

Introduction: The Research Special Interest Group Research Day Abstracts Special Issue 2021 - 2023

Author Information

Lisa Whittingham,^{1,2}
Anna Przednowek,^{1,3}

¹Research Special Interest Group, Ontario
Association on Developmental Disabilities,
Ontario, Canada

²Department of Child and Youth Studies,
Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario,
Canada

³School of Social Work, Nipissing University,
North Bay, Ontario, Canada

Correspondence:

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The OADD Research Special Interest Group (RSIG) Research Day brings together researchers, professionals, persons living with developmental disabilities, and others interested in research about/with individuals with developmental disabilities to exchange ideas, resources, and concerns. This research day:

- Celebrates the research being done across the province that involves individuals with developmental disabilities as both participants and co-researchers.
- Provides an opportunity to network and build research collaborations, and,
- Highlights areas of interest and developments in the ways that research is being conducted with individuals with developmental disabilities.

After having to abruptly cancel the RSIG Research Day in 2020 due to growing concern about COVID-19 and the extensive measures taken to keep people safe, we were determined in 2021 and 2022 not to let the pandemic prevent us from achieving our goals. To that end, we decided to host the research day online, featuring keynote speakers, oral presentations, data blitzes, and a website featuring poster presentations with brief oral descriptions.

In 2021, our theme was *Living in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Emerging Opportunities and Obstacles*. Wanting to ignite a discussion that drew parallels between the historic treatment of individuals with developmental disabilities in Ontario and the impacts of the public health measures on these individuals residing in residential care facilities, we invited Dr. Madeline Burghardt, from Kings College, University of Western Ontario, and York University, to be our

keynote speaker. In her talk, *“Emerging from the Cracks: Strengthening Our Place in the Post-COVID World”*, Dr. Burghardt discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the cracks in our advancement of care and support for individuals living with developmental disabilities in Ontario and suggested what needs to be done post-pandemic to ensure history does not repeat itself. The Research Day also included five oral presentations and eleven poster presentations that highlighted a broad range of research being done across Ontario. Many of these projects highlighted the detrimental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals with developmental disabilities and highlighted how we could move forward to address the gaps it revealed.

In 2022, our theme was *Who Has a Seat at the Table? Changing the Rules of Engagement in Research and Practice?* Recognizing that researchers are increasingly looking for ways to foster individuals with developmental disabilities as co-researchers and making research processes more accessible by promoting facilitators and reducing barriers to inclusion, we invited Dr. Virginie Cobigo to be our keynote speaker. In her talk, *Inclusive Research: Why It Takes More than a Seat at the Table*, Dr. Cobigo demonstrated the adaptations made to the research process to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities are included in research processes. We also had the opportunity to hear from a panel of self-advocates supported by researchers about how inclusive research practices were used to explore their living experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also welcomed five oral presentations, one symposium, and 15 poster presentations that featured a variety of topics being explored by students, early career professionals, and research practitioners across Ontario. Many of these projects were undertaken by interdisciplinary teams and in partnership with community agencies.

In 2023, we were pleased to be able to host the RSIG Research Day in person again in London, Ontario. Our theme for this year was *“Knowledge is Power: Creative and Collaborative Ways of Sharing Knowledge”*. In our call for abstracts, we welcomed submissions that demonstrate the various creative and collaborative ways that knowledge has been produced and shared to make changes to both policy and practice, and in the developmental sector. We were especially interested in research highlighting promising practices surrounding stakeholder engagement in practice, service delivery, research, and knowledge translation with persons with developmental disabilities and their supports. We invited Dr. Evadne Kelly to be our keynote speaker this year. In her talk *Collectively Creating Conditions of Knowing: The Offerings of an Activist-Art Project Series called Into the Light*, Dr. Kelly spoke about working from her archival research to lead and collectively create a project series called *Into the Light*, an activist-art project series that addresses histories of Ontario educational institutions producing and disseminating oppressive knowledge and traces those histories to present day inequities and works to counter them. The Research Day also included eight oral presentations, five data blitz presentations and ten poster presentations that highlighted the collaborative and inclusive ways of engaging in research with persons living with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Conference Committees

Hosting a conference is a team effort and the success of the RSIG Research Day comes from the passion, dedication, and commitment of a volunteer committee composed of individuals who share an interest in promoting the research involving individuals with developmental disabilities

being completed in Ontario, Canada. We are grateful to the following conference committees for their hard work:

2021	2022	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Courtney Bishop, Brock University ● Nicole Bobbette, Queen's University ● Cassandra Charbonneau, University of Windsor ● Daniel Dickson, Concordia University ● Lara Genik, Vanier Children's Mental Wellness ● Sue Hutton, ARCH Disability Law ● Shannon Norris, Nipissing University ● Sara Ouellette, Nipissing University ● Anne Readhead, Brock University ● Brianne Redquest, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health ● Alan Santinele Martino, Carleton University ● Katelyn Soucie-Vukmanich, Brock University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nicole Bobbette, Queen's University ● Cassandra Charbonneau, Community Practitioner ● Olivia Dobson, University of Guelph ● Rebecca Hansford, Queen's University ● Sue Hutton, ARCH Disability Law ● Cassidy Martel, Nipissing University ● Alan Santinele Martino, University of Calgary ● Laura Mullins, Brock University ● Shannon Norris, Point in Time Centre for Children, Youth and Parents ● Sara Ouellette, HANDS The Family Help Network ● Brianne Redquest, University of Calgary ● Daniel Dickson, Concordia University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Courtney Bishop (co-chair), Durham College ● Kaylagh Vanwyck, Christian Horizons ● Josée Boulanger, University of Ottawa ● Cassandra Charbonneau, Community Practitioner ● Olivia Dobson, University of Guelph ● Rebecca Hansford, Queen's University ● Alan Santinele Martino, University of Calgary ● Laura Mullins, Brock University ● Shannon Norris, Point in Time Centre for Children, Youth and Parents ● Brianne Redquest, University of Calgary ● Daniel Dickson, Concordia University

Each year, members of the RSIG Research Day Committee review abstract submissions and award nominations. To provide a fair, blind peer review of the abstract submission, all identifying information is removed from the abstracts and committee members are asked to refrain from reviewing abstracts where they believe they may have a bias in evaluation. The

abstracts are judged using a scoring rubric that evaluates the strengths of the purpose, methodology, results, conclusions, and practical/clinical implications of the submission. In 2022, the RSIG Research Day committee initiated a concrete effort to increase the accessibility of presentations. This included providing guidelines for presenters about how to make their presentations more accessible and hosting a Q&A session for presenters before the conference to help guide them through the implementation of the accessibility guidelines. In 2023, we were pleased to award our first, Self Advocate Travel Award to a self-advocate co-presenter.

The commitment of researchers and interdisciplinary teams to find creative ways to continue their research through the pandemic speaks to their resilience and strength, and their desire to promote the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities. As a committee, we continue to be inspired and motivated by the work of our colleagues and look forward to future RSIG Research Day events. It is our pleasure to share the abstracts from the 2021 – 2023 Research Days in this special issue of the Journal on Developmental Disabilities.