



Autism Empowerment Neurodivergent Creators Collective 1st Anniversary Workshop Guide

Celebrating 1 year of creativity, connection, and community with the AE-NCC!

Celebrating 15 years of Acceptance, Enrichment, Inspiration, and Empowerment with AE!

Welcome to AE-NCC's Year One highlights!

Since our launch in April 2025, Autism Empowerment and the AE-NCC have offered free workshops, creative conversations, and resources to support autistic and neurodivergent creators in storytelling, writing, filmmaking, podcasting, performance, and advocacy.

This guide accompanies our **April 18th, 2026** workshop presentation and highlights our first year of workshops in chronological order, along with replay and handout links where available. All links were designed to be clickable for your convenience.

Additional creative resources can be found in the [AE-NCC Resource Library](#).

1) Virtual Launch Informational Event



Date: April 26, 2025

Presenters: Gwyn LaRee, Brian Tashima, John Krejcha, and Karen Krejcha

Our original kickoff event introduced the Neurodivergent Creators Collective to the community and invited attendees to connect, learn more, and help shape the future of AE-NCC. This virtual launch helped set the tone for a welcoming, creative, neurodivergent-led space where storytelling, community, and representation matter.

Replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDfxG-cRz6Y>

Related links:

- AE-NCC email sign-up: <https://bit.ly/aenccmailinglist>
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2) Introduction to Filmmaking



Date: **May 24, 2025**

Presenters: **Gwyn LaRee** and **Brian Tashima**

AE-NCC's first full workshop introduced participants to the creative world of filmmaking and offered an encouraging starting point for new and aspiring storytellers. Designed to be accessible and beginner-friendly, the session invited attendees to explore visual storytelling, creative process, and ways to get started bringing ideas to life through film.

Replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9TbSI3wIMg>

Handouts/related resources:

- **Introduction to Filmmaking Slides and Study Guide:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/IntroToFilmmakingStudyGuide.pdf>
 - **Recommended Movies for Creatives:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Recommended-Movies-for-Creatives.pdf>
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3) Introduction to Voice Over & Podcasting



Date: June 22, 2025

Presenters: Gwyn LaRee and Karen Krejcha

This popular hybrid workshop introduced attendees to the worlds of voice over and podcasting, encouraging neurodivergent creators to use their voices with confidence and purpose.

Gwyn LaRee presented Introduction to Voice Over, and Karen Krejcha presented Introduction to Podcasting. Participants explored voice performance, podcast planning, practical warmups, and early steps for getting started behind the mic.

Replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgShz8dueAg&t=6s>

Handouts/related resources:

- **Introduction to Voice Over and Podcasting Slides and Study Guide:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Introduction-to-Voice-Over-Podcasting-3-Slides.pdf>
 - **Actor Resume Basics:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Actor-Resume-Basics.pdf>
 - **EDFC Disability Loop Group video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89wuB5zHCS0>
 - **Sample Profile Tracking:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Sample-Profile-Tracking.pdf>
 - **Podcast Planner and Podcast Resources:**
https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/IntroToPodcastingHandouts_AE_NCC.pdf
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4) Introduction to Independent Writing & Publishing



Date: July 26, 2025

Presenter: Brian Tashima

Brian Tashima shared skills and strategies for writing and publishing independently, drawing from his own journey as an author and creative entrepreneur. This workshop encouraged writers

to take ownership of their stories and better understand what goes into creating work that can stand alongside traditionally published books.

Due to technical difficulties, this workshop was not recorded, but slides and reading resources were made available.

Replay: A live encore performance with Brian Tashima will take place via Zoom on Saturday, June 20, 2026 and will be recorded. Register in advance at our website.

Handouts/related resources:

- **Introduction to Independent Writing and Publishing Slides:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Intro-to-Independent-Writing-and-Publishing.pdf>
 - **Recommended Reading for Writers:**
https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Reading-for-Writers_AE-NCC.pdf
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5) Creating Characters



Date: August 30, 2025

Presenter: Gwyn LaRee

Professional actor, voice over performer, and instructor Gwyn LaRee guided participants through what makes characters interesting, believable, and memorable.

This workshop offered insight for writers, actors, podcasters, filmmakers, animators, and other creatives who want to strengthen the people at the heart of their stories.

Replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJVYgLBLSG8&t=4s>

Handouts/related resources:

- **Creating Characters Slides – 3/page with Study Guide:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Creating-Characters-Presentation-3-to-a-page.pdf>
- **Move Your Mind with Gwyn LaRee: Acting Warm-ups and Character Development:**
https://youtu.be/vBLrnexQC2Q?si=9zTJ_2bNIfGWSGjs

6) Learning Writing and Storytelling from Video Games



Date: September 13, 2025

Presenter: Meg Eden Kuyatt

Award-winning neurodivergent author Meg Eden Kuyatt shared how video games can teach writers powerful lessons about storytelling, especially through environment, objects, and visual cues.

This workshop explored environmental storytelling and encouraged participants to think more broadly about how stories are built across multiple creative mediums.

Replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPSrRSdBMPY>

Handouts/related resources:

- **Environmental Storytelling / Learning Storytelling through Video Games Slides:**
https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/EnvironStorytelling_videogames.pptx
- **Environmental Storytelling Resource Handout:**
https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Environmental-Storytelling-Handout_1pg.docx
- **Gone Home video reference:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS5eQmRqBIY&t=42s>
- **Amazon Trail II video reference:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsx4bNmr42s&t=192s>

7) Storybuilding for Publication and Production (Panel)



Date: October 18, 2025

Panelists: Alexandra Halliburton, Trelanda Lowe, Karen Maseng, and Brian Tashima

This inspiring panel brought together neurodivergent creatives working across writing, filmmaking, illustration, editing, and production.

Attendees heard firsthand about what it takes to bring ideas to life, including the challenges, breakthroughs, and practical realities of moving stories from imagination into public view.

Replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pelg-nOO61E&t=24s>

Handouts/related resources:

- **Storybuilding for Publication & Production Slides:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Storybuilding-Presentation.pdf>

8) Storytelling for Good: Turning Your Story into Purpose



Date: November 15, 2025

Presenters: Karen Krejcha and John Krejcha

In this encouraging and advocacy-centered workshop, Karen and John Krejcha explored how storytelling can be used for leadership, advocacy, healing, growth, and personal empowerment. Using the L.I.G.H.T. Switch Method™, they shared how lived experience and authentic voice can help creators bring hope, change, and deeper connection into the world.

Replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnP9tyEB5a0&t=495s>

Handouts/related resources:

- **Storytelling for Good Workshop Slides:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Storytelling-for-Good-LSM-Slides.pdf>
 - **Storytelling for Good Workshop Slides – 3 to a page:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Storytelling-for-Good-3-slides-to-a-page-for-notes.pdf>
 - **Storytelling for Good – The Light Switch Method™ FAQ Handout:**
<https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Storytelling-for-Good-The-Light-Switch-Method-FAQ.pdf>
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9) Easterseals Disability Film Challenge: Interview with Nic Novicki



Date: **December 13, 2025**

Featured Guest: **Nic Novicki**

Interviewer: **Gwyn LaRee**

This special AE-NCC event featured actor, comedian, producer, and Easterseals Disability Film Challenge founder Nic Novicki.

Attendees learned about the origins and purpose of the Disability Film Challenge, how it creates opportunities for disabled storytellers, and how filmmakers with and without disabilities can get involved in this powerful annual competition.

Replay: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgsTAE0zU_Q&t=5s

Related links/resources:

- **Easterseals Disability Film Challenge website:** <https://disabilityfilmchallenge.com/>
 - **Nic Novicki's website:** <https://www.nicnovicki.com/>
 - **Nic Novicki on Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/nicnovicki2/>
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10) Low-Budget Filmmaking: Lighting and Cinematography Basics



Date: February 21, 2026

Presenter: Edward Martin III

With more than 154 film, writing, and production credits, Edward Martin III shared practical, beginner-friendly guidance for low-budget filmmakers who want to create strong visual storytelling without expensive gear. The workshop explored how lighting shapes mood, guides audience attention, and works together with camera movement and placement to strengthen a scene.

Replay: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvMzgMuJ_RY

Handouts/related resources:

- **Low-Budget Filmmaking: Lighting and Cinematography Basics Slides:**
https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Low-Budget_Filmmaking.pdf
 - **Low-Budget Filmmaking Slides with Speaker Notes:**
https://www.autismempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Low-Budget_Filmmaking_annotated.pdf
 - **Hellbender Media website:** <https://www.hellbendermedia.com/>
 - **Hellbender Media Low-Budget Filmmaking Tips:**
<https://www.hellbendermedia.com/tips/>
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11) Editing a Short Film



Date: March 21, 2026

Presenter: Martin Vavra

Filmmaker Martin Vavra took participants behind the scenes of short film editing and showed how editors shape pacing, mood, performance, and story in post-production. Using a real short film as an example, he discussed organizing footage, syncing audio, building rough cuts, refining scenes, and using tools like J-cuts, L-cuts, room tone, and sound design to strengthen the final product. The workshop also offered encouragement for newer creators learning the art of editing over time.

Replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vdv4X4RSi6I>

Handouts/related resources:

- **DaVinci Resolve 20:** <https://www.blackmagicdesign.com/products/davinciresolve>
 - **Incompetech.com:** <https://incompetech.com/music/royalty-free/music.html>
 - **BreakingCopyright.com:** <https://breakingcopyright.com/>
 - **YouTube Creators:** <https://www.youtube.com/creators/>
 - **Martin Vavra's website, Galaxy Sailor Productions:** <https://www.martinvavra.me/>
 - **Dynamic Film Frame Academy @ Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/dffa.pdx/>
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Other Ways to Connect with AE-NCC

AE-NCC has also offered ongoing ways for neurodivergent creatives to connect and grow beyond workshops, including monthly **Chill & Chat** gatherings, **Creators Corner** articles, educational videos, mentoring, and the AE-NCC online Resource Library.

Chill & Chat

A free, low-key monthly Zoom gathering hosted by AE-NCC Program Lead Brian Tashima. These casual meetups are not recorded, camera use is optional, and guests are welcome to share projects, brainstorm, ask questions, or simply listen in.

Chill & Chat happens the first Saturday of most months. When there are holidays or other AE events, we may do the 2nd Saturday or skip that month.

The Zoom link is the same for each month. No pre-registration required. See website for details.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86095978904>

Upcoming 2026 dates: May 2, June 6, July 11 (due to 4th of July), August TBD, Sept 5

AE-NCC Creator Corner and Feature Articles at Spectrum Life Magazine:

<https://www.spectrumlife.org/blog?q=ae-ncc>

<https://www.spectrumlife.org/currentissue> (for the most current issue)

AE-NCC Resource Library and Learning Hub

Explore free tools, workshop handouts, videos, and inspiration for autistic and neurodivergent creators in acting, voice over, filmmaking, podcasting, writing, and more. This is a work in progress, and we add new resources each quarter.

If you have any local or national or online resources you'd like to add to our library, please let us know!

AE-NCC Resource Library:

<https://www.autismempowerment.org/programs/aencc/ae-ncc-resource-library/>

Stay Connected

- AE-NCC email: <https://bit.ly/aenccemail>
- AE-NCC webpage: <https://www.autismempowerment.org/programs/aencc>
- AE YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/autismempowerment>
- AE-NCC Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/aencc>
- Program Coordinator Brian Tashima: brian@autismempowerment.org
- General Autism Empowerment info: info@autismempowerment.org
- Autism Empowerment website: <https://www.autismempowerment.org>
- Spectrum Life Magazine: <https://www.spectrumlife.org>



or mail a check to “**Autism Empowerment**”

P.O. Box 871676, Vancouver, WA 98687

We are an autistic-led grassroots 501(c)3 nonprofit charity and rely on public support to fund our programs, services, and resources. We truly appreciate your kindness and support!