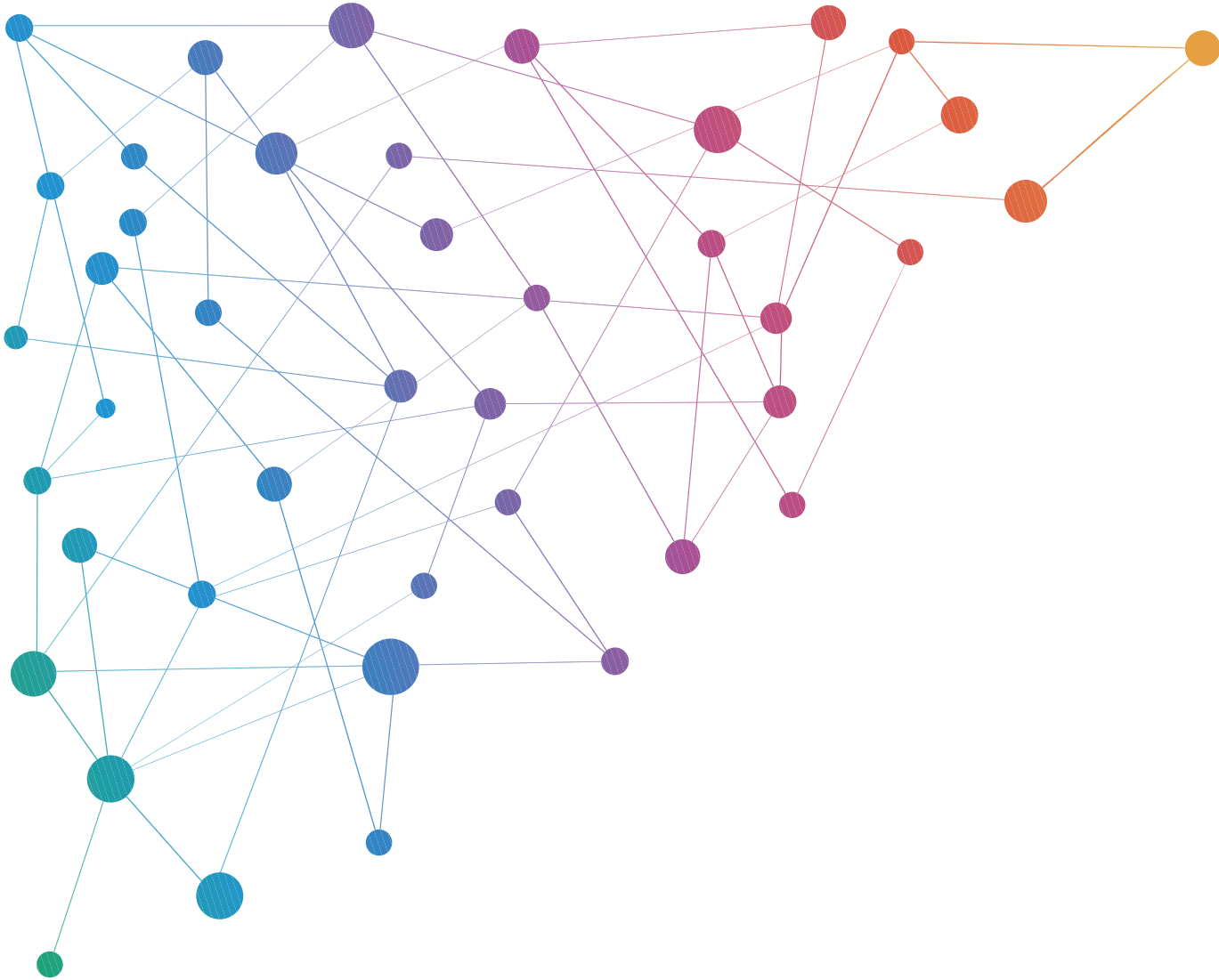




# The Chair in Autism Treatment and Care Research

**SUMMARY REPORT • 2012-2017**



## Table of Contents

<b>2</b>	Executive Summary
<b>4</b>	Research Projects
<b>9</b>	Knowledge Mobilization
<b>9</b>	Publications
<b>17</b>	Technical Reports
<b>17</b>	Conference Presentations & Posters
<b>19</b>	Presentations & Workshops for Non-Academic Audiences
<b>21</b>	YorkSpace
<b>21</b>	The ASD Mental Health Blog
<b>23</b>	TEDxYorkUSalon
<b>25</b>	Teaching & Training

# The Chair in ASD Treatment & Care Research

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chair in Autism Spectrum Disorders Treatment and Care Research is dedicated to studying ways to improve the mental health and well-being of people with ASD and their families in Canada. It is a unique research position that aims to work with stakeholders including people with ASD, their families, services providers, and governmental bodies, to:

- Translate research to inform stakeholders about mental health and ASD;
- Study ways of addressing mental health problems in people with ASD;
- Provide support to the next generation of Canadian ASD researchers and clinicians

Announced in November 2012 as a 5-year commitment, the Chair is funded by the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research](#) in partnership with [Autism Speaks Canada](#), the [Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance](#), [Health Canada](#), [Kids Brain Health Network \(formerly NeuroDevNet\)](#) and the [Sinneave Family Foundation](#). Additional funds from [York University](#). By nature of this partnership, the position was characterized by tremendous opportunity to work with and learn from multiple perspectives. The Chair is set to end in September 2017, and the following report is a summary of all the accomplishments and activities to date over the course of the award.

From the beginning, stakeholder advisory meetings were held with a broad community to inform research directions and collaborative impactful research. A number of recommendations emerged: 1) Focus on research areas related to mental health treatment of those with ASD, including studying the effectiveness of existing community interventions, and identifying and developing treatment; 2) engage individuals with ASD, their families, and service providers in the research process through media, social media, electronic communication, working with service providers, and by putting families first; 3) Present research outcomes in ways that are accessible to non-academics - using multimedia, plain language summaries, social media, and in-person presentations. In addition to these directions, the Chair had a mandate to foster the next generation of researchers in the area of treatment and care. Stakeholders asked that research make sure to explore needs

and service use across the life course, intervention programs, and the impact of community living for people with ASD. They hoped that the Chair would encourage partnerships among agencies to improve integration of services, connect with rural and smaller communities, and promote and develop Canada-wide collaborations. You can read more about the meetings on the [ASD Mental Health Blog](#).

Over the course of the Chair, we made excellent progress. We initiated or collaborated on 15 projects, including with the Toronto Catholic District School Board, Special Olympics Ontario, the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance, the Geneva Centre for Autism, Autism Ontario and Integrated Autism Consulting, and Conestoga College. The last years of the Chair have focused on consolidating our research investments in knowledge translation and capacity building. We continue to conduct research that results in meaningful, impactful outcomes for people living with ASD and their families. Our treatment studies have led to 93 children, adolescents and young adults receiving free psychological therapy for mental health difficulties, to 22 graduate students in clinical psychology trained to provide mental health care to people with ASD, and informed service planning at the provincial and national level. Because of the backbone support from the Chair and further support from Kids Brain Health Network, we have also successfully received an operating grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to expand our treatment trial to reach even more children and continue well beyond when the Chair funding ends.

We have shared the knowledge produced through our work in many ways, communicating ASD and mental health research to academic and non-academic audiences alike. Dr. Weiss authored 48 peer reviewed publications based on work funded by the Chair (with others in press), of which 24 are available free to the public through YorkSpace – York University's Open Access Repository. The Chair funded the work of 107 poster/paper presentations at 36 scientific conferences, and provided 47 lectures/workshops on ASD and mental health to community organizations. Five postdoctoral fellows, 12 graduate students and 11 undergraduate students were supported with funding from the Chair at different points in time.

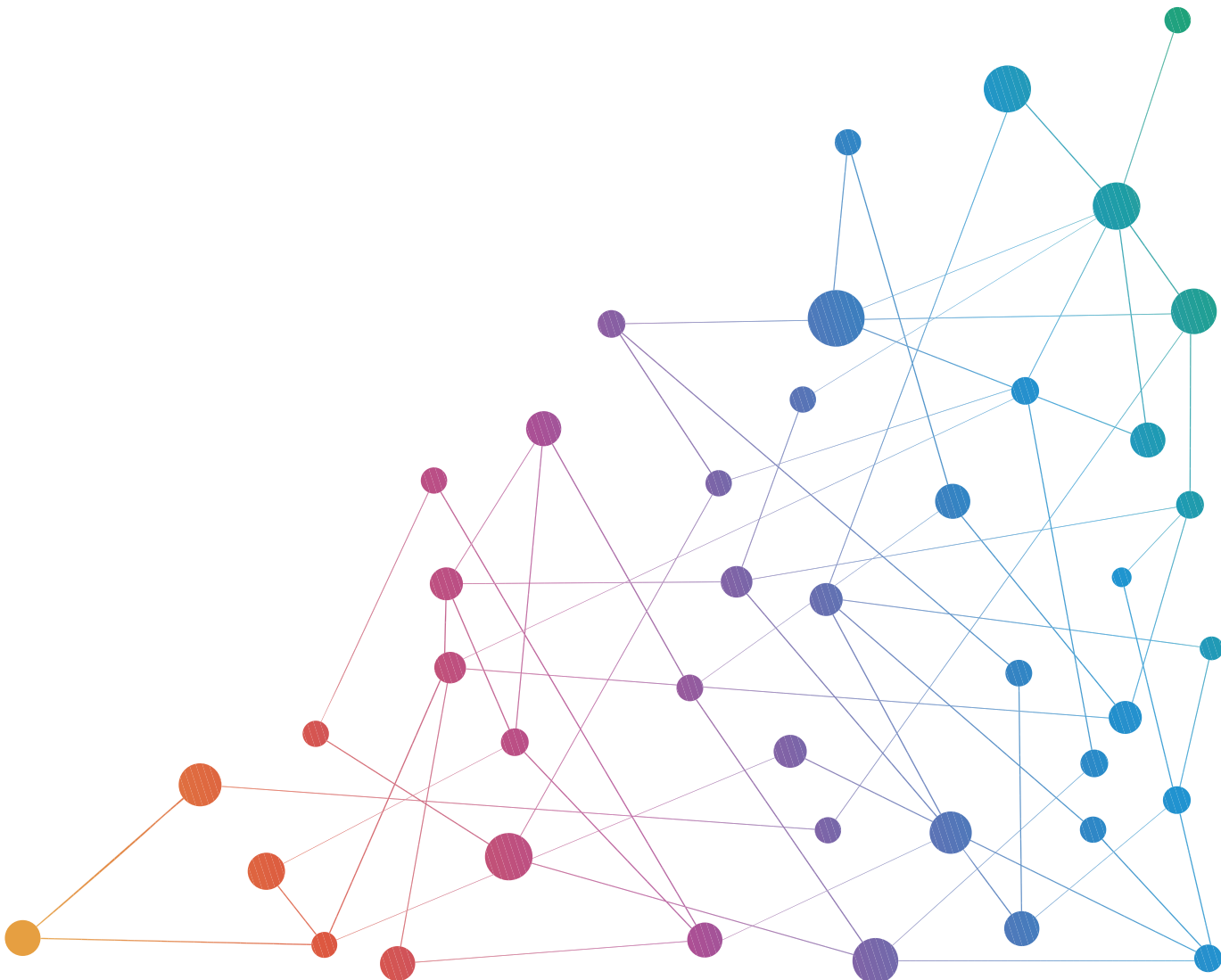
Beyond Chair related studies, we conducted innovative knowledge translation activities to improve access to mental health-related research. Our ASD Mental Health Blog created and posted 82 lay summaries of scientific studies, 20 editorials, 20 news articles, and 13 videos - all focused on ASD and mental health. We expanded our reach through social media (Facebook and Twitter; sharing evidence-based resources multiple times daily). We involved 11 undergraduate and 7 graduate students from multiple universities across Ontario as authors on the blog, increasing their learning and experiences with knowledge translation. Further, we hosted two widely applauded TEDx events focused on ASD (with total views for our talks reaching over 100,000 and counting). Our TEDxYorkUSalon Events also led to an important side effect: They served to galvanize conversations among stakeholders around research and practice, energizing the community in a new way and serving to re-engage them in a constructive relationship with the research process.

I would like to thank the many partners who show such strong support for the program and the stakeholder groups who are involved in our ongoing efforts to conduct meaningful and impactful health-related research. As always, at the heart of this research program are Canadians with ASD and their families. We create reports like this one to make sure we are answering to them; providing a summary of the research, stakeholder engagement, knowledge translation, and teaching and training activities. It has been an honour to hold this inaugural Chair in ASD Treatment and Care Research.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jonathan Weiss, Ph.D., C. Psych  
Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychology  
York University



# RESEARCH PROJECTS

## **The SPY-ID Project: Sport Participation in Youth with Intellectual Disabilities**

Funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada & Department of Canadian Heritage (Sport Canada) and Special Olympics Ontario

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Jonathan Weiss

**Co-applicants:** Dr. Jessica Fraser-Thomas, Dr. Robert Balogh, Dr. Yona Lunskey, Dr. Jean Cote (collaborator), Mr. Tom Davies

Youth with intellectual disabilities struggle to access typical recreational activities, and are less likely than typically developing peers to get involved in community sports or to be physically active. In 2013, the Chair began a partnership with Special Olympics Ontario to identify factors that lead to involvement and retention in sport for youth with intellectual disabilities, by having Special Olympics athletes' caregivers complete an online survey. Approximately one third of these young athletes had a diagnosis of ASD. In 2014, we travelled to different parts of Ontario, and interviewed 58 of these athletes to understand how they feel about themselves, about others, and about doing different types of activities. We followed up with all the families to see who has continued to participate and examined the factors that relate to athlete retention. These findings were submitted to three high-profile research conferences (two national and one international research conferences). This research involved many graduate students and have led to 5 peer reviewed publications, with others in development. In 2016, we completed all data collection, and have provided constructive feedback to Special Olympics on ways of improving programming for participants. Dr. Weiss also participated in a sport participation panel, alongside fellow researchers, policy makers and service providers, to discuss the importance of sport for youth with ASD and other developmental disabilities. In addition to Chair support, this work is funded in part by Sport Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

## **Secret Agent Society: Operation Regulation - An Emotion Regulation Intervention for Youth with ASD**

Youth with ASD often experience emotional difficulties like anxiety, depression, or anger, which can be related to difficulties with regulating their emotions when faced with stressful situations. The Secret Agent Society - Operation Regulation program, developed by Dr. Renae Beaumont, is a cognitive behavioural program to help youth with ASD cope with their emotions and handle day-to-day stressors by teaching tools and strategies. Children learn these strategies through numerous spy-themed activities like an emotion-focused computer game, cue cards, session games, and parent and teacher handouts. As of December 2016, 56 children successfully completed the trial. SAS-OR also functioned as a training opportunity for 22 graduate students who learned to provide therapy to children with ASD. These students worked as the program therapists under the supervision of Dr. Weiss and his postdoctoral fellows (Drs. Thomson, Burnham Riosa, & Salem-Guirgis), as well as a PhD candidate (Ms. Wincentak). In 2016, we published a feasibility trial showing that SAS-OR is a clinically useful program to deliver, and completed all service provision related to the randomized trial, leaving 2017 for data analysis, dissemination and training.

## **Mental Health Screening Tool and Mindfulness Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Funding Agency: Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

**Principle Investigators:** Dr. Janos Botschner and Dr. Jonathan Weiss

**Co-investigator:** J. Hamilton Wilson

Ontario's post-secondary education system faces considerable challenges as it seeks to address the risks of poor academic achievement for students with ASD who experience concurrent mental health issues. The goals of this project were to develop, pilot, and evaluate a risk-based approach for engaging, screening, and supporting post-secondary students with ASD who are experiencing mental health issues. We supported the development

of a campus-based early mental health intervention for students with ASD at Conestoga College, which included an in-person mindfulness training module and an electronic learning module. A revised version of the program was then shared with the University of Guelph and York University. Evaluation showed that mindfulness training assisted students in becoming more aware (e.g., how emotions are connected to negative thoughts). Students who completed the final feedback survey reported that mindfulness helped them manage stress and be more aware of themselves. Reported benefits included that it helped them focus on their school work, connected them to new people, and that taking the modules was worth their time. Continued partnerships with Conestoga Students Incorporated, York University, University of Guelph, and Autism Services Waterloo Region have been established.

## **MYmind: Mindfulness Training for Adolescents with ASD**

**Funded by Kids Brain Health Network (formerly NeuroDevNet)**

Previous research has shown that mindfulness not only helps to improve attention and focus, but can also be effective in reducing stress, increasing control over negative feelings, and improving quality of life. This research project examined whether participation in MYmind, a mindfulness training program designed for adolescents with ASD and their parents, was related to improved outcomes. Originally developed and tested by researchers in the Netherlands, this program aims to have families experience the benefits of mindfulness meditation and cognitive therapy techniques while learning to relate to one another in a new way. This initiative provided training to four graduate students and two post-doctoral fellows from our lab, building the capacity of trained professionals for the future. We also provided this training to 25 clinicians, who are now more able to deliver mindfulness based therapy to individuals with ASD and their families. Three cohorts have completed the program thus far – altogether, 24 parent-teen dyads have been able to participate. Following the program, many parents reported closer relationships and improved communication with their children. Most youth reported improvement in their ability to manage stress and negative emotions, and an increase in self-esteem and awareness of their own and others' feelings. One youth stated, "it's inspiring to think how there are programs like [MYmind] that can help us get through life's difficulties." Kids Brain Health Network has put together a [video](#) showcasing the program. We have now completed data collection and are analyzing the results. Several organizations (e.g. Geneva Centre for Autism, Lake Ridge Community Support Services) have begun to run mindfulness-based programs for people with ASD in the community, which means that our efforts are directly leading to improved capacity in mental health services.

## **The Program to Assist Social Thinking**

**Toronto Catholic District School Board**

The Program to Assist Social Thinking (PAST) is a strength-based socio-emotional intervention currently offered to students with ASD in the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). Developed and implemented more than seven years ago by a team of educators with expertise in ASD, PAST is currently provided in five TCDSB schools. PAST has received positive support from educators, families, and students. Through our community-engaged research partnership with TCDSB educators, started in 2014, Dr. Burnham Riosa (postdoctoral fellow) led a mixed methods project exploring the effectiveness of PAST. She collected data through qualitative interviews with students, educators and parents, and conducted behavioural observations across several school locations to assess how PAST may be translating into improved student behaviours and well-being. Data collection is complete and data analysis is currently underway.

## **Transition to Life Program**

**Autism Ontario & Integrated Autism Consulting**

The Transition to Life Program was developed by Integrated Autism Consulting to help address the needs of young adults with Asperger Syndrome, and provide support as they transition from secondary school into adult life. In 2013, Autism Ontario and Integrated Autism Consulting approached the Chair for assistance in designing an evaluation framework for the 12-week pilot/demonstration course that began in the summer of that year. The Chair advised the Transition to Life program about how to conduct program evaluation and assisted in the data analysis of their past implementation. With funding from the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, the program is now being provided in Barrie, Kingston, Ottawa and Toronto for

adults between the ages of 18 and 28 with Asperger Syndrome. For more information about Transition to Life, visit the Integrated Autism Consulting website at [www.integratedautismconsulting.com](http://www.integratedautismconsulting.com) or the Autism Ontario website at [www.autismontario.com/adults](http://www.autismontario.com/adults).

## **Magnus Cards by MagnusMode Ltd.©**

**Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**

In collaboration with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), the Chair developed content for a number of health-related Magnus Cards for the [MagnusMode](http://magnusmode.com) app, which was launched successfully in December 2015 and is now freely available to the public. The free app is used to create e-flashcard decks that serve as easy to understand how-to guides for everyday activities such as cooking, grocery shopping, going to the dentist and picking up prescription medication. Magnus Cards are designed to empower and promote independence in individuals with developmental disabilities through the use of training cards that cover fundamental life skills. Card deck topics were selected based on health services research conducted at York U and CAMH with individuals with ASD and their families. The Health card decks can be accessed by creating a free account at [magnusmode.com](http://magnusmode.com) and downloading the MagnusCards app for tablets or smartphones.

## **Adding Injury to Insult: An Exploration of Risk Factors for Peer Victimization in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

**Funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)**

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Adam McCrimmon

**Co-Investigators:** Dr. Tanya Beran, M. Catherine Cappadocia, Dr. Jonathan Weiss

The goal of this study was to understanding specific risk factors related to peer victimization in students with ASD. At the University of Calgary, 49 children and adolescents aged 8-17 years with ASD attended one or two in-depth assessments to learn about their experiences from their unique perspective, and to understand what may place them at risk. The research team also learned about this from parent (n = 48) and teacher (n = 34) perspectives. Risk factor analysis supporting the notion that peer victimization is a complex phenomenon that likely involves both individual and environmental/relational factors. The results of the current study include important information and knowledge for schools, clinicians, parents, and individuals with ASD who seek to understand the complex nature of bullying of students, particularly those with ASD. The qualitative portion of the study was published in a peer reviewed journal, with the quantitative study manuscript underway.

## **Health Care Access Research in Developmental Disabilities Program (H-CARDD)**

**Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Health System Research**

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Yona Lunskey

**Co-Leads:** Dr. Robert Balogh, Dr. Barry Isaacs, B., Dr. Ian Casson, Dr. Virginie Cobigo, Dr. J. Lee, Dr. E. Lin, Dr. Lynn Martin, Dr. Hélène Ouellette-Kuntz, Dr. Simone Vigod, Dr. Jonathan Weiss

The purpose of the H-CARDD program is to minimize the differences in health outcomes of individuals with developmental disabilities in Ontario, including people with ASD. Dr. Weiss was a co-lead on the project that examined health service use of transition age young adults (18-24 years of age) with developmental disabilities across the province. He and his co-lead, Dr. Barry Isaacs (Surrey Place Centre) studied disparities between the physical and mental health of young adults with developmental disabilities, including those with ASD, compared to peers without these conditions, and how this related to differences in their emergency services and psychiatric service use. Our knowledge user group comprised staff from the Ontario Ministries of Community and Social Services, of Child and Youth Services, and of Education. Our findings reveal that young adults with ASD are more likely to have clinical health issues and use physical and mental health services compared to peers without developmental disabilities, and are even more likely to have psychiatric diagnoses, and visit the family physician, pediatrician, and psychiatrist, and emergency department for psychiatric reasons, compared to peers with other developmental disabilities. Results from this study are currently under review in a top tier autism research journal, has been presented at many policy roundtables, and developed as a Applied Health Research Question report for the Ontario Ministry of Child and Youth Services.



## Forecasting Service Needs for Youth with Autism Transitioning to the Adult Developmental Services Sector

Funding by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Helene Ouellette-Kuntz

**Co-Investigators:** Dr. Yona Lunsky, Dr. Jonathan Weiss

Effective service planning for individuals with ASD transitioning into the adult sector requires a better understanding of the proportion of youth and young adults with autism who meet service eligibility criteria, and their level of support needs. This project sought to estimate the number and eligibility of youth 16–24 years of age with ASD whose families seek developmental services from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, and describe their support needs to forecast their adult developmental service needs. The researchers looked at existing data to forecast service needs for youth with ASD transitioning to the adult developmental services sector, including the National Epidemiologic Database for the Study of Autism in Canada, Statistics Canada, the Multidimensional Assessment of Providers and Services project, and the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network in the United States. They found few differences between youth with and without autism in terms of their service and support needs, although a higher proportion of youth with autism had exceptional behavioural support needs, a higher proportion of their parents were concerned about their safety because of those behavioural support needs, and their families tended to have more formal supports available to them. The forecasted need ranged widely because of the lack of data about the number of youth with ASD in Ontario and the number that meet service eligibility criteria. The report recommended that a strategy was needed to ensure that the necessary data are collected and made available for forecasting purposes if it is committed to meeting the needs of individuals with autism transitioning to the adult services sector.

## Working Together to Support Transitions

Funding from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Helene Ouellette-Kuntz

**Co-Investigators:** Dr. Shira Avni, Dr. Yona Lunsky, Dr. Patricia Minnes, Dr. Jonathan Weiss

Family caregivers of adults with developmental disabilities in Ontario have been participating in an ongoing survey where they report on the services that they need and their experiences with the Adult Developmental Services system. This project continued follow-up with parents to understand what happens in Year 3 after entering the adult service system. We explored the experiences of families both waiting and transitioning and how best to provide better outcomes. Parents reported that questions about planning and choice, school, volunteering and work, and job training were rated as more important than questions about social roles, relationships, or community and neighbourhood. They suggested questions should be tailored and relevant to the person (for example, older people may not remember their high school experiences). Lastly, participants said it was very important to them to know of, and be able to access, events and activities in their local neighbourhoods. For more details, see the [Multidimensional Assessment of Providers and Systems \(MAPS\) website](#).

## National Needs Assessment of Individuals with ASD

In collaboration with the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance and additional funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada

In Spring 2014, the Canadian ASD Alliance (CASDA) worked with the Chair to develop and administer the National Autism Needs Assessment Survey, which received more than 5300 respondents from across the country, who provided input on service use, service needs, and barriers to access for individuals with ASD. In August 2014, CASDA submitted the [“Autism in Canada: National Needs Assessment Survey for Families, Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder & Professionals”](#) report to the Public Health Agency of Canada, identifying the range of services needed to provide adequate support. Currently, the data from the survey is being analyzed to understanding some of the factors that may influence service use, community participation and other outcomes that are meaningful for families and policy makers. The report has served to help guide Autism Speaks Canada’s recent grant funding for community projects and the formation of the Canadian Autism Partnership Working Group. Dr. Weiss presented province specific results from this survey to stakeholders in Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia. We also published a major study in a top tier autism research journal presenting results of how Canadians with ASD access their priority services. We have presented findings through 6 oral presentations, 6 posters, and several additional academic papers and KT products coming soon.



## **Changing Support Needs and Service Delivery in Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Ontario: Follow-up of Two Cohorts**

In collaboration with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and funding from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

Even as clear service needs exist in community and health domains for adults with ASD, we do not know how needs change over time and the factors that might drive such change. In collaboration with CAMH, this research project examines the changing support needs and service delivery in adults with ASD in Ontario and across the country. Two follow-up surveys, one based in Ontario and the other, a follow-up survey to the 2014 CASDA National Needs Assessment Survey, have been conducted. For participants based in Ontario, we are seeking to understand the role of Developmental Services Ontario in obtaining services. We have completed data collection for both the surveys, and will produce a final report to the Ministry of Community and Social Services in 2017. This study will inform policy and service planning to address the community supports and health needs of individuals with ASD. This research was funded by a Developmental Services Research Grant Fund from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services Community Supports Policy Branch.

## **Understanding and Assessing the Risk of Suicide in People with ID or ASD**

Collaborating with Université du Québec à Montréal and funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Led by Principal Investigator, Dr. Brian Mishara, Dr. Weiss is part of a team aiming to understanding the characteristics of suicide in people with ID or ASD. This first phase of this research, a clinical file review, has been completed, and consultations with stakeholders are underway to develop a tool to measure suicidal risk to assist with prevention efforts.

## **Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Mental Health Problems in Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders: A Transdiagnostics Approach**

Funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Kids Brain Health Network

Neurodevelopmental disorders (which include ASD) are estimated to affect 16% of children, and up to 70% will have mental health problems, like anxiety or depression. Many of these children are often excluded from receiving treatment because of their complex socio-communicative and cognitive profiles. Building off the current success of our randomized trial, this new project will examine whether Secret Agent Society – Operation Regulation improves emotion regulation abilities and decreases emotional and behavioural problems in children with various neurodevelopmental disorders, 8 to 12 years of age. This study will continue to involve many children with ASD, who often have other co-occurring difficulties, such as learning or attentional problems. This new project will expand the scope of who can be involved in our trial, helping even more children and families. The impact of this project could further enable changes in how evidence-based treatment for mental health is delivered.

## **Child Health Initiatives Limiting Disability– Brain Research Improving Growth and Health Trajectories Strategic Patient–Oriented Research (CHILD–BRIGHT SPOR)**

Funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research

The [CHILD-BRIGHT network](#) aims to achieve brighter futures for children with brain-based developmental disabilities and their families by creating novel interventions to optimize development, promote healthy outcomes, and deliver responsive and supportive services across the life-course. Twenty-six investigators will work on 12 projects. Together with youth and families, CHILD-BRIGHT's pan-Canadian network includes an impactful patient-oriented research program, authentic citizen engagement, multi-pronged knowledge translation and patient-oriented training. Dr. Weiss is a co-lead on the knowledge translation team that will study and mobilize best practices to involve stakeholders in the research process for maximal impact of research-informed practice.

# KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

The Chair's mandate includes making research on mental health accessible. This can happen in many ways: through publications in peer reviewed journals that are openly accessible, through presentations at scientific and lay conferences, and through online posts about research topics.

## PUBLICATIONS

	2013	2014	2015	2016	Mid 2017/Online First	Total
First Author	2	3	4	3	0	12
Co-Author	2	4	2	3	6	19
Last Author	1	3	5	3	7	19
Total	5	10	11	9	13	48

Note: Any underlined authors were students/trainees. \* Until May 2017, others in press not featured here.

1. McMorris, C., Weiss, J. A., Cappelletti, G., & Lunsky, Y. (2013). Family and staff perspectives on service use for individuals with intellectual disabilities in crisis. *Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 6(1), 14-28. doi: [10.1080/19315864.2011.606393](https://doi.org/10.1080/19315864.2011.606393)

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of families who use crisis and short-term transitional supports from the perspectives of families and of support staff. Families and staff spoke about their positive and negative experiences in seeking support, the staff characteristics that enabled these positive experiences, the challenges they encountered with crisis and transitional support services as well as the general service system, and the impact of service limitations.

2. Weiss, J. A., Robinson, S., Fung, S., Tint, A., Chalmers, P., & Lunsky, Y (2013). Family hardiness, social support, and self-efficacy in mothers of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 7, 1310 – 1317. doi: [10.1016/j.rasd.2013.07.016](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2013.07.016)

This study examined family hardiness, perceived social support and parent self-efficacy as predictors of family distress in mothers of individuals with ASD. We demonstrated that perceived self-efficacy and social support mediated the link between the accumulation of stressors and family hardiness, and that hardiness was a partial mediator in explaining how stressors were associated with family distress. This article is freely available for download through YorkSpace.

3. Weiss, J. A., Viecili, M., Sloman, L., & Lunsky, Y. (2013). Direct and indirect psychosocial outcomes for children with autism spectrum disorder and their parents following a parent-involved social skills group intervention. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 22(4), 303-309.

This study examined the direct and indirect outcomes of a social skills group intervention for children with ASD and their parents. Thirty-five children and their parents participated in the program evaluation. Results suggested significant increases in overall child social skills according to parent and child report, in child general self-worth, and in parent service empowerment and psychological acceptance. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

4. Villeneuve, M., Chatenoud, C., Hutchinson, N. L., Minnes, P., Perry, A., Dionne, C., Frankel, E. B., Isaacs, B., Loh, A., Versnel, J., & Weiss, J. (2013). The experience of parents as their children with developmental disabilities transition from early intervention to kindergarten. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36(1), 4-43. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1002306>

Recent research suggests that the transition process is critical to the early school experiences of children with

developmental disabilities, yet challenging for their parents. Results from this qualitative study demonstrated the unique experiences and meanings of collaboration held by families, and highlighted the challenges these differences pose for healthcare providers and educators who are committed to involving parents in the transition process.

**5. Lunskey, Y., Lake, J. K., Balogh, R., Weiss, J., & Morris, S. (2013). A review of Canadian mental health research on intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 6(2), 106- 126. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19315864.2012.700685>**

This article reviewed Canadian research that involves individuals with “dual diagnosis”; defined as having a developmental disability and mental health problem. Canadian researchers have made important contributions regarding inpatient and outpatient mental health services, families, autism, specific disorders and behaviours, aboriginal mental health, forensics, and emergency services.

**6. Weiss, J. A., Thomson, K., & Chan, L. (2014). A systematic literature review of emotion regulation measurement in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Autism Research*, 7(6), 629-648. doi: [10.1002/aur.1426](https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.1426)**

To provide an overview of how emotion regulation (ER) has been studied in individuals with ASD, we conducted a systematic review of the past 20 years of ER research. The findings provide the field with an in-depth analysis of various ER measures and how each measure taps into an ER framework. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**7. McPhie, M. L., Weiss, J. A., & Wekerle, C. (2014). Psychological distress as a mediator of the relationship between childhood maltreatment and sleep quality in adolescence: Results from the Maltreatment and Adolescent Pathways (MAP) Longitudinal Study. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 38(12), 2044-2052.**

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.07.009>

The current study examined the relationship between history of childhood maltreatment and sleep disturbances in adolescence. More severe childhood maltreatment was related to increased sleep disturbances, and psychological distress was a significant mediator of the childhood maltreatment-adolescent sleep disturbance association.

**8. Weiss, J. A. (2014). Transdiagnostic case conceptualization of emotional problems in youth with ASD: An emotion regulation approach. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 21(4), 331-350.**

doi: [10.1111/cpsp.12084](https://doi.org/10.1111/cpsp.12084)

Many authors have designed cognitive behavioural interventions to address transdiagnostic factors related to multiple emotional problems, although none have applied this focus to youth with ASD. The current review article describes how a transdiagnostic emotion regulation framework may inform interventions for youth with ASD, which until now have focused almost exclusively on anxiety. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

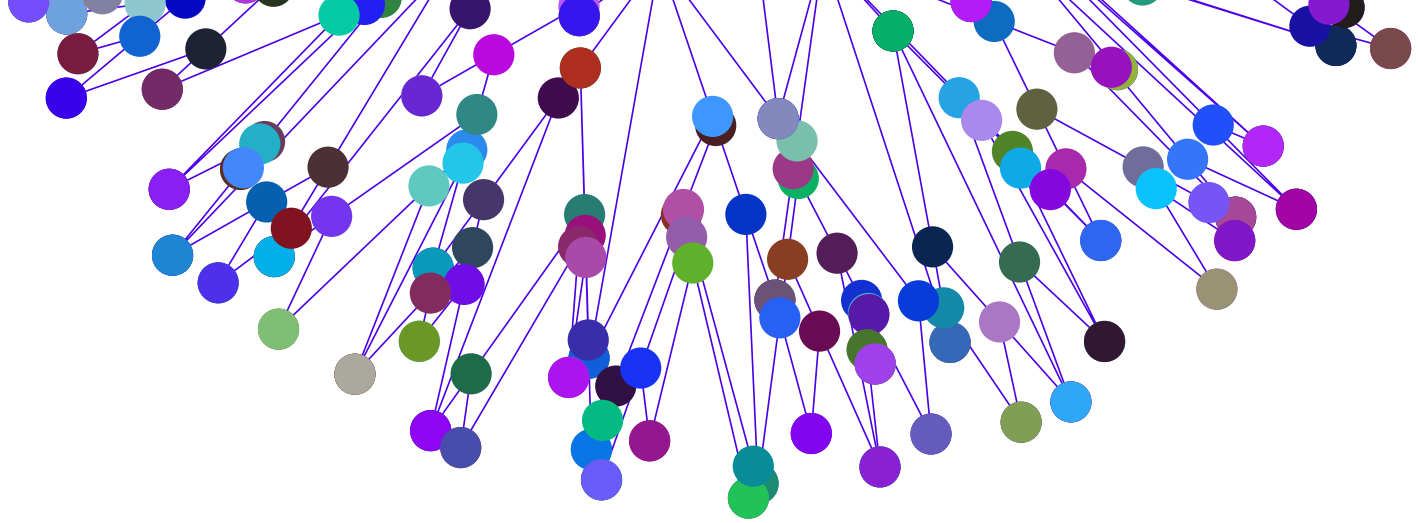
**9. Lake, J. K., Weiss, J. A., Dergal, J., & Lunskey, Y. (2014). Child, parent, and service predictors of psychotropic polypharmacy among adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, 24(9), 486-493. doi: [10.1089/cap.2014.0011](https://doi.org/10.1089/cap.2014.0011)**

This study examined the child, parent, and service factors associated with polypharmacy in adolescents and young adults with ASD. Results of this study indicated that adolescents and young adults with ASD are a highly medicated population with multiple factors associated with psychotropic polypharmacy, including the patient’s psychiatric comorbidity, history of hurting others, therapy use, and parent burden. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**10. Weiss, J. A., Wingsong, A., & Lunskey, Y. (2014). Defining crisis in families of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Autism: International Journal of Research and Practice*, 18, 985-995.**

doi: [10.1177/1362361313508024](https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361313508024)

This study investigated the subjective experience of crisis in mothers of children with ASD. Thematic analysis revealed that crisis is characterized by factors influencing four major areas: demands, internal capabilities, external resources, and subjective appraisal. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#). You can also review the [lay summary](#) of these results in our Research Snapshot.



**11. Vogan, V., Lake, J. K., Weiss, J. A., Robinson, S., Tint, A., & Lunskey, Y. (2014). Factors associated with caregiver burden among parents of individuals with ASD: Differences across the spectrum. *Family Relations*, 63(4), 554-567. doi: [10.1111/fare.12081](https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12081)**

This study investigated factors associated with burden in parents of adolescents and young adults with ASD to understand how these factors differ across varying levels of intellectual functioning. ASD severity, externalizing behaviours, medical comorbidity, and parent age was associated with burden in parents of adolescents and young adults with ASD and an intellectual disability. Inability to pay for services was associated with burden in parents of individuals with ASD without intellectual disability. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**12. Lavoie-Brown, S., Vecili, M. A., & Weiss, J. A. (2014). Sexual knowledge and victimization in adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44(9), 2185-2196. doi: [10.1007/s10803-014-2093-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-014-2093-y)**

In this study, adults with and without ASD completed questionnaires regarding sexual knowledge sources, actual knowledge, perceived knowledge, and sexual victimization. Individuals with ASD obtained less of their sexual knowledge from social sources, more sexual knowledge from non-social sources, had less perceived and actual knowledge, and experienced more sexual victimization than controls. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#) and you can review the [lay summary](#) of these results in our Research Snapshot.

**13. Schroeder, J., Cappadocia, M. C., Bebko, J., Pepler, D., & Weiss, J. A. (2014). Shedding light on a pervasive problem: A review of research on bullying experiences among children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44(7), 1520-1534. doi: [10.1007/s10803-013-2011-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-013-2011-8)**

Autism spectrum disorder is characterized by difficulties with social interaction, communication, and the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships, placing individuals with ASD at increased risk of bullying victimization, compared to typically developing peers. This paper reviews the literature that has emerged over the past decade regarding the prevalence of bullying involvement in the ASD population, and associated psychosocial factors.

**14. Paquette-Smith, M., Weiss, J. A., & Lunskey, Y. (2014). History of suicide attempts in adults with Asperger Syndrome. *Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention*, 35(4), 273-277. doi: [10.1027/0227-5910/a000263](https://doi.org/10.1027/0227-5910/a000263)**

This study examined the issue of suicidality in adults with Asperger Syndrome. Fifty adults from across Ontario completed an online survey. Over 35% of the sample reported that they had attempted suicide in the past, which was associated with a history of depression and more severe autism symptomatology. These findings highlight a need for more specialized services to help prevent future attempts and to support this vulnerable group. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#) and you can review the [lay summary](#) of these results in our Research Snapshot.

**15. Bebko, J., Schroeder, J., & Weiss, J. A. (2014). The McGurk effect in children with Autism and Asperger Syndrome. *Autism Research*, 7(1), 50-59. doi: [10.1002/aur.1343](https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.1343)**

Samples of children with ASD, with Down syndrome, and without developmental disabilities, were presented with an experimental technique called the 'McGurk effect', where certain types of audio information are paired with visual information. Children with autism showed a lower rate of the McGurk effect compared to those with Asperger Syndrome, Down syndrome or without developmental disabilities. These results have implications for potential speech perception difficulties in children with autism that may be linked to their representation of speech sounds. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**16. Weiss, J. A., Cappadocia, M. C., Tint, A., & Pepler, D. (2015). Bullying victimization, parenting stress, and anxiety among adolescents and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Autism Research*, 8(6), 727-737. doi: [10.1002/aur.1488](https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.1488)**

This study looked at kinds of individual and contextual variables that are associated with anxiety and bullying victimization in youth and young adults with ASD. More frequent bullying was associated with greater levels of child anxiety, but this relationship was impacted by the level of parenting stress. These results suggest that to help children with ASD cope with stressors, such as bullying, we need to consider supporting parents. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**17. Fung, S., Lunsy, Y., & Weiss, J. A. (2015). Depression in youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders: The role of ASD vulnerabilities and family –environmental stressors. *Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 8, 120-139. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19315864.2015.1017892>**

This study explored how parent distress and negative life events are associated with depression in youth and young adults with ASD. We found that high parent distress and exposure to 3 or more negative life events were associated with symptoms of depression in individuals with ASD. Younger individuals or ones who have average or above-average intellectual functioning had higher depression levels. This article is freely available for download on [YorkSpace](#).

**18. Thomson, K., Burnham-Riosa, P., & Weiss, J. A. (2015). Brief report of preliminary outcomes of an emotion regulation intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder: The Secret Agent Society: Operation Regulation. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45(11), 3487-3495. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10803-015-2446-1>**

Children with ASD often have problems with emotion regulation. We reported on progress with the SAS:OR intervention (see above for full description of the project); a cognitive behaviour therapy intervention to improve emotion regulation in children with ASD. Children and parents indicated high satisfaction with the activities and program, which appeared to have a high degree of feasibility. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**19. Perry, A., Taheri, A., Ting, V., & Weiss, J. A. (2015). The GO4KIDDS Brief Adaptive Scale. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 28(6), 594-597. doi: [10.1111/jar.12143](https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12143)**

Adaptive behaviour is an important outcome to measure in individuals with developmental disabilities at all ages, although no brief version exists specifically for children and youth. We reported on the psychometric properties of a brief and freely accessible tool (GO4KIDDS Brief Adaptive Behaviour Scale). This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**20. Lunsy, Y., Paquette-Smith, M., Weiss, J. A., & Lee, J. (2015). Predictors of emergency service use in adolescents and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders living with family. *Emergency Medical Journal*, 32(10), 787-792. doi: [10.1136/emered-2014-204015](https://doi.org/10.1136/emered-2014-204015)**

Individuals with ASD are more likely to use emergency services than the general population. We examined factors that may contribute to more visits, and found that a combination of need and enabling variables were important – specifically, previous ED use in the last year, a history of hurting others, and having no structured daytime activities were the strongest predictors. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#) and you can review the [lay summary](#) of these results in our Research Snapshot.

**21. Weiss, J. A., Viecili, M., & Bohr, Y. (2015). Parenting stress as a correlate of cognitive behavior therapy responsiveness in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and anxiety. Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 30(3), 154-164. doi: [10.1007/s10803-015-2412-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-015-2412-y)**

This study examined the effectiveness of a 12-session "Coping Cat" intervention for children with ASD, and found that 50% of children had clinically meaningful improvements. In addition, changes in parenting stress were associated with changes in child anxiety, from pre- to post-treatment. These results suggest that we need to consider parents' experiences in the process of delivering mental health interventions to children.

**22. Weiss, J. A., & Burnham-Riosa, P. (2015). Thriving in youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual Disability. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 45(8), 2474-2486. doi: [10.1007/s10803-015-2412-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-015-2412-y)**

Most research on mental health in individuals with ASD and intellectual disability has focused on deficits. We examined individual and contextual factors of thriving in youth with intellectual disability, with and without ASD. Youth with both ASD and ID were reported to thrive less than peers with ID only. Differences in sociocommunicative ability and school and home participation mediated the relationship between ASD and less thriving. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**23. Viecili, M. A., & Weiss, J. A. (2015). Reliability and validity of the Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. American Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 120(4), 289-301. doi: [10.1352/1944-7558-120.4.289](https://doi.org/10.1352/1944-7558-120.4.289)**

The Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory (PedsQL) measures health-related quality of life, a growing area of research, particularly among individuals with disabilities. We looked at the reliability and validity of the PedsQL in individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including individuals with ASD. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**24. Weiss, J. A., MacMullin, J., & Lunskey, Y. (2015). Empowerment and parent gain as mediators and moderators of distress in mothers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Journal of Child and Family Studies, 24(7), 2038-2045. doi: [10.1007/s10826-014-0004-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-014-0004-7)**

This study examined how parent empowerment and positive gain were associated with maternal distress and child problem behaviours and aggression, in children with ASD. We found that child problem behaviour was related to greater maternal distress and less parental empowerment. Child aggression was not related to distress in moms who have higher levels of positive gain. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**25. Minnes, P., Perry, A., & Weiss, J. A. (2015). Predictors of distress and well-being in parents of young children with developmental delays and disabilities: The importance of parent perceptions. Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 59(6), 551-560. doi: [10.1111/jir.12160](https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.12160)**

As children with developmental disabilities transition to school, distress may occur as service delivery shifts from being family-centred to child-centred. This study looked at predictors of both distress and well-being in mothers during this transition period. Parent coping variables such as parental perception (reframing) and empowerment influenced both positive gain (perceived benefits) and parental distress.

**26. Lake, J. Vogan, V., Sawyer, A., Weiss, J., & Lunskey, Y. (2015). Psychotropic medication use among adolescents and young adults with an autism spectrum disorder: Parent views about medications and health care services. Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology, 25(3), 260-268. doi: [10.1089/cap.2014.0106](https://doi.org/10.1089/cap.2014.0106)**

Psychotropic medications are frequently used to treat mental health and behavioural issues in adolescents and adults with ASD. We found that young adults with ASD were more likely to use psychotropic medication and not use non-pharmacological services first, compared to adolescents. Also, parents of young adults were less satisfied with the perceived expertise and monitoring of medication use than parents of adolescents. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**27. Altomare, A., McCrimmon, A., Cappadocia, C., Weiss, J.A., Beran, T., & Smith, A. (2016). When push comes to shove. Canadian Journal of School Psychology. doi: [10.1177/0829573516683068](https://doi.org/10.1177/0829573516683068)**

This study examined the coping strategies used by students with ASD when they experience bullying, by interviewing students with ASD. Thematic analysis identified 3 themes: approach, avoidance, and the complexities of bullying. These insights may lead to possible avenues for school-based interventions.



**28. Weiss, J. A., Burnham Riosa, P., Robinson, S., Ryan, S., Tint, A., Viecili, M., MacMullin, J., & Shine, R. (2016). Understanding Special Olympics experiences from the athlete perspectives using photo-elicitation: A qualitative study. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*. doi: [10.1111/jar.12287](https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12287)**

Many individuals with intellectual disabilities face challenges participating in organized sport. We looked at the experiences of five athletes with intellectual disability involved in Special Olympics. Using photography to document and describe their sport experiences, athletes talked about their connections to teammates and coaches, and the importance of training and hard work.

**29. Tint, A., Maughan, A. L., & Weiss, J. A. (2016). Community participation of youth with intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*. doi: [10.1111/jir.12311](https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.12311)**

This study examined community participation in youth with intellectual disability, with and without ASD. While we found no differences in the number and frequency of community activities that the two groups participate in, caregivers reported that youth with ASD were less involved in the activities in which they participated, and that social requirements of the activities, such as communication and relationships with peers, made participation more difficult.

**30. Tint, A., Thomson, K., & Weiss, J.A. (2016). A systematic literature review of psychosocial and physical correlates of Special Olympics participation among individuals with intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*. doi: [10.1111/jir.12295](https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.12295)**

We reviewed 46 studies to better understand how Special Olympics is associated with individuals' physical, psychological/emotional social and intellectual/cognitive wellbeing. Overall, there is more support for physical, psychological/emotional and social outcomes among participants as compared to cognitive/intellectual. Future research with more rigorous study designs are needed.

**31. Weiss, J., Ting, V., & Perry, A. (2016). Psychosocial correlates of maladaptive behaviour and psychiatric diagnoses in youth with severe developmental disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 60(6), 583-593) doi: [10.1111/jir.12278](https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.12278)**

Mental health problems are common in youth with severe or profound developmental disabilities. We looked at child and family characteristics, and psychosocial factors to see if they were related to mental health problems in these youth. Youth with a diagnosed mental health problem were more likely to have better adaptive behaviour and more stressful life events than those without a diagnosed mental health problem.

**32. Robinson, S., Weiss, J. A., Lunskey, Y., & Ouellette-Kuntz, H. (2016). Informal support and burden among parents of adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 29(4), 356-365. doi: [10.1111/jar.12184](https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12184)**

We examined the relationship between behaviour support needs of adults with intellectual disability and parental burden, and whether perceived helpfulness of informal supports influenced this association. The analysis showed that informal support was negatively related to burden, but it did not change how behavioural support needs influenced parental outcomes.

**33. Weiss, J. A., Tint, A., Paquette-Smith, M., & Lunskey, Y. (2016). Perceived self-efficacy in parents of adolescents and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Autism*, 20(4) 425-434. doi: [10.1177/1362361315586292](https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361315586292)**

This study examined the experience of self-efficacy in parents of people with ASD. Lower self-efficacy was related to having an older child, being an immigrant, experiencing more barriers to service access, and caregiver burden. Since parents often play a crucial role in the lives of individuals with ASD across the lifespan, it is important that service providers support the efforts of parents to provide and access care.

**34. Tint A., & Weiss, J. A. (2016). Family wellbeing of individuals with autism spectrum disorder: A scoping review. *Autism*, 20(3), 262-275. doi: [10.1177/1362361315580442](https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361315580442)**

Families play an important role in supporting individuals with ASD across the lifespan, but little attention is paid to the wellbeing of those families. This review of 86 studies on the topic showed that the definitions and methods to measure family wellbeing are broad and diverse. Future research would benefit from understanding how individuals in the family rely on each other.

**35. MacMullin, J., Lunskey, Y., & Weiss, J. A. (2016) Plugged in: Electronic use in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Autism*, 20(1), 45-54. doi: [10.1177/1362361314566047](https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361314566047)**

Although technology currently plays an integral role for most youth, there are growing concerns of its excessive and compulsive use, particularly for individuals with ASD. We compared patterns of electronics use in individuals with and without ASD. Compared to parents of individuals without ASD, parents of individuals with ASD were more likely to report that electronics use was currently having a negative impact for their children. This is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#) and you can review the [lay summary](#) of these results in our Research Snapshot.

**36. Tint, A., Thomson, K., & Weiss, J. A. (2017). A systematic literature review of psychosocial and physical correlates of Special Olympics participation among Individuals with intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 61(4), 301-324. doi: [10.1111/jir.12295](https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.12295).**

We reviewed 46 studies to better understand how Special Olympics impacts individuals' wellbeing. Overall, there is more support for physical, psychological/emotional and social outcomes among SO participants as compared to cognitive/intellectual; however, many studies had methodological issues which limited our ability to generalize the results.

**37. Ting, V., & Weiss, J. A. (2017). Emotion regulation and parent co-regulation in children with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47(3), 680-689. doi: [10.1007/s10803-016-3009-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-016-3009-9)**

Parent co-regulation is often associated with child emotion regulation and emotional problems, but not much is known about how this plays out in youth with ASD. This study found that parent scaffolding (i.e., parents' support of motivation and emotional development in a task) and child emotion regulation predicted child externalizing problems, after controlling for child age and IQ.

**38. Tint, A., Maughan, A. L., & Weiss, J. A. (2017). Community participation of youth with intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 6(2), 168-180. doi: [10.1111/jir.12311](https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.12311)**

This study examined community participation in youth with ASD and ID, and youth with only ID. The group with ASD participated in approximately the same number of community activities, and just as often, as the group without ASD. However, caregivers reported that youth with ASD were less involved in the activities in which they participated, and that social requirements made participation more difficult.

**39. Khanlou, N., Haque, N., Mustafa, N., Vazquez, L. M., Mantini, A., & Weiss, J. A. (2017). Access barriers to services by immigrant mothers of children with autism in Canada. *International Journal of Mental Health Addiction*. Open Access. doi: [10.1007/s11469-017-9732-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-017-9732-4)**

In this study, 21 immigrant mothers of children with ASD were interviewed about their experience accessing services. Structural support challenges, such as delays in diagnosis, fragmented and dispersed services were common, followed by instrumental challenges due to loss of social ties and stigma. Lack of expected support from partners, and negative perceptions of services, were identified as emotional and perceptive challenges. This article is freely available for download through [YorkSpace](#).

**40. Vogan, V., Lake, J. K., Tint, A., Weiss, J. A., & Lunskey, Y. (2017). Tracking health care service use and the experiences of adults with autism spectrum disorder without intellectual disability: A longitudinal study of service rates, barriers and satisfaction. *Disability and Health Journal*, 10(2), 264-270. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2016.11.002>**

This study looked at what medical and mental health services 40 adults with ASD without intellectual disability used and their personal experiences. Results showed that beyond a family doctor, the most commonly used services were dentistry, individual counseling, and psychiatry. Those who had medical problems experienced more barriers to service use than those who did not, and those who had medical and mental health problems were less satisfied with services. You can review the lay summary in our Research Snapshot.

**41. Hassan, M., Thomson, K. M., Khan, M., Burnham Riosa, P., & Weiss, J. A. (2017). Behavioral skills training for graduate students proving cognitive behaviour therapy to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Behavior Analysis: Research and Practice*, 17(2), 155-165. doi: [dx.doi.org/10.1037/bar0000078](https://doi.org/10.1037/bar0000078)**

This study evaluated how well clinical psychology graduate students implemented a CBT intervention for youth with ASD if they themselves received a behavioural skills training session or just the typical self-study of the manual.

Therapists preferred the session and showed some additional improvements in terms of the accuracy and quality of intervention delivery after receiving the training session.

**42. Lunsky, Y., Hastings, R., Weiss, J. A., Palucka, A., Hutton, S., & White, K. (2017). Comparative effects of mindfulness and support and information group interventions for parents of adults with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47 (6), 1769-17779. doi: [10.1007/s10803-017-3099-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3099-z)**

This study evaluated two community based interventions for parents of adults with ASD and other developmental disabilities. Parents in the mindfulness group reported reductions in psychological distress for up to 20 weeks, while parents in the support and information group did not. This article is freely available to download through [YorkSpace](#).

**43. Tint, A., Weiss, J. A., Lunsky, Y. (Online First). Identifying the clinical needs and patterns of health service use of adolescent girls and women with autism spectrum disorder. *Autism Research*. doi: [10.1002/aur.1806](https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.1806)**

In this study, caregivers of 61 adolescent girls and women with ASD and 223 boys and men completed an online survey. We found that a greater proportion of girls and women used psychiatry and emergency department services as compared to boys and men. This article is freely available to download through [YorkSpace](#).

**44. Lai, J. K. Y., & Weiss, J. A. (Online First). Priority service needs and receipt across the lifespan with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Autism Research*. doi: [10.1002/aur.1786](https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.1786)**

This study examined the priority service needs and receipts of Canadian families with autism based on caregiver report. With age, priority needs diversified and those priority needs were less likely to be met. Systemic factors, such as caregiver-directed services, were highly correlated with getting priority needs met across the lifespan. This article is freely available to download through [YorkSpace](#).

**45. Altomare, A., McCrimmon, A., Cappadocia, C., Weiss, J. A., Beran, T., & Smith-Demers, A. (Online First). When push comes to shove: How are students with autism spectrum disorder coping with bullying? *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*. doi: [10.1177.0829573516683068](https://doi.org/10.1177/0829573516683068).**

This study examined coping strategies for peer victimization. Thirty-eight students viewed cartoons depicting characters that experienced various forms of bullying at school and responded to open-ended questions to explore their suggested coping strategies. Three themes emerged: approach coping, avoidance coping, and complexities of bullying. This study provides insight into the coping strategies used and avenues for school-based intervention.

**46. Burnham-Riosa, R., Ting, V., Maughan, A., Stables, V., Albaum, C., & Weiss, J. A. (Online First). Remediating deficits or increasing strengths in autism spectrum disorder research: A content analysis. *Advances in Neurodevelopmental Disorders*. doi: [10.1007/s41252-017-0027-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s41252-017-0027-3)**

Research on the health and well-being of people with ASD is an important area of study. In this paper, the authors reviewed 1,154 studies to find out how many of them (1) were about the well-being of people with ASD, and (2) if the focus was mainly on people's strengths or their difficulties or challenges. Among those studies that were looked at in detail, most were focused on challenges, followed by studies that focused on both challenges and strengths, whereas only a small percentage just focused on the strengths of people with ASD.

**47. Maughan, A. & Weiss, J.A. (Online First). Parental outcomes following participation in cognitive behavioural therapy for children with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. doi: [10.1007/s10803-017-3224-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3224-z)**

In this study, changes in parent mental health, parenting and expressed emotion were examined, following participation in a randomized controlled trial of CBT for 57 children with ASD. Improvements occurred in treatment groups in parent depression and emotion regulation, compared to the waitlisted parents. This study suggests that children with ASD benefit from parent involvement in their therapy.

**48. Lunsky, Y., Weiss, J., Paquette-Smith, M., Durbin, A., Tint, A., Palucka, A., & Bradley, E. (Online First). Predictors of emergency department use by adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorder: A prospective cohort study. *British Medical Journal*. doi: [bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/7/e017377](https://doi.org/bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/7/e017377)**

This prospective cohort study examined the predictors of emergency department (ED) visits in a cohort of adolescents and adults with ASD. Parents reported on their adult children with ASD living in the community. Study found that a combination of individual and contextual variables may be important for targeting preventative community-based supports for individuals with ASD and their families.

## TECHNICAL REPORTS

McGarry, C., Chiu, A., Brown, H. K., Wilton, A., Weiss, J., Lunsy, Y., & Isaacs, B. (2015). [Young adults with autism spectrum disorders: Health profiles and service utilization](#). Applied Health Research Question Report prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Child and Youth Services by the Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities Program.

Weiss, J. A., Whelan, M., McMorris, C., Lyons, M., & Carroll, C., and the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance. (2014). [Autism in Canada: National Needs Assessment Survey for Families, Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Professionals](#). Report prepared for the Public Health Agency of Canada.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & POSTERS

The aforementioned research was presented at 34 conferences since 2013, as oral presentations and posters. Presentations were on topics such as:

- bullying
- correlates of concurrent anxiety and depression
- antipsychotic medication use
- suicidal behaviour
- sport participation
- crisis
- sexual knowledge and victimization
- emotion regulation
- electronics use in youth
- evaluation of interventions (e.g. mindfulness, CBT)
- parent scaffolding
- therapeutic alliance
- service access

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Scientific conference posters	17	13	28	18	10	86
Scientific conference presentations	3	1	1	12	6	22
Conferences	4	8	10	9	5	36
Trainees who attended these conferences	5	8	13	7	6	–



## Selected Conferences

Year	Conferences
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Seattle, WA.</li> <li>• International Meeting for Autism Research, San Sebastian, Spain</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing in Developmental Disabilities Conference, Toronto, ON</li> </ul>
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4th Health &amp; Wellbeing in Children, Youth, and Adults with Developmental Disabilities Conference, Vancouver, BC</li> <li>• The joint 20th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for Developmental Neuroscience and 5th Annual NeuroDevNet Brain Development Conference, Montreal, QC</li> <li>• 40th Annual Conference for the Association for Applied Behavior Analysis International, Chicago, IL</li> <li>• 47th Annual Gatlinburg Conference on Research and Theory in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Chicago, IL</li> <li>• International Meeting for Autism Research, Atlanta, GA</li> </ul>
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Philadelphia, PA</li> <li>• 48th Annual Gatlinburg Conference on Research and Theory in Intellectual and Developmental Disability, New Orleans, LA</li> <li>• International Meeting for Autism Research 2015, Salt Lake City, UT</li> <li>• International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Americas Regional Congress, Honolulu, HI</li> <li>• Canadian Psychological Association 76th Annual Convention, Ottawa, ON</li> <li>• American Psychological Association Annual Convention, Toronto, ON</li> </ul>
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 49th Annual Gatlinburg Conference on Research and Theory in Intellectual and Developmental Disability, San Diego, CA</li> <li>• International Meeting for Autism Research, Baltimore, MD</li> <li>• 42nd Annual Conference for the Association for Behavior Analysis International, Chicago, IL</li> <li>• American Psychological Association Annual Convention, Denver, CO</li> <li>• International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities World Congress, Melbourne, Australia</li> </ul>
Mid 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3rd Annual CASDA Leadership Summit, Ottawa, ON</li> <li>• Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities - Research Special Interest Group Conference, Niagara Falls, ON</li> <li>• International Meeting for Autism Research, San Francisco, CA</li> <li>• Canadian Psychological Association 78th Annual Convention, Toronto, ON</li> <li>• American Psychological Association Annual Convention, Washington, DC</li> </ul>

## PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS FOR NON-ACADEMIC AUDIENCES

Dr. Weiss has given talks about mental health and ASD to academics, individuals with ASD, clinicians, educators, families, and policy makers in different branches of government.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Talks	12	16	2	12	7	47

### Selected Presentations

Below are a selection of some of those talks, many of which you can view online:

Year	Conferences
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "A Review of the Research on Mental Health Problems in Youth with ASD, and the Need for a Mental Health Promotion Framework" Western University Autism Centre of Excellence Distinguished Lecturer Series (London, ON)</li> <li>• "Emergency services, hospitalizations, and mental health care for adolescents and adults with ASD" Autism Community Training Annual Conference (Vancouver, BC).</li> <li>• "Mental health &amp; ASD: The importance of healthy relationships." Kids Ability Annual Conference (Waterloo, ON)</li> <li>• "Bullying strategies for youth with ASD" Autism Ontario Webinar (Toronto, ON).</li> <li>• "Understanding and addressing mental health problems in children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders" Geneva Centre Summer Training Institute (Toronto, ON)</li> <li>• "ASD and Mental Health: Journalist workshop." CIHR Journalist Workshop, CIHR Communications and Public Outreach branch and the Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health (Toronto, ON)</li> <li>• "Don't push me around! Limiting the causes and consequences of bullying." CIHR Cafe Scientifique (Toronto, ON)</li> <li>• "Health and well-being of youth with intellectual disability who participate in Special Olympics in Ontario." CARE-ID Webinar (Toronto, ON)</li> </ul>
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Supporting Mental Health in Individuals with ASD: Moving Beyond Anxiety" The First Canada-Israel Autism Research Symposium on Autism (Jerusalem, Israel).</li> <li>• "Addressing Bullying in Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Research and Strategies" Monarch House (Vancouver, BC)</li> <li>• "Supporting Youth with ASD Through Positive Youth Development" Psychology Symposium at University of Warwick (Coventry, United Kingdom).</li> <li>• "Health and Health Service Use in Transition Age Youth with Developmental Disabilities" H-CARDD Town Hall Webinar (Toronto, ON)</li> </ul>
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Thriving in ASD: What Does it Take?" Autism Community Training (Vancouver, BC).</li> <li>• "Supporting Mental Health in Students with ASD" A Professional Learning Day for Educational Assistants presented by Eastern Ontario Staff Development Network (Kingston, ON)</li> </ul>



Year	Conferences
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Health of young adults with developmental disabilities across Ontario” Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres (CAPHC) Presents! Webinar Series</li> <li>• “Cognitive behaviour therapy for emotion regulation in youth with ASD” University of Warwick Autism CBT Workshop, (Coventry, United Kingdom)</li> <li>• TEDxYorkUSalon “Spectrum” TEDxYorkU, (Toronto, ON)</li> <li>• “Mental Health Problems in Youth with Developmental Disabilities” Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres (CAPHC) Presents! Webinar Series.</li> <li>• “Bullying in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders” Autism Research Training Program (Montreal, QC)</li> <li>• “Mindfulness and Cognitive Behavioral Approaches for Youth and Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder.” JFK Partners 4th Annual Autism Spectrum Disorder Conference, (Aurora, Colorado CO, USA)</li> <li>• “Mental Health &amp; Thriving in People with ASD” Geneva Centre for Autism International Symposium (Toronto, ON)</li> <li>• “Emotion Regulation Interventions for Youth/Teens with ASD” Geneva Centre for Autism International Symposium (Toronto, ON)</li> <li>• “Physician Session” Geneva Centre for Autism International Symposium, (Toronto, ON)</li> </ul>
Mid 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Addressing Mental Health in Autism: Should We Treat the Person with ASD, the Family, or the Community?” Autism Community Training’s 13th Annual Focus on Research Conference (Vancouver, BC).</li> <li>• “A balanced approach to studying mental health in Autism: Problems and positivity” University of Toronto – OISE, Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development Colloquia Series (Toronto, ON).</li> <li>• TEDxYorkUSalon “AutismInnovations” TEDxYorkU (Toronto, ON).</li> <li>• “A balanced approach to addressing mental health in Autism Spectrum Disorder: Problems and positivity” McCain Child Psychiatry Rounds at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Toronto, ON).</li> <li>• “Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to Address Emotion Regulation in Children with Autism” Psychology Rounds at the Montreal Children’s Hospital (Montreal, QC).</li> <li>• “A Balanced Approach to Studying Mental Health in Autism: Problems and Positivity” Center for Autism in California State University Fullerton (Los Angeles, CA, USA)</li> </ul>

## Media Features

In addition, Dr. Weiss’ research was featured in various news and media outlets, including the following:

- “What does wellbeing look like in families raising children with ASD?”, NeuroDevNet News & Publications, May 11, 2015
- “The unexpected transformation of Aaron Pearlston: He is now Douglas Pearson, white supremacist”, National Post, July 3, 2015.
- “Social communication skills and meaningful inclusion best predictors of thriving in youth with autism”, NeuroDevNet News & Publications, December 10, 2015.
- “York U-CAMH team creates app-based health education tool for people with autism”, Y-File, York University’s News Source, December 16, 2015.
- “Autism may strain family life even before children are diagnosed”, Reuters Health, December 18, 2015.
- “Helping patients with autism navigate the stressful ER” Featured in the CNN Health News, February 29, 2016: <http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/29/health/autism-patient-care-er/>
- “Cognitive behaviour therapy and mindfulness can help kids with autism” Featured in Huffington Post - The Blog, November 01, 2016: [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/julie-m-green/cbt-mindfulness-autism\\_b\\_12674008.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/julie-m-green/cbt-mindfulness-autism_b_12674008.html)
- “To support children with developmental disabilities, we must support parents” Written for Healthy Debate on June 22, 2016: <http://healthydebate.ca/opinions/developmental-disabilities-parental-support>

## YORKSPACE

The Chair upheld the commitment to improving the accessibility of information using open access repositories. In accordance with the [CIHR Open Access Policy](#):

	2013	2014	2015	2016	Mid 2017
Total Articles Available	6	17	20	25	46
Total Views	567	440	3470	9746	11437
Total Downloads	1332	1115	5661	15147	17492

## ASD MENTAL HEALTH BLOG

Stemming from recommendations from the initial Stakeholder Advisory Day in January 2013, we launched the ASD Mental Health Blog to keep families, service providers, and individuals with ASD informed about research into ASD and mental health. The [purpose of the Blog](#) is to make knowledge accessible - not simply about showcasing the research from the Chair. The Blog can also be followed on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). We create a new post approximately every 2 weeks. Our Blog was [featured](#) in the ResearchImpact blog for its innovated use of social media to make research accessible.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	Mid 2017
Tweets	–	210	728	1,687	2,150
Twitter Followers	–	265	824	1,362	1,575
Facebook likes	–	–	186	286	317
Facebook posts	29	51	34	36	13
Blog posts	33	45	42	35	11
Blog Subscribers	–	125	138	147	150
Blog unique views	–	8000	16706	11302	4291

## Research Summaries

Each month, the ASD Mental Health Blog shares several ResearchSnapshots (clear language summaries). The template and format were developed by [ResearchImpact](#) and have been adopted by Dr. Weiss for summarizing research on ASD and mental health that would be of interest and/or helpful to stakeholders. These articles are based on peer-reviewed published research studies and provide a two-page summary, covering 5 key areas: what the research is about, what the researchers did, the main findings, how the reader can use this information, and the take-home message. Each summary also provides a brief biography about the researchers and citation for the original article.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	Mid 2017	Total
Lay Summaries	15	18	21	28	8	90
Editorials	7	8	2	3	1	21
Videos	7	3	0	3	1	14
News	6	2	9	3	0	20

These summaries can be downloaded and shared freely by visiting the [Research Summaries](#) page on the blog. Here are some titles of the Research Snapshots:

- A useful strategy to regulate emotions for children and teens with autism
- The role of positive family processes in change in autism symptoms and maladaptive behaviours in adulthood
- Physician perspectives on providing primary medical care to adults with autism spectrum disorder
- Antipsychotic medication paired with intensive behavioural intervention: an effective aggression reduction strategy in youth with ASD
- Experiences of youth with ASD making the transition to adult healthcare

## Editorials and Videos

We've also produced several editorials and videos that evaluate and discuss research findings, pertinent issues, and resources related to ASD and mental health.

## In the News

These posts outline and link to news items that feature the work of the Chair, as well as topics and upcoming events that may interest the many different members of the ASD community.

## Upcoming Conferences

To encourage knowledge mobilization and the sharing of research findings, the ASD Mental Health Blog provides updates about upcoming research conferences taking place in Canada and the United States. Each conference listed has a link to the conference website, where stakeholders can receive more information, register or submit abstracts.



## TEDxYorkUSalon

Independently run, self-organized TEDx events help share ideas in local communities around the world in a TED-like experience. This platform, with a license given to TEDxYorkU, allowed us to run 'Salons', intimate TEDx events.

The aim of these Salons was to provide a forum for ideas within the Canadian ASD community. These events have consistently been described as groundbreaking. We have run two such events: Spectrum and AutismInnovations.



### Spectrum (2016)

The TEDxYorkUSalon "Spectrum" was held on May 28th, 2016, selling out quickly. We filled the Glendon Theatre in Toronto to capacity with 146 registered. On that day, 130 were in the audience (at least 18 who identified themselves as family members, 17 as professionals who work with people living with ASD, 6 students and 6 who wanted to identify as self-advocates). Recognizing that knowledge mobilization is a learning process among stakeholders with different perspectives and expertise, we involved people with ASD, parents, researchers, educators, policy makers, and service providers as presenters on topics relevant to transition-age youth and adult. Topics ranged from how parents were empowered by participating in autism research to the changes that clinicians see the healthcare system needs to make for adults with autism. Community leaders rallied everyone to come together and work with one voice to support individuals and their caregivers.

One participant:

**"[The event gave them] access to a wide variety of perspectives. Although different, there was an underlying sense of the possible - that challenges can be overcome. Not everything is an obstacle."**

One parent shared after the event:

**"It was a really neat event for many reasons. One, it was so beautifully and thoughtfully organized. The attention to detail was phenomenal. As a teacher and a mom of a son with autism, I notice and appreciate such things... I don't think he has ever been treated so thoughtfully and respectfully...."**

The talks from "Spectrum" have over 32,000 views and can be found at [www.tedxyorkusalon.org](http://www.tedxyorkusalon.org) or on YouTube [here](#) – where the impact of the event goes far beyond those in attendance that day. One of our partners of the event, the Kids Brain Health Network, created a 3-minute video summary of the event which can be viewed [here](#).

## AutismInnovations (2017)

Based on the success of this first event, on April 22nd 2017, we held a second TEDxYorkUSalon “AutismInnovations”. This Salon focused on innovations for people with ASD within their community by 4 Canadian TEDx speakers and showcased research from local universities in a series of 3-minute lightening talks by 13 academics from the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Our success in effective science communication and knowledge translation continued with a sold-out event with 148 in attendance. Guests self-identified in the following groups during registration: 35 were family members of someone with ASD, 83 were professionals in the field (researchers, clinicians, policymakers), 16 were university students, and 14 identified as being on the autism spectrum. This time, we added more camera angles, better audio recording, a graphic notetaker who attentively sketched the talks on a mural at the side of the stage as the talks were going on. We also added more interaction time and added a social media stream, poster displays from the researchers, and invited artists with autism to display their work. The videos are now edited and available online. This event was a forum for knowledge exchange and effective science communication. The audience had opportunity to interact with the researchers and speakers before and after their talks, allowing for engagement around ideas and innovative programs.

On that day, our event (#TEDxYorkUAutInnov) was trending 40th on Twitter across Canada. Given that major sports teams were in action that day, we were very satisfied to be at the same level as the hashtags: weekend (45th), ScienceMarch (46th).

Our speakers enjoyed the experience thoroughly, here are some of the comments in the evaluation:

“I liked that it was a challenge and put me outside my comfort zone”

“I really enjoyed learning about other speakers’ research as well as sharing my own with them and with the audience”

“I really enjoyed the experience. Very interesting people who all seemed genuinely engaged”

“Thank you for organizing such a uniquely inspiring and education event. I found it extremely worthwhile and am honoured to have

One researcher and speaker at the event publicly tweeted:

#TEDxYorkUAutInnov best autism event I have ever attended.  
Congratulations to @DrJonathanWeiss & @drjonlai #inspiration  
#innovation

Visit [www.tedxyorkusalon.org](http://www.tedxyorkusalon.org) for more details and updates.

# TEACHING & TRAINING

Part of the Chair's mandate is to support the next generation of ASD researchers.

Since 2013, the Chair has funded five postdoctoral fellows and a number of graduate students:

**Dr. Kendra Thomson** (Ph.D., BCBA-D, University of Manitoba) has previously conducted research evaluating a self-instructional manual for teaching direct-care staff how to conduct discrete-trials teaching in an early intervention program for children with ASD. In 2014, she worked under the supervision of Dr. Weiss, examining the effectiveness of Secret Agent Society: Operation Regulation intervention. Dr. Thomson obtained a position as an Assistant Professor in 2015 in the Centre for Applied Disability Studies at Brock University.

**Dr. Priscilla Burnham Riosa's** (PhD, BCBA-D, University of Guelph) research interests are in understanding the impact of ASD on the individual, the family, and other social contexts. She and Dr. Weiss collaborated with educators from the Toronto Catholic District School Board to examine the Program to Assist Social Thinking. Dr. Burnham Riosa also recently began exploring therapeutic alliance in the Secret Agent Society: Operation Regulation (SAS:OR), and the impact this may have on program outcomes. Dr. Burnham Riosa obtained a position as an Assistant Professor in 2016 in the Centre for Applied Disability Studies at Brock University.


**Dr. Sandra Salem-Guirgis's** (PhD, BCBA-D, University of Manitoba) research at York University focuses on the effects of different types of interventions including mindfulness based therapies and cognitive behaviour therapies on children and teenagers with autism and their parents. She is interested in the evaluation of behavioural and clinically-based interventions that target not only behaviour and performance but also socio-emotional functioning and family functioning within the ASD and DD populations. Dr. Salem-Guirgis will be beginning a career as an Assistant Professor at George Brown College in the Behavioural Science Technology Program.

**Dr. Jonathan Lai's** (PhD, McMaster University) research focuses on knowledge mobilization to inform policy through: 1) understanding the health and service needs of individuals with ASD and the factors that influence service utilization and community inclusion, and 2) knowledge translation through the ASDMentalHealth Blog, social media, and stakeholder engagement events (i.e. TEDx Salon events). Previously, he was co-funded by Kids Brain Health Network to work with Autism Speaks Canada on the implementation of Worktopia, a pre-vocational training program for youth with ASD and related initiatives. He is interested in bridging the gaps between brain science, mental health and society-at-large through moving research into evidence-based policies and programs. Dr. Lai will be doing a second post-doctoral fellowship with the CHILD-BRIGHT SPOR Knowledge Translation Unit in Fall 2017 at McGill University.

**Dr. Johanna Lake's** (PhD, McMaster University) research and clinical interests are broadly centered on the health and wellbeing of individuals with developmental disabilities. She is currently working under the supervision of Dr. Weiss, delivering and examining the effectiveness of a cognitive behavioural therapy program, the SAS:OR – Transdiagnostic Trial. Dr. Lake is particularly interested in how this therapy affects change in child emotion regulation and parent co-regulation. She is also interested in supporting caregivers of individuals with developmental disabilities using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. Dr. Lake previously collaborated with Dr. Weiss on projects examining medication use, mindfulness, and service use among individuals with an autism spectrum disorder.

Several graduate students received research or travel funding to present research at scientific conferences, including: Michelle Viecili, Ami Tint, Jennifer MacMullin, Suzanne Robinson, Stephanie (Fung) Ryan, Katherine Wincentak, Odette Weiss, Melissa Rourke, Victoria (Ting) Chan, Andrea Maughan, Karen Black, and Carly Albaum. You can learn about their research interests on the [Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health website](#).





In addition to the postdoctoral fellows and graduate students, three lab coordinators, one program coordinator, one social media correspondent, six research assistants, and three volunteers worked with Chair in the five years:

**Andrew Goodwin** was a Research Assistant for Dr. Weiss from August 2014-2015, working alongside the SAS:OR research team. Andrew is now completing a graduate degree in Psychology at OISE/U of T.

**Casey Fulford** started working as a Lab Coordinator and Research Assistant for Dr. Weiss from May 2013-2014. Working for the Chair provided Casey with many opportunities to be involved in studies and hone her research skills, including administration and scoring of standardized tests, conducting intake interviews with parents, and developing a research poster for a conference. Casey is currently completing a graduate degree in Psychology at the University of Ottawa.

**Carly Albaum** was a Lab Coordinator for Dr. Weiss from May 2014 to July 2016. She received her BA in the Specialized Honours Psychology Program, completing her undergraduate thesis under the supervision of Dr. Weiss. Carly is currently pursuing her graduate training in Clinical-Developmental Psychology at York University under the supervision of Dr. Weiss.

**Emily Guertin** worked as a Research Assistant on the PAST project from October 2014 to June 2015. She obtained a BSc in Psychology from McMaster University and she is currently pursuing her MA in Applied Disability Studies at Brock University.

**Flora Roudbarani** has been working as a Research Assistant for Dr. Weiss since June 2016, working on the SAS:OR program. She obtained a BSc in Psychology from McMaster University and a MEd in Developmental Psychology at OISE/University of Toronto. Flora is interested in pursuing graduate training in Psychology while being involved in ASD research.

**Gemma Cruz** began her involvement in the lab in July 2016 as a volunteer and Honours thesis student with Dr. Weiss, using data from the SAS:OR program. Gemma hopes to conduct research and work alongside children and young adults on the ASD spectrum to find ways to improve their overall quality of life.

**Jordan Cleland** worked as the Social Media Correspondent until August 2015. She is currently working on her Master's of Social Work at the University of Toronto. She hopes to continue research and work with individuals with disabilities, and strives to make the world a more inclusive place.

**Julia Martini** is a volunteer in the lab who is currently completing a double degree in Psychology and Teacher Education. After completing her honours thesis with Dr. Weiss next year, Julia aspires to enter a graduate program in Clinical-Developmental psychology with the hopes of one day providing therapy to children and adults and being involved in ASD research.

**Kayla Halberstadt** is a volunteer in the lab currently working on her Honours BSc in Psychology. Kayla hopes to continue her education, striving towards a career helping those with disabilities.

**Lisa Chan** (MA, OISE, University of Toronto) was a Research Assistant for Dr. Weiss since January 2013 to May 2014. Working for the Chair provided Lisa with the opportunity to help develop and coordinate clinical research on cognitive behavioural therapy treatments for children/youth with ASD that target anxiety disorders and emotion regulation skills. Lisa has since completed an MA in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Toronto.

**Maria Khan** was a Research Assistant for Dr. Weiss from June 2015-2016, working on the SAS:OR program. She received her BA in the Specialized Honours Psychology program, completing an independent study under the supervision of Dr. Weiss. Maria is currently pursuing graduate training in School & Clinical Child Psychology at the University of Alberta.

**Mira Goldstein** was a Research Assistant on the MYmind project and Honours thesis student for the Chair. Her thesis examined the relationship between participation in MYmind and mindfulness and mental health in parents of adolescents with ASD.

**Paula Tablon** has been a Lab Coordinator for Dr. Weiss since June 2016. She completed her Honours BA in Psychology. Working for the Chair has provided her with many opportunities to help develop, coordinate and conduct clinical research in ASD. Paula intends to pursue graduate training in Clinical Psychology.

**Rachel Grant** worked as the Project Coordinator for the MYmind project since October 2014 to June 2015. She graduated from McMaster University with an MSc in Global Health where she focused on global disease and spent time developing a mental health based initiative in Sierra Leone. Rachel is now completing a medical degree at the University of Calgary.

Canada

