**TRAINING IN TRAUMA-INFORMED POSITIVE BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORTS FOR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS OF ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

**Emily Bulten; Dr. Rosemary Condillac; Brock University**

**Objectives:** Adults with a developmental disability (DD) who have high support needs and live in supported community settings are heavily reliant on direct support professionals to provide access to meaningful opportunities while respecting their autonomy. In Ontario, these direct support professionals may have a wide range of skills, educational backgrounds, and experiences, resulting in highly variable approaches to care and inconsistent implementation of support strategies. Government of Ontario regulations specify the need for person-centered supports including opportunities for autonomy and choice, but there is variation in the interpretation of these requirements and the specific training that agencies provide to their staff. Research regarding the outcomes of direct support staff training has focused on improving staff knowledge and/or skills, but few studies have also measured corresponding client outcomes as a result of staff training. The goal of this study is to respond to the unmet support needs of adults with DD and the lack of availability of training for direct support professionals through studying a new approach to training.

**Method:** Positive Behaviour Supports (PBS) includes evidence-based Applied Behavior Analysis strategies used to prevent or reduce problem behaviour by increasing autonomy and choice and teaching new skills to improve quality of life for people with DD. A trauma-informed approach to care (TIC) enables direct support professionals to design and deliver services that accommodate the vulnerabilities of trauma survivors, ultimately improving quality of life and reducing the frequency and severity of problem behaviours. Behavioural Skills Training (BST) is an evidence-based approach to staff training which employs instruction, modelling, rehearsal and feedback, and is competency-based. BST may be an effective approach in teaching skills consistent with PBS and TIC to direct support professionals to improve supports for adults with DD, promoting healing and improving their quality of life. This approach to training includes knowledge training on TIC and PBS, followed by behavioural skills training to teach direct support professionals specific PBS skills through a trauma-informed lens. Staff will be taught three skills in succession (present choices, present tasks, and provide assistance) within a multiple baseline across behaviours design. The study will include 25 direct support professionals from local partner agencies and the adults with DD who they support. The design will include four phases: 1) baseline; 2) BST with a colleague or confederate; 3) BST on the job with a resident; and 4) follow-up at two weeks and again one month later.

**Results:** N/A**,** presenting proposal as a data blitz.

**Discussion/Conclusions:** Increased autonomy improves quality of life for people with DD. It is expected that client outcomes of autonomy, access to activities, problem behaviour frequency and severity, and mental health symptom severity will improve as a result of multicomponent training of staff. Staff wellbeing and job satisfaction are also expected to increase with a greater understanding and skill set relating to best practices. If successful, we can improve staff’s skills and the degree to which they provide non-intrusive support in a trauma-informed and autonomous way. This research aims to give people with DD more opportunities for choice and enhanced supports that go beyond meeting basic human needs and towards meaningful improvements in quality of life.