



HEALTHY LIVING | WELL-BEING

March 23, 2023

Panel Participant

9:30-10:30 a.m.

Merrick Egber

Merrick Egber was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at the age of 8, which was then called Asperger's Syndrome – a variant which included mild to moderate supports needed. While he didn't learn about his disorder until the age of 18, he had symptoms unlike many other children, including the inability to fold textbook covers, needing help to tie his shoes (which still don't have strong grips and come loose constantly), droopy arms, and an inability to try to depersonalize feedback and know when someone is joking or not. When he was in the tenth grade, in 2001, a multitude of causes rendered his abilities to transition well as he felt powerless and had to seek help for his depression, a condition which exists to this day. He also came up with a coping strategy which allowed him to start up a hobby of creating poetry and song lyrics, and eventually getting them self-published on Amazon.com and Lulu.com which can be found on www.MerrickEgber.com.

After earning a B.A. in Communication Studies at Florida Atlantic University, he went on to join the staff at the Els for Autism Foundation, a few months before the ribbon cutting of the Els Center of Excellence in 2015, as the longest self-advocate working for the Foundation. He is the Secretary of FL APSE and the Chairperson of the Els for Autism Advisory Board. During his tenure, he helped found The Spoken Wheel Society, a Social Group for adults with autism, the Fore Autism Podcast, and the Adults with Autism Mental Health Support Group – which spun off as the Teens 'Connections' Mental Health Support Group too. While he may require mild to moderate supports, his theory supported by the clients he comes into contact with, is that the population with high supports is indistinctive from the population with mild to moderate supports, they just need high mental health supports instead of or including life and communication supports.

