**TRANSITIONING ADOLESCENTS WITH**

**AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER: LIFE PREP COURSE**

**Meaghen Shaver1 and Andrea Roblin-Hanson2**

**1Centre for Behavioural Studies, St. Lawrence College,**

**2Hotel Dieu Hospital, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**

**Objectives:** Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder may experience skill deficits in the area of adaptive living skills such as self-care, shopping, cooking, problem solving and planning. These skills play particular importance during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. The current study endeavored to identify community service gaps and specific skill deficits for this population, and to evaluate an evidence-based treatment program to address the identified deficits.

**Method:** A scan of the literature was conducted to identify evidence based practices for this population and target skill area. In the initial phases of research, the Assessment of Functional Living Skills – Community Participation Protocol was used to identify target skills in 8 participants diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and subsequently these skills were taught in a five-week skills group format called the “Life Prep Course”. A treatment package that included Behavioural Skills Training, Video Modelling and In-Vivo Generalization opportunities was implemented. Assessment scores, probe data and social validity scores were collected to demonstrate the effectiveness and acceptability of the intervention. Currently, maintenance of the taught skills is being assessed, and subsequently a replication of the “Life Prep Course” is planned in March/April 2018.

**Results:** Results showed that the participants acquired the targeted skills. Specifically, 6/8 participants increased their assessment score by over 10% upon reassessment. Generalization of skills to natural situations was moderate, and was demonstrated to be at 80% success by week 5 of the program. Participants and caregivers reported high levels of satisfaction with the intervention.

**Discussion/Conclusions:** This study strengthens the evidence base for Behavioural Skills Training as an effective intervention to teach life skills to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Barriers to service delivery will be discussed.

**Correspondence:**

**Meaghen Shaver, MSc., BCBA**

**Centre for Behavioural Studies, St. Lawrence College**

**100 Portsmouth Ave.,**

**Kingston, ON, K7L 5A6**

**613-544-5400 x1128**

[**mshaver@sl.on.ca**](mailto:mshaver@sl.on.ca)

Supporting graphs on next page

Figure 2: Percentage of successful generalization probes for participants with at least 4 data points

References

Baghdadli, A., Assouline, B., Sonie, S., Pernon, E., Darrou, C., Michelon, C., & … Pry, R. (2012). Developmental trajectories of adaptive behaviours from early childhood to adolescence in a cohort of 152 children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism And Developmental Disorders, 42(*7), 1314-1325. doi:10.1007/s10803-011-1357-z

Burke, R. V., Anderson, M. N., Bowen, S. L., Howard, M. R., & Allen, K. D. (2010). Evaluation of two instruction methods to increase employment options for young adults with autism spectrum disorders. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 31*, 1223-1233. doi: 10.1016/j.ridd.2010.07.023

McDonald, T. A., & Machalicek, W. (2013). Systematic review of intervention research with adolescents with autism spectrum disorders. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders, 7(*11), 1439-1460. doi: 10.1016/j.rasd.2013.07.015

Miltenberger, R. (2012). *Behavior Modification: Principles & Procedures*. Belmont, CA:

Wadsworth.

Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis. (2017). *Report of the Ontario scientific expert*

*taskforce for the treatment of autism Spectrum disorder.* Retrieved from: <http://www.ontaba.org/pdf/ONTABA%20OSETT-ASD%20REPORT%20WEB.pdf>

Palmen, A., Didden, R., & Arts, M., (2008). Improving questioning asking in high-functioning adolescents with autism spectrum disorder. Effectiveness of small-group training. *Autism, 12,* 83-98. doi: 10.1177/1362361307085265

Palmen, A., Didden, R., & Lang, R. (2012). A systematic review of behavioural intervention research on adaptive skill building in high-functioning young adults with autism spectrum disorder. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders, 6*(2), 602-617. doi: 10.1016/j.rasd.2011.10.001

Partington, J. & Mueller, M. (2012). *Assessment of Functional Living Skills – Community*

*Participation Protocol*. Pleasant Hill, CA: Behavior Analysts, Inc.

Roth, M. E., Gillis, J. M., & DiGennaro Reed, F. D. (2014). A meta-analysis of behavioural interventions for adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Behavioural Education, 23*(2), 258-286. doi. 10.1007/s10864-013-9189-x

Taylor, J. L., McPheeters, M. L., Sathe, N. A., Dove, D., Veenstra-VanderWeele, J., & Warren, Z. (2012). A systematic review of vocational interventions for young adults with autism spectrum disorders. *Pediatrics, 130*(3), 531-538. doi: 10.1542/peds.2012-0682

Weaver, L. L. (2015). Effectiveness of work, activities of daily living, education, and sleep interventions for people with autism spectrum disorder: A systematic review. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 69*(5), p1-p11. doi: 10.5014/ajot.2015.017962