

## Overlooked and At Risk: Identifying Autism in Gifted Children

Presented by: Megan Helmen, PsyD, LP

Autism Virtual Summit 2025

Delivery method: On demand

Instructional Level: Intermediate

Sponsored by NCS Pearson, Inc.

### Overview

Many intellectually gifted children with autism are overlooked and misunderstood. “They can’t be autistic” because of strong verbal skills, high achievement, or subtle social differences. Yet these children often struggle profoundly, facing elevated risks for anxiety, victimization, and suicidal ideation. Clinicians will deepen their understanding of how autism presents in gifted youth and why traditional diagnostic approaches may miss them. Through real-world case examples and data from gifted autistic children, attendees will learn to recognize nuanced presentations and better support this vulnerable population. This session bridges clinical insight with practical tools to enhance diagnostic accuracy and drive meaningful, individualized care. This is an intermediate level session.

### Learner Outcomes

*Based on the content of this session, participants will be able to*

1. Describe current empirical findings related to autism in intellectually gifted children, including helpful assessment measures
2. Differentiate between clinical presentations of gifted children and those who are both gifted and autistic, using case-based comparisons
3. Identify and interpret subtle manifestations of autistic traits in gifted children to improve diagnostic accuracy and support planning

### Time-Ordered Agenda

10 minutes	Brief overview of intellectual giftedness & case for why identifying autism in gifted individuals is crucial
20 minutes	Test measures and interviewing considerations
15 minutes	Case examples and comparisons (gifted vs gifted + autistic)
10 minutes	Report sample for conveying this 2e profile, general approach to recommendations, and provision of a resource list
5 minutes	Q&A

### About the Presenter

Megan Helmen PsyD, LP is a pediatric neuropsychologist and the owner of Developmental Discoveries Neuropsychology. She received her Doctorate of Psychology from Minnesota School of Professional Psychology and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Pediatric Neuropsychology at the University of Minnesota. She has 14 years of postdoctoral experience with clinical work providing neuropsychological evaluations.

## Disclosures

**Financial:** Dr. Megan Helman LLC is presenting at the request of Pearson and is receiving an honorarium for her presentation.

**Non-financial disclosure:** No relevant nonfinancial relationship exists.

NCS Pearson, Inc., is the sponsor of the Autism Virtual Summit 2025. Pearson develops and distributes assessments and intervention tools for speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and psychologists.

## References

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  - Is licensed by a state or provincial regulatory agency to practice audiology or speech-language pathology
  - Is credentialed by a state regulatory agency to practice audiology or speech-language pathology
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