The Conference Pre-Education Committee is excited to present our Book Club Selection *The Reason I Jump* by Naoki Higashida. This book explores life through the eyes of a 13-year-old boy with autism and is presented as responses to a series of questions. The author writes in his foreword:

“I wrote this book in the hope that it will help you understand how painful it is when you can’t express yourself to the people you love. If this story connects with your heart in some way, then I believe you’ll be able to connect back to the hearts of people with autism too.”

Delve into this book and discuss your thoughts with a small (or large) group of your colleagues/peers/friends

- What insights did you gain in reading Higashida’s book? What, if any, of your assumptions about autism were challenged in this reading?
- Higashida’s hope was that his story would “connect with your heart in some way.” What connections were made for you in reading this book and how might it impact your ability to “connect back” with current and/or future clients?

In her Ted Talk, *I’m not your inspiration, thank you very much*, Stella Young notes:

“And life as a disabled person is actually somewhat difficult. We do overcome some things. But the things that we’re overcoming are not the things that you think they are. They are not things to do with our bodies. I use the term ‘disabled people’ quite deliberately, because I subscribe to what’s called the social model of disability, which tells us that we are more disabled by the society that we live in than by our bodies and our diagnoses.”

In what ways might drama therapeutic processes perpetuate the social barriers that Young is speaking to? In what ways are drama therapeutic processes equipped to bring awareness and healing to the social barriers that Young is speaking to?

Send us your questions, thoughts and reflections after reading this book. **We want to host your Book Club’s reflections on our blog.** Feel free to send your reflection(s) in creative form: a poem, short story, image, picture or any other expression.

We look forward to hearing from you!!

*Please note: all book club submissions will be posted to the conference blog pending approval.*

Suggested Readings for additional study:

*Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger’s* by John Elder Robison
*An Unquiet Mind* by Kay Redfield Jamison
*The Center Cannot Hold* by Elyn R. Saks
*My Age of Anxiety* by Scott Stossel
*Brain on Fire* by Susannah Cahalan

Also, check out the full Ted Talk by Stella Young titled “I’m not your inspiration, thank you very much”: [http://www.ted.com/talks/stella_young_i_m_not_your_inspiration_thank_you_very_much?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/stella_young_i_m_not_your_inspiration_thank_you_very_much?language=en)