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Welcome to Today's  
PaperClip Communications  
Webinar



# Students on the Spectrum: Effective Communication & Training Tools to Reduce Frustration and Avoid Miscommunication

*April 11, 2017*

*2:00– 3:30 PM EST*

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# Panelist

- Andrew Donahue
- Director of Social Pragmatic Programs
- Landmark College
- andydonahue@landmark.edu
- *The opinions expressed during today's event are not necessarily those of PaperClip Communications.*

- Andrew Donahue, MA, is the Director of Social Pragmatic Programs at Landmark College. Specializing in working with students with ASD, Andrew has extensive experience working as a therapist, teacher, administrator and vocational counselor with students and adults in a variety of educational and community settings. He is responsible for developing programs that encourage and facilitate engagement for students on the spectrum including early orientation, social groups, workshops and peer mentoring support. Andrew received a Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a concentration in substance abuse/addictions as well as a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Autism Spectrum Disorders from Antioch University New England. He has presented at numerous conferences and workshops on topics related to college students with ASD.

# Panelist

- Michael Luciani
- Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Campus Life
- Landmark College
- Mluciani@landmark.edu
  - *The opinions expressed during today's event are not necessarily those of PaperClip Communications.*

Michael Luciani, M.B.A., has been with Landmark College since 1996, when he was hired as Assistant Dean of Students. He has served in a number of roles since then, including Dean of Students. In 2014, he was promoted to Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Campus Life, leading the strategic planning process for Student Affairs and supervising all areas of Student Affairs, including Residential Life, Student Conduct, Counseling and Health Services, Athletics, Student Activities, Fitness and Recreation, Social Pragmatic Programs and Services, New Student Orientation, and Campus Safety and Emergency Management.

Luciani is actively involved in a number of committees at LC, including admissions, enrollment management, budget, research, evaluation and planning, technology, and crisis management committees; five- and 10-year NEASC steering committee; alcohol and drug education task force; operational management council; and staff council.

# Panelist

- Dr. Manju Banerjee
  - Vice President of Educational Research and Innovation
  - Landmark College
  - [manjubanerjee@landmark.edu](mailto:manjubanerjee@landmark.edu)
- The opinions expressed during today's event are not necessarily those of PaperClip Communications.*
- Manju Banerjee oversees the Landmark College School of Educational Design, which includes the Landmark College Institute for Research and Training (LCIRT) and Division of Educational Technology and Online Programs (ETOP). Dr. Banerjee has over 30 years of experience in the field of learning disabilities and ADHD, including working with students with ASD and postsecondary disability services. She is a certified diagnostician and teacher-consultant on learning disabilities. She has published and presented extensively, both nationally and internationally, on topics such as, disability documentation and accommodations, technological competencies for postsecondary transition, online learning, and universal design. She received her doctoral degree from the Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut, on the application of universal design to high stakes assessment. See Dr. Banerjee's clip on UDL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHvRzemuHA>

# Let's Define the Problem...

- Students on the spectrum can be socially challenging and often require additional support, resources and considerations inside and outside of the classroom in order to be successful. Some professionals report frustration, fear of personal safety, communication challenges and difficulty coping with behavioral outbursts that can be experienced when working with students on the spectrum. Today's campus professionals and faculty members can form successful relationships with students on the spectrum if they have the *tools they need to engage these students and provide appropriate accommodations.*

- One of the only accredited colleges in the U.S. designed exclusively for students who learn differently, including students with learning disabilities (such as dyslexia), attention deficit disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Offers a range of AA/BA programs to a student body of +/- 450.



## LANDMARK COLLEGE PUTNEY, VERMONT

# Autism Spectrum Disorder Defined

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development.

These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors



# Primary Manifestations of ASD

- Social Interaction Difficulties
  - Eye Contact
  - Facial expressions
  - Body posture
  - Emotional signals
  - Reciprocity
  - Interest in shared enjoyment
  - Understanding feelings of others
  - Discomfort by touch.

# Primary Manifestations of ASD

- Behaviors
  - overly dependent on routines
  - highly sensitive to changes in their environment
  - hypersensitivity to sensory stimulation (touch, pain, textures)
  - failure to demonstrate empathy with their peers
  - Preoccupations & intensely focused in a single topic that can dominate conversations and focus

# Primary Manifestations of ASD

- Communication deficits
  - responding inappropriately in conversations
  - misreading nonverbal interactions; lack nonverbal communication skills
  - difficulty building friendships appropriate to their age
  - Difficulty understanding the listener perspective
  - Difficulty with humor & innuendo
  - Concrete – focus on self-needs.

# Students in General

- Have a desire to succeed
- Want to have friends
- Would like to have a relationship
- Care about what people think of them
- Like to feel important and significant
- Want to feel secure and confident
- Are working on figuring out who they are

# Learning the Language of ASD

- Theory of Mind, empathy, ability to understanding perspectives of others
- Central Coherence, getting the big picture, generalizing, making connections
- Executive functioning, planning, going with the flow, staying on task, monitoring self
- Sensory issues, heightened sensitivity
- Developmental considerations

# Challenge for Students

Understand and adjusting to the expectations of college life, in and outside of the classroom.

# Challenge for Staff/Faculty

Understand and accommodate the delivery of information informed by our understanding of how students process information

# “30 Second Stretch”

*We think your health is important.  
Please feel free to take a 30 second break to stretch  
and/or reflect before we continue.*



# Provide Structure for Success

- Instructional, learning new skills
- Opportunities for experience and practice
- Voluntary participation
- Different levels of entry

# Instructional

- Social skill groups
- Individual meetings
- P.E. classes
- Improv theater groups
- Pet therapy
- Study groups
- Work study

# Experience/Practice

- Off Campus trips
- Dinner table
- Video game groups
- Study groups
- Weekend Trips
- Hiking/activity groups
- Peer mentors
- Campus activities

# Communication Style Matters

- Be direct, unambiguous
- Be instructional
- Create a visual with your words
- Use visual props
- Use agendas
- Prepare, practice and reinforce
- Remember to generalize

# Changing campus culture

- Educating staff/faculty
- Provide opportunities where students with ASD can excel
- Collaborative activities

# Case Studies

## Case 1

John is a freshmen at a large university. He has a diagnosis of ADHD and ASD. He meets regularly with his case manager at the disability services office for accommodation letters. It is the start of his second semester and John just learned that the class he wanted to register for is filled. He was advised by his disability services case manager to talk with the faculty member in-person to see if there was any flexibility in the student cap for the course.

John meets with the faculty to ask if he can join the course despite it being full. The faculty member says, “no”, the course is capped unless someone drops out. John is very upset because it took a lot of mental strength on his part to meet with this faculty member and ask for a favor. He says to the faculty member, “We’ll see about that.” Now, the faculty member is upset and feels threatened. He reports the incident to the department chair. Soon, the situation escalates; campus security is involved, as is the Dean of Student Affairs and the Provost. Obviously, there was much misunderstanding happening here.

# Case Studies

## Case 2

Jack is a sophomore at a highly competitive institution. He is very smart, good looking, dresses well, and also has a diagnosis of ASD. He meets with his disability services coordinator to seek advice about his lack of friends in any of his classes. He describes a current incident where he asked a classmate, “May I have permission to sit next to you?” and the classmate rolled her eyes and said, “weirdo” and moved to another seat in the lecture hall. Jack is very hurt.

His disability services coordinator has known for some time that Jack is extremely polite, to the point of where it sounds too formal and stilted. She says, “at times you are too polite.” Jack is puzzled. He says, “My mother always taught me to be polite.”

# Q/A

## ***How Do I Ask a Question of the Panelist(s)?***

*You can write in a question or comment anytime during the event by clicking on the “Chat” Bubble in the left hand corner of your screen.*

## **OR**

*If you would like to talk to a panelist(s) live, please call-in using the phone number provided on your instruction sheet, press \*1 and you will be put in a call queue until it is your turn to ask your question.*

## ***For Questions that Arise After the Conference***

*If you have a question that you were unable to ask during the webinar, please feel free to email the presenters directly.*



## 5 Takeaways from Today:

1. Adjust your communication to match the characteristics of ASD
2. Be direct, unambiguous and concise
3. Be instructional and provide opportunities to practice
4. Changing delivery is not the same as compromise
5. Prepare, reinforce and debrief

# Feedback

*We want your feedback on today's event!*

If you would like to provide suggestions for improvement and/or ideas for future event topics, please email us at:

[info@paper-clip.com](mailto:info@paper-clip.com)

and she will send you the link to our brief online survey.

Thank you for your participation,  
*PaperClip Communications*

# Certificate of Completion

Thank you for your participation in today's webinar. Please note that we do offer certificates of completion to our webinar participants.

If you and/or your colleagues would like a certificate, please go to the link below and complete the information requested --- by selecting the webinar you are seeking a certificate for and using the password provided in your registration information --- then simply click submit and your certificate will arrive shortly.

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## *Upcoming Webinar Conferences:*

A PaperClip Communications Webinar

### **MICROAGGRESSION**

Today's Critical Work – Creating & Sustaining an Inclusive & Civil Campus Community

A graphic featuring five overlapping speech bubbles in shades of green, yellow, red, and blue, positioned above five stylized human silhouettes in various colors (orange, purple, blue, brown, red).

2:00-3:30pm ET  
**Tuesday, April 25, 2017**

**KIDS ON CAMPUS**

Mitigate Risk, Protect Young Guests & Your Institution with Proper Policies

A large green hand icon with a white outline, palm facing up, symbolizing protection or care.

2:00-3:30pm ET  
**Wednesday,  
April 26, 2017**

A PaperClip Communications Webinar

**10 LAWSUITS THAT YOU  
MAY NOT BE AWARE OF**

Protect Your Institution & Mitigate Risk – Lessons Learned

A graphic showing a wooden gavel resting on a stack of books, with a fan of papers or documents behind it, set against a yellow background.

**Wednesday,  
May 17, 2017**  
2:00-3:30pm ET

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