

2019 Activities Summary

January 1, 2019 - March 31, 2019

Quick Description (Quarter-at-a-Glance)

- Autism in Medicine training event with LoneStar LEND (Lonestar Education in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities).
- Matthew Reardon Center for Autism.
- Research Symposium for University of Houston System.
- Rebecca School Conference --DIR (Developmental, Individual-differences, & Relationship-based model) Conference.
- Love & Autism -Neurodiversity with The Family Guidance & Therapy Center.
- Panel to address resources for UPenn graduate students with autism.

Roles & Development of Praxis

- ★ Acted as **trainer** and **panelist** for an **autism in medicine** training event hosted by LoneStar LEND (Lonestar Education in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) with McGovern **Medical School** Texas.
- ★ **Presented** at Matthew Reardon Autism Conference. The Matthew Reardon Center for Autism offers **centers** with education **focused** towards children, teens, and young adults with **autism**.
- ★ **Participated** in a symposium at University of Houston System.
- ★ **Keynote speaker** for Rebecca School Conference addressing **self-advocacy** and promoting **curiosity and creativity**.
- ★ **Event Speaker** for The Family Guidance & Therapy Center conference focused on **Autism and Love**, speaking on Neurodiversity.
- ★ **Featured Panelist** at a UPenn panel to address **resources** for **autistic** graduate **students**. Attending students felt outstanding needs were not being met and necessitated being addressed.

Values-at-Work

- Extending sphere of influence by training about sensitivity and inclusivity in medicine at a medical school, a place traditionally steeped in tradition and exclusivity.

- Working within the autism community to continue addressing self-advocacy and inclusivity, as the mainstream perception of autistic characteristics can leave out those in the margins.
- Continuing their own education and awareness in how to serve the needs of marginalized communities.
- Addressing systems that overlook the needs of marginalized communities; in this example, graduate students with autism at UPenn. In addition to addressing what is being overlooked, addressing practical & pragmatic solutions while encouraging self-advocacy.

Role of Employment as Educator

In the scope of Dr. Onaiwu's praxis, their livelihood intertwined with their values, but is easy to overlook. The two co-exist, with their livelihood almost conjoining invisibly. Their activism and advocacy are a way of life, supported by their own nonprofit Advocacy Without Borders, and numerous other leadership and board positions.

Their background is largely in education.

- ❖ **Education: M.A. in Special Education**, with an emphasis in Development Disabilities from University of Texas Permian Basin
- ❖ **Work Experience: K-12 Faculty** from 2014-2016
 - LWCS of the Association of Christian Teachers and Schools
 - Curriculum development, instruction, projects and other duties required of teachers.
- ❖ **Work Experience: College Instructor** from 2016-2022
 - State & Systemwide for Texas State Technical College
 - Duties included system-wide coordinating real life learning experiences for students, as well as acting as a liaison for first-year students adjusting to college and preparing for a career.

This circles back emphatically during this quarter with the many events centered on education. University of Houston System is part of their employment. The conferences with the Matthew Reardon Center and the Rebecca School tie directly into Dr. Onaiwu's M.A., giving them credentials to speak on autism, developmental disabilities, and education not only as an advocate and activist, but also as an experienced and credentialed teacher.

They also advise on the intersection of parenting and disabilities, including autism. Besides their own experience as a parent with children that have overlapping marginalizations, they have theoretical and in-depth expertise on brain development and healthy modalities for working with children, especially those who may need extra attention.

This development of accredited educator in Dr. Onaiwu's praxis was present from the beginning, typically running in the background (but not always, as with the #JusticeforKayleb campaign). From this stage forward, it becomes a forthright pillar of their work.

Events Timeline

- Training Event--Autism in Medicine training event/ LoneStar LEND (Lonestar Education in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) as Panelist in McGovern Medical School Texas
 - ◆ February 15
- Autism Conference --Matthew Reardon Autism Conference / Matthew Reardon Center for Autism' as Presenter in Savannah, GA
 - ◆ February 28
- Research Symposium--University of Houston System/Participant in Houston, TX
 - ◆ March 1
- Rebecca School Conference --DIR (Developmental, Individual-differences, & Relationship-based model) Conference /Rebecca School ICDL DIR Regional Conference 2019 as Keynote Speaker in New York, NY
 - ◆ March 8
- Neurodivergent Discussion --Love & Autism -Neurodiversity /The Family Guidance & Therapy Center as Event Speaker in San Diego, CA
 - ◆ March 12
- Education Panel--Panel to address resources for UPenn grad Students with autism/Featured Panelist at UPenn, PA
 - ◆ March 25

Featured Event

In a list of events, it's easy to forget that around each and every event has a story of people who participate, learn, and foster relationships. The bulleted lists aren't static accomplishments, but dynamic experiences for all the people involved.

This specific featured event took place at the University of Pennsylvania. The event was cosponsored by several contributors, including the Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network, whom Dr. Onaiwu represented. They were also the keynote speaker. Other sponsors of the event included the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly; Wendy Hensel, Dean of the Georgia State University Law School; Amy Edwards, Director of Drexel Autism Support Program; and Angust Murray, Executive Director of Kinney Center.



Photo from Rachael Creager published in The Daily Pennsylvanian

The list of contributors shows how much collaboration can go into coordinating one event. The forum included discussion about training for faculty to avoid future discrimination that some of the autistic

graduate students had run into. While UPenn works within the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, specific initiatives for autistic students were still lacking.

Source:

<https://www.thedp.com/article/2019/03/autism-graduate-student-support-panel-penn>

- Lunches of Love
 - Ongoing project from 2016 - 2019 twice annual.
 - K-12 and college student volunteers.
 - Collaborative with Texas State Technical College (TSTC) and the nonprofit. Lunches of Love (LOL) committed to helping end childhood

hunger in Fort Bend County by providing a free nutritious sack lunch during extended school holidays and weekends."

- Lunch bag decorating sessions and food donation drives.
- Feeds thousands of impoverished children at over 20 public schools and satellite locations.



- Community presentations to help support and encourage prospective entrepreneurs, especially young adults, people with disabilities, women, and people of color.
 - Also with Texas State Technical College & delivered by University of Houston Texas Gulf Coast Small Business Development Center Network specialists.
 - Ongoing from 2017-2019.

April 1, 2019 - June 30, 2019

Quick Description (Quarter-at-a-Glance)

- The Fort Bend ISD's Department of Social Emotional Learning & Enrichment Programs.
- Disability Summit for The Center for Rural Development.

- Schooling Social Brains: Social Groups, Neurodiversity, & Equity: Seeing Clearly and Boldly in Mind, Brain, & Education.
- Episode 7 of podcast – “Enthusiasm is Morénike Giwa Onaiwu’s secret weapon”
- “Overlapping Identities, Overlapping Barriers: At the Intersection of Disability” at Brooklyn Public Library.

Roles & Development of Praxis

- ★ **Promoting educational strategies** training in collaboration with the Fort Bend ISD's Department of Social Emotional Learning & Enrichment Programs.
- ★ **Addressing** The Center for Rural Development by addressing the **needs** of the **disabled community**.
- ★ **Speaker** addressing **neurodiversity and equality** at an educational panel called “Learning and the Brain Panel” as an advocate living with **multiple marginalization** on a personal level, as well as being an **educator**.
- ★ **Featured speaker** on podcast with title “**Enthusiasm is Morénike Giwa Onaiwu’s secret weapon**”.
- ★ **Keynote Speaker** at Brooklyn Public Library presenting “Overlapping Barriers: At the **Intersection of Disability, Race and Gender**.”

Values-at-Work

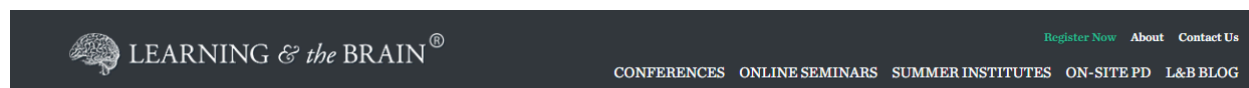
- Sharing knowledge and best practices with local organizations, as well as internationally.
- Promoting awareness of diversity and inclusivity in systems it’s often overlooked, in rural development for example.
- Highlighting neurodiversity and equity among educators and educational organizations.
- Sharing personal life stories on a podcast about the work that’s being done and motivations.
- Speaking about the intersection of disability, race, and gender as both an expert and personal experience.

Events Timeline

- Educational Strategies Training--The Fort Bend ISD's Department of Social Emotional Learning & Enrichment Programs in Sugar Land, TX
 - ◆ April 1
- -Disability Summit/ The Center for Rural Development as Keynote Speaker
 - ◆ April 1

- Learning and the Brain Panel-- Schooling Social Brains: Social Groups, Neurodiversity, & Equity: Seeing Clearly and Boldly in Mind, Brain, & Education
 - ◆ May 3
- Autistic Podcast--Actually Autistic Podcast/ Episode 7 --"Enthusiasm is Morénike Giwa Onaiwu's secret weapon" as Speaker online
 - ◆ May 5
- Brooklyn Public Library Presentation--In Our Own Voices/ Overlapping Identities, Overlapping Barriers: At the Intersection of Disability, Race and Gender as Keynote Speaker at Brooklyn Public Library, NY
 - ◆ May 10

Featured Events



SPEAKER PROFILE

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Morénike Giwa Onaiwu, EdD Candidate

Co-Executive Director, Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network; Autism Self-Advocate; Former K-12 Teacher; Board Member, Autistic Self-Advocacy Network; Advisory Board Member, Ethical Autism Research Project, National Resource Center for Parents with Disabilities, National Center for Mental Health & I/DD; Co-Editor, *All the Weight of Our Dreams: On Living Racialized Autism*

Events

The first event included in this section is the “Learning and the Brain” event. This event addressed socialization, schooling, race, and neurodiversity. The event was held at the Sheraton in Times Square, in New York City. Dr. Onaiwu spoke to “Seeing Clearly and Boldly in Mind, Brain, & Education: The Interplay of Neurodiversity, Race, and Learning from Adult-Child Interactions and Social Structures Through the Education System.”

Source:

<https://www.learningandthebrain.com/education-speakers/Mor%C3%A9nike-Onaiwu>

The second event was also in New York, this time in the borough of Brooklyn, with the Brooklyn Public Library. Below is a screenshot from their website.

Overlapping Identities, Overlapping Barriers: At the Intersection of Disability, Race and Gender

📅 Fri, May 10 2019 ⌚ 5:00 am – 9:00 am 📍 Central Library, Dweck Center

ADHD

autism

Inclusive Services

LGBTQ

mental health

“There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.” Audre Lourde

When people don't fit the dominant stereotype associated with their identity, barriers, already significant, increase. Hear about the struggle in the panel "In Our Own Voices." Check out the break out sessions on special education services for English Language Learners, strategies for autistic trans people, how to challenge your child's classification and growing up disabled in the Caribbean-American Community. Join us as for overview and concrete support for individuals and families in addressing these and related issues.



**DISABILITY
RIGHTS
ARE CIVIL
RIGHTS**

[Central Library](#)

10 Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Source:

<https://www.bklynlibrary.org/calendar/overlapping-identities-central-library-dweck-20190510>

July 1, 2019 - September 30, 2019

Quick Description (Quarter-at-a-Glance)

- Publication of two scholarly articles on HIV/AIDS research.
- Same-Same-Different Podcast addressing “otherness” with Michigan Radio.
- United Nations Panel on Empowering Women & Girls with Autism as Panelist.
- The University of Michigan/Guest Lecturer.
- US Conference on AIDS--The Future is Female: WoC Leadership in the HIV Movement.
- US Conference on AIDS--All About Us: Women & Biomed in HIV Prevention/2019 USCA Conference.
- Spectrumly Speaking podcast Living Racialized Autism.

Publications

- ★ El-Sadr WM, Donnell D, Beauchamp G, Hall HI, Torian LV, Zingman B, Lum G, et al. *Financial Incentives for Linkage to Care and Viral Suppression Among HIV-Positive Patients: A Randomized Clinical Trial (HPTN 065)*. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2017 Aug 1;177(8):1083-1092.
 - When people with HIV receive consistent care and manage viral suppression, their health improves, and new infections are prevented. Financial incentives, in the form of gift cards, create more interest and follow-through with consistent management.

- ★ Gamble T, Branson B, Donnell D, Hall HI, King G, Cutler B, et al. Design of the HPTN 065 (TLC-Plus) study: *A study to evaluate the feasibility of an enhanced test, link-to-care, plus treat approach for HIV prevention in the United States*. *Clin Trials*. 2017 Aug;14(4):322-332.
 - This study specifically was researching the feasibility of larger studies and research, specifically relating to a “test and trial” approach with antiretrovirals . The study showed the research would be a large and feasible undertaking.

Roles & Development of Praxis

- ★ Assisted in the **publication** of two scholarly **articles** on **HIV/AIDS research**.
- ★ **Guest speaker** on podcast addressing “**otherness**” with Michigan Radio.
- ★ **United Nations Panel** on Empowering **Women & Girls with Autism**.
- ★ Providing insight as a **guest Lecturer** at The University of Michigan.
- ★ **Attendee** at the US Conference on AIDS--The Future is Female: **WoC Leadership** in the **HIV Movement**.
- ★ Also **attended** the US Conference on AIDS--All About Us: **Women & Biomed in HIV Prevention**.
- ★ Featured **speaker** on Spectrumly Speaking podcast.

Featured Events: Podcasts

Source: <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/763301659/same-same-different>

Although Dr. Onaiwu has spoken on several panels, presentations, and keynotes, podcasts become increasingly common. Part of this is in association with the Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network (AWN) and their outreach work.

The first podcast of this quarter was one through Michigan Radio and NPR. Same Same Different was hosted by Bryce Huffman and addressed different ways humans have lived with “otherness.”



podcasts ▸ society & culture

Same Same Different

From Michigan Radio

A show about identity and how to survive "otherness" with our humanity and sanity intact.

 APPLE PODCASTS

 RSS LINK



Dr. Onaiwu also appeared on Episode 73 of Spectrumly Speaking, addressing Living Racialized Autism (which is part of the title of their co-edited anthology).

<https://differentbrains.org/living-racialized-autism-with-morenike-giwa-onaiwu-spectrumly-speaking-ep-73>

Values-at-Work

- HIV/AIDS research and inclusivity has always been a foundational piece of Dr. Onaiwu’s value system and praxis.
- Speaking on “otherness,” a common experience of people in marginalized communities.
- Working with international policy makers to address the needs of marginalized groups, especially at intersections. In this case, the UN with women/girls and autism.
- Acting in the capacity of educator at every opportunity.

- Continuing ongoing dedication to HIV medical advancement, including prevention, and forging inclusivity in both the trials of new medications and accessibility.
- Sharing life experience as a person with several intersecting marginalizations and as a frontline activist.

Events Timeline

- Podcast--Same Same Different Podcast addressing “otherness”/Michigan Radio as Guest Speaker
 - August 1
- United Nations Panel on Empowering Women & Girls with Autism as Panelist
 - August 16
- College Guest Speaker--The University of Michigan/Guest Lecturer
 - September 1
- US Conference on AIDS 2019 --The Future is Female: WoC Leadership in the HIV Movement as Presenter & Attendee in Washington, DC
 - September 4
- US Conference on AIDS 2019 --All About Us: Women & Biomed in HIV Prevention as Presenter & Attendee in Washington, DC
 - September 5
- Podcast--Spectrumly Speaking/ Living Racialized Autism, with Morénike Giwa Onaiwu/ep. 73 online
 - September 9

October 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019

Quick Description (Quarter-at-a-Glance)

- Gender Infinity Conference.
- Autism and Parenting/ Family to Family Network.
- Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit Program Committee.
- Published a chapter in a book called *Autistic Community & Neurodiversity: Stories from the Frontline*.

Roles & Development of Praxis

- ★ **Participant** at the Gender Infinity Conference addressing **intersectionality, neurodiversity, & gender identity**.
- ★ **Panelist** for Family to Family Network’s panel on **autism and parenting**.

- ★ **Attended** Biomedical **HIV** Prevention Summit.
- ★ **Writer** of a chapter in an anthology called *Autistic Community & Neurodiversity: Stories from the Frontline* (edited by Steven Kapp), reflecting on own experience as an editor of an anthology centering race and autism. The chapter was entitled “A Dream Deferred” No Longer: Backstory of the First Autism and Race Anthology.

Values-at-Work

- Expanding conversations about intersectionality, neurodiversity, and gender identity.
- Addressing concerns of autism and parenting.
- Biomedical advances in HIV are a leading cause of concern.
- Addressed experience of being a co-editor of the very first anthology written exclusively by people of color with autism, including the following values: not about us without us, you definite you, and everyone gets paid. Also expresses people over profits as a personal and shared value.

Events Timeline

- Gender Infinity Conference--Intersectionality, Neurodiversity, & Gender Identity/Gender Infinity Organization as a Participant in Houston, TX
 - ◆ October 19
- Autism & Parenting Panel--Autism and Parenting/ Family to Family Network as Panelist in Houston, Texas
 - ◆ November 1
- Autism Chapter Published--”A Dream Deferred’ No Longer: Backstory of the First Autism & Race Anthology,” in ***Autistic Community and Neurodiversity Movement: From the Frontlines***. Edited by Steven Kapp. As writer
 - ◆ November
- HIV Prevention Summit--Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit Program Committee/2019 Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit as Attendee in Houston, Texas
 - ◆ December 10

In Their Words

In an anthology edited by Steven K. Kapp called *Autistic Community and the Neurodiversity Movement: Stories from the Frontline*, Dr. Onaiwu reflected about the experience of co-editing *All the Weight of Our Dreams: On Living Racialized Autism*. Their chapter is called “A Dream Deferred” No Longer: Backstory of the First Autism and Race Anthology. The excerpt below beautifully describes Dr. Onaiwu’s collaborative process, in writing, editing, and in numerous other projects and undertakings. Collaboration is implicit in their work. Dr. Onaiwu reflects on how differences can be strengths, and challenges are just part of the path towards creating.

We were quite an eclectic team, and we had a lot to learn. We were all Autistic. We were all people of color: Lydia is East Asian; E. is multiracial; I am Black. All of us loved to write and had even had some previous work published, but none of us considered ourselves professional writers. None of us had an educational nor work background in journalism; none of us had ever worked for a magazine, book publisher, or newspaper. None of us had ever been involved in a project quite like this. In addition, we all had major time constraints due to our busy lives and numerous responsibilities. Lydia was enrolled in law school at the time; E. was running a professional skating and dance company; I was teaching. E. and I had eight kids between the two of us. All three of us had various advocacy commitments we were engaged in that required time and energy, and we all had different work schedules. Furthermore, we all lived in different parts of the US: E. lived on the West Coast, Lydia on the East Coast, and I was in the South.

However, all three of us were devoted to the project and willing to “learn on the job” and challenge ourselves to make things work. We all possessed a strong work ethic, an enormous amount of enthusiasm, the ability to “think outside the box” which helped us to grasp new things quickly, and the ability to hyperfocus. We had different working styles: one of us was a planner who liked to make lists and preferred to stay ahead of deadlines; another was a perfectionist and procrastinator who would have periods of inactivity/dormancy and then become infused with a creative burst of energy that enabled rapid completion of a voluminous amount of work at the very last moment; the other person was a combination of these two types.

Our differences worked in our favor as we all brought unique strengths to the team and were able to support one another well if we faltered because we didn’t all share the same weaknesses. We were united in our belief in the importance of the anthology and in our respect for one another. Over the years we maintained regular (sometimes multiple times daily) communication via email, message, and other electronic means. Together, along with several other dedicated individuals, we built something real, something monumental, something beautiful.

Source: [“A Dream Deferred” No Longer: Backstory of the First Autism and Race Anthology--Autistic Community and the Neurodiversity Movement: Stores from the Frontline.](#)

