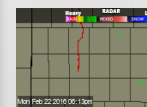


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UCLA helping college students with autism

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By **Karin McCay** [CONNECT](#)

LUBBOCK, TX (KCBD) - Look what UCLA is doing, not to treat autism, but include it.

They've incorporated a 16 week class for college students with autism or other challenges to help them improve on social skills and one on one communication.

Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson says, "From there we talk about things like peer entry and exiting, and that's just going up to people and starting conversations or joining conversations." Dr. Laugeson is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the UCLA. She is also the founder of what is known as PEERS. It stands for "Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills."

Joey Juarez took the class as a graduate student at UCLA, since he was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. He says the program has helped him in many ways, "initiating and maintaining a conversation. Planning get togethers. The do's and don'ts of a get together depending on whether it's like a friendly casual get together or like dating."

The PEERS program has grown to include more than just college students.

The program has been adapted to help with social skills in adolescence and even among pre-schoolers.

For more information, go to www.semel.ucla.edu/peers

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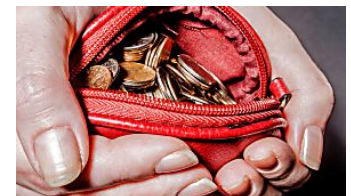
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