



**The Clinical Bulletin
of the
Developmental Disabilities Program**

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Annual Developmental Disabilities Spring CPD, 2016

On April 13, 2016, the Developmental Disabilities Program in the Department of Psychiatry at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University, held their 14th Annual Developmental Disabilities Spring Continuing Professional Development day. The event featured three invited speakers;

Joan Gardiner, Speech Language Pathologist, who spoke about Communication Disorders in people with Developmental Disabilities.

Heather Bailey, Occupational Therapist, who spoke about Sensory Impairments in people with Developmental Disabilities.

Stephanie Gratton, from Developmental Services Ontario (DSO), who spoke about the role of the DSO, and how to navigate the DSO system.

In our Summer 2016 issue, we featured a summary of the presentation given by Joan Gardiner, M.Cl. Sc., S-LP ©, Reg. CASLPO, about communication disorders.

In our last issue, we summarized the presentation by Stephanie Gratton from DSO.

Below, find a summary of “Sensory Impairments”, presented by Heather Bailey.

Sensory Impairments.

We take in information using our 5 senses; touch, hearing, sight, smell and taste. These systems are constantly taking in information, and our brain is constantly processing that information. Each system has its own importance to the way we interact with, and experience the world around us. People with developmental disabilities may have sensory impairments that co-exist with their disability, or that are secondary symptoms of their disability. Often, problems arise when those with a developmental disability cannot, for whatever reason, verbalize or communicate the symptoms of a sensory impairment that they are experiencing.

These senses allow us to hear, see, feel, smell and taste, but they also effect other aspects of our lives. Our hearing/auditory system is very discriminative, and allows us to be aware of social cues. Our olfactory system is an important one right from birth, as it allows infants to identify their parents. It also has strong ties to emotion and memory. Our sense of taste is extremely individualized and allows us to experience food, and our visual system (central and peripheral) can strongly affect our mood. Our senses also affect our movement, balance, body awareness and body function.

Sensory processing means that information is received through the sensory systems (input), translated in the central nervous system, and results in meaningful, and appropriate responses (output). Sensory integration and modulation happens automatically for most people, but those with a developmental disability can often experience disrupted or distorted sensory integration and modulation. In the typically developing/developed population, 5.3% of people have a sensory processing dysfunction. This tends to be much higher in the developmentally disabled population, and is more common with some disorders, such as Autism Spectrum Disorders, Fragile X, Cerebral Palsy, and other genetic syndromes, as well as in mental health diagnoses, like schizophrenia and anxiety disorders.

When a clinician does an assessment of a patient with a Developmental Disability, they can look for sensory clues. Think about what the person is getting out of their behavior? Their experience may be different from your own. Expect higher sensory responses from your patients in less familiar and comfortable environments. Remember that their tolerance for sensory stimuli might vary throughout the day. Also consider the concept of self-regulation. Think about the two primary factors that contribute to understanding of the overall concept of sensory processing; neurological thresholds (the way the nervous system responds to sensory input) and self-regulation strategies (what a person uses to cope). Sensory seeking behaviours are evident in people with hyposensitivity. This may result in risky behaviours, lowered awareness of touch/pain, inappropriate touching, and the patient may seem lazy or uninvolved. Those with sensory avoiding behaviours tend to be evident in people with hypersensitivity. This may result in overreactions to mild input, behavioural outbursts, and higher levels of anxiety.

15th Annual Spring CPD

The 2017 Annual Developmental Disabilities Spring CPD will be held on March 29, 2017 at Windermere Manor. This year we have invited the following speakers;

Dr. Amer Burhan, MD., Associate Professor, Chair of the Division of Geriatric Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University.

Dr. Burhan will speak about specialized issues in the Geriatric population with Developmental Disabilities.

Dr. Michael Mak, MD., Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University.

Dr. Mak will speak about sleep disorders in the Developmentally Disabled population.

Louis Busch, Behavioural Therapist, Forensic Rehabilitation Unit, Complex Care & Recovery Program, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto Ontario. President, Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis, and Coordinator, Ontario Behaviour Analytic Community of Practice.

Mr. Busch will give a talk entitled; “Functional analysis and multi-component treatment evaluation of severe Pica”.

Registration for this event will open in the new year. Seating is limited, and lunch is provided, so you are encouraged to register early to avoid disappointment.

Registration information can be found on our website here;

http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/ddp/education/continuing_professional_development.html

Or by contacting Sarah O’Flanagan, Program Coordinator for the Developmental Disabilities Program at ddp@uwo.ca, or 519-646-6100 x47694

Developmental Disabilities Clinical and Research Rounds

The second session of the new Developmental Disabilities Clinical and Research Rounds was held on Wednesday October 12, 2016 at the Child and Parent Resource Institute in London.

Dr. Rob Nicolson (MD, Chair – Developmental Disabilities Program) and Nolan D’Souza (Genetic Counselor, LHSC) gave a joint presentation entitled; “Autism and PTEN”. Dr. Nicolson gave a clinical case presentation of a patient with ASD and a PTEN mutation, and Nolan D’Souza spoke about the potential relationship between the mutation and ASD as suggested in recent literature.

The third session of the new Developmental Disabilities Clinical and Research Rounds was held on Wednesday November 9, 2016 at the Child and Parent Resource Institute in London.

Dr. Don Saklofske, Professor in the Department of Psychology, and Chair – Personality and Measurement, Department of Psychology, gave a presentation entitled “Assessing Intelligence: Contemporary Relevance... or Passe?”

The fourth session will be held on Wednesday December 14, 2016 at the Child and Parent Resource Institute in London.

Dr. Ryan Stevenson, Department of Psychology, Brain & Mind Institute, Western University, will give a talk entitled “The role of sensory processing in ASD symptomatology”.

All are welcome at this event, no registration is required.

If you cannot attend in person, but would like to watch the event as a live-streamed webinar, please contact Sarah O’Flanagan, Program Coordinator for the Developmental Disabilities Program for details on how to do so.

These talks are also available for viewing after the fact on our website at;

http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/ddp/education/continuing_professional_development.html

This is an accredited learning series through the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Canadian Psychological Association and the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

Research in the Developmental Disabilities Program.

Annual Dr. Benjamin Goldberg Research Award

In the spring of 2016, the Developmental Disabilities Program held the annual Dr. Benjamin Goldberg Research Grant Competition. This award has historically been open to anyone registered as a student at a community college or university in Southwestern Ontario.

This year we received 5 very high level applications, and our successful applicant was Lara Genick, a graduate student at the University of Guelph. Lara will use the funds to complete a study meant to test the effectiveness of a previously developed and piloted pain training program for respite workers, using a randomized controlled trial. She hypothesizes that completion of said program will lead to an increase in respite workers' pain assessment and management-related knowledge, perceptions feasibility/confident/skill and strategy use in the developmental sector.

Good luck and congratulations to Lara, and watch for a report of her findings in a future issue of this bulletin.

Annual C. Kingsley Allison Research Award

In the fall of 2016, the Developmental Disabilities Program held their annual C. Kingsley Allison Research Grant Competition. This grant is open to any student (undergraduate or graduate), faculty member, or employee of the Western University Community. We also accept applications from non-University persons working with agencies in the London region, providing services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. This grant is not limited in scope – rather it is for any, and all research projects that are of relevance to the understanding of the causes, diagnosis, and treatment of intellectual and developmental disabilities.

This year we received 9 excellent applications. The peer-reviewed judging process is currently in progress, and the successful applicant(s) will be announced in the new year. Good luck to all our applicants.

This is an annual competition, and will be held every fall. For more information on this award and the eligibility criteria, please visit our website here;

http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/ddp/research/our_research.html

or contact Sarah O'Flanagan, Program Coordinator for the Developmental Disabilities Program at ddp@uwo.ca, or 519-646-6100 x47694

Upcoming Conferences on Developmental Disabilities.

The Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities will hold their annual conference from April 18 – April 21st, 2017 at the Hilton Niagara Falls, Hotel & Suites, Niagara Falls Ontario.

Registration will open in the new year, but more information can be found on their website here;

<http://www.oadd.org/>

The theme of the 2017 conference is “Identifying Gaps: Unlocking Potential”.

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Submissions welcome. Articles published or referenced in this Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Western University, the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, The Department of Psychiatry, or the Developmental Disabilities Program.