



# Cottage Autism Network Conference

15<sup>th</sup> May 2022, Talbot hotel, Wexford

*"SUPPORTING DIVERSITY"*

Cottage Autism Network is a charity set up in 2004 by a group of parents facing the challenges of living with Autism. We are a parent led group offering families advice and support who are living with ASD. Every member and volunteer with C.A.N. has a family member affected by Autism. This gives us a real understanding of what parents are feeling and dealing with. We have weekly activities for all our children to help with social skills and through these events lasting friendships are made. We strive to enable and empower parents through training and organised activities. C.A.N. aims to improve the quality of life of people affected by ASD by providing supports, promoting equality and inclusion as well as raising awareness in the community by being a voice for our members.

We are pleased to announce our upcoming conference in the **Talbot Hotel, Wexford** on the **15<sup>th</sup> May 2022**. Our speakers are listed below (also overleaf) and there will be several local vendors involved at the conference providing ASD supports and supplies. Members of Cottage Autism Network will receive discounts on the day and a reduced price on conference tickets.

Tickets are available through our website at [cottageautismnetwork.com](http://cottageautismnetwork.com)

## **ADAM HARRIS** (AsIAm)

Adam Harris is a 26 year old social entrepreneur, Autism advocate and Founder-CEO of AsIAm.ie, an organisation committed to building a more Autism-friendly society in Ireland. Adam established AsIAm.ie based on his own experiences of growing up with Asperger Syndrome, a condition on the Autism Spectrum. Today Adam addresses Autism issues in the media and at conferences, national and international. A Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awardee, Adam also sits on the Board of Specialisterne Ireland and the NCSE Consultative Forum.



## **GARETH NOBLE** (KOD Lyons)

Gareth is recognised as one of Ireland's leading litigators in the area of children with disabilities. He has successfully represented many families with carers allowance, domiciliary carers allowance and services for children in education and early assessment of their needs and service provision. Gareth has provided advice to educational institutions on policy formation and implementation. He is a leading solicitor in child rights and protection cases.



## **AMANDA MCGUINNESS** (Little Puddins)

Amanda is a law graduate; visual supports designer, autism consultant and early intervention educator who is also a mother to four children. Amanda is autistic, as are 3 of her children. She is an experienced webinar presenter and designs bespoke training courses on request. Amanda has also launched a successful online shop for visual supports at [littlepuddins.ie](http://littlepuddins.ie). In 2021 Amanda became an ambassador for Ireland's national Autism charity ASIAM.



## JAMES NORTHRIDGE (UrAbility)

James is the founder of UrAbility and has spent the last 7 years working to improve the experience of people with disabilities through assistive technology. He has dyslexia and ADHD and has personal experience with the challenges that face students. UrAbility specialises in providing assistive technology training to parents, teachers and SNAs with their main aim targeted towards student's success.



## DOLORES CROWLEY / ALLAN CUTHBERT / DAVID CROWLEY (Financial Wellbeing)

When Allan's niece was born with Down syndrome, he realised the many complicated issues parents of children with special needs faced, so he set up Financial Wellbeing in 2008. Dolores joined the company in 2010 after being a Carer for her mum for 30-years and now for her son David. Finally, David joined Financial Wellbeing in 2014 which is a company dedicated to assisting parents of children with additional needs and helping them to financially secure their child's future.



## MARIE BYRNE (Play Therapist)

Marie is an Education Consultant, Teacher/trainer, Child and Adolescent psychotherapist and parent working in South County Wexford. She has significant experience in delivering training and support to parents and education professionals, having worked as an Autism advisor with SESS/NCSE for a number of years. She works directly with autistic children and young people, both as a teacher and as a psychotherapist/play therapist and also supports their parents/carers in understanding and appreciating the perspective of their children. She has a wealth of professional and personal experience of loving, living and working with autistic people and brings a neuro-psychotherapeutic approach to her work in this area.



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