

# Seneca

## Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum

Webinar for CICMH

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Mental Health Counsellor

# Agenda

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- Why do postsecondary students with ASD need support?
  - Special thanks to Tara Connolly from Algonquin College for resources
- ASD Transition Program
  - Breakdown of the day
- Program for the Education & Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®)
  - What is PEERS®?
  - How to bring PEERS® to your campus
- Future collaborations/projects

# Polling Questions

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# What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

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- Neurodevelopmental in nature
  - Impacts communication, social interaction, and behaviour
- Associated conditions
  - Depression, Anxiety, Sensory Integration, OCD, LD
  - Health issues – sleep, GI

*“If you’ve met one person with ASD, you’ve met one person with ASD” – Dr. Stephen M. Shore*

## Strengths

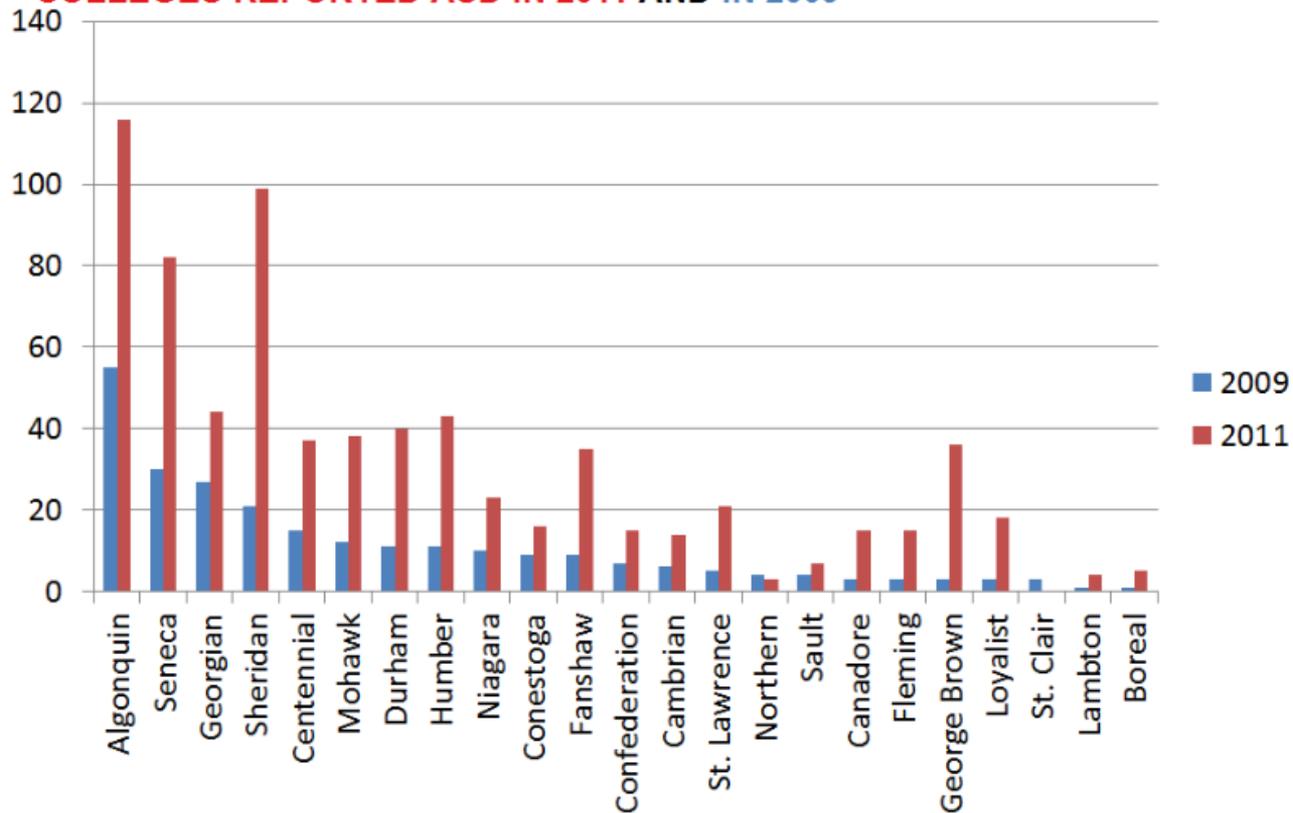
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- Attention to detail
- Highly skilled in particular areas
- Logical
- Independent thinkers
- Sense of social justice
- Visual thinkers
- Verbal strengths
- Direct communication
- Average to above average Intelligence

## Challenges

- Limited perception of how others think and feel
- Visual cues and unstated rules of conversations
- Social conventions and literal thinking
- Big picture views
- Need for routines
- Visual-spatial processing in a large college
- May not hold same values as neurotypical norm

## COLLEGES REPORTED ASD IN 2011 AND IN 2009

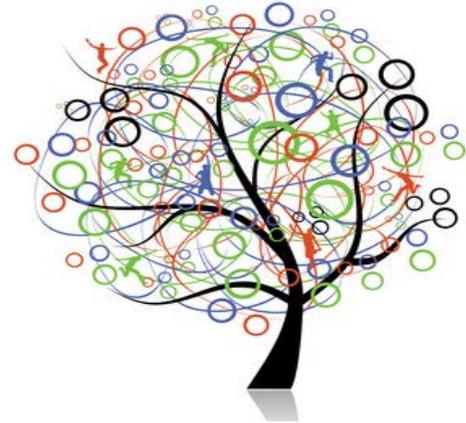


Identifying trends and supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder transitioning into postsecondary, Report to the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario Susan Alcorn MacKay, Director NOARC, 2009.

# How does ASD affect Postsecondary Education?

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- Communication
- Expands the Space/  
Alternate Perspectives
- Socialization
- Creativity
- Information Delivery Considerations
- Sensory, Anxiety, Mental Wellness



# Best Practices for Students with ASD

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- Comprehensive transition planning including:
  - Academic goal setting and preparation
  - Self-awareness and self-advocacy skills
  - Academic accommodations
  - Academic supports
  - Support/coaching around social situations and interactions
  - Inter-service collaboration
  - “Just-in-time” services
  - Multi-use space
- Benefits of knowledge exchange/transfer opportunities can bring ripple effect provincially

# ASD Transition Day Schedule

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11:00 – Registration/Welcome

11:10 – How to Make Stress Your Friend

12:30 – Lunch in cafeteria

1:15 – HELP! Now! For me as a Senecan

2:15 – Unwritten Rules of College Classroom/Ask the Professor

3:00 – Break

3:15 – Tour of the Test Centre, Learning Centre, Library and Quiet Areas

4:00 – Self Advocacy and Accommodations

5:00 – Parents asked to join

- Specialisterne Canada

- PEERS, Improvability, SMILE Mentor

5:30 – Feedback and dinner

6:15 – Students and Parents for a Q&A and What's the Difference? Session

7:00 – Wrap up

All topics/resources covered were made accessible on a shared drive afterwards

# HELP! Now! For Me as a Senecan

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- Takeaway sheet/USB with personalized resources
  - I don't know anyone.....what can I do?
  - Differences between “Just in time” services and urgent matters
  - I am upset.....what can I do or use?
  - Seneca email is not working
  - Who do I talk to for.....?
  - I'm feeling overwhelmed! What can I do?
  - I need to talk to someone about my program

# Unwritten Rules of the Classroom

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- Professor's perspective
  - Use of fidget or calming gadgets
  - Email etiquette
  - Assignments
  - Accommodations
  - Lecture goes too long.....what to do and what not to do
  - Leaving class early
  - What if you disagree with the professor?
  - Typos or spelling mistakes
  - Eating in class
  - Washroom breaks



## Employment Bridging Program

For Neurodiverse\* Students in Ontario

- A partnership to enable employment opportunities for neurodiverse students
- Using Specialisterne's proven and specialized recruitment, onboarding and management model to address systemic barriers faced by the neurodiverse population
- Adapted for the post-secondary student context
- Primarily for integrated learning and shorter-term employment opportunities such as co-op, internship and summer placements
- For more information: [specialisterne.ca/bridge](https://specialisterne.ca/bridge) or [bridge@specialisterne.ca](mailto:bridge@specialisterne.ca)

*\*Includes those on the autism spectrum, with ADHD/ADD, PDD-NOS, OCD, Clinical Anxiety, and other similar conditions and ways of being*

# Feedback on ASD Transition Day

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Please provide some feedback on the over all ASD day.

It was ok!

The day was very informative

I liked ASD day because I'm not able to come to the RSS workshop on Wed & Thurs due to work. I think that I got all my questions answered and I know where I need to go next week.

well-paced and easy to get through

Very good

I love doing the technology more than the talking.

I was satisfied with the day.

interesting

Amazing experience! Great time I had!

The sessions taught me to manage my stress levels

It was a really good day overall



## Social Skills Group For Young Adults

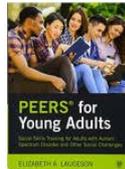
PEERS® for Young Adults is a 16-week evidence-based social skills intervention for motivated young adults between 18-38 years of age who are interested in learning skills to make and keep friends and develop romantic relationships. This internationally acclaimed program was originally developed at UCLA by PEERS® Clinic Founding Director, Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson. During each group session, young adults are taught important social skills and are given the opportunity to practice these skills. PEERS® may be appropriate for teens with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, Anxiety, Depression or other social and behavioral challenges. Young adults must be socially motivated and attend each session with a social coach.

### Young Adults will learn about:

- Conversational Skills
- Appropriate Use of Humor
- Electronic Communication
- Handling Direct and Indirect Bullying
- Handling Arguments & Disagreements
- Organizing Get-Togethers with Friends
- Dating Skills
- Strategies for Handling Sexual Pressure

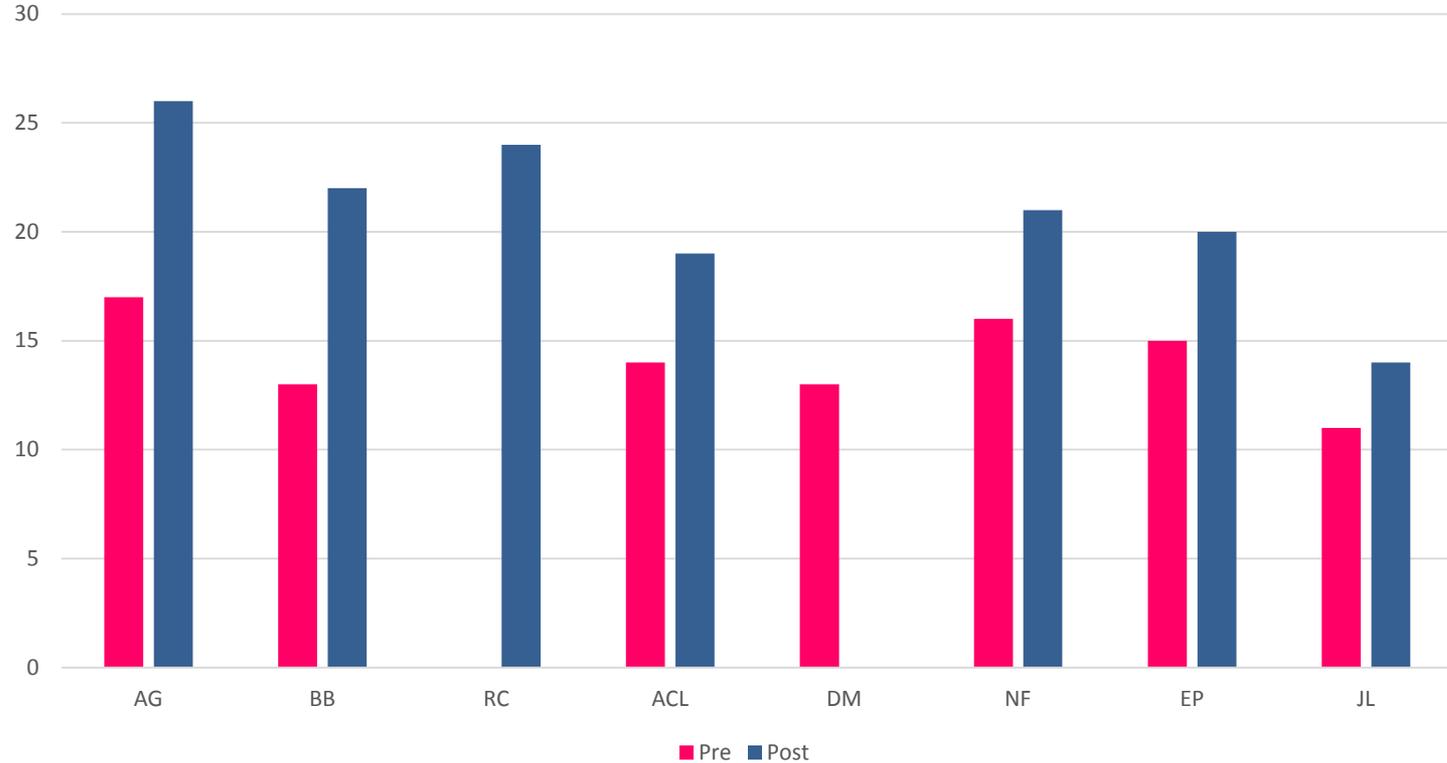
For enrollment information, please contact  
(310) 26-PEERS (310-267-3377)  
or email: [peersclinic@ucla.edu](mailto:peersclinic@ucla.edu)

For more information, please visit our website at  
[www.semel.ucla.edu/peers](http://www.semel.ucla.edu/peers)



# Test of Young Adult Social Skills Knowledge

TASSK Pre/Post



# Research Scales

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- Young Adult and Social Coach packages are done for Pre, Post and 6 months Post PEERS®
- Quality of Socialization Questionnaire
- Emotional and Autism-Spectrum Quotients
- Test of their Social Skills
- Loneliness Scale
- Social Responsiveness Scale
- Social Anxiety Scale

# A Word From Our Participants

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- Longer and more meaningful conversations
- “I learned how to set up group meetings using the 5 W’s that I learned in PEERS<sup>®</sup>”
- In placement, able to connect with clients and my co-workers and join conversations
- I have more tools in my toolbox now
- Parent and Student impactful letter and video

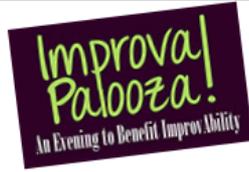
# Who can be trained?

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- The PEERS® for Young Adults Certified Training Seminar: Caregiver-Assisted Intervention is designed exclusively for mental health professionals, educators, medical professionals, speech and language pathologists, occupational and recreational therapists, researchers, and other professionals who work with young adults with social challenges.
- Attendees will obtain 24 hours of training over 3 days regarding use of the PEERS® Curriculum and the research behind the program.
- For information on dates and registration, please visit PEERS® website <https://www.semel.ucla.edu/peers> for certification or email [cindy.lau-chan@senecacollege.ca](mailto:cindy.lau-chan@senecacollege.ca) We are developing a 1 to 2 day training module.

# Future Collaborations/Projects

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- [www.improvability.ca](http://www.improvability.ca) Alana Shields Barker
- York Region School Board
  - Transition programming from secondary to post-secondary
- PEERS® Training
- Training for Seneca front line staff and faculty

**Thank You!**

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