**OADD RSIG 2024 Poster Presentation Abstract**

1. **Objectives:** When facilitating programs such as *Transitioning Together* (TT) which, aims to support autistic youth and their families during the transition to adulthood, it is important that practitioners receive training to develop their clinical skills to not only learn to effectively facilitate a group but to build rapport with their clients along the way. In 2021, organizations across York Region, Ontario, offered a TT Clinical Implementation Training opportunity to interested community practitioners. Preliminary pre-post survey findings of the TT Clinical Implementation Training program indicated practitioner-reported increases in their transition-to-adulthood knowledge and confidence in supporting youth and their families during this transition. Some participants recommended additional training opportunities to increase practitioners' facilitation skills. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to (1) understand which facilitation skills were most important for delivering TT and (2) develop and evaluate the effectiveness of an online behavioural skills training (BST) package targeting identified facilitator skills that complements the existing TT Clinical Implementation Training.
2. **Methods:** The present study uses a sequential mixed methods design. In Study 1, we conducted small group and individual interviews with 10 participants to understand what essential TT facilitator skills could be included in an online BST package. Participants were between the ages of 29 and 60 with 20% identifying as male and 80% as female. Half of the participants have between 11 and 20 years of experience working with autistic transition-aged youth. We qualitatively analyzed the focus group and interview data by looking for relationships between the data. In Study 2, we are currently evaluating the effectiveness of the training package using a single subject design with three previously trained TT program facilitators. Participants (all identify as female) are between the ages of 45 and 48. Two participants have previous experience delivering group programs, including TT. Effectiveness will be evaluated using visual analysis.
3. **Results:** Study 1 findings indicated that establishing and maintaining rapport was essential, and many strategies to build rapport, including active listening, could be taught to facilitators. After consulting with the TT program developers, we created an online TT active listening training package. Preliminary data have been collected and the results indicate promising increases in active listening skills across the three participants following training.
4. **Discussion/Conclusion:** Our findings will add to the relatively limited knowledge of empirically-based training programs targeting professionals delivering transition to adulthood programs for autistic youth and their families.

**LISTENING TO BUILD RAPPORT: DEVELOPING AND EVALUATING A VIRTUAL TRAINING PACKAGE TO TEACH COMMUNITY PRACTITIONERS ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS**

**Mills, S.1, Maher, K.1, Bowman, Z.1, Burnham Riosa, P.1, DaWalt Smith, L. E.2, Szidon, K.2, & Thomson, K.1.**

**1Brock University, 2Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison**

**Correspondence:**

**Presenter:**

**Shona Mills**

Department of Applied Disability Studies

Brock University

[sm17uf@brocku.ca](mailto:sm17uf@brocku.ca%E2%80%AF%E2%80%AF)

**Additional Authors:**

**Kyra Maher**

Department of Applied Disability Studies

Brock University

[km18xd@brocku.ca](mailto:km18xd@brocku.ca)

**Zack Bowman**

Department of Applied Disability Studies

Brock University

[zb18aj@brocku.ca](mailto:zb18aj@brocku.ca)

**Priscilla Burnham Riosa, PhD, BCBA-D**

Department of Applied Disability Studies

Brock University

[pburnhamriosa@brocku.ca](mailto:pburnhamriosa@brocku.ca)

**Leann E. Smith DaWalt, PhD**

Waisman Center

University of Wisconsin-Madison

[lesmith2@wisc.edu](mailto:lesmith2@wisc.edu)

**Kate Szidon**

Waisman Center

University of Wisconsin-Madison

[szidon@wisc.edu](mailto:szidon@wisc.edu)

**Kendra Thomson, PhD, BCBA-D**

Department of Applied Disability Studies

Brock University

[kthomson@brocku.ca](mailto:kthomson@brocku.ca%E2%80%AF)