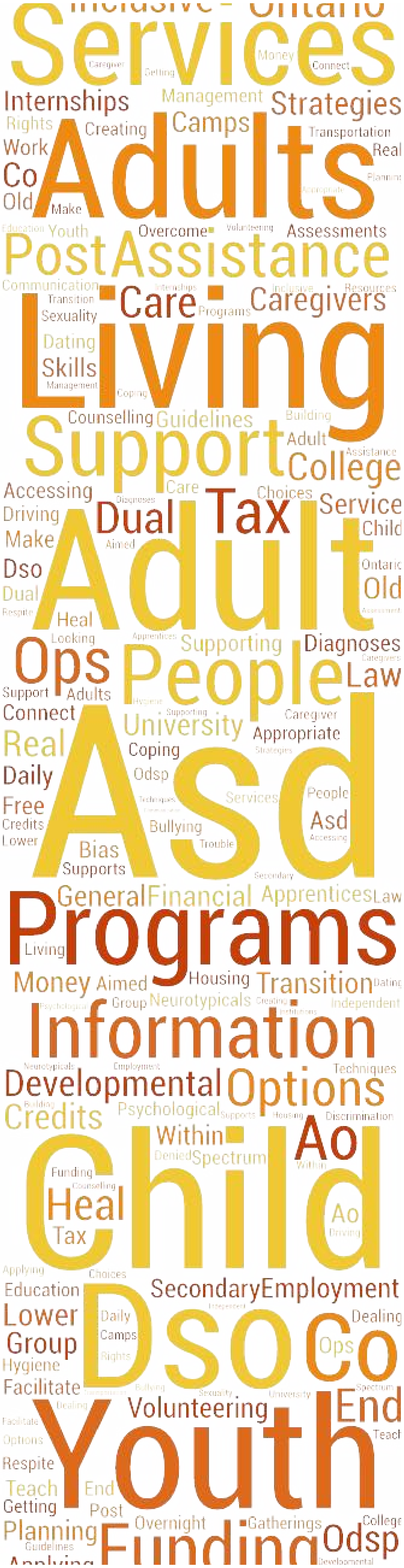

FINAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 2017

Bridging Knowledge Gaps:

Research into the Transition of Individuals with ASD from Youth to Adulthood in Ontario

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Project funded by Ontario Ministry of Community & Social Services.

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INTRODUCTION

AIM OF THE PROJECT

The aim of this project was to determine what *content* would make the existing ConnectABILITY.ca topic page for adults with ASD most useful and well-utilized. To make this aim a reality, it was agreed that a collaborative approach with key institutional and community partners would be used to engage three key target groups:

1. Adults with ASD
2. Caregivers of youth (ages 17+) and adults with ASD
3. Professionals that support adults and/or caregivers

RESEARCH PARTNERS

While researchers at the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) were responsible for data collection and analysis, Sara Lebensold (ConnectABILITY ASD Project Coordinator) played a key role in this project. Sara liaised between CCBR and the Steering and Implementation Committees that were comprised of members from five partnering organizations: Autism Ontario, Geneva Centre for Autism, Kerry's Place Autism Services, Community Living Toronto, and ConnectABILITY.ca. This project was made possible through funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research questions were organized according to four main theme areas:

Transitions from youth to adulthood

- What information do people living with ASD, caregivers, and professionals need in order for people living with ASD to successfully transition from youth to adulthood that can be provided on the ConnectABILITY.ca topic page?

Passport Funding

- What information do people living with ASD, caregivers, and professionals need regarding Passport funding that can be provided on the ConnectABILITY.ca topic page?

Community connections

- What information could the topic page provide about connecting adults living with ASD in a supportive way? And for caregivers?

Additional Website Content & Organization Suggestions

- What strategies will help make the connectABILITY.ca ASD topic page a well-recognized and useful platform for people living with ASD, caregivers, and professionals?

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study followed a community-based research approach that aims to: (1) be as useful and relevant as possible; (2) ensure meaningful participation of stakeholders throughout the research process; and (3) be action-oriented, by providing clear recommendations for the way forward. Data collection tools included *online surveys* and *focus groups*. The online surveys (for adults with ASD, caregivers, and professionals) were designed to provide a wide *breadth* of information, while the focus groups (with the same three target groups) provided *depth* and allowed us to probe further on topics raised in the survey responses[1]. The research design for this project is explained further in the diagram below.

Refinement of Research Design

- Research questions were developed with Steering Committee.
- Online survey questions were developed and piloted with input from the Implementation Committee.

Online Surveys

- Research partners circulated invitations to participate.
- Surveys were completed across Ontario by adults with ASD (N=96), caregivers (N=336), and professionals (N=101).

Survey Analysis

- Mid-term report was written based on preliminary survey results.
- Focus group questions were drafted.
- Steering and Implementation Committee provided feedback on Mid-term report and focus group questions.

Focus Groups

- Five focus groups were conducted in Waterloo, Toronto, and Thunder Bay with the three target groups: adults with ASD (N=1; 4 participants), caregivers (N=2; 15 participants) and professionals (N=2; 8 participants).

Final Report

- Focus group data was analyzed together with survey data.
- Final report was drafted and presented to the Steering Committee.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Many people participated in the online survey. We speculate that the reasons for this are three-fold: 1) the invitation to participate was very well circulated and promoted through emails and social media strategies employed by research partners; 2) participants are interested in the topic of transitions to adulthood for people with ASD; and 3) participants were motivated by the possibility of winning a prize[2]. The infographic on page 6 describes the demographics of the online survey participants.

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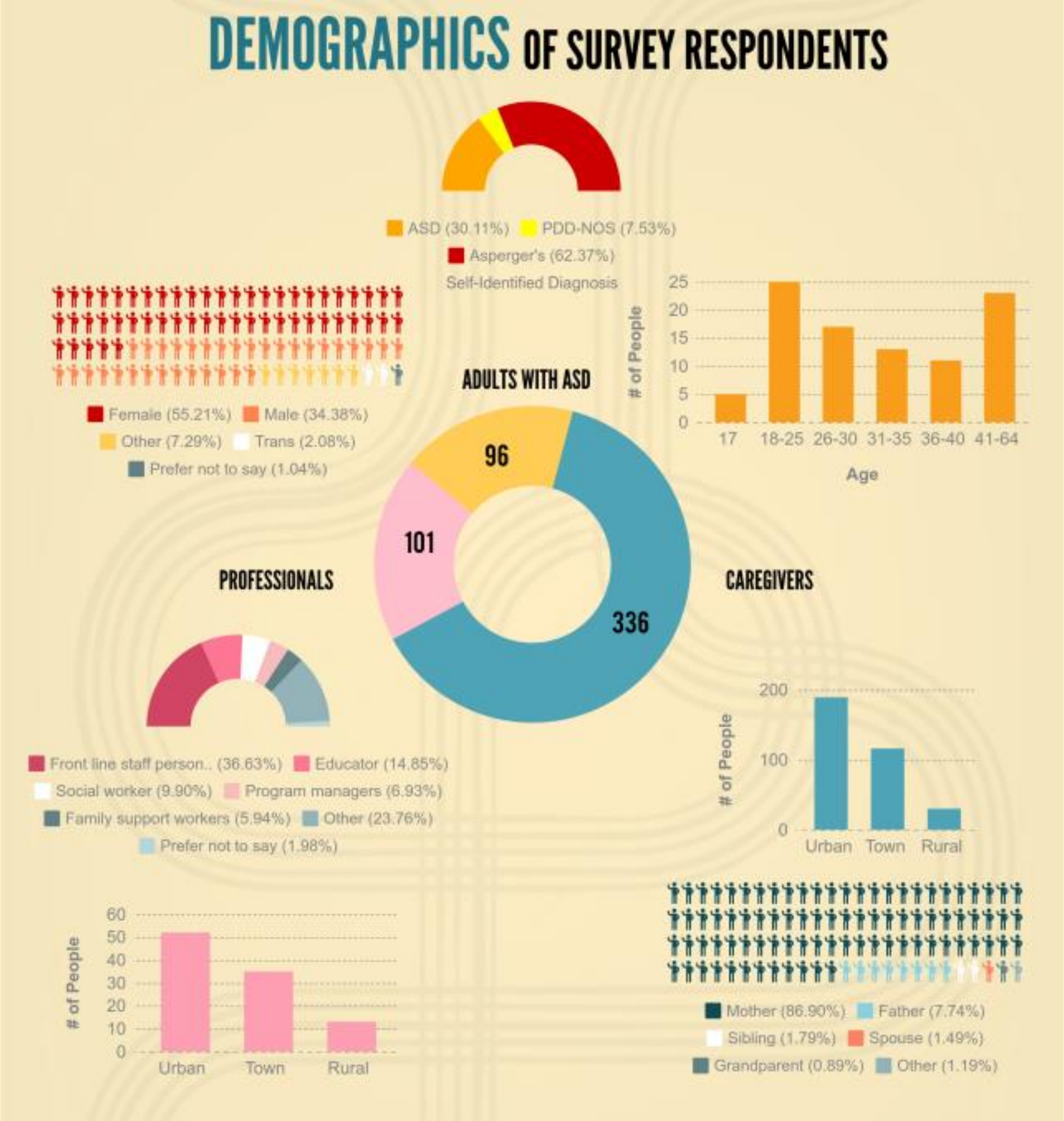
[1] There were two focus groups scheduled with adults with ASD. One of the focus groups was cancelled due to the lack of perceived interest (there was only one confirmed participant the day before the scheduled focus group).

[2] One participant per stakeholder group was randomly chosen to win a $150 Visa card. All three winners wrote personal and thoughtful thanks to the CCBR staff person that sent out the prizes.



Readers will note that 28% of the adults with ASD identified themselves as having Asperger's (now included under the umbrella of ASD in the DSM V) which is an over-representation of people on the ASD spectrum. That said, it may be indicative of the proportion of adults with ASD that would frequent the ASD topic page.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

The survey and focus group questions specifically asked target groups what they need or want on an ASD topic page for adults with ASD. This report is organized by the 4 guiding research questions related to **transitions, passport funding, community connections,** and **other important information**.

TRANSITIONS FROM YOUTH TO ADULTHOOD

Participants explained that the transition period from adolescence into adulthood is difficult for both persons with ASD as well as their caregivers. According to our survey, only 13% of adults with ASD and 15% of caregivers agreed that making the transition from being a youth to being an adult was smooth. Survey results also indicated that caregivers are primarily responsible for planning and decision-making during this important time in life. Only 24% of adults with ASD agreed that they "helped to plan for changes in supports that happened when I turned 18". As Figure 1 demonstrates, most caregivers began to plan for adulthood when their youth was between the ages of 15 to 16 years.

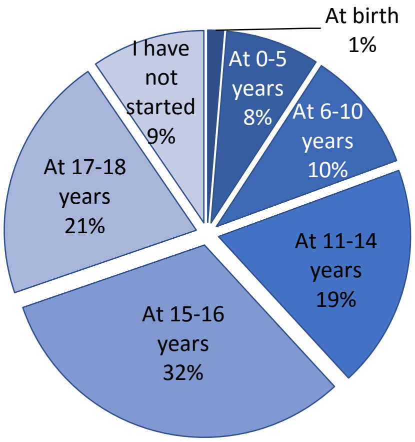


Figure 1: Age of person with ASD when caregiver(s) began planning for adulthood (caregiver survey, n=294)

Caregivers consistently reported feeling stressed, overwhelmed and isolated during this period of transition. In our survey, 85% of caregivers agreed that planning for adulthood (for their youth with ASD) was **stressful**, and 82% agreed that it was **time-consuming**.

Overall, our survey showed that only 18% of caregivers agreed that "my youth had the support needed for the transition from youth to adulthood." Many participants expressed frustration over the fact that most government-funded ASD services end at the age of 18, and that support for adults on the spectrum is limited and expensive.

> *"The local chapter meetings are less and less relevant as your kids get older, the information that's shared." (Caregiver)*

So, where do adults with ASD and their caregivers turn to for support regarding the transition into adulthood? Within the survey, caregivers indicated that they turned to **community organizations** (28%), **other parents** of children on the spectrum (26%), **family members** (22%), **school teachers** (21%), **social workers** (18%), and **support groups** (12%). Moreover, some caregivers reported attending conferences (16%) and information sessions (35%), though these can be difficult to attend when caregivers cannot leave their adult with ASD alone. When adults with ASD were asked where they turn to for support when planning for their future, the most common survey responses were **parent/guardian** (63%), **friend** (34%), and **nobody (I plan my own future without support)** (20%).

> *"We feel completely on our own and if we were not paying for our son's day program out of pocket he would be home all day [with] nothing to do." (Caregiver)*

Several participants explained that the services and supports that *are* available for adults with ASD or their caregivers (such as counselling or respite programs) tend to be expensive, forcing many caregivers to forego the support or to pay out-of-pocket. According to our survey, at least 45%

of adults with ASD are stuck at home most of the time, with very few educational or employment prospects. In fact, only one in ten caregivers agreed that "as my youth became an adult, they had good educational, job, and program opportunities to pursue."

SO, WHAT CAN AN ASD TOPIC PAGE DO TO HELP?

First off, participants indicated that a webpage for adults with ASD could provide some general information on what services and supports are available within different communities across Ontario. According to our survey, 74% of caregivers would find it helpful to have information on programs and services online. Many participants also expressed a need for information on how to access ASD and mental health professionals. As one professional explained, mental health within this population is especially important, given that "half the people in Ontario don't get diagnosed [with ASD] until after [the age of] 21… the depression and anxiety needs to be treated."

In addition, findings indicated that there are many specific topic areas that a webpage could cover, to provide accessible and relevant information to persons with ASD, their caregivers, and professionals. Across all stakeholder groups, the top five topic areas that emerged to include online are: (1) information on financial and legal support; (2) information on employment and volunteering; (3) information on independent living skills and housing; (4) information on post-secondary education; and (5) information on social skills and relationships.

> *"I think concrete information for families [is needed online], because it's an exhausting process for some families, like how do I go and how do I find specialized support workers? The not knowing of it is very overwhelming. If there were simple steps, like this is how you can hire somebody… in a way that's not overwhelming."*
> *(Professional)*

INFORMATION ON FINANCIAL + LEGAL SUPPORT

Information related to financial support was identified by all three stakeholder groups as a key topic to include online. This topic is very broad and includes information on where and how to obtain government funding (e.g., ODSP, Passport, tax credits) as well as tips on banking and legal assistance.

Findings demonstrated that information on **funding applications** should be included on an ASD topic page. For example, 67% of adults with ASD indicated that information on the **ODSP application** would be helpful to have online. Many caregivers agreed, with one suggesting to include "a one-pager that said 'you can apply for ODSP at this age, this is what it means, this is how you do it."

> *"For me, this [information on funding applications] has been lacking. I have no clue how to get funding, nor do I think I would qualify."*
> *(Caregiver)*

The majority (67%) of caregivers also identified the importance of providing – or linking to – information on the **Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) process**, a prerequisite to obtaining Passport funding. According to caregivers, the lack of accessible information on DSO and Passport means that they are often relying on other caregivers for assistance, and sharing information that is not always accurate. A more detailed description of what could be included online regarding the Passport Process is explored further in the next section of the report.

Other information related to financial and legal planning is also desired by caregivers and adults with ASD, such as information on RDSPs and creating wills. As one adult with ASD wrote, "[I would like access to] legal advice concerning employment rights [and] personal wills." Another adult with ASD explained that he would like "skills for coping with poverty e.g., how to access food banks [and] resources for financial emergencies."

INFORMATION ON EMPLOYMENT + VOLUNTEERING

Participants explained that the topic of employment is very important to address online. In our survey, it was the number one topic identified by caregivers to include online, and the number two topic identified by adults with ASD. As Figure 2 demonstrates, only about 40% of adults with ASD indicated that they are employed either part or full-time. However, it is likely that this percentage is lower in the broader population, given that only 22% of caregivers reported that their adult with ASD is currently employed (either part of full-time).

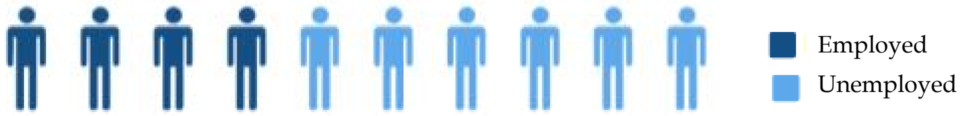


Figure 2: Number of Adults with ASD who are employed vs. unemployed (n=81)

As shown in Figures 3 and 4, only 27% of adults with ASD and 13% of caregivers indicated that they received helpful information about finding and keeping paid work. 76% of adults with ASD and 77% of caregivers explained that it would be helpful to have such information available online.

Did you receive helpful information about finding and keeping paid work (for adults with ASD)?

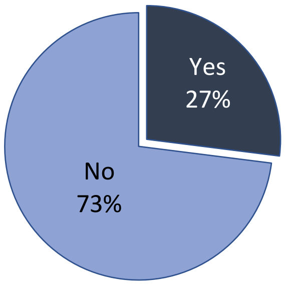


Figure 3: Adults with ASD (n=62)

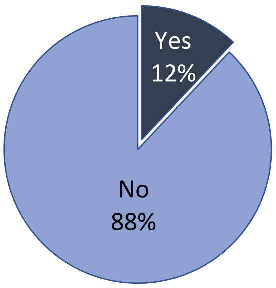


Figure 4: Caregivers (n=244)

As participants – including several professionals – explained, having an education – even a university one – does not guarantee employment for many adults with ASD. While individual contexts varied greatly, findings indicate that more supports are needed to: (a) train potential employers on ASD; and (b) assist adults with ASD to expand their networks and gain job-related skills. When asked what could be put online, one adult with ASD explained "sensitivity training resources for prospective employers [as a] push for hiring and retaining us." An online topic page could provide a list of available workshops for employers, a list of current employment opportunities in Ontario where persons with ASD have had success, and tips on how to gain employment for adults with ASD. Some caregivers and professionals also suggested that an online topic page could provide some success stories of how adults with ASD have found and kept jobs.

Finally, information on volunteering could also be made more available online. Several participants discussed the benefits of volunteering for persons with ASD, saying it can contribute to a meaningful life. Many of the same barriers to employment exist for adults seeking volunteer positions, however; a list of current opportunities, and/or tips on securing a volunteer position, would be useful to include online.

INFORMATION ON INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS + HOUSING

All stakeholder groups indicated that information on independent living skills (e.g., cooking, cleaning, groceries, laundry, and transportation) is crucial to include on an online topic page for adults with ASD. When asked if they had received such information when making the transition into adulthood, only 39% of adults with ASD, and 9% of caregivers, said that they did. Given that most programs that teach independent living skills (ABA, IBI, etc.) are only funded for children under the age of 18, caregivers and adults with ASD struggle to find available support in this area. The majority of participants (77% of professionals, 65% of adults with ASD, and 64% of caregivers) said that this information would be useful to have online.

> *"Independent living skills and communication skills are critically important, but I have had to set up my own charity to provide a high-quality program offering this support" (Caregiver)*

Related to independent living skills is the desire for more accessible information on housing for adults with ASD. As one adult with ASD explained, their main goal is to live independently but in order to do so they need assistance to *"access, strategize, and plan for housing."* While it may be out of scope for ConnectABILITY's ASD topic page to provide in-depth information on housing, it would certainly be important to include links to such resources online. As one professional explained, "it's nice to know the housing is being considered and looked at because it's a gigantic issue [among adults with ASD]".

INFORMATION ON SOCIAL SKILLS + RELATIONSHIPS

A fourth topic to address on an online topic page for adults with ASD is information on social skills (including communication) and relationships (including dating, sexuality, and parenting). When planning for the transition into adulthood, only 34% of adults with ASD said they received information about social skills, yet over 70% agreed that such information would be useful to have online.

> *"I think we have to experiment to see what works. I think we need like a menu of things we could try, and see what would germinate in different communities." (Professional)*

When talking with professionals, many of them agreed that more support groups are needed across Ontario that help adults with ASD to develop communication and relationship skills, and to build self-confidence. While it may be possible to provide some connection opportunities online (see page 13), a topic page on ASD could at least connect individuals to existing groups in their community, and/or encourage professionals and interested others to be creative and develop such groups.

Dating and sexuality was a common topic of discussion among adults with ASD. Within the survey, 57% of adults with ASD indicated that it would be helpful to have information about dating and sexuality online. Caregivers and professionals also agreed that this information would be valuable for adults with ASD. Another caregiver expressed frustration with how the school system teaches their children with ASD about sexuality: “they don’t break it down enough for our kids!”. Information related to LGBTQ and gender dysphoria could also be made available, according to focus group participants.

> *“I cannot do that as his mom [provide him with information on sexuality] – we connect them to the programming.” (Caregiver)*

INFORMATION ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Information on post-secondary education is also needed and desired by adults with ASD and their caregivers, and was commonly discussed together with employment. Within the survey, about 1 in 10 adults with ASD said they are currently in attending college or university, and 54% said it would be helpful to have information about post-secondary education online. Professionals discussed the importance of encouraging families to consider post-secondary education; as they explained, many adults with ASD are quite capable of continuing in school, but are not always provided the encouragement or the information in order to do so.

> *“Employment is huge, such a big one, and post-secondary education: a lot of kids don’t have that vision, and the families don’t have that vision for their kids. They just think they’re going to end up in a day program, you know, or just hanging out in the community. But there’s a lot of people that experience autism that are quite capable of going on to post-secondary” (Professional)*

OTHER SUGGESTED TOPICS TO INCLUDE ONLINE

Other topics suggested by several participants include:

- Respite options for caregivers
- Information on caregiver rights to make choices for adults with ASD
- Information on mentoring programs
- Information on mental health concerns and supports for adults with ASD

PASSPORT FUNDING

The topic of Passport funding was addressed in detail within the online surveys and focus groups. Overall, while very few caregivers and adults with ASD were actually aware of Passport funding, almost everyone was interested in learning more about the topic and in having increased access to information online.

52% of adults with ASD (n=85) and 29% of caregivers (n=253) had never heard of Passport Funding.

For people who applied for Passport funding, only 34% of the caregivers agreed that the application process was straight-forward. Most professionals (74%) were not involved in any aspect of the Passport Funding application process.

WHAT WOULD PEOPLE LIKE TO SEE ON AN ASD TOPIC PAGE?

First of all, given that many participants had never heard of Passport funding, it would be important to include some basic information about the topic online. As professionals and caregivers explained, there is a need for consistent and clear information on Passport funding across the province. Information on the Ministry of Community and Social Services website on Passport Funding does not provide enough detail for people to understand the process or know what to expect.

Survey respondents and focus group participants identified five aspects of Passport funding that would be extremely helpful to have on an ASD topic page: (1) tips on the application process; (2) hearing from people who have funding; (3) common misunderstandings (i.e. when peoples' understanding/information is incongruent with policies); (4) FAQs around eligibility and wait times – for applicants and for programs/services that it will cover; (5) information on next steps for people who are ineligible or who are denied Passport funding. Table 1 outlines some key questions that a webpage could answer in relation to these five aspects.

> *What is it? How to get it? How much is it? Why apply? What do you do if you are denied? What is the appeals process? What are other sources of funding? How do caregivers access programs without Passport funding? What are the ways around IQ cut-off? (Caregiver)*

Table 1 : Priority areas of information on Passport Funding.

TIPS ON APPLICATION PROCESS	*HEARING FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE FUNDING*	*INELIGIBLE OR DECLINED? THEN WHAT?*
1. Clear instructions (step-by-step) on how to apply. 2. Clear instructions on how to appeal a decision. 3. What should people expect in a home assessment, as part of the application process?	1. What are some examples of how people are using and benefitting from Passport funding? 2. For recipients of Passport Funding, make supports available in the community explicit.	1. If denied, where else can parents turn to for funding? 2. Who can parents talk to in their community about funding possibilities?

FAQS: ELIGIBILITY & WAIT TIMES	*COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS*
1. When should someone start the application process? 2. What is Passport funding able to cover? 3. What is the best way to administer the funds? 4. How long does it take to complete an application? 5. How are decisions made? 6. How long until a decision is made? 7. How can I keep receiving funding?	1. What are the common misunderstandings about Passport funding? 2. Examples of misinformation that emerged in this project: • There's always a long waitlist for Passport. • DSO doesn't consider Autism a developmental disability. "One of the dangers of communicating from family to family – if parents are told they have to wait forever, might not bother applying. I think that all families should be encouraged – whether they think their child qualifies or not – to apply immediately and start that wait process." (Caregiver)

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Findings from the survey and focus groups clearly show that connecting with others is extremely important, both for adults with ASD and for caregivers.

> *I think it's the number one challenge of people who experience autism or disabilities... not having true friendship. (Professional)*

79% of adults with ASD feel it's important to be connected to others with ASD.

63% of caregivers think it's important that their youth/adult is connect to others with ASD.

65% of caregiver do not think their youth/adult is connected to others with ASD.

Caregivers also see great value in connecting with other caregivers. Locally-organized chapters or groups often create their own networks of caregivers to connect. Survey results indicated that 21% of caregivers (n=292) currently participate in a parent support group of some kind.

> *"I like making friends on the spectrum because we have something in common but also have a lot of neurotypical friends that I enjoy spending time with." (Adult with ASD)*

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Participants expressed strong interest and placed a lot of value on having and maintaining good community connections. For people living with ASD, the opportunity to connect with other adults with ASD offers a chance to share useful information about available ASD supports and services. For some adults, having ASD in common with others would factor into their motivation to meet with peers. For others, getting together with other adults is less about the ASD and more about having a social life and making and keeping lifelong friends. Moreover, while caregivers explained that they mostly connect to other caregivers face-to-face, adults with ASD seem to more commonly connect with others online. Figure X below shows the different ways that adults with ASD currently connect with others living with ASD.

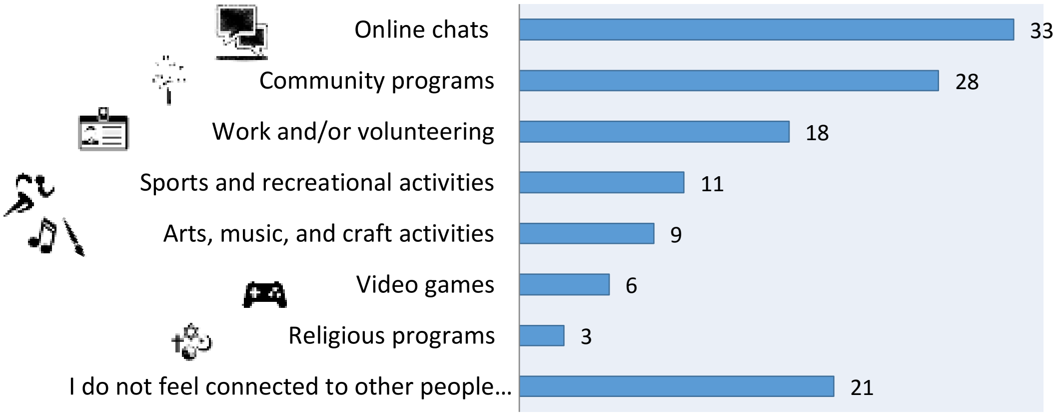


Figure 5: How do you connect with other people living with ASD? (n=74)

> *I prefer face-to-face [ways of connecting] because I can make friends – lifelong friends. (Adult with ASD)*

ONLINE WAYS TO CONNECT PEOPLE

Adults with ASD, caregivers, and professionals identified a range of gaps and recommendations that they would find most useful on an ASD topic page. 49% of the adults with ASD (n=74) indicated that they already connect with other people through online chats. Survey and focus group participants clearly suggested that face-to-face interactions are both necessary and cannot be replaced with online relationships.

Figure 6 outlines some important aspects to consider when developing an online topic page for adults with ASD. As participants explained, these aspects will help to facilitate important community connections.

MESSAGE BOARD

- Most recent announcements & news items related to community connections
- A place where caregivers/adults with ASD can post and answer questions (i.e., a discussion forum)

FACE-TO-FACE EVENTS

- List of organized events as well as clubs and support groups that exist
- Contact information for in-person support groups
- List of event ideas that groups could coordinate in their own communities
- Include camps for youth/adults wtih ASD.

NETWORKS & ORGANIZATIONS

- List of networks, organizations, and conferences to be connected to

OTHER MEANS OF CONNECTING ONLINE

- List of relevant Facebook groups
- Links to gaming sites (e.g. Minecraft)
- Opportunities for instant messaging

Figure 6: Priority areas related to Community Connections

CONTENT ORGANIZATION AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The focus of our work was to determine what content people wanted to see on an ASD topic page *and* what would make the website well-utilized. This section highlights key areas of consideration for when the content is being organized. When asked if they had ever heard of ConnectABILITY.ca, the following percentages of participants had NOT:

66% of adults with ASD (n=83)

67% of caregivers (n=295)

51% of professionals (n= 84)

This would suggest that ConnectABILITY.ca will need to connect with other organizations to promote this topic page when it is ready for launching.

Within the focus groups, a number of creative suggestions emerged about how to design an online topic page for adults with ASD. The most commonly discussed suggestions are described in Table 2.

Table 2: Considerations for Content Organization and Design

INCLUDE SUCCESS STORIES	*USE SYMBOLS AND VISUALS*	*ADD LINKS TO WEBSITES*
• Incorporate stories of people with ASD who are doing well and caregivers who have been successful navigating parts of the system. • Highlight stories of friendships, how to use Passport funding, etc. • Highlight aspects that give people hope. • Be creative in the formatting e.g., use graphic novels or comic strips.	• Avoid animations. • Use symbols to accompany words. • Incorporate videos as an alternate way to learn information. However, some adults with ASD explained that videos can appear as window dressing and of lesser importance than text. • Avoid having videos with 'auto player' functions.	• Provide a comprehensive bank of links to other relevant sites (Ontario-wide and community-specific) • Suggested links are listed in Appendix A. • Have a button for people to press if they're feeling overwhelmed or just want out. It could re-direct them to another page like Google.
BE STRATEGIC ABOUT COLOURS & SUB-CATEGORIES	*BE WARY OF VOLUME OF INFORMATION*	*BE CAUTIOUS OF LANGUAGE*
• Avoid primary colours that appear childish. • Use sub-categories to break up information and to make diverse types of information easy to find and follow.	• Display available information without having to scroll through pages of text.	• Avoid terms like "high" and "low" functioning. • Use clear terms for topics and titles. • Provide a list of common acronyms in ASD contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes the content recommendations for the ASD topic page for ConnectABILITY.ca. These recommendations are organized according to (1) transitions from youth into adulthood; (2) Passport funding, and; (3) community connections.

Transitions from Youth to Adulthood

Financial & Legal Support

☐ Information on where, how, and when to apply for government funding (ODSP, Passport, tax credits, etc.); consider one-pagers that people can print off.
☐ Tips on banking and legal assistance.
☐ Information on DSO process as it relates to applying for funding support (such as Passport).
☐ Information on RDSPs and creating wills.
☐ How to access supports such as food banks and resources for financial emergencies, as someone with ASD and living in poverty.

Information on Independent Living Skills & Housing

☐ Information on independent living skills like cooking, cleaning, groceries, laundry, and transportation.
☐ Information on housing options as well as strategies for planning and securing housing.

Information on Social Skills & Relationships

☐ Information on social skills and communication.
☐ Information on relationships including dating, sexuality, and parenting.
☐ Information on LGBTQ and gender dysphoria.

Information on Employment & Volunteering

☐ Information on ASD training/awareness for potential employers; a list of workshops.
☐ Sensitivity training resources for prospective employers.
☐ Opportunities for adults with ASD to expand networks and gain job-related skills.
☐ List of current employment opportunities in Ontario where people with ASD have gainful employment.
☐ Tips for how to gain employment - for adults with ASD.
☐ Share success stories of adults with ASD who have found and kept their jobs.
☐ List of places of current opportunities for volunteering.
☐ Tips on securing a volunteer position.

Information on Post-Secondary Education

☐ Information on how to get necessary supports while pursuing post-secondary school.
☐ Share success stories of adults with ASD who have successfully completed post-secondary school.

Other Topics

☐ Respite options for caregivers of adults with ASD.
☐ Information on caregiver rights to make choices for adults with ASD.
☐ Information on mentoring programs for adults with ASD.
☐ Information on mental health concerns and supports for adults with ASD.

Passport Funding

Tips on the Application Process

☐ Clear step-by-step instructions for application and appeal process.
☐ What to expect during the application process (e.g. home assessment)?

Hearing from people who have secured Passport funding

☐ How are people who have Passport funding using it? Benefitting from it?
☐ What are people using Passport funding on?
☐ Access to supports on Passport funding (e.g. Passport Service Coordinators)

Options if not eligible for or successful with Passport funding

☐ What other options do people have?
☐ Where else can people reach out to?

Frequently Asked Questions about Eligibility & Wait Times

☐ When to start application process? How long does it take to complete the application?
☐ What programs, supports, and services will funding cover?
☐ How are decisions made?
☐ How long does a decision take?
☐ How can I keep receiving funding?
☐ How to best administer the funds?

Common Misunderstandings

☐ List common assumptions or misunderstandings about Passport funding such as:

- There is always a long waitlist.
- DSO doesn't consider Autism a developmental disability.

Community Connections

Ways to Connect Online

☐ Suggested places where people can connect with others online (e.g. forums for chats, Facebook pages people can join, gaming sites)

Face-to-Face Events

☐ Event ideas for people to initiate or host
☐ List of organized events
☐ List of clubs that people can join or start (e.g. chess, Comic-con)
☐ Support Groups and contact information to get more information

Camps for Youth/Young Adults with ASD

☐ List of ASD-friendly camps with eligibility criteria provided

Networks & Organizations

☐ List of networks, organizations, and conferences to join or attend

Message Board

☐ Place to post announcements and recent news items
☐ Host or provide link to a place where people can join a discussion forum

Links to Other ASD-related Websites

☐ Organize lists of links that adults with ASD, caregivers, and professionals might benefit from.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: LIST OF RECOMMENDED WEBSITE LINKS

AANE.org
Age of Autism
Art of Autism
ASO GCA
ASO Niagara
Asperger Society of Ontario
aswr.ca
Autism advocacy Facebook pages
Autism Canada
Autism Joy Club
Autism Ontario
Autism Ontario Charity Village
Autism Ontario Ministry of Community & Social Services
Autism Ontario TVCC
Autism Research Institute
Autism Society
Autism Speak
Autism Today
Autism Women's Network (AWN)
Autism.net
autismspectrumconnection.com
Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN)
Bill Nason
Blogs – ofbean; thinking autism, Emma's hope; respectfully connected
Blogs like a *autisticnotweird* or *askanautistic*
CAMH
CASDA
CL9
Community Living
Developmental Services Ontario Autism Ontario - local chapter
Facebook – autism unplugged
Facebook for Niagara Chapter
Geneva Centre
HCAARD
http://autismwomensnetwork.org/
http://autisticadvocacy.org/
http://emmashopebook.com/
http://hamiltonfeminauts.weebly.com
http://musingsofanaspie.com/
http://ollibean.com/
http://researchautism.net/
http://www.actcommunity.ca/information/autism-manual-for-bc/
http://www.autistichoya.com/
http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/english/specialneeds/autism/aprk/index.aspx
http://www.forwardmotion.info/
http://www.planningnetwork.ca/en-ca
http://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/
https://autism-center.ucsd.edu/autism-information/Pages/what-is-autism.aspx
https://ymcahbb.ca/Programs
Kerry's Place
Learning disability groups
Mea Centre
Ministry of Child and Youth Service
Musing of an Aspie blog
Neurodivergence Speaking
Neurowonderful
OCALI
Ollibean blog
OMIM
Owl Maclurn
Parenting Autistic Children with Love and Acceptance
Planet Aspergia
POPARD
Proud Autistic Living
r/aspergers
Real Social Skills
Reena Centre
Science Daily
SFOA

SHEO
South African FB group “Ask Me, I’m Autistic…?
specialisterne
TCAG
The Autism Acceptance Project
The National Professional Development Center on ASD
Thinking Person's Guide to Autism
Viva community Centre
WAVEottawa.ca
Wrong Planet (and IRC chat)
www.algonquincollege.com/asd
www.autismawarenesscentre.com
www.transitionresourceguide.ca
Y's Owl Maclure, Transition to Life - Integrated Autism Consulting, Spectrum Intervention Group
YSSN