

**Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC) On-Line to Success (OLTS) Evaluation
Report**

Supporting Students with Intersectional Identities During the Post-Secondary Transition

January 2026

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Acknowledgements

This project was conducted in collaboration with the Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC). We extend our sincere thanks to all student participants who generously shared their time, experiences, and perspectives. Their insights were central to understanding how transition supports are experienced in practice and to identifying meaningful opportunities for program growth. We also thank RARC staff and OLTS facilitators for their collaboration, openness, and ongoing commitment to supporting students with disabilities during the transition to post-secondary education. Their engagement throughout the evaluation process made this work possible. This research was undertaken thanks in part to a New Recruitment Supplement funding from the Canada First Research Excellence Fund, awarded to Dr. Tasmia Hai through the Healthy Brains, Healthy Lives initiative at McGill University.



Executive Summary

“OLTS helped me understand how to advocate for myself, but I still felt like parts of my identity were invisible in the process.”

Who is RARC and the OLTS Program?

The Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC) strives to promote equity and access for students with neurodevelopmental disorders by providing evidence-based services and supports, including assessments, training, research, and transition programming. RARC’s On-Line to Success (OLTS) program is designed to support students with disabilities—including learning disabilities, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and mental health disabilities—as they transition from secondary to post-secondary education. Recognizing the need to address the intersectional challenges faced by students with disabilities, RARC has increasingly sought innovative strategies to better serve students whose experiences are shaped by race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. This evaluation builds on that commitment by examining how OLTS is experienced by students with diverse and intersecting identities.

Objectives

This evaluation examined how students with disabilities and intersecting identities experience the transition to post-secondary education and assessed the perceived effectiveness of OLTS. While OLTS has demonstrated value as a disability-focused transition support, less was known about how intersecting identities shape students’ transition experiences and support needs. In collaboration with RARC, this study builds on RARC’s expertise to identify gaps in inclusivity and to develop culturally responsive, anti-oppressive recommendations for program enhancement. Guided by an intersectional framework¹, this evaluation examined strengths, gaps, and opportunities for enhancing OLTS through culturally responsive and anti-oppressive approaches that reflect the lived realities of diverse learners.

Evaluation Questions

Following an intersectionality framework¹, the evaluation addressed the following questions:

1. What barriers do students with disabilities who have diverse and intersecting identities face during their transition to post-secondary education?
2. How effective are existing transition supports, including OLTS, in meeting the needs of these students?
3. What resources and program developments could improve the cultural responsiveness, accessibility, and inclusivity of OLTS for students with intersecting identities?

Methodology

Participants were drawn from former OLTS program cohorts between 2021 and 2024 and were eligible if they were 18 years of age or older, had participated in OLTS, and consented to follow-

up research participation. This mixed-methods evaluation combined quantitative survey data (n = 39) and program metrics (2021–2024) with qualitative interviews (n = 9) with former OLTS participants. Integrating descriptive trends with lived experiences allowed the evaluation to identify both what OLTS does well and where students experienced gaps—particularly for those with intersecting marginalized identities.

How Useful is the OLTS Program?

Overall, OLTS was experienced as a meaningful and effective transition support. Participants reported increased confidence navigating post-secondary systems, stronger self-advocacy skills, and improved understanding of disability accommodations. Students described valuing the program’s structure, practical information, and opportunities to learn from facilitators and form connections with peers with lived experience of disability. However, experiences were not uniform: some participants felt that while disability-related supports were strong, other aspects of their identity were less visible within the program.

Satisfaction and Feedback

Participants reported high levels of satisfaction with OLTS, describing the program as accessible, supportive, and practically useful. Students valued the program’s clear structure, organizational learning strategies, neurodiversity-affirming approach, and emphasis on self-advocacy. Satisfaction was often accompanied by constructive feedback. Participants highlighted the need for more explicit attention to intersectional identities, stronger emotional and mental health supports, and continued guidance during the early stages of post-secondary education. These insights point to opportunities for improving OLTS while building on its existing strengths.

Recommendations

Based on the integrated quantitative and qualitative findings, the evaluation identifies opportunities to enhance OLTS through more explicit integration of culturally responsive and intersectional content, strengthened emotional and mental health supports, and extended support beyond program completion. Participants identified structured mentorship and step-by-step guidance for navigating key systems as particularly beneficial additions to the program.

Conclusions

This evaluation demonstrates that RARC’s OLTS program provides a strong foundation for supporting students with disabilities during the transition to post-secondary education. Findings show that OLTS effectively builds confidence, strengthens self-advocacy skills, and improves students’ understanding of disability accommodations. At the same time, the evaluation highlights the importance of attending to intersecting identities and systemic inequities that shape students’ transition experiences. Enhancing OLTS through more explicit intersectional, relational, personalized, and sustained supports would further strengthen its impact and ensure the program continues to empower and meet the diverse needs of the students it serves.

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Background

Intersectionality is a critical and analytical framework that identifies how multiple diverse identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status (SES), and disability, intersect to reveal interconnected systems of power and oppression.¹⁻⁴ This study builds on scholarship from Critical Disability Studies and Social Justice Education to frame disability as a socially constructed and context-dependent identity.¹⁻⁴ Intersectionality reveals how social identities and inequalities are mutually shaped, meaning that identity-related experiences (e.g., race) cannot be understood without considering their intersection with other identities (e.g., disability).^{5,6} Despite Canada's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), systemic issues like sexism, ableism, and racism persist.⁶ While these barriers are well-documented, their cumulative effects remain underexplored.⁷⁻⁹ Students with disabilities transitioning to post-secondary education face unique challenges that are compounded by such identities.^{8,10} This critical period involves navigating academic expectations, reduced structured supports, and increased self-advocacy demands.

Research indicates that post-secondary students with intersectional identities face higher risks of negative outcomes, such as lower academic achievement, reduced access to support services, and increased dropout rates, particularly in the context of systemic barriers.⁶⁻¹¹ As of 2021, one in four people in Canada (26.5%) identify as racialized.¹² These individuals experience higher unemployment rates (12.5% vs. 7.3% for White Canadians) and earn approximately 73¢ for every dollar earned by White Canadians.¹⁸ These disparities are compounded for the 22% of Canadians with disabilities, who have lower employment rates (59.4% vs. 80%) and lower post-secondary degree attainment (13.2% vs. 20.7%).¹²⁻¹⁴ The intersection of other diverse identities exacerbates these disparities, resulting in poorer health, higher poverty, and increased reliance on government assistance.

Although policy initiatives like the *Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism* and the *Ontario Anti-Black Racism Strategy* address systemic racism, they often overlook the intersection of other marginalized identities.¹⁵ Similarly, many disability services fail to account for cultural, gendered, or socioeconomic factors, exacerbating systemic inequities.^{1-5, 16,17} By situating this study within a multi-layered understanding of oppression, it brings together diverse literatures to address a pressing gap in applied educational support. This study highlights the need for culturally responsive services rooted in anti-oppression frameworks—such as anti-racism, gender equity, and disability justice—to address systemic gaps.

Objectives

This project addresses the underexplored challenges faced by high school students with intersectional identities—including race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status (SES), and disability—as they transition to post-secondary education. While RARC's On-Line to Success (OLTS) program is designed to support students with disabilities in navigating this transition, the current study expands this scope by explicitly examining how race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, and SES intersect with disability to shape students' experiences.

To date, RARC has not conducted a targeted investigation into the intersectional challenges experienced by racialized students with disabilities. This study, led by researchers at McGill University and developed in collaboration with RARC, seeks to address this gap by gathering qualitative and quantitative data from past OLTS participants, offering new insights into how intersecting identities influence post-secondary transition outcomes.

Given the research objectives and the shared commitment to advancing inclusive, evidence-based practices, this project is uniquely positioned to achieve meaningful impact through partnership with RARC. The research objectives were co-created with input from RARC, ensuring the study directly responds to the needs of students with multiple marginalized identities as they navigate post-secondary systems.

By positioning intersectionality—particularly in relation to race and culture—as a core analytic lens, this study builds upon RARC’s mission to support equitable educational transitions while contributing independent, complementary insights. It emphasizes the need for culturally responsive services grounded in anti-oppression frameworks, including anti-racism, gender equity, and disability justice.

The overarching project aim is to:

- Identify the unique barriers and needs of students with intersectional identities during the post-secondary transition period;
- Develop recommendations for enhancing OLTS and related transition programs; and
- Promote more equitable, inclusive, and responsive supports that equip and empower diverse students to successfully navigate their educational journeys.

Through this collaboration, the study not only advances scholarly understanding of intersectional disability but also offers practical guidance to strengthen the equity, inclusivity and cultural responsiveness of transition programming in Ontario and beyond.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used to capture a comprehensive view of both broad trends and in-depth participant perspectives. Quantitative survey data provided information on demographics, perceived barriers, discrimination, and support effectiveness, while qualitative interviews offered deeper insight into how students’ intersecting identities shaped their transition experiences and interactions with OLTS.

Participants and Recruitment

Participants were drawn from former OLTS program cohorts (2021–2024). Eligible participants were adults (18+), had previously participated in OLTS, self-identified as having a disability and an intersectional identity (e.g., racialized and disabled), and had consented to follow-up research participation. Eligible participants completed an online quantitative survey that included demographic questions as well as items assessing transition barriers, experiences of discrimination, program satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness of OLTS supports. A total of

39 participants completed the quantitative survey. Table 1 summarizes key participant characteristics, including disability type, race, ethnicity and cultural identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background. This information is presented to contextualize the findings and highlight the diversity of students who participated in the evaluation. From this group, nine participants were purposively selected for interviews to ensure balanced representation across key intersectional identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, disability type, gender identity, LGBTQ+ identification, socioeconomic status).

Table 1
Participant Characteristics (n=39)

Variable	Category	N	%
OLTS Completion	Completed program	34	87
	Did not complete	5	13
Age	18-20	35	90
	21-23	4	10
Post-Secondary Enrollment	Yes	32	82
	No	7	18
Gender Identity	Female	20	51
	Male	14	36
	Non-binary/third gender	4	10
	Transgender	1	3
2SLGBTQ+ Identity	Yes	9	23
	Maybe	4	10
	No	23	59
	Prefer not to say	3	8
Race/Ethnicity*	White	26	67
	Black or African American	2	5
	Asian	2	5
	Hispanic or Latinx	4	10
	Other (mixed/Indigenous)	5	13
Disability Identity*	Learning disability	11	28
	ADHD	5	13
	Autism spectrum disorder	11	28
	Mental health disorder	3	8
	Other disability	9	23
Family income	Under \$30,000	2	5
	\$30,000 – \$70,000	6	15
	\$70,000 – \$110,000	7	18
	\$110,000 – \$150,000	3	8
	\$150,000 or more	5	13
	Unsure	16	41

Note. Percentages are based on the full sample (N = 39). Race/ethnicity and disability identity were select-all-that-apply items; therefore, percentages may exceed 100%.

Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected through an online demographic questionnaire and survey administered via McGill University managed Qualtrics, a secure survey platform ensuring data privacy. Survey items assessed perceived barriers during transition, experiences of discrimination, and perceptions of OLTS program support effectiveness. Participants who completed the survey received a \$25 electronic gift card as compensation. Qualitative data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 30–45 minutes, conducted via Microsoft (MS) Teams. Interviews delved deeper into themes identified in the survey by exploring participants’ transition experiences, perceptions of OLTS program supports, unmet needs, and recommendations for program improvement. Interview participants received a \$50 electronic gift card as compensation.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively to identify patterns related to barriers, support effectiveness, and intersectional differences in experiences. These quantitative findings are intended to illustrate patterns of agreement and variability within the sample rather than determining statistically significant differences or causal relationships. Qualitative interviews were auto-transcribed through MS Teams with interview transcripts reviewed and verified by authors. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to transition challenges, identity-related experiences, and suggested program enhancements. Findings from both data sources were examined together to provide a comprehensive understanding of participant experiences and to inform actionable recommendations for strengthening OLTS programming.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval was obtained from McGill University’s Research Ethics Board with secondary authorization from RARC. All participants provided informed consent, and data were anonymized following Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2) guidelines. Given the potential sensitivity of discussing experiences with racism, ableism, or discrimination, participants were offered referrals to support services and provided opportunities to review and clarify their responses to ensure psychological safety and accuracy.

Key Findings: What Changed, What Worked, and Where Gaps Remain

This mixed-methods evaluation examined how students with disabilities and intersecting identities experienced the transition to post-secondary education and assessed the perceived effectiveness of RARC’s OLTS program. Quantitative findings highlight broad patterns in barriers and program effectiveness, while qualitative interviews provide insight into how these patterns were experienced in students’ everyday lives. All quantitative items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree). To enhance interpretability for applied audiences, figures present the percentage of participants who selected “Agree” or “Strongly agree” for each item. Descriptive means and standard deviations are retained in the text to provide additional context regarding response patterns and variability.

Taken together, the findings indicate that OLTS played a meaningful role in supporting students' confidence, self-advocacy, and preparedness for post-secondary education, while also identifying important gaps related to intersectional identity, emotional well-being, and individualized support.

Disability as a Central and Consistent Transition Barrier

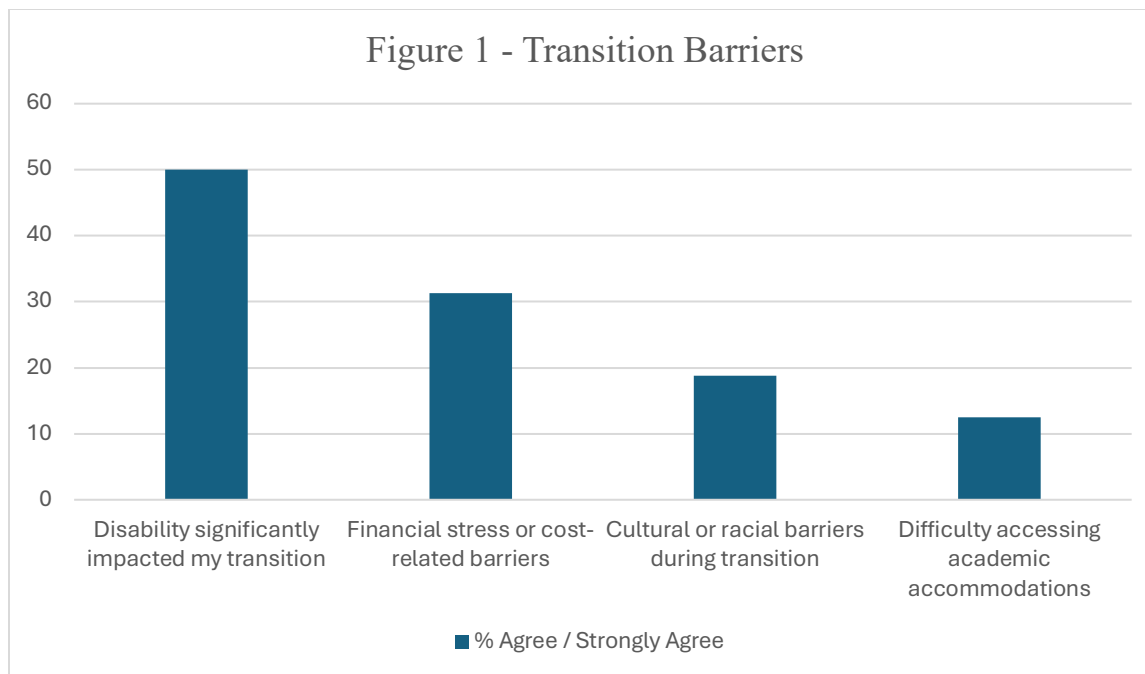
Across both quantitative and qualitative findings, disability emerged as the most consistent factor shaping participants' transition to post-secondary education, primarily through systemic barriers related to accessing accommodations and navigating institutional systems. This finding speaks directly to the broader transition period rather than to the OLTS course specifically, highlighting structural challenges that precede and extend beyond formal transition programming.

Quantitative results indicated that approximately four out of five respondents (about 79% of the analytic sample, $n = 39$) identified disability as a primary determinant of their transition challenges, particularly in relation to delayed accommodation processes, extensive documentation requirements, and limited institutional guidance.

Qualitative accounts reinforced this pattern, with participants describing difficulties not only in securing accommodations, but also in understanding institutional procedures, identifying appropriate points of contact, and managing the timing of supports once academic demands had already intensified. Several students emphasized that support often arrived only after academic or emotional difficulties had already emerged. As one participant explained:

“By the time I met with accessibility, I was already in university and behind. It felt like help only came once things were already falling apart.”

These patterns are illustrated in Figure 1, which shows the percentage of participants who agreed or strongly agreed that specific transition barriers were present. As shown, disability-related barriers—largely reflecting challenges related to accessing accommodations and navigating institutional systems—were endorsed by a substantially larger proportion of participants than other transition challenges.



Note. Percentages reflect participants who selected “Agree” or “Strongly agree” for each item (analytic sample N = 39).

Intersectional Barriers Were Uneven but Meaningful

“I felt out of place and not accepted by my peers. When you’re discriminated against for being LGBTQ+, you think, “I’m also disabled—that’s another difference. I have to hide that too. Once you learn to hide one thing about yourself, you hide everything.”

While disability-related barriers were consistently reported, experiences related to race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexuality, and socioeconomic status were more variable across participants. Quantitative findings reflected this unevenness. On a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree), endorsement of cultural- and race-related barriers fell in the moderate range (Ms = 3.75–4.06, SDs ≈ 0.83–1.14), indicating substantial variability rather than uniform endorsement across the sample. This variability is also reflected in Figure 1, where endorsement of cultural, racial, and financial barriers is lower and more uneven compared to disability-related barriers.

In contrast, institutional disability-related barriers were strongly endorsed, with participants reporting high agreement that disability significantly shaped their transition experiences, particularly in relation to accessing accommodations and navigating post-secondary systems (M = 1.81, SD = 0.81). Financial barriers were not captured through standalone quantitative items and emerged primarily through qualitative accounts, where students described financial strain, costs associated with disability documentation, and challenges navigating financial aid systems as compounding their transition difficulties.

Qualitative findings help explain this variability. Students with intersecting marginalized identities described how disability interacted with race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexuality, and socioeconomic background to intensify transition challenges. These experiences included cultural misunderstanding, pressure to conceal aspects of identity, minority stress, and fear of disclosure within academic and institutional settings:

“Navigating with a disability is already hard, but culture shifts the context. You’re constantly deciding what parts of yourself are safe to show.”

Although intersectional barriers were not universally experienced, when present they had significant consequences for students’ sense of belonging, emotional well-being, and willingness to seek support. Greater variability in quantitative responses related to race, ethnicity, culture, and discrimination reflects uneven but meaningful intersectional barriers rather than their absence.

OLTS Supported Confidence, Self-Advocacy, and Disability Navigation

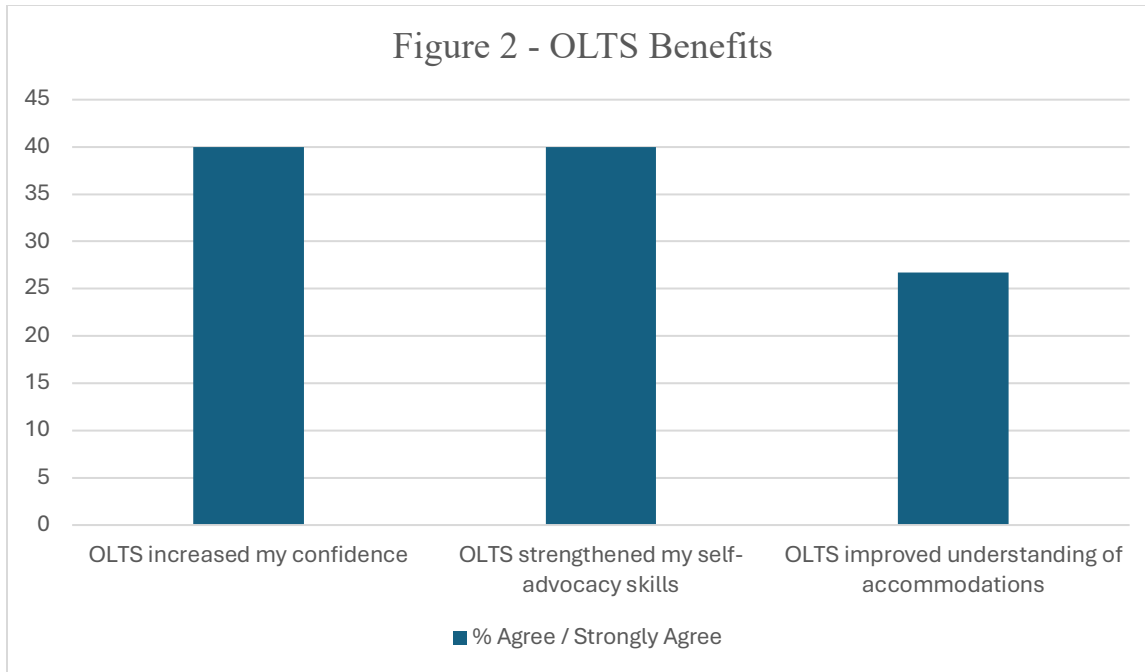
“The program was really helpful...it helped my confidence, understanding my disability, and not feeling alone.”

Despite the challenges described above, participants consistently identified OLTS as a meaningful and beneficial source of support during their transition. Quantitative findings indicated strong agreement that OLTS increased students’ confidence, strengthened self-advocacy skills, and improved understanding of disability accommodations. On a 5-point Likert scale, participants reported high endorsement of these outcomes, including increased confidence ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.05$), strengthened self-advocacy ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.97$), and improved understanding of accommodations ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 0.54$).

These patterns were echoed clearly in the qualitative interviews. Participants described OLTS as helping them feel more prepared to navigate post-secondary systems that often felt complex and intimidating:

“OLTS helped me understand how to advocate for myself. I didn’t feel lost walking into accessibility anymore.”

Students emphasized the value of OLTS’s structured guidance, practical learning and organizational strategies, and clear explanations of accommodation processes. Peer discussions and facilitator support were also highlighted as important sources of connection and validation, particularly for students who had previously felt isolated or misunderstood. Collectively, the findings indicate strong alignment between participants’ quantitative ratings of program effectiveness and their lived experiences of OLTS. These findings are illustrated in Figure 2, which presents the percentage of participants who agreed or strongly agreed that OLTS increased confidence, strengthened self-advocacy skills, and improved understanding of disability accommodations.



Note. Percentages reflect participants who selected “Agree” or “Strongly agree” for each item (analytic sample N = 39).

Gaps in Cultural Responsiveness, Emotional Support, and Personalization

“It was hard to connect to OLTS... there was lots of stories about dyslexia and ADHD, but not my disability.”

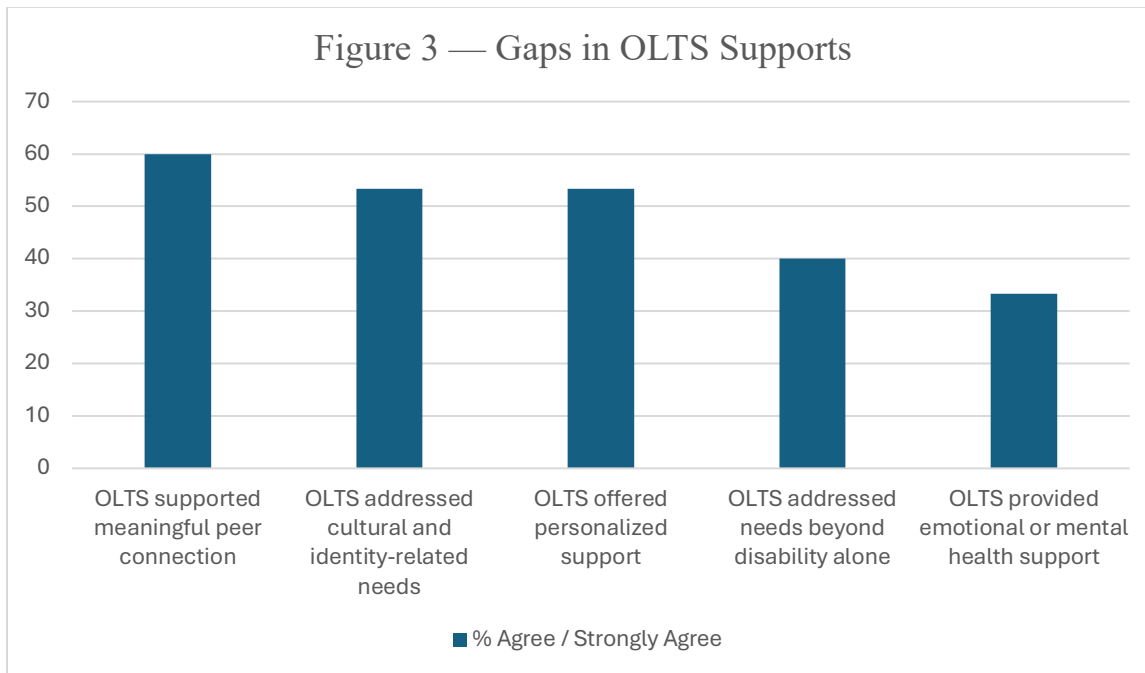
Although OLTS was widely viewed as effective in supporting disability-related transition skills, both quantitative and qualitative findings identified areas where support was experienced as uneven or incomplete. Survey responses showed greater variability in participants’ perceptions of cultural responsiveness (M = 2.40, SD = 1.02), emotional and mental health support (M = 2.13, SD = 0.88), opportunities for peer connection (M = 2.53, SD = 1.36), and personalization of supports (M = 2.60, SD = 1.20), suggesting less consistent experiences across students in these domains.

Qualitative interviews elaborated on these gaps. Participants described a desire for OLTS to engage more explicitly with intersectional identities, including race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. While disability-related content was viewed as strong, some students felt that other aspects of their identity were overlooked or addressed only implicitly:

“OLTS helped with the disability stuff, but parts of my identity still felt invisible. I think it could go further.”

Emotional well-being also emerged as a key area for improvement. Students described anxiety, stress, burnout, and self-doubt during the transition period, often rooted in previous experiences

of stigma or institutional barriers during transition. Some participants expressed that additional emotional support or follow-up during the early stages of post-secondary education would have helped them manage challenges as they arose. Others emphasized a desire for more individualized, hands-on guidance that reflected their unique goals and circumstances. As shown in Figure 3, endorsement of OLTS’s cultural responsiveness, emotional and mental health support, peer connection, and personalization was more variable, indicating uneven experiences across participants in these areas.



Note. Percentages reflect participants who selected “Agree” or “Strongly agree” for each item (analytic sample N = 39).

Participant Satisfaction and Perceived Value of OLTS

“It was the first time I felt my disability wasn’t something to hide... I could work with it.”

This section summarizes overall participant satisfaction and serves to contextualize the findings above rather than introduce new analytic themes. Overall, participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the OLTS program. Students consistently described OLTS as accessible, supportive, and practically useful in preparing them for the transition to post-secondary education. Many emphasized that the program helped demystify post-secondary systems, reduce anxiety related to accommodations, and increase their sense of preparedness.

Positive feedback highlighted OLTS’s clear structure, neurodiversity-affirming approach, and emphasis on self-advocacy. Participants valued hearing from peers and facilitators with lived experience of disability, which reduced stigma and contributed to feelings of validation and belonging. At the same time, participant satisfaction was often expressed alongside constructive

feedback. Students emphasized the importance of expanding OLTS to more explicitly reflect intersectional realities and to provide continued support beyond program completion:

“OLTS gave me a strong foundation, but once you actually start post-secondary, that’s when things really hit. A check-in during first term would make a big difference.”

Taken together, participant satisfaction data confirm OLTS’s strong foundational value while also highlighting opportunities for growth. Students viewed OLTS as an important and effective support, and their feedback points toward concrete ways the program could be strengthened to better reflect the diverse realities of students with intersecting identities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are grounded directly in the integrated quantitative and qualitative findings presented above.

1. Develop a Structured Mentorship Program

“Talking to someone who’s done it...especially someone disabled...would help.”

A central recommendation emerging from this evaluation is the development of a structured mentorship component within OLTS. Participants consistently emphasized the value of guidance from individuals with lived experience of disability, particularly those who had successfully navigated post-secondary education. Mentorship was viewed as a powerful way to translate abstract advice into concrete, actionable support.

A mentorship program could pair OLTS participants with trained mentors—such as senior post-secondary students or recent graduates with disabilities—who share similar academic pathways, disability identities, or intersecting identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, LGBTQ+ status, socioeconomic or first-generation background). Such relationships could provide:

- Practical, step-by-step guidance for navigating systems including accessibility offices, course selection, and institutional systems
- Emotional validation and normalization of transition-related stress
- Identity-affirming peer support that reduces stigma, isolation and minority stress
- Role modeling that empowers students to envision successful post-secondary trajectories

Importantly, mentorship should be framed as an embedded and normalized component of OLTS rather than an optional add-on, reducing the burden on students to self-identify or request additional support.

2. Integrate Culturally Responsive and Intersectional Content

“OLTS helped me understand how to advocate for myself, but I still felt like parts of my identity were invisible in the process.”

Participants recommended that OLTS more explicitly address how disability intersects with race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, and SES. Findings suggest that while disability-related content was well supported, other aspects of identity were often addressed implicitly or inconsistently. Integrating diverse narratives, case examples, and facilitators or mentors with varied lived experiences would help ensure that students see themselves reflected in the program and feel that their full identities are acknowledged and valued.

3. Strengthen Emotional and Mental Health Supports

“OLTS could spend more time looking at life outside the classroom...socially, I struggled to find other people like me. That was part of why I had such a hard time.”

Given the prevalence of anxiety, burnout, and psycho-emotional disablism described by participants, OLTS would benefit from more explicit attention to emotional well-being. While practical transition skills were highly valued, findings indicate that emotional and mental health challenges often intensified during the early stages of post-secondary education. Enhancements could include proactive mental health check-ins, partnerships with culturally responsive counseling services, or skill-building sessions focused on coping, resilience, and help-seeking.

4. Extend Support Beyond Program Completion

“I just wish there was more support after the program ended... someone checking in once classes started.”

Participants expressed a strong desire for continued support once post-secondary studies begin. Findings suggest that the period immediately following program completion is a critical transition point where challenges often intensify. Follow-up check-ins during the first term, mentorship continuity, or optional booster sessions could help students apply OLTS strategies in real time as new academic, social, and institutional challenges arise.

Conclusions

This evaluation was guided by three interrelated aims: (1) to identify the unique barriers and needs experienced by students with intersecting identities during the transition to post-secondary education; (2) to develop evidence-informed recommendations for enhancing OLTS and related transition programs; and (3) to promote more equitable, inclusive, and responsive supports that equip and empower diverse students to successfully navigate their educational journeys. Taken together, the findings provide a comprehensive account of both the systemic conditions shaping post-secondary transitions and the role that targeted transition programming can play in supporting students within these contexts.

Across quantitative and qualitative findings, disability emerged as the most consistent and pervasive barrier shaping participants' transition experiences. Students described structural challenges related to accessing accommodations, navigating institutional systems, and meeting documentation requirements—often at points when academic or emotional difficulties had already intensified. These challenges were widely framed as systemic rather than individual, with

participants emphasizing that difficulties arose not from a lack of motivation or preparedness, but from institutional processes that placed the burden of navigation on students themselves.

At the same time, the findings underscore that transition experiences are not uniform and are shaped by intersecting identities and systems of inequity. While disability-related barriers were consistently reported across the sample, qualitative accounts illustrated how disability often intersected with race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexuality, and socioeconomic status to intensify transition challenges.

Notably, many of the narratives describing gaps in cultural responsiveness, emotional support, peer connection, and personalization came from participants who identified as racialized, LGBTQ+, first-generation, or from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. These participants frequently described additional pressures related to disclosure, belonging, and safety within institutional contexts, suggesting that intersecting identities shaped not only the barriers encountered, but also how gaps in support were experienced and interpreted.

Within this broader transition context, the evaluation demonstrates that RARC's OLTS program plays a critical and meaningful role in supporting students with disabilities as they enter post-secondary education. Strong alignment between quantitative and qualitative findings indicates that OLTS is effective in building confidence, strengthening self-advocacy skills, and increasing students' understanding of disability accommodations—key competencies for navigating post-secondary environments. Participants consistently described OLTS as accessible, validating, and practically useful, particularly in helping them demystify institutional systems and approach disability as something to work with rather than conceal.

At the same time, the findings highlight important opportunities for program enhancement. While OLTS provides a strong foundation for disability-focused transition support, participants' accounts revealed uneven attention to cultural responsiveness, emotional and mental health support, peer connection, and individualized guidance. These gaps were most frequently articulated in qualitative accounts from participants navigating multiple forms of marginalization, underscoring the importance of transition supports that move beyond a singular focus on disability to more fully engage with students' intersecting identities and lived realities.

Overall, this evaluation highlights the value of transition programming that is not only skill-based, but also relational, intersectional, and responsive to systemic inequities. By building on its existing strengths and integrating the recommendations outlined in this report, OLTS is well positioned to continue evolving as a more inclusive, equitable, and empowering transition support program—one that supports diverse students not only to access post-secondary education, but to navigate it with confidence, agency, and a sense of belonging.

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