Neurodivergent News

FROM NeuroHub Connect

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FRONT PAGE · COMMUNITY

US report finds autistic-led groups are fast becoming a bigger part of adult autism services

A US charity's review of 527 grant applications found that applications from autistic-led groups rose 662% in four years. It also found long waiting lists and growing money worries among services for autistic adults.

Neurodivergent News desk, edited by David Gray · AI-written · AI fact-checked

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More of the groups asking for money to support autistic adults in the US are now autistic-led, according to a new report from the charity NEXT for AUTISM. The same report says demand for support is growing faster than providers can meet it.

The 2026 State of Adult Autism Services report was published on 20 November. NEXT for AUTISM is a New York-based nonprofit that funds programmes for autistic adults. The report is based on the 527 applications it received in its 2026 grants round. They came from organisations in 46 US states and two US territories and asked for $5.9 million in total.

Autistic-led applications up 662%

The biggest change was in who is applying. Applications from autistic-led projects rose from 26 in 2022 to 198 in 2026, an increase of 662%. That means about 38% of this year's applications came from autistic-led projects. The charity counts a project as autistic-led when it has "active and continuous involvement from an autistic employee of the organization".

Many of these groups are younger and smaller than other applicants. The full report says the typical autistic-led applicant was founded in 2023, four years later than other community-based groups. NEXT warns that being so new makes them more exposed to funding cuts and more reliant on short-term project

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money. It says funders need to invest in helping these groups build up their organisations.

Their proposals focused on changing systems, career mentoring, starting businesses, paid arts work and changing how employers work. Autistic people were also involved in projects that weren't autistic-led. Among those projects, 75% said they consulted autistic adults through surveys, listening sessions or focus groups. Half gave autistic adults advisory or co-design roles.

Long waits and stretched budgets

The report also describes a sector under pressure. Applicants reported 47,720 people on active waiting lists. Waits were most often three to six months, but some were longer than two years. The longest waits were often for residential support and behavioural health services. Eight in ten applicants said demand had gone up. Only 19% described access to services in their area as adequate and stable.

In 2026, 77% of applicants reported at least one kind of financial strain or disruption, up from 45% in 2025. Government funding cuts were the disruption reported most often. The report adds a caveat: this year's application form included new questions about running conditions. So the rise reflects both a harder funding climate and a more sensitive way of measuring it.

Staffing is another problem. More than one in five applicants had no full-time paid staff. Among groups that said staffing was holding them back, 71% said direct support professionals were the hardest to recruit. These are the paid workers who give people day-to-day support.

The 'services cliff'

The charity asked applicants which unmet needs funders should watch most closely. The most common answer was the "services cliff", meaning the sudden loss of structured support when school-based services end. One Virginia-based organisation quoted in the report said services for adults, especially people with higher support needs, "fall off a cliff after they graduate from school".

Work and employment projects made up the largest share of the money requested, at 36%. Social and community projects came next at 32%.

What the numbers can and can't tell us

The report is open about its limits. It describes the organisations that applied for NEXT's grants and is not a nationally representative picture of all adult autism services. Organisations reported their own figures. The report says waiting-list totals should be read as a sign of scale rather than an exact count of separate people. The report covers the US only.

NEXT says it will keep funding work in four areas of adult life: home, work, social life and health. In its conclusion, it describes the applications it saw as showing "not resignation, but invention" from the people closest to the need.

This piece summarises reporting by NEXT for AUTISM. Read the original articles for the full story.

SOURCES

2026 State of Adult Autism Services: A NEXT for AUTISM Strategic Report (NEXT for AUTISM)
nextforautism.org/updates/2026-state-of-adult-autism-services-report

2026 State of Adult Autism Services: A NEXT for AUTISM Strategic Report (full report PDF) (NEXT for AUTISM)
nextforautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/NEXT-for-AUTISM_2026-State-of-Adult-Autism-Services-Report_final_.pdf

This article online

FAMILIES

Florida mother asks how her autistic son left school without staff noticing

A US local TV report says an autistic 17-year-old in a Florida school autism programme left school unnoticed. His mother says she found him alone about two miles away. The story raises questions about how schools keep autistic pupils safe.

Neurodivergent News desk, edited by David Gray · AI-written · AI fact-checked

A mother in Palm Beach County, Florida, is asking for answers after she says her autistic 17-year-old son walked off his high school campus without staff noticing. She says she later found him walking alone along a road about two miles from the school. The account comes from a report by CBS12, which was republished by NBC24.

We are not naming the young person or his family.

What the mother says happened

The mother told CBS12 that her son is in his final year of school and is enrolled in the School District of Palm Beach County's autism programme, where he gets support throughout the school day.

She says that on the morning of Friday 13 November 2026, school staff phoned to say they could not find him. She left home straight away and drove around looking for him herself. According to her account, she found him a few minutes later, walking alone about two miles from the school.

She then went back to the school and recorded conversations with school officials and police officers. CBS12 reports that in one of these recordings she can be heard expressing frustration at what she believes was a failure to supervise him properly.

Questions about the timeline

The mother says she later learned her son may have been missing for longer than she first thought. According to her account, school officials told her he was last seen on security camera footage at 9:18am. She says the school started a "Code Yellow" alert at about 9:45am, but she was not told until 10:16am.

She says officials told her their cameras did not show him leaving, and that they believe he went out through an open bus gate.

She told CBS12 she has met the head teacher and is working with school leaders on steps to improve safety. But she still wants to know how it happened.

> *"I still want to know how it happens, so it doesn't happen to somebody else, right?"*

What the school district says

The school district would not discuss the details. It said a US federal student privacy law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), stops it commenting on an individual pupil. In a statement given to CBS12, district communications chief Sean Cooley said the safety of students is the district's "highest priority".

The mother says the family has made a report to school police. CBS12 does not say what happens next with that report, and none of the mother's account has been tested by any official investigation that we know of.

Why it matters

Many families of autistic young people who need a lot of support rely on schools to know where their child is throughout the day. This story is one family's account, and the school has not given its side because of privacy rules. Even so, it raises questions that families everywhere ask: how specialist programmes supervise

pupils, how quickly parents are told when a child can't be found, and what changes after something goes wrong.

This piece summarises reporting by CBS12, republished by NBC24. Read the original report for the full story.

SOURCES

Mother demands answers after teen with autism leaves high school unnoticed (NBC24 / CBS12 (Sinclair))
nbc24.com/news/nation-world/mother-demands-answers-after-teen-with-autism-leaves-high-school-unnoticed-florida-news-local-news

This article online

FROM NEUROHUB · OUR OWN CONTENT

From NeuroHub: ‘Symphrenic time’ and why the kitchen clock doesn’t match lived time

A new post on NeuroHub’s blog The Wider Existence explores how autistic attention and experiences of psychosis can reshape the sense of time, and proposes the idea of ‘symphrenic time’.

This is NeuroHub’s own blog post, from The Wider Existence. We wrote this summary; the original is linked in the Sources box.

NeuroHub's own blog, The Wider Existence, has published a new essay about the gap between clock time and the time people actually live. The post, credited to Helen Edgar and David Gray-Hammond, carries a content note because it discusses psychosis, distress and burnout.

Time that follows attention

The writer describes time that has "never felt linear", spiralling and stretching until the edges of the day are lost, then folding three hours into what feels like ten minutes. They link this to monotropism, the idea that autistic attention tends to go deeply into a few channels rather than spreading across many. Deep focus can make time melt away, while a looping worry can make it feel endless.

The post calls the strain of moving between clock time and felt time a "double temporality problem", borrowing from Milton's 2012 idea of the double empathy problem. The writer says that constant translation is quiet but exhausting.

Philosophy, starlight and psychosis

The essay draws on thinkers including Henri Bergson, who contrasted measured time with lived time, and Gilles Deleuze. It uses starlight as an image of the past reaching into the present.

The writer also speaks openly about perceiving the world in ways others say aren't real, when time can turn "kaleidoscopic". They are clear they don't want to romanticise this, noting that not knowing whether it is day or night can be truly frightening.

A new word

The post sets out the concept of symphrenia, which the writer and David Gray-Hammond have been proposing as an alternative framing to the language of a "split mind". It describes a deeply connected bodymind that thinks and feels with the world. From this comes "symphrenic time", pictured as tangled spirals of past, present and future.

The writer places this alongside other ideas, including crip time (Alison Kafer, Ellen Samuels), mad time (Aimee Sinclair), spiral time in neuroqueer creative spaces, and their own writing on "water time". They suggest that honouring all these ways of living time could change things "at whatever pace it needed", and say community does much of the work of holding them.

A free bonus podcast episode on the same theme is available on The Wider Existence. The post also points readers to support: in the UK, Samaritans are free to call any time on 116 123, and the Hearing Voices

Network and Mind offer information and peer support.

This is a From NeuroHub piece: an AI-written summary of our own content. Read the original: scan the QR code in the Sources box.

SOURCES

Symphrenic Time: Spirals, Starlight and the Clock on the Kitchen Wall (The Wider Existence)
thewiderexistence.co.uk/p/symphrenic-time-spirals-starlight

Read the original

This article online

FROM NEUROHUB · OUR OWN CONTENT

From NeuroHub: Re-Storying Autism relaunched, with a meet-the-authors webinar now on YouTube

NeuroHub's Autism Theory channel has posted a webinar introducing the relaunched Re-Storying Autism framework, now two books and a video course for Autistic people, families and practitioners.

This is NeuroHub's own video, from Autism Theory. We wrote this summary; the original is linked in the Sources box.

NeuroHub's own YouTube channel, NeuroHub Connect, has published a video introducing the relaunched Re-Storying Autism framework. It features the authors, David Gray-Hammond and Helen Edgar. This is NeuroHub's own content, not independent news, and this summary is based only on the video's public title and description.

The video went up on 20 November 2026. Its description presents it as a free one-hour webinar for meeting the authors, seeing what has changed and asking questions in a live Q&A.

What Re-Storying Autism is about

The description says that for generations autism has been explained to Autistic people: diagnosed, measured and managed. Re-Storying Autism sets out to start somewhere different. It invites Autistic people, and the families, carers and practitioners around them, to put aside inherited stories about autism and build understanding together. The focus is on relationships and environments, not on fixing or changing anyone.

What's new in the relaunch

- A new title for a wider audience: Re-Storying Autism: A Framework For Autistic People, Carers and Supporting Practitioners (2027 Edition).
- Two books instead of one: a streamlined 190-page course book and a new Companion Workbook, with full pages of space to write, draw and reflect.
- A more accessible design: it follows the British Dyslexia Association's style guide, with one clear font, more space between lines, clear headings, a simple symbol for each type of reflection, and cream paper to reduce glare.
- A relaunched video course: people can work through it on demand, at their own pace, alongside the books.

What the webinar covers

According to the description, the session covers the story behind the framework and why it was rebuilt. It also covers NeuroHub Community's six-point framework at the heart of the books, and a look inside the course book, workbook and video course. It explains how the reflective questions work for four groups: family members, parents and carers; Autistic children and young people; Autistic adults; and the shared relationship between them.

The books and course explore:

- monotropism, the double empathy problem and Autistic culture
- identity, language and models of disability

- the eight senses, interoception and co-regulation
- Autistic play and interest-led learning
- burnout as a crisis of connection
- trauma, safety and the emotional environment
- learning from Autistic community

Who it's for

The description names four groups:

- Autistic adults looking for an affirming way to make sense of their own experience
- parents, families and carers of Autistic children, young people and adults
- practitioners in education, health, social care and beyond who want to move past deficit-based approaches
- anyone with the 2026 edition who wants to see what's changed

The description also links to the Re-Storying Autism website, NeuroHub's Building a Positive Autistic Identity course, the Horizons Project, NeuroHub Community, and Helen Edgar's Autistic Realms resources.

This is a From NeuroHub piece: an AI-written summary of our own content. Watch the original: scan the QR code in the Sources box.

SOURCES

Restorying Autism: Meet, Greet, And Explore | David Gray-Hammond & Helen Edgar (Autism Theory)
youtube.com/watch?v=iLnGmrM9W_0

Watch the original

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FROM NEUROHUB · OUR OWN CONTENT

Re-Storying Autism relaunches with two books, a more accessible design and a refreshed video course

NeuroHub’s own channel has published a free one-hour webinar about the relaunched Re-Storying Autism course. The new edition is aimed at autistic people, carers and supporting practitioners, with a design that follows dyslexia-friendly guidance.

This is NeuroHub’s own video, from This Week At NeuroHub. We wrote this summary; the original is linked in the Sources box.

This is news from NeuroHub itself. Our own YouTube channel, NeuroHub Connect, has published Restorying Autism | Relaunch Tour, described as a free one-hour webinar about the relaunch of the Re-Storying Autism course. According to the video's description, it is a chance to meet the authors, see what has changed and put questions to them.

What has changed

The course has a new title, chosen to reach a wider audience: Re-Storying Autism: A Framework For Autistic People, Carers and Supporting Practitioners (2027 Edition).

There are now two books instead of one:

- a streamlined course book of 190 pages
- a brand-new Companion Workbook, with full pages of space to write, draw and reflect

A more accessible design

The description says the new edition follows the British Dyslexia Association's style guide. In practice, that means:

- one clear font
- more space between lines
- clear headings
- a simple symbol for each type of reflection
- cream paper to reduce glare

The description presents these choices as part of a

more accessible design for the books.

The video course

The Re-Storying Autism video course has also been relaunched. The description says people can work through the framework on demand, at their own pace, with the books alongside them.

Where to find out more

The video description points to the Re-Storying Autism website as the home of the course and workbook. It also links to other NeuroHub Connect spaces, including The Horizons Project, which brings NeuroHub Connect's work together in one place, and the NeuroHub Community, a place to stay connected with others.

This summary is based only on the video's title and description. It does not cover what was said in the webinar itself.

This is a From NeuroHub piece: an AI-written summary of our own content. Watch the original: scan the QR code in the Sources box.

SOURCES

Restorying Autism | Relaunch Tour (This Week At NeuroHub)
youtube.com/watch?v=hf_NAi_NZi4

Watch the original

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How we make this

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