



## Bio: Guy Stephens

Guy Stephens is a passionate advocate and a nationally recognized expert on restraint and seclusion. In 2019, Guy founded the Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint (AASR). AASR is a highly respected national nonprofit organization and a community of over 30,000 parents, caregivers, self-advocates, teachers, paraprofessionals, school administrators, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, counselors, school psychologists, attorneys, and others working together to influence change in supporting children whose behaviors are often misunderstood. AASR's mission is to inform changes in policy and practice to reduce and eliminate the use of punitive and exclusionary discipline and outdated behavioral management approaches and end the school-to-prison pipeline. The vision of AASR is safer schools for students, teachers, and staff.

In 2022, Guy Stephens and the Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint partnered with the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). The partnership focused on accelerating progress on the shared goal of eliminating seclusion and reducing physical restraints in schools nationwide. Through this partnership, Guy contributed to the development of a new training program called Reframing Behavior. Reframing Behavior is a new schoolwide training program that unpacks the latest neuroscience research to help all educators build a more positive, supportive learning environment and prevent disruptive behavior.

Guy promotes trauma-informed, neuroscience-aligned, neurodiversity-affirming, relationship-driven, and collaborative approaches to working with children. He has presented at conferences and events across North America and regularly speaks as a guest lecturer for undergraduate and graduate courses. Frequently, Guy is cited in news and media coverage related to restraint, seclusion, suspension, expulsion, corporal punishment, and other forms of punitive and exclusionary discipline.

Guy has served on the board of directors for The Arc of Maryland since 2020 and is currently the board president. Guy also serves on the board of directors for PDA North



America, where he supports the mission of spreading awareness of PDA to parents, individuals, educators, and therapists throughout the US and Canada. Guy is an active member of the Alliance to Prevent Restraint, Aversive Interventions, and Seclusion (APRAIS). Guy is the host of the AASR Live podcast, a biweekly video podcast that started in 2020. Guy has provided testimony in states across the nation in support of legislation aimed at reducing the use of physical restraint and eliminating the practice of seclusion. In 2022, Guy spoke to the House Committee on Education and Labor of Congress in support of the Keeping All Students Safe Act.

Guy lives in Southern Maryland with his wife and two amazing children. His journey in advocacy began as a parent, advocating for appropriate accommodations and supports for his neurodivergent son. In 2018, Guy completed the Parents' Place of Maryland's LEADers training, a parent leadership program to develop leadership skills among parents of children with disabilities and special healthcare needs. In 2019, Guy completed the Maryland Coalition of Families Family Leadership Institute (FLI), a 60-hour intensive training program for parents and caregivers of school-age children with mental health needs. In 2021, Guy had the opportunity to complete a Beyond Behaviors Masterclass with Dr. Mona Delahooke. In 2022, Guy completed Foundations in Self-Reg from The Mehrit Center and Life Spaces Crisis Intervention training. In 2023, Guy completed The Polyvagal Certificate Course from The Polyvagal Institute.

Guy believes that we can do better for all children and adults; if we can, we must. Guy understands that we must embrace neurodiversity and neuroscience to create safe and inclusive environments and ensure equal rights and opportunities for all.