

## Research Posters

**Arwen Caines, Audra Osgood, & Katie Staden**

*Reducing Restraint Use and Increasing Quality of Life*

A Society for Treatment of Autism resident came to live at the facility demonstrating significant self-injurious behaviours (SIB); which had been managed utilizing physical and mechanical restraints. Multidisciplinary programming strove to reduce restraint use, while also reducing SIB. Approaches focused on reducing the size and the duration of the support needed through behavioural and sensory-based approaches. In doing so, the team was able to increase the client's engagement in daily activities (e.g., school, self-care, extra-curricular) thus helping to improve quality of life through occupational engagement, engagement in pre-vocational, vocational, community activities, increased independence, and have more positive interactions with family.

**Rakhee Chowdury & Carrie Mazoff**

*Worktopia in Quebec: The Journey Towards Sustainable Employment of an EmploymentWorks Graduate*

Worktopia is a national project aimed to improve the employment futures of youth with ASD. In 2017 and 2018, one of the Worktopia initiatives, Employment Works Canada (EWC), was offered by the Miriam Foundation in Montreal with the goal of providing workplace training to youth with ASD. While the program supports participants with their tailored goals over 12 weeks, it is the employment ecosystem, namely the individual's supported network of resources, that contributes to successful employment. In this poster, we will present the impact story of an EWC graduate, by highlighting all of the collaborative efforts made to ensure his success upon his entry into the job market.

**Virigine Cobigo, Casey Fulford, Sophia Hrycko, John McLennan**

*Identifying Service Patterns for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders Through Service Use Mapping*

Children and youth with autism spectrum disorders and their families often require interventions and services from multiple agencies and sectors over time. However, examining such service use and associated service problems is hampered by the lack of tools to identify complex patterns, such as cross-sector service use. Our research project entails constructing visual maps of service use, based on parent interviews, to capture longitudinal, cross-sector service use to help identify and illustrate service patterns and problems. The resulting information may be helpful in informing initiatives to improve the service system. Examples of these maps and associated findings will be presented.

**Adelina Cozma & Adam McCrimmon**

*Living Without Adequate Community Mental Health Supports: The Experiences of Parents of Post-Secondary Students with Autism and Co-occurring Mental Health Challenges*



The purpose of this study is to conduct a qualitative inquiry of parental perspectives on the experiences of post-secondary students with ASD and co-occurring mental health challenges while accessing or trying to access mental health services and/or informal mental health supports in Alberta. Knowledge to be disseminated from this study will contribute a qualitative inquiry on the characteristics and effectiveness of mental health care delivery systems compared to other kinds of informal mental health supports. The study highlights the need for a broader environmental scan of supports that can further inform critical gaps in funding and policies.

**Melissa Fernandez, Maria Brown, Ingrid E. Sladeczek, Shari Joseph, & Calliope Simianakis**

*CRDI-TED Miriam: Professional Services and Research with Montréal Families of Children with Autism and/or Intellectual Disability*

The present poster will provide an overview of the Centre de réadaptation en déficience intellectuelle et en troubles envahissants du développement (CRDI-TED Miriam) and the professional and research services offered to Montréal families with pre-school and school-age children with autism and/or intellectual disability. Conference attendees will learn about the rich history that shaped Miriam Home for the Exceptional to present day CRDI-TED Miriam. Moreover, the type of behavioral consultation intervention services used will be outlined and further explored in the context of an ongoing research project currently in place with McGill University and the McGill Centre for Research on Children and Families. Consultation interventions are known to be effective, time efficient, and structured approaches to problem solving used to optimize the quality of life for children and adolescents (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2007). While there is a large body of research demonstrating the efficacy of behavioral consultation and conjoint behavioral consultation within school settings, there has been limited research and behavioural data from home and community settings (Bellinger, Lee, Jamison, & Reese, 2016). As such, our study looks to expand the research literature and inform clinical practice on conjoint behavioral consultation by assessing parent perceptions and satisfaction with services and child outcomes on broad areas of functioning (e.g., communication, self-help, gross and fine motor skills, play development, sexuality, social skills, cognitive skills, and maladaptive behaviors).

**Caroline Jose, Patricia George-Zwicker, & Aaron Bouma**

*Innovative Dissemination of Research Findings by Autistic Adults*

From the very beginning, the CONNECT project (CONtiNuity of carE and services for autistiC adultS) proved to be a tremendous co-learning adventure between researchers and autistic self-advocates. The research data collected on the health and socio-economic status of this overlooked population is worrying and needs to be promoted among the public, service providers and decision-makers in order to improve the well-being of the autistic community. This poster will present how autistic adults and researchers co-created a video to disseminate the project findings as widely as possible, and how the involvement of self-advocates was essential in reaching the right target audiences.

**Andrea Rodgers & Adam McCrimmon**

*Emotional Intelligence and Social Skills in adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder*



Social connectedness and belonging are vital during adolescence when the desire to connect with others is increasingly strong. Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) present with social impairments that increase their risk for mental illness, poor academic achievement, and peer victimization (Laugeson & Park, 2014). A potential underlying mechanism contributing to social impairment in adolescents with ASD is Emotional Intelligence (EI; McCrimmon, Climie, & Huynh, 2017). This project aims to explore if EI is improved in adolescents with ASD upon completion of the Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills. Preventing social isolation and enhancing social development are critical for teens with ASD. Examining social skills and EI may advance our knowledge of important factors that contribute to social emotional development in this unique population.

### **Jenna Simpson**

*Beyond Respite: What Adolescents with Neurobiological Disorders have Learned at Summer Camp*

This study engaged a group of high needs adolescents with neurobiological disorders to explore what attending summer camp means to them. The teens were provided with digital cameras and asked to capture what summer camp means to them. The results were an in-depth exploration about what the teens had learned at summer camp. The participants discussed the value of skill mastery and learning social skills while at camp. They also talked about growing up and the role that summer camp had played on their personal lives. Their rich descriptions support summer camps as meaningful beyond just respite for caregivers.

### **Emmanuela Tedone**

*Advancing Teaching and Clinical Practices for Children with Visual Challenges and Autism Spectrum Disorder*

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often rely on their visual sense to understand and relate to their surroundings (Notbohm, 2012). When children with an ASD present with a visual challenge, it is suggested that current teaching and clinical approaches be adapted and revised to meet the children's needs (Verdier et al., 2017). Such practices include the use of tactile symbols (Aasen & Naerland, 2014a), tactile schedules (Aasen & Naerland, 2014b), and songs in storytelling (Thompson & Abel, 2018). These aforementioned practices help foster children's agency, speech and language skills, and social-emotional development (Aasen & Naerland, 2014a, 2014b; Notbohm, 2012; Thompson & Abel, 2018).

### **Karen Turner, Lucyna Lach, & Patrick McGrath**

*Parents Empowering Neurodiverse Kids: Strongest Families Neurodevelopmental*

Researchers partnered with parents to adapt an online parenting program to the needs of families of children with neurodisabilities who also face challenging behaviours. Combining educational modules with group coaching and Parent-to Parent support, "Parents Empowering Neurodiverse Kids" is the latest in a suite of Strongest Families programs designed to provide parents with skills to help manage challenging behaviours and holds promise to improve quality of life for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families. This poster introduces the Parents Empowering Neurodiverse Kids program and let you know how you can take part or refer others to the study.



**Corey Walker**

*Inclusive Job Seekers: What Every Employer & Service Provider Should Know*

This poster provides valuable strategies to job coaches, other service providers and employers on how to promote and encourage inclusive job seeking, hiring and employment. The poster will cover the following topics: 1. Inclusive hiring & interviewing, 2. Workplace accommodations & communication, 3. Disability Awareness & Sensitivity Training and 4. The role of the job coach. The information in this poster will be derived from two sources: 1. My own first person experience as an autistic adult, and 2. From various national resources from RWA.

## **Organization Posters**

**Bri Adamson & Anaïk Maesele**

*Autism Aspergers Friendship Society of Calgary (AAFS).*

Nothing is worse than sitting just out of reach. On the outside looking in. Seeing the door but being unable to walk through.

AAFS offers social-recreational programs to families, doing a great job of servicing Calgary. However, we noticed a gap. Countless families in need of support, live in areas surrounding Calgary. They were seeing the social support offered in the city that they couldn't reach themselves. AAFS decided to come to them. We spent the past year developing Rural AAFS; bringing AAFS' community of C.A.R.E. to those families living just outside of the support that urban centres offer.

**Emilio Frometa**

*The Autism Mentorship Program*

The Autism Mentorship Program (AMP) is a Not-For-Profit Organization that pairs student-athletes with local youth who have ASD. In addition to the pairings, the AMP partners with local community and sporting organizations to create ASD accessible sporting events for families. Through weekly meetings, the children gain the opportunity to improve their social abilities and develop their motor skills. The AMP is a resource for families that aids in their child's course of development through a safe, positive, and constructive relationship with trained post-secondary student-athletes who are invested in their lives. This poster will outline the AMP's existing work in Kingston, and the plans for the program's growth into Ottawa. Check us out online at [www.autismmentorship.com](http://www.autismmentorship.com)

**Nathalie Garcin, Richard Kerkhoven, & Hayley Vininsky**

*Clinique Spectrum: Integrated Neurodevelopmental Consultation Services*

Clinique Spectrum's mission is to offer optimal, innovative, well-coordinated, and evidence-based approaches to treatment and management of neurodevelopmental disorders. We work as an integrated team of professionals including psychology, psychiatry, behaviour analysis, speech and language therapy,



nutrition, and sexual education. We work with families and caregivers to create integrated plans for care, in both the natural environment (home, daycare or school) and in our clinic.

**Patricia George-Zwicker**

*Autistics Aloud, LifeSpans Canada*

Autistics Aloud is a grassroots publication that began as a newsletter and transitioned to a magazine with a mandate to highlight and support the experiences of Canadians on the Autism Spectrum entirely from a first-person perspective. We are embarking on a unique project known as Lifespans. Our poster aims to take the viewer on a visual journey starting with the history of the publication, how we evolved, and where we are going next! We will share visuals of past submissions, explanations for who we are, and what we hope Autistics Aloud Lifespans can achieve for autistic Canadians and our communities.

**Lise-Marie Gravel**

*Écosystème d'Autisme sans Limites*

Notre affiche représente notre mission, notre projet et nos activités.

1. Elle décrit d'abord notre clientèle et les membres de nos groupes;
2. Elle met en évidence les enjeux majeurs pour les adultes autistes de haut niveau de fonctionnement (Asperger);
3. Elle fait la liste de nos programmes et milieux, ainsi que de nos partenaires principaux et illustre par des photos;
4. Elle explique notre projet, c'est-à-dire le modèle de services que nous avons créé pour les jeunes adultes autistes de haut niveau de fonctionnement et que nous sommes en train d'implanter à Montréal.

**Jessica Kondor**

*The Quest for Independence Program*

The poster in question would be for some of the services that are targeted to adults including the Quest for Independence program, where we build on skills for adults with autism so they are able to become more independent in their lives in whatever areas they want to target. It would also indicate research that we are doing to find resources and services that can help adult individuals with autism spectrum disorder who are in the workforce and need more help or resources in order to talk about autism in the workplace or help them succeed in their respective jobs.

**Shane Lynch & Katelyn Lowe**

*Becoming An Adult: Improving The Transition To Adulthood For Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorder*

Launch + Skills is an innovative program for individuals with autism transitioning from high school to adulthood. Located in Calgary, Alberta, the 6-month program offers participants one-to-one skills coaching on a bi-weekly basis to learn the necessary skills needed for increased readiness for employment, post-secondary education, or living independently. Six workshops are offered to teach



core readiness skills. Participants attend weekly café-style meet ups with other participants to build their social networks. Discussion will include an overview of key goal areas associated with improved transitions. Emerging data will be provided on the outcomes of current participants.

**Jillian McDonald, Barbara Potter, & Tanya McLeod**

*Worktopia Project, Sinneave Family Foundation*

A summary of the Worktopia Project and the sustainability of related programs - including relevant information on programs including CommunityWorks Canada, EmploymentWorks Canada and SchoolWorks Canada. It would also provide an overview of the shift to policy/system change through the Worktopia Employment Network.

**Keelin McKiernan & Joanne Welcher**

*Collaborative Employment Pathways for Individuals across the Spectrum*

It is estimated that there are currently 46,000 adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Alberta. These often complex individuals are widely under-employed or under-represented across the workforce. Society for Treatment of Autism, with funding through the Community Initiative Project, has developed distinct pathways for individuals to be successful in competitive employment or work placement positions. Each person, based on their strengths, barriers to success, and levels of support required, was categorized into a particular pathway in an effort to provide appropriate supports. This poster will focus on the employment pathways and the supports required to facilitate successful employment.

**Rae Morris & David Nicholas**

*Autism and Intellectual Disability National Resource and Exchange Network (AIDE)/ Réseau d'échange et de ressources nationales sur l'autisme et les déficiences intellectuelles (AIDE)*

AIDE is a wide-reaching initiative starting with information and support to individuals with autism and intellectual disability, and their families. Information and support consist of credible, up-to-date information and emotional support via a peer network and tangible resources. AIDE will offer curated information, including information about treatment approaches, formal and informal supports, and other resources.

AIDE est une initiative d'envergure qui commence par l'information et le soutien aux personnes atteintes d'autisme ou ayant une déficience intellectuelle, et leur famille. L'information et le soutien se composent de renseignements crédible et actualisés ainsi que de soutien émotionnel par l'entremise d'un réseau de pairs et de ressources tangibles. AIDE offrira des renseignements choisis, notamment sur les méthodes de traitement, les formes de soutien formel et informel ainsi que d'autres ressources.

**Daniel Reinhardt & Kevin Reinhardt**

*Not "Just ASD", Assessment & Treatment, Teens, Young Adults, Older Adults, Men, and Women*

Our Assessment and Treatment Service is focused on Older Teens, Adults, Males, Females, experiencing possible ASD, LD, Executive Function/ADHD difficulties along with co-occurring psycho-social issues,



anxiety, depression, OCD, personality disorder, etc. We provide Comprehensive assessment services addressing the often ignored fact that the person is not dealing with “JUST” ASD. We have a particular treatment bias for CBT and associated social skills training programs like PEERS for Teens or Young Adults. Located in Newmarket Ontario (1 hour northbound on GO from Toronto Union Station). We will travel to provide assessment services if necessary (especially Atlantic Provinces). Contact us at PsychologyService.ca

**Alana Riordan**

*WAVE Ottawa*

When in the “real world,” life, social, and job-related skills are extremely important. Some of these skills are tackled in school but many times people graduate unprepared for this transition. Learn about delivering unique and quality-based programming in a community setting. The goal: promote autonomy for adults with ASD and with other DDs through transferable skills training, volunteer experiences, and recreation opportunities so they may reach their own unique level of independence. Focus on advocating for clients, believing in and fostering each of their unique abilities, and using evidence-based methods to deliver programming in a community-based setting.

**Fabienne Samson**

*Transforming Autism Care Consortium*

Autism researchers in Quebec were challenged to break down silos and unite their expertise in the hope of improving quality of life for autistic individuals and their families. The Transforming Autism Care Consortium connects more than 50 researchers and 300 clinicians, students and research personnel from 7 universities and 5 university health centers and has three main objectives: 1) Build a pipeline to create a database of genetic, cellular, brain, and behavioral data in 1,000 families, 2) Building capacity by offering training and funding opportunities, and 3) Connect researchers, clinicians, community and government to integrate knowledge in practice and policy.

**Michael Stolte**

*A Service Provider’s 10-year Journey of Adopting Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) in a Community Setting*

Autism spectrum disorder impacts 1 in 66 individuals. Despite availability of evidence-based practices (EBP) such as pivotal response treatment (PRT), adoption of these practices is low in community due to many systemic barriers. The Centre for Autism Services Alberta, a large service provider in Western Canada, has been providing pivotal response therapy (PRT), an EBP, since 2007. PRT is a naturalistic developmental behavioral model of practice with established protocols for evaluating fidelity. A program description of PRT will be provided, including the long-distance training model delivered by the Koegel Autism Center and the adapted training model currently being implemented by the Centre. Summary effectiveness data, as well as adoption mechanisms, will inform other providers on how to improve EBP in community settings.



**Dean Svoboda**

*magAAFSzine*

Our poster will showcase the MagAAFSzine; an online magazine that, as one writer puts it, "gives us a voice in other communities and gives other communities an insight in to ours." Each issue is filled with creative writing, comics, art and articles on varying topics. It is a quarterly publication made possible by the talents, passions, creativity and vision of members of AAFS. The MagAAFSzine is developed, edited, written and published through AAFS Journalism Program and is in partnership with Mount Royal University and can be viewed here, [bitly.com/magaafszone](http://bitly.com/magaafszone)

**Dan Ten Veen**

*Spectrum Productions*

Our poster centers around the progress of our model forging pathways into media, along with a challenge to incorporate simple storytelling tools into each organization. We of course are working to develop tools to replicate our model in easy ways, and highlight some accomplished creators in our studio.

**Rebecca Wattman & Carmen Hall**

*Skills4Life: ABA day program for adults in the community*

Skills4Life is a unique pilot day program focusing on life-long learning for adults with ASD and other significant developmental disabilities that began in September 2017. It is person-centred approach that applies Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) principles for individuals to meet their goals in employment, post-secondary education, recreation, and increasing independence. The poster will feature the development of an adult-centred program in a 3:1 format for learning new skills while individuals participate in their home and community. Research completed, in partnership with Fanshawe College, showed high parent and participant satisfaction and the development of new skills for life-long learning.

**Bruno Wicker & Martine Kurtzweg**

*auticonsult*

auticonsult est une entreprise internationale de services du numérique et la première entreprise au Québec à employer spécifiquement des personnes sur le spectre de l'autisme/syndrome d'Asperger en tant que consultant en informatique. Nous sommes fiers de développer une culture professionnelle valorisant l'autisme/syndrome d'Asperger, de reconnaître chacun de nos collègues pour ses forces et talents individuels, et d'offrir des prestations d'excellent niveau à nos clients. Ce poster décrit de manière détaillée notre mode de fonctionnement et les services que nous apportons à nos employés TSA.