

EMBRACING YOUR LIMITATIONS AS A NEURODIVERGENT AFRO AMERICAN

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Grand Rising,

I am honored to have the opportunity as a guest writer to share my story during Black History Month! My name is Michele Abraham-Montgomery, formally known as Chele pronounced Shell), and I am the She/EO and co-founder of Spectrum Success 911 along with my son, Khyllil Robinson. Why is this important, you might ask. To answer your question, my son is 32 years old and is diagnosed with autism. I



Now, let's get back to embracing your limitations because that was not a cliffhanger or a misprinted title. Yes, Khyllil learned how to not only embrace his limitations as a neurodivergent man he also learned how to highlight his abilities. How did he do that you asked? Thank you for asking because I would love to tell you! Khyllil graduated from GAMP (Girard Academy Music Program) He graduated with a 3.7 GPA (grade point average), played six instruments and took statistics at Community College (CCP) in the 10th grade. Khyllil graduated from CCP and went on to major in Communication and Public Speaking at Temple University for 3 years.

Currently, Khyllil has been working for the last five years for the Mayor's Office and the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS) as a Community Autism Peer Specialist! Together, we have provided programming for youth and young adults living on the spectrum along with their siblings and family members since 2017.



After realizing there were no support groups for black and brown families living on the spectrum in SW Philly, Spectrum Success 911 began running support groups at Community Behavioral Health (CBH) twice a week to educate, empower, and provide support. Spectrum Success 911 was known for being a safe space without shame, blame, or judgment!

Now comes the best part, I call it putting the icing on the cake! If you have made it this far, I have a smile on my face, and you definitely made my heart smile. Spectrum Success 911 has grown multiple branches since we started our support group! We could not have done it without community partners or as some refer to their support persons, life supports. Having reliable support is as important as having a heartbeat to live. Getting and receiving mental health services is as important as taking cough syrup when you are sick. Most importantly (drum roll) taking your medication as instructed and showing up for your appointments is the key to unlock well-being.

Especially if we are going to change the narrative of passing down inappropriate behaviors and practices in black and brown communities that have been repeated for generations and centuries! Thank you for allowing me to borrow your time and sharing a few gems with you. I hope you found some that you can use and if not at this moment, put them in your pocket for later. 😊