

The Autism Society's Project Unlock PEACE (Providing Equitable Autistic Care Everywhere) focuses on providing correctional healthcare professionals, administrators, and officers with the resources to better serve the Autistic and Intellectual and Developmental Disability community.

Through targeted training, the project aims to improve physical and mental health outcomes through Autism and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities education, providing support strategies, and effective behavioral interventions. **This project was developed in collaboration with our North Carolina Advocates, whose insights and lived experiences were instrumental in shaping its direction.**



Sam Brandsen

Sam Brandsen completed his PhD in physics at Duke University with a focus on quantum information theory. Towards the end of his PhD, he became intensely interested in Autism research and currently spends much of his time thinking about quality of life and access to healthcare for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Sam currently works with several different research teams at Duke University, UNC TEACCH, UCLA, and elsewhere on a variety of research projects and initiatives focused on Autistic quality of life. More generally, he is eager to continue learning about the experiences of other Autistic individuals. Sam is Autistic himself and also has a wonderful Autistic child.



Cierra Cobb

Cierra Cobb is the Executive Director of I Kare NC and a passionate advocate for justice, equity, and systemic reform, with a focus on incarcerated youth, especially those with disabilities and mental health challenges. Drawing from lived experience, she works to dismantle dehumanizing practices in jails and prisons and promote fair, humane treatment for all. Through grassroots efforts, Cierra leads initiatives to divert youth from incarceration, champion restorative justice, and hold systems accountable. Her mission is clear: to replace cages with care and fear with opportunity.



Cynthia Tate Gibson

Cindy Tate-Gibson is a music therapist and educator working in private practice and higher education. Through both clinical and personal experience, she developed a dedication to working with neurodivergent individuals. This background has been instrumental for Cindy in her role as an advocate for incarcerated individuals, starting with her wrongfully-convicted Autistic husband. By sharing this experience with her husband and seeing through his eyes, Cindy has come to understand support, advocacy, and change is needed in order to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities who are incarcerated.



Zachary Tackett

Zach Tackett, PharmD, is a clinical pharmacist specializing in telehealth for chronic disease management and medication optimization. He has broad experience in ambulatory and acute care, serving patients across the lifespan, including those with Autism and other neurodevelopmental disabilities. Zach is also the co-founder and Executive Director of the Autism Innocence Project, a national effort supporting Autistic individuals in the criminal legal system. As an Autistic professional, he brings both lived and clinical expertise to his work advancing equity in healthcare and justice.

To learn more about Project Unlock PEACE

Visit: AutismSociety.org/Autism-Justice-Center

To learn more about the Autism Society

Visit: Autismsociety.org

Questions? Peace@autismsociety.org

