

SARTAC
Fellows:

Advancing
Self Advocacy
through
Leadership and
Policy

About the Fellow **Michelle Middlemiss**

State: Pennsylvania

Interest in fellowship:

Opportunity to increase safety through education, understanding, and innovation.

Host: Brian Kluchurosky

Progress City, LLC



My Safety, My Rights (MSMR)

Let me tell you a story...

My Safety, My Rights (MSMR)

GOAL: to create positive and safe encounters for people with autism in local communities.



My Safety, My Rights (MSMR)

PLAN OF ACTION:

- 1- Survey of autism knowledge to community resources.
- 2- Survey to individuals and families with autism on how safe and understood they felt in their community.

My Safety, My Rights (MSMR)

PLAN OF ACTION:

- 3- Training on autism to local community resources.
- 4- Design of autism TIP wallet-cards.
- 5- Design of a register system to provide preferred communication to local police (unique number assigned and tag distributed)

My Safety, My Rights (MSMR)

CHANGES THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT

- Cut down the project participants from 10 people to 5.
- Delay on implementation due to COVID-19 (implementation set for March 2021).

My Safety, My Rights (MSMR)

SATISFACTION WITH END RESULT OF PROJECT:

- With MSMR, knowledge on autism is increased allowing for more positive and safe encounters in the local community.



WHAT I LEARNED AS A FELLOW



- How to take an advocacy idea and turn it into a usable tool for my community.
- How to develop and distribute surveys.
- How to speak up for myself and my cause to community officials and governing boards.
- How to rely on my cohort of fellows to overcome my anxiety of making this project public.

RESOURCES CREATED

MSMR PRODUCTS AND RESOURCES

- SURVEYS

Post Autism Training Survey for the Wilkins Township Police
(pertaining to my SARTAC project, "My Safety, My Rights"
December, 2019

(PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSE)

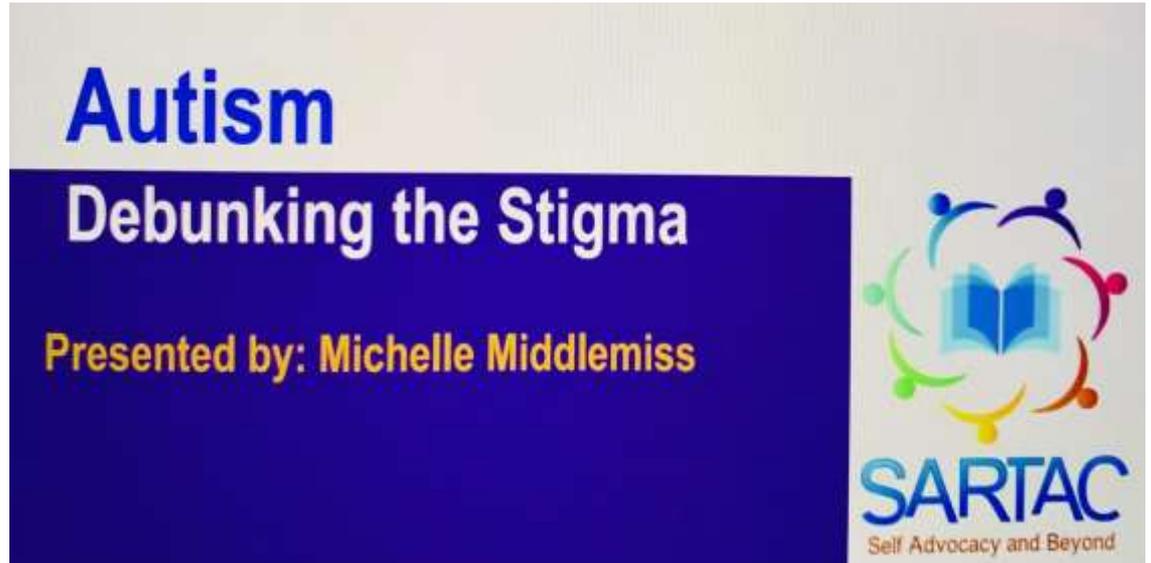
There are no right or wrong answers!

1. *After having Autism Training, how comfortable do you feel, questioning a person with Autism?*
(1) *very uncomfortable* (2) *a little uncomfortable*
(3) *somewhat uncomfortable* (4) *fairly comfortable*
(5) *very comfortable*
2. *After having Autism Training, how comfortable are you talking to someone who seems very confrontational? (looks like they are resisting to cooperate)* (1) *very uncomfortable*
(2) *a little uncomfortable* (3) *somewhat uncomfortable*
(4) *fairly comfortable* (5) *very comfortable*
3. *After having Autism Training, do you know the outward signs that show that someone may be Autistic?* (1) *I don't know any signs*
(2) *I know a few signs* (3) *I know many signs*

RESOURCES CREATED

MSMR PRODUCTS AND RESOURCES

- AUTISM
TRAINING



Autism
Debunking the Stigma
Presented by: Michelle Middlemiss



SARTAC
Self Advocacy and Beyond

The image shows a presentation slide for 'Autism Debunking the Stigma'. The slide has a light grey background with a dark blue horizontal band across the middle. The title 'Autism' is in large blue font at the top. Below it, 'Debunking the Stigma' is in white font on the dark blue band. Underneath, 'Presented by: Michelle Middlemiss' is in yellow font. On the right side, there is a logo for SARTAC, which features a stylized blue book with colorful human figures (green, yellow, orange, red, purple) around it. Below the logo, the text 'SARTAC' is in large blue font, and 'Self Advocacy and Beyond' is in smaller black font.

Tips for engaging someone who we know is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder?

1- **Assume nothing** - regardless of appearance, tone of voice (or lack thereof) - don't give up - EVERYONE has a unique pathway for engagement.

2- **Ask questions** - use their name and make sure that your questions are with as much clarity as possible (to limit any misinterpretation). Be mindful of rapid-fire questions.

3- **Read social cues** - Do not assume a non-response is someone who cannot comprehend. If unable to engage, seek out the individual's preferred method of engagement. This will help determine if the individual is over-anxious or overwhelmed.

4- **Be an active listener** - what can we pick up from the individual's responses? Is direct communication difficult, and if so, what alternative ways might be suggested?

RESOURCES CREATED

MSMR PRODUCTS AND RESOURCES

- UNIQUE TAG



LEADERSHIP & POLICY RESULTS

BE BRAVE

LISTEN!

HAVE AN

ACTION PLAN



THE ROLE OF THE HOST

HOST: Brian Kluchurosky of Progress City, LLC

Resources provided: office space, technology for products, weekly meetings.

THE ROLE OF THE HOST

Support provided: ability for Michelle to feel comfortable to bounce ideas off of; challenge Michelle on her thoughts to ensure they were practical and able to be generalized to others; positive reinforcement throughout.



Q & A

You have

Questions

We have

Answers



SARTAC

Self Advocacy and Beyond

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The Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) seeks to strengthen the self-advocacy movement by supporting self-advocacy organizations to grow in diversity and leadership. The resource center is a project of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), the oldest national self-advocacy organization in the country. SARTAC is a Developmental Disabilities Project of National Significance, funded by the Administration For Community Living – Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). The information in this product was written to provide guidance for self-advocates and their allies to assist in understanding policy issues affecting their lives. It is not to be used to determine a person's legal rights or an organization's legal responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, as amended or any other federal, state or local laws written to protect the rights of people with disabilities.