

## **Autism Society of America and LRIDD announce the release of FAQ for Public Defenders**

**April 13, 2023** — The Autism Society of America, the nation's oldest and largest grassroots Autism organization has partnered with Legal Reform for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (LRIDD), a nationwide non-profit dedicated to decriminalizing developmental disabilities, to produce a Public Defenders Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) brochure, to assist defense attorneys representing clients with Autism.

People with developmental disabilities (DD), including Autism, are grossly overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Less than one percent of the U.S. adult population has a developmental disability but represents between two and ten percent of people in jails, prisons, or awaiting trial. Juvenile offenders with Autism and other developmental disabilities are also overrepresented in the juvenile legal system. In order to ensure effective representation, full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, and full and equal access to the criminal legal system, attorneys must be aware of the differing needs of people with Autism and other individuals with developmental disabilities.

In this first collaboration, the Autism Society and LRIDD have created a guide for public defenders that answers many common questions that attorneys must consider in providing effective representation. This brochure provides a broad range of answers to such issues as identifying a disability in a client, ensuring the provision of reasonable accommodations by all governmental entities, and tips for effective communication with a client.

A copy of the brochure, Public Defenders FAQs, can be downloaded at no cost from [this webpage](#).

Professionals, families, and people with disabilities are encouraged to avail themselves of this brochure and should contact the Autism Society at 1 (800) 328-8476 or [info@autism-society.org](mailto:info@autism-society.org), or LRIDD for more information.

### **ABOUT LRIDD**

LRIDD is the country's leading organization dedicated to criminal legal reform for developmentally disabled individuals. We do this by:

- Educating stakeholders in the criminal legal system, as well as lawmakers in reforming and changing laws.
- Advocating for education, de-escalation, and diversion when behavior due to developmental disabilities is criminalized in the criminal legal system.

- Advocating through every stage of the criminal legal process for providing appropriate accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

For more information, go to [www.lridd.org](http://www.lridd.org).

## ABOUT Autism Society of America

The Autism Society's mission is to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully. As the nation's oldest leading grassroots Autism organization, the Autism Society and its approximately 70+ local affiliates serve over half a million members of the Autism community each year. It envisions a world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it – including education, advocacy efforts, and supports and services throughout the lifespan. During Autism Acceptance Month, the Autism Society has a goal to fundraise \$350,000 to expand acceptance in practice for the Autism community. For more information, go to [www.autismsociety.org](http://www.autismsociety.org), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).