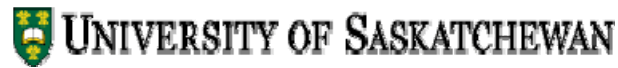


Learning About Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Adolescents & Young Adults: A Tri-University Research Project

RESEARCH TEAM OVERVIEW

Principal Investigator	Dr. Vicki L. Schwean	
Position/Title	Professor and Associate Dean	
Dept/Organization	Division of Applied Psychology, University of Calgary	
Names of other Team Members	Title/Institution/Organization	Role Within Project:
Dr. Donald H. Saklofske	Professor, Division of Applied Psychology, University of Calgary	Principal Investigator
Ms. Janine Montgomery	Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Manitoba Doctoral Student, University of Saskatchewan	Co-Investigator
Ms. Danielle Dyke & Mr. Adam McCrimmon	Doctoral-Level Graduate Students, Division of Applied Psychology, University of Calgary	Co-Investigators
Ms. Yvonne Hindes, Ms. Keoma Thorne, Ms. JoAnne Burt & Ms. Candace Kohut	Masters-Level Graduate Students, Division of Applied Psychology, University of Calgary	Co-Investigators



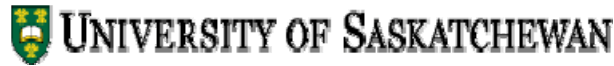
TRI-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY

The goal of this project is to examine psychological factors that promote resiliency in adolescents and young adults with Asperger's Disorder (AS) and High Functioning Autism (HFA). Resiliency is the ability to succeed, in spite of significant exposure to risk, and is an important predictor of life success. Resiliency paradigms and findings have demonstrated that variability in successful transitions is often associated with individual differences in social and emotional abilities. The link between resiliency and social-emotional functioning has been demonstrated in typically developing populations and in recent years has been established in various populations of individuals presenting with exceptionalities. Given that significant and sustained social-emotional difficulties are primary characteristics of AS and HFA, it seems particularly important that research focus on understanding causes of these difficulties, and their relationship to developmental and adult outcomes.

Current research has demonstrated that youth with difficulties in social interaction and emotional regulation, the primary challenges faced by individuals with AS and HFA, are at an elevated risk for experiencing social isolation, loneliness and peer bullying. Consequently, these youth are less likely than their typically developing peers to experience successful life transitions in educational, vocational, and community settings. Although research suggests social and emotional difficulties lead to poor transitional outcomes for youth with AS and HFA, research has yet to fully explore the psychological and cognitive processes that underlie these difficulties or their role in predicting various outcomes. An examination of these psychological and cognitive factors and their relationship to developmental health and well-being in youth with AS and HFA is of great interest, as it is this type of research that will ultimately inform support services for these individuals.

An extensive collaborative team has been assembled for this project. The principal investigators, Drs. Vicki Schwean and Donald Saklofske, are internationally known experts in the fields of child psychopathology and cognitive/neurocognitive assessment. Dr. Schwean is the Associate Dean of the Division of Applied Psychology at the University of Calgary, and both Drs. Schwean and Saklofske hold faculty positions within the division. Our team also includes Janine Montgomery, a doctoral student from the University of Saskatchewan, who has recently accepted an academic position at the University of Manitoba, two U of C doctoral-level students, Danielle Dyke and Adam McCrimmon, and four U of C masters-level students, Jo-Anne Burt, Candace Kohut, Yvonne Hindes and Keoma Thorne. Their combined academic background encompasses the clinical, school, counselling, and neurological sub-disciplines of psychology.

This research is fundamentally important to ensuring that youth with AS and HFA enjoy all the rights, privileges, and services granted to typically-developing persons. The identification of predictive factors for resiliency promotion has the potential to inform and guide government policy and subsequent funding initiatives for support services for youth with AS and HFA, their families, and their communities. Most importantly, through the identification of factors that contribute to successful outcomes, this research becomes the first step in identifying supports designed to build on and strengthen protective factors within these youth.



RESEARCH PROJECT PARTICIPATION

Who's Participating?

Participants in this project will be 100 youth between the ages of 16 and 21 years and their parents and teachers/instructors. This research project is a tri-university initiative between the Universities of Calgary, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. As such, it currently involves adolescents and young adults from these 3 prairie provinces. *We are also interested in involving youth from British Columbia and as such, extend an invitation to professionals, families and B.C. youth to contact us should they be interested in obtaining further information or participating in this research project.*

What Does Participation Involve?

Participating youth will be asked to complete several pencil and paper, and computer tasks that assess thinking skills, social and emotional abilities, as well as resiliency. Some participants will complete one session requiring approximately one hour of participation. Other participants will complete one, 4-5 hour session. Drinks, snacks & free parking are provided & all participants are entered into a prize draw (for prizes such as USB thumb drives). **Participants completing the 4-5 hour session will be given a \$50 gift certificate (for places such as Future Shop & Wal-Mart) for their time spent in the project.**

Appointments are arranged at a time that is most convenient including weekdays, weekends & evenings.

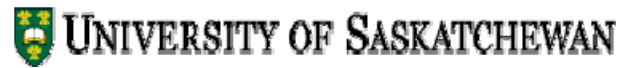
PARENT & TEACHERS/INSTRUCTORS

Parents and potentially a teacher/instructor (suggested by the participant or their parent/guardian), who knows the participant well, will be providing a further marker of social and emotional abilities through the completion of a few additional questionnaires (requiring only 20-30 minutes of their time).

Why Participate?

1. It is anticipated that the information we gather in this project will provide us with a better understanding of individuals with Autism Spectrum disorder (ASD). A better understanding will help individuals, their parents and their communities to gain further supports that meet the unique needs of individuals with ASD.
2. Most participants find that the paper & pencil tasks and computer games are quite enjoyable.
3. PARTICIPANTS ARE COMPENSATED FOR THEIR TIME (with \$50 gift certificates!)

For more information and participation in this project,



please contact the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Research Group at:

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