

**Alison Singer, President, Autism Science Foundation**  
**MIND Institute Distinguished Lecturer Series – February 14, 2018**

**Biographical Information**

Alison Singer is Co-Founder and President of the Autism Science Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to funding innovative autism research and supporting the needs of people with autism. As the mother of a 20-year-old daughter with autism and legal guardian of her older brother with autism, she is a natural advocate. Since 2007, Singer has served on the federal Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC), which is charged with writing an annual strategic plan to guide federal spending for autism research. She serves on the executive boards of the Yale Child Study Center, the Seaver Autism Center at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, the Marcus Autism Center at Emory University, and the University of North Carolina Autism Research Center, as well as on the external advisory board of the CDC's Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, the New York State Immunization Advisory Committee, and the Simons Foundation SPARK advisory board. In 2012, the American Academy of Pediatrics named her an "autism champion." Singer serves on the board of directors of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR) and chairs the INSAR Communications Committee. Prior to founding the Autism Science Foundation in 2009, she served as executive vice president of Autism Speaks and as a vice president at NBC. She graduated magna cum laude from Yale University with a B.A. in Economics and has an MBA from Harvard Business School. In her free time, she enjoys kickboxing, cross-fit, and judging high school debate tournaments.

**Presentation Abstract**

Ms. Singer will discuss how, although options and opportunities for people with autism are still severely lacking, there have been tremendous advances in awareness, diagnosis, treatment, and services since autism was first identified. Individuals with autism today have gained important rights and protections. Alison Singer knows this firsthand – both her adult brother (diagnosed in the 1960's) and her young adult daughter (diagnosed in 2000) have autism and have had dramatically different experiences. Ms. Singer will focus on how families' experiences with autism have changed from the 1960's to the present. Alison will describe the different cultural climate her older brother faced when he was diagnosed compared to her daughter's experience of being diagnosed decades later. Over the past fifty years individuals with autism have gained important rights and protections, but these improvements can quickly erode without continued family advocacy.