**INTENSIVE COLLEGE ADAPTIVE SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

**Carmen Hall, PhD Student, Fanshawe College, Saybrook University**

**Abstract**

**Objectives**

The following study addressed the gap in services for transition-age youth and emerging adults with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. The study identifies the gaps in the community living, inclusion movement for adults with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities, whereby often a focus on physical inclusion is required but does not necessarily highlight skill building to promote greater access and inclusion, leaving such movements with only mild success (Lamb & Bachrach, 2001; Owen et al., 2015).

**The study addressed the following research questions:**

1. Does a comprehensive, short-term behavioral treatment package positively influence skill acquisition?
2. How do caregivers and the community rate the treatment package and perceive it in influencing the individuals’ quality of life, self-determination, support needs, and independent living skills?

**Method**

Eighteen participants ages 16 to 33 years old participated in a five-week summer intensive behavior skill building and habilitation training course offered to adults with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities at the local college. Trained ABA therapists taught individuals in natural settings with individualized programs and goals to teach communication, social, and adaptive living skills. A mixed methods approach was utilized. First, a switching replications design was used to measure participant’s communication skills, social skills, adaptive living skills, and quality of life from pre- to post-intervention with five published measures. Two groups were formed and each group acted as the others’ control. Second, a single-subject, multiple probe across behaviors design measured each participant’s social and communication skills across three identified behaviors. Interobserver agreement (IOA) was recorded for 31% of sessions and 96% IOA was obtained. Lastly, a focus group and social validity survey were completed to capture caregivers’ satisfaction, concerns, and suggestions.

**Results**

Final research analysis is being completed, however, preliminary results demonstrated moderate to large increase in skills acquired for participants who were able to learn the three skills within the 5-week intervention in the single-subject design. Maintenance was maintained four months later. In the switching replications design, results demonstrated significantly greater skills in communication, social skills, daily living skills, and quality of life from pre- to post-intervention on two skill-based measures as compared to the control group, increasing on average 8% for communication and social skills and 15.6% for daily living skills. Parents rated the intervention high in social validity with 100% of parents indicating that they strongly agreed with the program, the methods used, and would have their child participate again. In focus groups themes of enjoyment of the program and desperation for a full-time skill teaching program emerged. Parents enjoyed the intensity of teaching and low support to participant ratio.

**Discussion/Conclusions**

The research highlights the need for intensive, clinical training programs for adults with intellectually disabilities to enhance skill development and thus independence and quality of life. By providing opportunities to learn skills on a daily basis that are individualized, customized, taught to mastery, and generalized into the community, the number of opportunities to be included in the community and enhance quality of life increases.

**Correspondence:**

Carmen Hall

Fanshawe College / Saybrook University

clhall@fanshawec.ca