

Dr. Annika Soderfelt

3:45 - 5:00PM

Not Always Happy: The Mental Health and Wellness of Individuals with Down Syndrome

This presentation will discuss the reality of the mental health and wellness of individuals with Down syndrome including current understandings of diagnoses in the population, the role of sensory and emotional regulation, and the myth of individuals with Down syndrome being always happy. We will learn about how to create sensory diets, perform as co-regulators, and better understand the unique needs of individuals with Down syndrome with their mental health and wellness.



Dr. Annika Soderfelt, OTR/L, is a school based occupational therapist in the San Diego area. She has her bachelors in psychology from Villanova University and doctorate in occupational therapy from the University of St. Augustine. During her doctoral research, she created the non-profit website NotAlwaysHappy.org as a mental health and wellness resource for individuals with Down syndrome and their loved ones. She is passionate about creating increased understanding of and breaking stereotypes about the mental health and wellness of all people, but especially individuals with Down syndrome. Annika has previously spoken regarding mental health and wellness and regulation for both NDSS (National Down Syndrome Society) and NDSC (National Down Syndrome Congress). She is a program lead for multiple age groups at GiGi's Playhouse San Diego and a member of the Down Syndrome Medical Interest Group (DSMIG-usa). Most importantly, Annika is an older sister to a younger brother with Down syndrome who motivates her in all her work within the Down syndrome community.