What You Need to Know
What You Need to Do
Outcomes from an Innovative Program for Students Transitioning to Post Secondary Education with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

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Overview – Key Points

1. ASD Pilots – How Do We Meet Diverse Needs on Diverse Campus with limited resources and rising numbers?

   1. Students with ASD are arriving in increasing numbers as are students with similarly complex needs – campus’ which are ASD-friendly become accessible to more students overall

   1. It’s about the needs for SPACE and PEOPLE
From the Literature

- More students with ASD are accessing post-secondary options (Dipeolu, Storlie, & Johnson, 2015; McKeon, Alpern, & Zager, 2013; Zager & Alpern, 2010)

- Students with ASD enrich PSE environment:
  - Uniqueness, attention to detail, independence, passion, etc. (DeOrnellas, 2015)

- Students with ASD may experience lower success rates in PSE and employment (Shattuck et al., 2012)
What the Pilots Produced: A Transition Process with Accompanying Tools

**Key Aspects of Process:**

- Robust
- Scalable
- Collaborative and comprehensive (includes key stakeholders: students, boards, families, local community, campus community)
- Not contained to a short period (spans early high school – up to graduation)
- Allows for *individualized* transition supports
What the Pilots Produced: A Transition Process with Accompanying Tools

**Key Aspects of Tools:**

- Adaptable
- Post-secondary focus and utility
- Promote capacity building
- Easily Implemented
Key Learning

- Some students with ASD who do reach out may use services at a higher level than other populations.
- Students with ASD find it helpful to have an anchor or a go-to for addressing issues rather than accessing multiple services.
- Boards continue to benefit from discussions about the settings so they can best guide their students as the students shift in their preferences, ideas, maturity, readiness.
- We need to look at transition out for our students.
Primary Goals of the Projects

• to enhance the **probability of successful transition** of students with ASDs to postsecondary studies

• to **provide educational opportunities** to all stakeholders
  students
  parents
  high school teachers
  guidance counsellors
  university teaching faculty
  university staff
  regarding **their respective roles** in successful transition.
To improve the probability of a successful transition into post secondary the pilots will:

- Address student needs by implementing a student-focused approach, from program activities to evaluation tools and measured outcomes

- Build partnerships with external stakeholders to enhance the transition process

- Build capacity of the post-secondary environment to support students

- Address gaps in service delivery and/or barriers related to transition into postsecondary education

- Produce and transfer knowledge products and resources (i.e. tools, methods, services) to enhance capacity of other institutions/stakeholders to support transitions to PSE
Aims for Student Development

• Acclimatizing to and navigating the physical and social environment
• Becoming aware of and accustomed to the demands and ‘hidden curriculum’ of the post-secondary environment
• Developing skills in the areas of academics and learning, coping, socializing, self-advocacy, and independent living
The Pilots: Different Look, Same Basis
Rationale and Context for the Pilots

• Recent reports of incidence of ASD 1 in 68 (CDC stats)

• Early interventions are changing the trajectories

• Numbers of students identifying with ASD at the institutions made them good candidates for pilot demonstration projects
Rationale and Context for the Pilots

• We know transitions are important for all students and particularly for students with ASD

• Resources, policy, capacity building and tools have been established in elementary and secondary to support the effectiveness and accessibility for students with ASD and this necessitates a focus on post-secondary for those choosing that path

• Pilots mandate to support transition into PSE - other areas of need are identified for student success
Challenges with Population

• Students with ASD face challenges in and out of class  

• Students with ASD may experience lower success rates in PSE and employment  (Shattuck et al., 2012)

• Anecdotally from the pilots:
  – struggling with labs, placements, co-ops
  – sense of urgency, knowing what is the pertinent information, tiring of the effort in staying over time,
  – connect to a trusted individual vs a type of service
Core Program Components

- Clear, consistent and early communication
- Early and Live Connections
- Structures that allow for “just-in-time” connections
- Campus and staff integration and Professional development
Clear, Consistent and Early

- ASD Day – students and their parents on campus grades 10 - 12
- Service Providers
- ABA Day
- Prospective Visits
- Clarity re Accommodations / programming in advance
- Advisory Board
Early and Live

- Sneak Peek
- Slice - 1 day
- ASD Transition - 1 or 3 days
- Project ADVANCE - 1 week
- Initial meetings
- Connection Meeting – Pre- intake meeting
- Parents/Advocates Involvement
Just-in-Time and Individualized

- Drop in times
- walking appointments
- Accommodations
- Introductory Letter to the Professor
- Low Sensory Spaces
- Drop in Centre
How Students with ASD Engage - Frequency
Frequency of Use

• 108 students were supported
  – 80% retention
  – 85% retention

• 362 Appointments with Disability Counsellor

• 906 Appointments with Learning Strategist Coach

• 2670 Drop-ins to the Drop-in Space
  – this does not include email contacts
Frequency and Type of Contact 2015-2016

- Email
- Disability Services POC
- Face-to-Face Apt - Learning Disability
- ASD Planning/Coaching
- Telephone Meeting
- Workshop/Group - Learning Disability
- Consultation - External Re Student
- Writing Letter, Petition Etc Consultation - Internal Re Student

EMAIL

Face to Face

DSO Point of Contact
Frequency and Type of TSC Service Use

- 45%: #TSC Drop-in
- 28%: #Email
- 15%: Total # LS appts
- 7%: Total #DC appts
- 3%: #Telephone
- 1%: # AT appts
- 1%: # Meetings
After the **First Month**
Campus and Staff Integration and Professional Development

- PD with Residence, Security, Registrar’s Office, Health Services, Employment Services and counselling
- Consultations with Faculty/Staff
- Tailored PD to programs - videos
- Library of resources
- World Autism Day - >Student Advocacy
- Designated Gym Space
- Collaboration with other student services
Faculty Videos
Capacity

Professional Development Provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Number of People Attending PD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Red: High School
- Gray: Post Secondary
- Dark Gray: Community

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE

Student Support Services

YORK UNIVERSITY
4. Capacity – Impact of PD

Faculty/Staff Reported Level of Confidence in Supporting Students with ASD Before and After Receiving Professional Development from TSC Staff (N=18)

- Before:
  - 1- Not at all confident: 2
  - 3 - Confident: 4
  - 5 - Very confident: 1

- After:
  - 1- Not at all confident: 2
  - 3 - Confident: 8
  - 5 - Very confident: 8
4. Capacity – Impact of PD

Faculty/Staff Perception of Capacity Following Professional Development From TSC Staff (N=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Not at all true</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Very true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel better able to support students with ASD in the college environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have implemented at least one concrete strategy to support a student on the spectrum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can recognize more positive aspects to having a student with ASD in the college than before this professional development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Best Practices for Supporting Student and Institution Success

Supporting the environment with PD and consultation

Leveraging pre-established transition events for visibility and early outreach

Providing PD to targeted teams in boards for highest impact
Best Practices for Supporting Student and Institution Success (cont.)

- Collaborate across services
- Use Universal Design within supports
- Ground service in understanding of unique strengths and challenges for folks with ASD
Leveraging Existing Resources

- Website information

- Current Intake processes – length of time

- Existing programming which it modified to suit ASD learners (e.g., Project ADVANCE, Residence Programming)
Leveraging Existing Systems

• Outreach Opportunities and Information Sessions
  – Family Information Evenings and Open Houses
  – ASD Transition Days
  – Summer transition programming (ADVANCE, SLICE)

• Meetings with Disability Counsellor in advance of official registration with DSO (Connections, Prospective)

• Using or modifying existing spaces to support sensory needs, provide easy opportunities to connect
Leveraging Existing Systems

- Services and events offered by the DSO
- Residence - opportunity for early move in
- Option to access academic preparation
  - enrol in LLS 1000 – Introductory level course
  - Essential Study Skills Modules
Cool Programming Ideas

- Sensory:
  - Low Sensory Space
  - Calm room in residence
- Connecting To People:
  - Drop In Centre
  - Advocacy Opportunities
  - Gaming Night
  - Socials
- Self Regulation:
  - Drop In Centre
  - Therapy dog
  - Workshops
  - APPs
  - Designated Gym

[Logo for Algonquin College and York University]
Inventory Item- APP

• Welcome video so that students can see what the offices look like prior to arrival

• Allows for way finding on campus

• Direct call access to department

• Will be able to book low sensory space
Inventory Item - Advance Look Video

Video made by students for prospective students

- build familiarity with some key services
- advanced visual on the environment
- student’s sharing some keys to success from their perspective
- modeling the possibilities, normalizing the use of services
Inventory Item - Staff and Faculty Training

Autism rates are rising in the general population.

- More students with ASD profiles are in the classrooms
- Over the past 5 years, the number of students with ASD who have registered with Counselling and Disability Services (CDS) has risen 211%
- More students with ASD are graduating from university

“York University’s Mission Statement commits the institution to accessibility and social justice. In advancement of the mission, the university aims to be an environment which respects the dignity and worth of all persons. In recognition of their abilities and contributions to York University, the university is committed to preventing, minimizing and removing the barriers to participation by persons with disabilities in the activities of the university including employment, study or social activity.” (Tucker & Sharma, 2012, p. 49)

Common Strengths and Challenges of ASD Include:

**STRENGTHS**
- Attention to detail
- Honest and direct communication
- Different ways of looking at things

**CHALLENGES**
- Focus and being present in familiar ways due to varied interests and fixations
- Social, emotional and communication
- Resistance to change in daily activities

Recognizing how you already support students with ASD

Find out how you can further support student success...
Results

• Participants
• Retention
• Reporting
  – quantitative and qualitative
• Knowledge Exchange
• Future Considerations
### Numbers: York and Algonquin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Incoming</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010 - 2011</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 - 2012</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 - 2013</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013- 2014</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014- 2015</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>61 (2 students left)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 – 2016</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>87 (2 students left)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Graph: Number of Students with ASD Accessing Services

- **2014-2015**: 61 students
- **2015-2016**: 87 students
- **2016-2017**: 100 students

- **Total Students Using TSC**
- **Total Student Transitioned to DSO Services and Able to Access Upper-Year TSC Services**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Completion Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013 - 2014</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 – 2015</td>
<td>95%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 - 2016</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This was a smaller cohort than the 2015 – 2016 group
Retention Rates of Cohorts 1-3 For Year 1 of Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Winter Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 1</td>
<td>87.18%</td>
<td>80.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 2</td>
<td>95.24%</td>
<td>89.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 3</td>
<td>90.38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chart Details
- **Y-axis:** Percent Retention (0% to 100%)
- **X-axis:** Semester (Fall, Winter)
- **Cohorts:** 1, 2, 3
Reasons For Leaving Stated in Qualitative Data

- not finding sense of purpose, motivation,
- wrong fit of program
- low grades
- mental health concerns
- lack of connection to services, resources or peers
- wanting to pursue studies at another institution or program
- readiness as identified by student (academic and/or functional skills)
Lessons Learned

• **Human resource intensive** – Counsellors, ASD Coaches and Learning Strategists hold crucial roles
  – ASD Coaches and an ASD Coordinator needed the same way Learning Strategies and Assistive Technology Specialists are needed for the LD population
  – Ways to provide services in an efficient way (i.e., drop in hours, drop in lab space)

• Having people resources in place at the beginning reduces need for intensive service in the middle of the semester
  – Having staff in place in DSO relieves some of the pressure on other service areas
Lessons Learned

• Understanding the needs of these students can go a long way to inform how services can be used to support other students – make the campus more accessible to all

• Employing principles of universal design (both in a teaching context and Student Services context) decreases anxiety as information readily available and clear to understand

• Students need safe spaces on campus – especially on a large campus
QUESTIONS?
Open Discussion

Challenges at Your Institution
References


References


References (cont.)

