

00:00:00:09 - 00:00:22:17

Eileen Lamb

Welcome to Adulting on the Spectrum. In this podcast, we want to highlight the real voices of autistic adults, not just inspirational stories, but people like us talking about their day to day life. Basically, we want to give a voice to a variety of autistic people missing limb, an autistic author and photographer, and I co-host this podcast with Andrew Komarow. Hey Andrew.

00:00:22:19 - 00:00:48:09

Andrew Komarow

Hey, Eileen, I'm Andrew. I'm an autistic entrepreneur. We also decided that we would add a warning to this podcast, and instead of a trigger warning or not safe, for work warning, although it can have that sometimes too. Eileen and myself are also very sarcastic, so we try to emphasize that, especially given a lot of the people we have on the podcast.

We just thought that we would add this disclaimer. I don't know if we'll keep doing it. Forgot how it came up. Already got distracted. Anyway, today our guest is Michelle. How do you say your last name again?

00:01:00:23 - 00:01:01:22

Michelle Vinokurov

Vinokourov.

00:01:02:11 - 00:01:31:06

Andrew Komarow

Vinokourov. Was diagnosed with autism at age two. She works full time during the school year at Manatee County as a Special Education Behavioral Specialist. Feel like they shouldn't have special twice in the title, but that's not her fault. On the side, she works for Full Spectrum ABA. As an RBT she provides therapy to her clients. Plus, she works as a blogger for the company and an autistic advocate. She strives to make an impact and enhance the quality of life for Neurodivergent people. Welcome.

00:01:38:22 - 00:01:40:13

Michelle Vinokurov

Thank you for having me on.

00:01:41:13 - 00:01:53:23

Andrew Komarow

Thank you for coming on. So we like to start the podcast by asking every guest how they prefer to identify whether autistic on the spectrum person with autism. Do you have a preference?

00:01:54:19 - 00:01:59:01

Michelle Vinokurov

I don't really. I'm more open.

00:01:59:01 - 00:02:05:08

Andrew Komarow

Okay. I don't care is, I think, our most common answer, although we haven't tallied it up yet.

00:02:05:15 - 00:02:06:12

Eileen Lamb

Yes, we have.

00:02:07:06 - 00:02:09:06

Andrew Komarow

We did. Do we have results?

00:02:09:07 - 00:02:15:03

Eileen Lamb

Yes, I can share that with you after the episode. But number one is no preference.

00:02:15:08 - 00:02:17:08

Andrew Komarow

So by a lot, I'm assuming, Right.

00:02:17:19 - 00:02:28:12

Eileen Lamb

TYeah. And then it's like autistic and with autism about the same. And then some someone with Asperger's

00:02:28:13 - 00:02:32:06

Andrew Komarow

But on the spectrum wasn't higher than like Asperger's, really.

00:02:32:10 - 00:02:37:12

Eileen Lamb

We only got to on the spectrum. I thought we had more too. But yeah.

00:02:37:12 - 00:02:42:17

Andrew Komarow

Oh yeah. I think a lot of people who don't care if they cared said that. That must be why.

00:02:43:06 - 00:02:47:09

Eileen Lamb

Yeah, because it's like the,... Yeah, totally

00:02:47:11 - 00:02:48:24

Andrew Komarow

Yeah. So.

00:02:49:13 - 00:03:04:23

Eileen Lamb

Yeah. So you were diagnosed at a young age. When did you learn you were autistic and what was the, do you know anything about the process? You were diagnosed as a child. Can you tell us about that?

00:03:05:18 - 00:03:50:01

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah. So? So going back, check a little bit. I was actually born in Brooklyn, New York. That's where I came from. And that's where I got my autism diagnosis. So my parents noticed that I wasn't reaching developmental milestones compared to my older sister Samantha. So they were they were really concerned. Like, one is one of the things was that and I had a lot of the classic symptoms of autism when more of like the challenges at a very young age, like, such as not responding to anybody who called my name like that was the first sign that they knew that like they they wanted to get more support for me.

So they went we went through the process of first going to my pediatrician. They said to go to gnarly allergies and because the pediatrician thought that I was deaf. So going to an allergist and they said that I had perfect hearing so that pretty much didn't do anything. So my parents went back to the pediatrician and they said that this is definitely something much more you got to go to neurologists.

So we went to this was around the way I was about two years old. I want my family and took me to a neurologist and stuff. We went through the whole autism evaluation and everything and that's where I found out about my autism diagnosis was through a whole evaluation. And it was it occurred in Downstate Hospital in Brooklyn, New York, and pretty much a lot of it had to do with like interviews and direct observations of me like, such as like I couldn't verbally communicate and lack of my context, imaging, you name it. So that's pretty much where that whole process began. And that's how I got my diagnosis at a very young age. And I did not know like, like self-awareness wise, I didn't know that I was autistic till way later in life. I found out from my parents in sixth grade, even though I was diagnosed early on.

00:05:24:14 - 00:05:52:14

Michelle Vinokurov

But I wasn't exposed really till I was in sixth grade because I was starting to learn that I think differently. I was noticing that like I had some issues with like when it came to making friends and everything, and that's where I felt that was pretty much where, like I noticed that I was, that I did stand out in the way and that's how I found out more so.

00:05:52:14 - 00:06:11:21

Andrew Komarow

And so. Did you find out on your own or did you ask your parents, Why am I not making friends or why do I go to this different classroom for half the day or just, you know, or something? Or did you just figure it out completely independent on your own.

00:06:12:10 - 00:06:32:16

Michelle Vinokurov

On it kind of was more so of my parents like we were. So what happened was that what I, I was telling my parents about how like there was a lot that I was thinking differently of than most people I've known is that. And so, like one day we went to my family friend's house and we were watching the Doctor Temple Grandin documentary.

That's kind of where they like in the way they said that was very similar to Doctor Temple Grandin in some ways. So that's where I kind of got pieces like they didn't tell me directly, but like that's where I kind of learned it.

00:06:47:13 - 00:06:55:11

Andrew Komarow

Was that on purpose? And that was how they were looking to tell you. So yeah, just completely random.

00:06:56:06 - 00:07:00:07

Michelle Vinokurov

No, I think that was the way they were trying to tell me without being direct about it.

00:07:01:06 - 00:07:02:07

Andrew Komarow

Okay.

00:07:02:07 - 00:07:02:18

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah.

00:07:04:12 - 00:07:31:03

Eileen Lamb

You know, that's a that's a good way to do it. So we met with a psychologist therapist to ask for advice on how to tell our youngest, you know who is higher functioning. And he started asking questions. And that's what she said. She said, you know, a great way to do it is like in, like drop hints and see like they can relate and, you know, try and find a way to a you know, for the conversation to come up in a way that's organic and natural.

So yeah, I think they did good with you.

00:07:35:19 - 00:07:45:24

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah, I definitely was. For me when I found that, like it, it actually helped me in regards to now I like helped to far my self awareness.

00:07:47:03 - 00:07:56:02

Andrew Komarow

And now there are more TV shows that are things or movies that you might be able to relate to rather than just Rainman or something about, you know?

00:07:56:02 - 00:07:57:09

Michelle Vinokurov

Oh yeah, absolutely.

00:07:58:01 - 00:08:07:03

Andrew Komarow

So yeah, that that's, that's good. When did you come out as being autistic, you know, publicly and why?

00:08:08:08 - 00:08:47:13

Michelle Vinokurov

So the funny thing is that it actually like public was it wasn't until I was 16 I so pretty much I my dad was sharing with me a story from someone that wrote on for Autism Speaks. And that's where like my dad was kind of encouraging me, like how I should share or finally share my story. Well, for a lot of people, because now that like how much that I've grown in life and everything and like just from my own experiences, that it gives more people insight as to, you know.

So I at the age of 16, I actually did write out a story for Autism Speaks, and I got it at that time. This was I was in my sophomore year of high school, so that's when I had my story shared online, and that's where I shared it more publicly to people. And a and pretty much after that, like, my life changed alot ever since.

00:09:17:12 - 00:09:30:22

Eileen Lamb

Can you tell us about your ABA experience? Did you receive ABA as a child and how come you decided to get in the field of ABA?

00:09:32:12 - 00:10:03:07

Michelle Vinokurov

So ABA Therapy was one of the therapies I received at a young age. I had a mix of other early intervention services thanks to my parents. Like they they wanted to get the supports from me that I needed early on in life. So I, I had ABA therapy, speech therapy, physical, occupationally,

name it. I had a mix of everything and it was for a at first like I had so intense, people would never even like hear of it.

I had it for seven days a week. No one hears about that nowadays, No one. So if you get lucky for anybody that gets that much. But I'm like, it was it was a lot, but it helped for me. And especially with ABA therapy, what really pushed me to pursue in the field today was because of my professional experiences as as a paraprofessional before before I moved up and I'll explain all that.

00:10:34:20 - 00:11:09:09

Michelle Vinokurov

But when I was working as a paraprofessional, right after I graduated from my community college, I went to up in New Jersey that I, I was working in a autism self-contained classroom and they actually implemented a therapy in the public school setting. And I thought that was amazing because now it's all about it's really important to be teaching communication skills, social skills, like all these things that like it's that we often forget to focus about in schools other than just academics.

00:11:09:09 - 00:11:42:01

Michelle Vinokurov

So I it just it really just drove me to go back to college, which I did. Then I went back to college online, went to university. I graduated through Purdue University Global as of last year. So I so ever since then, like I this is what I've gone into now. And even with being in Florida now, my family, I just moved a couple of years ago to Florida and I really been pushing more into the field.

00:11:42:01 - 00:11:48:17

Michelle Vinokurov

So that's why I work with Full Spectrum ABA on the side. So that way I'm providing therapy for clients.

00:11:49:24 - 00:12:11:14

Eileen Lamb

Do you have any thoughts on a self-contained classroom as opposed to, you know, an integrated classroom, like when the child is going to receive like some help and guidance but is in a classroom with, you know, other neurotypical kids?

00:12:12:00 - 00:12:17:09

Andrew Komarow

You could tell Eileen. I think I even saw an eye roll if I was capable of that. Right.

00:12:17:09 - 00:12:18:18

Eileen Lamb

I do. I say that like.

00:12:19:10 - 00:12:26:02

Andrew Komarow

How do I I don't want to say neurotypical, but God damn it, I think I have to look good.

00:12:28:05 - 00:12:56:15

Michelle Vinokurov

It's so good. Oh, man, I don't. I am I am a big a believer in inclusion. Absolutely. And the way that the idea of inclusion is described though it's different for everybody. That's I think that what I've noticed is that there are it is at the end of the day it comes to what's best interest for for the student.

At the end of the day, like there are things that like oh, that they can there's a lot of benefits when it comes to a more inclusive classroom. Absolutely. Like being with having the mixed population and everything. So of course, there's a lot of benefits like being able to pretty much like work together on certain abilities and everything that and and also increasing in strengths.

But also we have to remember that at the end of the day, like, you know, sometimes like and I'll even say this for myself, I, I was in a specialized school back in New Jersey before I even was mainstreaming in the public school setting. So and it's just it's really different for everybody and depends on like what depends on everybody's like skill levels, abilities.

You know. So that's that's where I would go with that.

00:13:54:21 - 00:13:59:02

Andrew Komarow

What works for one person might not work for another, and everything is individualized.

00:13:59:07 - 00:14:03:17

Michelle Vinokurov

Pretty much.

00:14:03:17 - 00:14:18:09

Eileen Lamb

The answer to, you know, a lot of things, just like, you know, one of my kiddos is in a regular classroom and the other is in a self-contained classroom because they have different needs. So I think I completely agree with you.

00:14:18:09 - 00:14:38:12

Andrew Komarow

Can you tell us a bit? I know you said that you were going to talk about it later, so I guess here is a chance, but I promise we were actually going to ask about it anyway, about your experience

with you know, special education. You mentioned starting as a paraprofessional and now it looks like you're doing other things.

So, so many parents also just have trouble getting forward and advocating for the right services. They don't know what questions to ask or even what they feel is right when they're getting it. Eileen you can speak to this, right, You know, just like when you're getting like a good experience or a bad experience or when to know what to ask for, what advice and resources can you give parents other than not to send their kids to school in Florida?

00:15:08:14 - 00:15:33:12

Michelle Vinokurov

So for I would say, it's always important for families to advocate for their child's needs, whatever it be like for any kind of therapy, let's say with speech therapy, like if your child needs it for communication, definitely go for it. Well, I know there. I know. I know. It's like a long time from my experiences with the school district.

How many parents really so afraid to ask for that kind of things. But it's so important too, because at the end of the day, like, parents are the ones who know the child best. Yes, there are teachers and with everybody in the schools that everybody has raised and everybody is a teen, I know there's a lot of fears that parents think of tonight.

Even my own parents do that. They have gone through fears of that, like trying to advocate the schools. But what's important for parents is always to also have documentation. My parents did this growing up for me in my own IEP meetings that they would write down every single day because if something like that, the school goes against them about they have a for their own records.

00:16:16:18 - 00:16:43:08

Michelle Vinokurov

And, you know, so it's important to have that and also getting as much information as you can. And also like it's really is important to find out like if the school has like speech therapy services or if you're allowed to bring in someone from outside into the schools, which I've seen that happen here. As a matter of fact, there are people that are bringing outside like aviate therapists into the school setting.

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Michelle Vinokurov

So, you know, you just have to you really have to keep fighting because this is for your for parents, like this is for your child, you know, So that's I think for me, it's always important for parents to keep fighting. And, you know, when because there are a lot of services out there, there are a lot of resources.

00:17:05:11 - 00:17:12:18

Michelle Vinokurov

Just, you know, don't be afraid to ask, have it all written down. And that's where I would go with that.

00:17:13:15 - 00:17:44:18

Eileen Lamb

Okay. So there are a lot of misconceptions about ABA therapy. I think one that really bothers me is that ABA therapy only cares about spoken language because ABA taught my child to use an AAC device. So it's like the opposite. And before that they even tried PECS which has become controversial sign language. Go talk like it was not just on language.

So I've never really understood where that misconception came from. So what are some of the biggest misconceptions about ABA you can tell us about?

00:17:57:01 - 00:18:28:22

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah, so there I've heard of everything and I've been told this online too, so I and that, especially ever since, like I came out more about with my work with Full Spectrum ABA. So pretty much that yeah, a lot of what people think about is that in terms of what's ABA like thinking that it's teaching like pretty much like robotic language or pretty much does just focus all about with just communication words, not just about that.

There is with ABA therapy, we focus on like the overall individual we're focusing on like not just communication, there's also social, there's also daily living. There's also play. We often forget that there is that we do focus on play too. For example, like I got, I have someone that I've been working with, I've been working on with playing board games with theM and that incorporates like so many naturalistic approaches such as like turn taking and also with like pushing on communication and engaging in social skills.

So there's a lot of mix of approaches being used by just some the common things that are in like a home or school environment and then what's really cool is that it's it is generalized, like whatever you're taking, say, in the home setting, it's brought out into the community, into schools. So I think that a lot is also what I, I can understand that where a lot of people are coming from because of how much that studies that the fields that the field has involved, that it's not you know, it's not crystal clear, perfect.

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Michelle Vinokurov

And I'll be honest, it's not you know, I think about this for every kind of therapy that it's not going to be 100% perfect. It's, again, when it comes to where the overall individual like what Like what fits best for them, what's the best interest for them, You know, so I if I could say for one friend that that it would be good for them to not one.

It might not you know. So again it just comes to the best interests of the individual and again,

with with ABA therapy, that it's it really has evolved over time. Like there are more autistic people out there that not just myself that are in the field like I have even in my work, like we have a whole team and everybody's like, not just providers, but everybody's in different departments within the company.

So it's it's really cool to see even see that, that inclusion aspect to in another department. So I just, you know, it just I know it is mind boggling to still like people get that it gets stuck in like that one part that one misconception and everything. But at the same time you have to look at the whole picture.

00:21:03:24 - 00:21:38:10

Eileen Lamb

Yeah, it's early. And, you know, I think once again, it comes back to the fact that not everything is for everybody. And, you know, and yet what I love about ABA is that it's tailored to the child's needs. So it's not going to be a one size fits all approach. And yeah, maybe for some kids it's not the right therapy, but to just like cancel the entire therapy is it's it's not realistic it's it's helped so many people.

00:21:38:10 - 00:21:45:19

Eileen Lamb

So I don't know why we can just say what you just said. It's for some people it doesn't work for others, you know, and it.

00:21:45:19 - 00:22:22:03

Michelle Vinokurov

It helped me out. It it helped me out big time, along with other therapies. So like, I had the mix of everything. So like, I just, you know, at the end of the day, it's also depends on like the type of therapist that's providing the services. And that's where a lot of the misconceptions come as well is because the like what I've noticed too, that why a lot of companies out there is about quantity when really it should be quality, like the quality of the services that are provided.

And that's how you make such a big difference, you know, and, and also the way of approaching at an individual level, you know, like let the individual take the lead.

00:22:33:00 - 00:23:01:11

Andrew Komarow

And I mean that that's an issue with medical treatment, especially here in America regardless anyway. But I'm going to push back on it. So I do agree that in general, like the parents know their child best. But, you know, I think from a lot of instances, they may not know, you know, autism best. So it would seem to me it would seem like a perfectly natural just, you know, initial reaction for a parent, like when will they speak?

How can they speak? I want them to make eye contact. And I think it's up to the professionals

like you to educate the parents. So are there times you've had to, you know, push back and educate and or just, you know, inform, you know, why certain, you know, expectations, you know, maybe should be changed a little bit.

00:23:27:04 - 00:23:46:23

Michelle Vinokurov

So that's a really good question. I'm actually I know in general here in Florida, like when I was from New Jersey, a lot more. I've noticed that the education wise, it's very different. So like down in Florida, like

00:23:46:23 - 00:23:50:17

Andrew Komarow

Education sucks, sorry Florida.

00:23:50:17 - 00:24:27:15

Michelle Vinokurov

I know, I know. I that's how I feel too. And that's why I like I feel like that's pushing me to do this now because of the fact that like, I want to be able to help like drive the difference of like having the that they go from even just even the awareness part to where advocacy happens, you know, like having people understand that like that with autism is just a wide range of abilities and challenges and, you know, like the way that the curriculum is taught, like it doesn't fit everybody.

00:24:27:15 - 00:24:53:01

Michelle Vinokurov

Like it's just, you know, so I've had to I've had plenty of talks with like, especially with this my full time work with the school district. I work as a behavioral specialist and I've had to talk to a lot of teachers staff about like how that big one thing could work for like most of the class. But why not work for this child. Like you have to be very tailored, like to differentiate like what works for this student.

And, you know, and like, let's say like for a kid that needs to know like where they are, where like for transitioning the places, for example, tell you that that having a student, like knowing where they are, where they're at, all lines, that they that way they're not going to get all like anxious and everything. So things like that, those little things will you have to pick up on that because it makes such a big difference for her to students who drive and everything.

00:25:28:13 - 00:25:34:01

Michelle Vinokurov

So, you know, it's just I have yeah, I've had my battles about that.

00:25:34:23 - 00:26:00:21

Andrew Komarow

So I mean, which is great it it's great that you're there to be able to do that. Yeah. Have you you

know, my, my it sounds like for the most part people are pretty receptive. But you also said battles. So I'm just curious. You know, I yeah, basically. I mean, would you want to tell us about a battle

00:26:02:07 - 00:26:12:02

Michelle Vinokurov

I actually a one good example I will say and I'm not I'm not in the name of these schools nothing because I cannot do that.

00:26:12:09 - 00:26:13:14

Andrew Komarow

But we know there're in Florida.

00:26:13:22 - 00:26:47:21

Michelle Vinokurov

Yes. So I had one school and this was the actually the first day that I started to travel on my own two schools, the very first school I go to. And like there was one teacher that it was during specials and I'll never forget this in me, me fear is inside. I was about to lash out, like lash out at them, but I held it together pretty much that they were not wanting this child to be part of in their classroom during that time.

And I'm like, Are you kidding me?

00:26:51:00 - 00:26:52:01

Andrew Komarow

What was the reason?

00:26:53:13 - 00:27:03:00

Michelle Vinokurov

Pretty much said the reason was being that they that they can't handle the kid. That was the reason. I'm like, are you kidding me?

00:27:03:19 - 00:27:09:18

Eileen Lamb

Now? What does the kid do like...

00:27:09:18 - 00:27:27:08

Michelle Vinokurov

They said that they can't manage their behaviors and everything. I'm like, I'm like, that's part of teaching those. You want to teach them, like teach them that basic. Even the basic, like school readiness is like I was like, Oh my God.

00:27:27:18 - 00:27:32:12

Eileen Lamb

They have to provide the kid with whatever it is that he needs to be successful. I mean.

00:27:33:03 - 00:27:46:08

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah, not only that, like that, it was it felt like to me like denying access to their education. Yeah, that's what was mind blowing to me. I was like, oh, like what the.

00:27:47:04 - 00:27:53:16

Andrew Komarow

But did you, did you win? do you know what happened? Later. Yes, I visit the school later, you know.

00:27:53:16 - 00:28:17:00

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah, I, I actually I went, I told the teacher I said that we're going to have this child being in the classroom because they can't deny access. So I, we, we did work with this in the classroom and stuff and they actually the student handled being in the classroom for most of the period and that was amazing. You know.

00:28:17:01 - 00:28:29:19

Michelle Vinokurov

So it like at first like the teacher just couldn't do it themselves. Like they just kept removing the student, which that's another issue of it's, that's a whole nother thing that. I been working on with that is trying to help decrease with all the removals because it just.

00:28:37:03 - 00:29:01:11

Eileen Lamb

Oh, this is much bigger than Florida, to be honest. I think a lot of states and and again, you know, it's it's hard because we say that, but it's also dependent on the school, it's dependent on the teacher, on the you know, it's dependent on so many things. So we can just like lump everybody in. So I'm like, look, you're you're in Florida and seems like you're doing great. So I don't want to say it's Florida fault, but.

00:29:05:22 - 00:29:26:18

Michelle Vinokurov

No, no, I you know, it's just that there's there are things that I've noticed that like just they just it just needs catching up on. That's how I think about it. Like to catch up with like other places, you know, once everybody is is up on the same page, then, you know, I think it would be to leads to more advocacy You know.

00:29:26:18 - 00:29:37:08

Andrew Komarow

So do you think advocacy is just misdirected and that instead of fighting each other, we should all be educating all the teachers in Florida because we're pretty much all on the same page about that.

00:29:38:10 - 00:30:07:23

Michelle Vinokurov

That's pretty much where I'm heading to about Yeah, pretty much where like, that's pretty much where I'm heading to about that. I am I like I joined I actually just became a behavior specialist earlier this year. I got I got the job literally like a month after graduation. So it was a big deal for me and like being and being the first on my team that's autistic.

So that's I just, I really hope to just continue to make an impact with the schools and everything.

00:30:16:08 - 00:30:46:10

Eileen Lamb

I feel like we keep going back and forth between ABA and the school because you have these two great experiences. But as being autistic helped you in in any way and forum in your job as RBT, was there a moment when it was helpful where you noticed something and you were able to like, intervene and relate to your clients in ABA?

00:30:48:09 - 00:31:16:17

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah. So I've had moments a lot of times I was able to redirect through special interests like I had. I had lost my one of my clients, like I was able to redirect them through their interests of Tom and Jerry because they loved Tom and Jerry. So I yeah, when, when things were going off task, like I was redirecting them through, through the use of Tom and Jerry, and that's how I got them back on track with doing what we were doing.

So it just, you know, it just, it's different for everybody how redirection is used. So like for me it worked in that case of using their special interests. So it depends on their own individual cases.

00:31:32:21 - 00:31:51:00

Eileen Lamb

So Tom and Jerry, seems so funny to me, I mean, I love it, but it's like it reminds me of my childhood. And so it's funny that, you know, those I don't know how that kiddo came across Tom and Jerry probably parents because it is not like on Netflix or YouTube or maybe it is.

00:31:51:05 - 00:31:55:08

Andrew Komarow

People do still do cable. Eileen, like there are some people.

00:31:58:00 - 00:32:03:00

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah, because this kid's the youngest so they got older siblings.

00:32:03:04 - 00:32:19:08

Andrew Komarow

So now we understand that you're not as famous a blogger as Eileen, but you do do some blogging. And where can we find you on social media and anything that you would like to promote or talk about?

00:32:19:23 - 00:32:49:02

Michelle Vinokurov

Oh, yeah, absolutely. So I run a blog website called The World of Autism. It does go under my professional brand name on my social media accounts known as Exceptional Shell. My user tag name is at @selfadvocateMV and I been running that since. I'll tell this. I've been running it since 2019. After I graduated from my community college, my English professor was the one that pushed me to do that.

00:32:49:08 - 00:33:06:21

Michelle Vinokurov

And so I still think to this day and I my blog website, if you go on Google it so you can type in the world of autism, you also can type in Exceptional Shell and it comes up like either way. And that's how .

00:33:06:21 - 00:33:19:13

Andrew Komarow

Yes, I have. I have actually seen your posts and things and that name like ring a bell And so yes. Now I've actually I've right here stuff before. I just didn't put it together with you. No name but yes.

00:33:20:04 - 00:33:21:18

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah, that's me.

00:33:23:03 - 00:33:41:13

Eileen Lamb

We're going to ask you some quickfire questions and by we, I mean I'm going to do it. So how it works is that I asked you a question and you tell me the first thing that comes to your mind. Okay, So what is your favorite food?

00:33:42:12 - 00:33:43:02

Michelle Vinokurov

Pizza.

00:33:44:12 - 00:33:51:21

Andrew Komarow

Plain, pepperoni, cheese, stuffed crust or just pizza?

00:33:51:21 - 00:33:54:17

Michelle Vinokurov

Stuffed crust plain. Yeah.

00:33:56:06 - 00:33:56:20

Eileen Lamb

Pineapple?

00:33:57:24 - 00:34:00:12

Andrew Komarow

Eileen, stop this.

00:34:00:12 - 00:34:02:08

Michelle Vinokurov

I don't like pineapple.

00:34:03:09 - 00:34:11:20

Speaker 1

What's your favorite representation of autism in the media. So like in a TV show, in a book, You know, a movie.

00:34:13:17 - 00:34:23:08

Michelle Vinokurov

That I would be dad for Temple Grandin. I did meet her in person back in 2019 when I was still living in New Jersey at the time. Is amazing.

00:34:24:05 - 00:34:49:11

Eileen Lamb

You know that's really amazing how she like because she's old. She came on our podcast actually, but she's like reaching all generations. You know, it's it's truly amazing how many people look up to her, you know, to obviously know the first time. So I hope that when I'm old, I have young people looking up to me. It's heartwarming.

00:34:49:11 - 00:34:51:14

Eileen Lamb

Okay. Well, who is your

00:34:51:14 - 00:34:59:14

Andrew Komarow

You're not very tall, so that might be a challenge. Get it? Ha ha ha. Funny.

00:34:59:14 - 00:35:02:22

Eileen Lamb

Who is your favorite actress?

00:35:04:17 - 00:35:09:24

Michelle Vinokurov

Oh, my favorite actress?

00:35:10:00 - 00:35:13:02

Eileen Lamb

Or actor, we don't want to be, you know.

00:35:13:02 - 00:35:16:23

Michelle Vinokurov

Actually, I would say more. Favorite actor, Freddie Highmore.

00:35:17:17 - 00:35:26:05

Eileen Lamb

Oh, is that The Good Doctor? I wish we had asked you, do you watch The Good Doctor? I assume you do.

00:35:27:16 - 00:35:50:02

Michelle Vinokurov

He so like it's interesting how his twist though how he portrays of autism because it's like you know not everybody is like that and which is important to know so but he does in a way like in sound like in a lot of ways he does do a great job though I will say.

00:35:51:06 - 00:36:09:15

Eileen Lamb

Did you see that controversial episode where I mean, I'm sure you have with when you kept repeating, I'm a surgeon, I'm a surgeon. That scene, what what did you think of it? Yeah.

00:36:09:23 - 00:36:47:06

Michelle Vinokurov

I've heard I had, like, mixed feelings. I had a mix with all long, like, of just like, were I repeating it in regards to how like echolalia, I feel like for me, growing up, like, I, I did have echolalia at somepoint. This was after like I, while I was learning the verbally communicate, which by the way, I don't say my first word until I was six years old and I didn't for verbally communicating sentences until I was ten.

And so a part of me developing speech was with echolalia and I that scene, you know, I was like, I can mix about it like the way that it was approach. Like either, you know, like, like the way that it was approached of like the it's hard for me to say right now.

00:37:19:24 - 00:37:20:24

Andrew Komarow

Dramatized

00:37:21:12 - 00:37:26:15

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah, I would say that. I definitely would say that.

00:37:26:15 - 00:37:27:09

Andrew Komarow

Mm Yeah.

00:37:27:10 - 00:37:54:08

Eileen Lamb

Yeah. You know, I never saw about that scene from echolalia point of view. To me it was more about like the meltdown and that's what was relatable to me was like, you know, I'm always like, you know, I hold myself pretty well. I'm able to, you know, have a job and all of that. But I can get very reactive in a way. And like, I feel like if I'm in a situation like the situation you was put in, then I'm a surgeon. But you know what I mean.

00:38:01:20 - 00:38:02:01

Michelle Vinokurov

Yeah.

00:38:03:09 - 00:38:26:17

Eileen Lamb

I would have the same reaction. You know, it's happened to me at school. It's happened to me like at work. And I can relate to that, you know, like just because 99% of the time I have, like, myself together and all of that doesn't mean I can't have a meltdown like that where, like, you know, it's not the right thing to do, but it's you're so emotionally, you know, that you can't mask, you can't keep it together.

00:38:27:00 - 00:38:28:14

Michelle Vinokurov

And yeah, I've had that too. I can relate to. Yeah. And that's where like Yeah. And that sense, Yes, that's where I can relate to about that. And I've, I've had those moments myself actually ever since, like in my, in my position and everything, going from a paraprofessional, being a behavior specialist, like it's a big job. So like having the moments like that, like I've had moments

like that I did and you know, like I, I can't for me like I can't always mask like that's just, that is like for me, like, for me in general, like when it comes to masking, it's hard for me to do that.

Eileen Lamb

Yeah, I think a lot of autistic people it's funny that, you know, a lot of autistic people didn't relate or so that was offensive because I feel like that's so relatable, you know? I mean, you can argue the acting if you want, but the scene itself is I mean, it was so on point, especially for someone who's high functioning. If you don't see I'm doing quotes because I'm using a functioning label. So, yeah, I really, I really like that that scene. Not that anybody else, but no, you know, So last question. What's your favorite color?

00:39:46:03 - 00:39:50:03

Michelle Vinokurov

My favorite color is blue. That's a calming color to me.

00:39:51:13 - 00:40:15:21

Eileen Lamb

Well its the color of autism speaks. Well, actually, you know, now we have the spectrum. So, Gretchen, from blue to pink. I shouldn't have said that. Okay, well, it was so great having you, Michelle. And I'm a I'm glad you were able to come on and circle questions about ABA and share your tips about, you know, the school system and all of that.

00:40:15:21 - 00:40:16:20

Andrew Komarow

I thought you said insure your tits

00:40:25:04 - 00:40:26:19

Eileen Lamb

Is my accent that bad.

00:40:30:19 - 00:40:33:22

Andrew Komarow

Im just in rare form today. I don't know what's wrong with me that sense of it.

00:40:33:22 - 00:40:39:12

Eileen Lamb

I have to make sure I didn't sound like that. Thanks, Andrew. Thank you again. And yeah.

00:40:40:11 - 00:40:40:24

Andrew Komarow

Thank you.

00:40:41:08 - 00:40:42:15

Michelle Vinokurov

You didn't. Thank you.

00:40:43:10 - 00:40:44:05

Andrew Komarow

Bye bye. Bye.