



"NURTURING SAFER COMMUNITIES"

**BUILDING SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE
COMMUNITIES**

BSSC SAFETY

NEWSLETTER JULY 2023

WHY WE NEED SAFER COMMUNITIES?

Have you ever thought about whether our communities are really safe for neurodivergent people? It's a question worth pondering. For too long, our voices have been ignored and misunderstood, leaving us feeling unsafe and unsupported.

Many autistic people face numerous challenges with law enforcement interactions in their daily lives. Police interactions, in particular, have often ended badly, causing unnecessary suffering and even loss of life. It's time to acknowledge these issues and take steps to make things better.

That's why Kind Theory has launched the BSSC Safety program (Building Safe and Supportive Communities). It's a program aimed at reducing escalations between law enforcement and autistic individuals. The BSSC SAFETY program is a program that works in two dimensions.



The first part of the program involves providing education, resources and training for law enforcement professionals to equip them with a better understanding of neurodivergent communication.

The second part of the program involves providing education, tools and resources to autistic individual to understand what to expect in a police interaction and how to help avoid escalation in law enforcement interactions.



JUNE

HIGHLIGHTS

EXCERPTS FROM FEATURED ARTICLES

LAW ENFORCEMENT IS FAILING THE AUTISTIC COMMUNITY - EMILY MORSON

A study in the US found that by the age of 21, 20% of autistic young people may be stopped and questioned by police and 5% may be arrested. By contrast, in the general population of US teenagers, only 9% are stopped by police, and much fewer than 1% are arrested.

That means autistic youth are stopped by police more than twice as often as young people in general, and arrested over five times as often!

US law enforcement statistics suggest that over their lifetime, autistic people are seven times more likely than the general population to interact with police.



OSTRICH - KAMEKO THOMAS

Everywhere I turned, I was constantly expected to be “on,” despite how obviously “off” I was. More often than not, I endured the benevolent cruelty of people who never passed up an opportunity to remind me of who I once was, as if I had magically forgotten. Whether it was someone going out of their way to tell me what they remembered me once doing, what they remembered me once saying, or what they remembered me once liking, folks around me made sure I knew that even if I had to fake it, they could only accept the “me” I used to be.



BOOK READING SESSION - CHRIS BONNELLO

Did you miss this month's exciting book reading session of *Underdogs* with Chris Bonello? No worries! You can now watch the recorded session on our official Facebook and YouTube channels.

Stay tuned to join us live on our next book reading session "Underdogs" with author Chris Bonello (@autisticnotweird)



NOURISH DIVERSITY SESSION IV

In our latest Nourish Diversity Session IV, we focused on practical meal planning strategies. It was an amazing session as we had the pleasure of having our board director, Laura, join us as a co-host alongside Rebecca King. The session was filled with insightful discussions and helpful guidance. We wrapped up the session with an activity that involved creating a 9-1-1 plan.

If you missed the session, you can catch up by visiting the link below. You can join us for our Session V on the 21st of August.



CONVERSATIONS WITH

TARA SHANNON

What could be more heartwarming and captivating than a genuine conversation where emotions flow freely and eyes light up with joy? At Kind Theory, we had the wonderful opportunity to engage in a heartfelt live discussion on Facebook with the talented author Tara Shannon, known for her beautiful book "Rabbit and Bear." During our conversation,

Tara shared her personal journey, from her childhood experiences to her discovery of being neurodivergent and her inspiring mission. It was a beautiful conversation that resonated deeply with all of us at Kind Theory. Tara's openness and authenticity touched our hearts, and we are immensely grateful for her willingness to share her story. We explored various aspects of her life, including her childhood memories and the path that led her to discover and embrace her neurodivergence. Tara's passion for writing "Rabbit and Bear" shone through as she spoke about the importance of representation. If you happened to miss this heartfelt conversation, we invite you to catch up by following the link below. We assure you that it is a conversation filled with warmth and insight that you won't want to miss.



BSSC SAFETY

PRELIMINARY SESSION

YOUR VOICE MATTERS



We started our "Building Safe and Supportive Communities" program with a special session called "Your Voice Matters." The session brought together our advisors, Kind Theory board members and team and focused on gathering insights from neurodivergent people to shape the program authentically, based on their own lived experiences. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to connect and learn from each other. The session was filled with valuable discussions and heartfelt emotions, as we all share the same goal: to ensure that interactions between law enforcement and autistic individuals, regardless of their differences, are safe and without any escalations. Our aim with this program is to prevent escalation and unnecessary harm in these encounters for everyone involved.

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JAIME HEIDEL



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TERRA VANCE



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KATHERINE LORELLI



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LALO

5

MATHEW RUSHIN



6

KAMEKO THOMAS



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KAISHAWNA FLEMING



8

TIMOTHY BOYKIN

**WE'D STILL LOVE YOUR INPUT AS WE
DESIGN THIS PROGRAM**



Do you have lived experience interacting with police?

What do you think causes escalation in police interactions?

What topics would you include in a police training about interacting with neurodivergent people?

What do you want to know about keeping yourself safe in a police interaction?

To share your insights, e-mail us at:

[talktous at kindtheory.org](mailto:talktous@kindtheory.org)