

PhD Trainee for Research Study: Position Available

Study Short Title: Pathways to Belonging

Study Full Title: Moving Beyond Inclusion: Pathways to Belonging for Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Project Website: voicesofyouthresearch.com (*see page 2 for description of research project*)

Funding: This grant is funded through a three-year Insight Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and will run from May 2018 – April 2021.

Research Team

Investigators: Dr. Rebecca Renwick and Dr. Debra Cameron

Collaborators from Community Organizations: Sharon Gabison, Ontario Federation for Adults with Developmental Disabilities, Melissa Ngo, Hand Over Hand Community Organization, and Dave Hingsburger, VITA Community Living Services

Project Consultants/Community Members: Zoe Stanley and TBD

Research Sites

This ongoing research project is based in downtown Toronto at the Rehabilitation Sciences Building (500 University Avenue), University of Toronto. Some travel will be required to various community sites in the Greater Toronto area.

PhD Trainee Qualifications

Applicants must be registered full-time in a PhD program (e.g., disability studies, rehabilitation sciences, occupational science, bioethics, nursing, social work, psychology, education or other related disciplines). Applicants whose doctoral work is related to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are preferred. All applicants must have a strong interest in and previous experience (e.g., paid or voluntary work or other sustained experience) with young adults (e.g., 18 – 35) with IDD. Applicants should have a foundational understanding of qualitative methodology, inclusive and participatory methods, and critical disability theory. Applicants must be willing to engage in all stages of the research process, including ethics board submissions, literature reviews (with support of research assistants), interviewing and data collection, data analysis using NVivo software (under supervision of investigators), and knowledge mobilization and dissemination (e.g., presentations at national/international conferences and co-authoring of academic publications). It is expected that the PhD trainee will participate/lead in writing of at least two academic articles for publication.

Outline of Expected Role of PhD Trainee

This training is expected to complement the nature of his/her thesis research and augment courses taken in theory and methods and specialized courses (e.g., related to young adulthood, disability studies). Ongoing training will make a valuable contribution to his/her PhD work and prepare him/her for postdoctoral work and an academic career through acquisition of qualitative research skills, participation in multiple stages of research

under supervision, and experience with innovative and inclusive methods. S/he will have ongoing training related to the research, attend project meetings, and meet regularly (i.e., weekly or biweekly) with, and be supervised by the principal investigator throughout the project.

Expected Timeline

Year 1: S/he will be oriented in detail to the research and its specific methods; participate in regular team meetings; read literature related to the research; participate in arranging appointments and collecting data from participants; make field notes; and participate in qualitative data analysis.

Year 2: S/he will participate in: regular team meetings; arranging appointments, data collection and analysis; national/international conference presentations; co-authoring manuscripts for peer-reviewed journals.

Year 3: S/he will participate in: regular team meetings data analysis to identify emergent categories/framework; national/international conference presentations; writing manuscripts (with authorship) for peer-reviewed journals; and in knowledge mobilization (e.g., final report, creating film and graphic novella on findings, public forum).

Term of traineeship: The trainee will have an initial 12-month contract beginning in either September 2018 or January 2019 with the opportunity for annual renewal upon yearly review. While the number of hours per week is flexible, it is expected that the PhD trainee will devote 12 to 15 hours per week to the Pathways to Belonging project.

Remuneration: \$18,000 per year for up to three years

To Apply: Please contact Dr. Rebecca Renwick (r.renwick@utoronto.ca) and attach a cover letter, your current cv, and the names of and contact information for 3 academic and professional references. **Apply by September 1, 2018**

Description of Research Project

Social inclusion is a major goal for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD). Yet, recent research indicates that policies and programs aimed at inclusion have not had the desired or expected outcomes for people with IDD. Researchers and policymakers have begun to recognize that *belonging* may be a more useful concept to consider, particularly for young adults (YA) with IDD who are leaving the education system and progressing through young adulthood, often supported primarily by family and community-based organizations. Accordingly, the objectives of this inclusive research study are to examine: (a) how YA with IDD achieve belonging (or not) and; (b) how particular contexts and conditions (e.g., people, places, activities, strategies) foster and support belonging (or not) from the perspective of YA with IDD, family members, and community organizations.

Previous research (e.g., Voices of Youths project) conducted by the current team, identified a framework of 4 components of belonging. This framework provides a foundation to build on and expand theoretical and practical knowledge about how YA with IDD achieve belonging and the conditions and resources that support it from multiple perspectives. Currently, community living for Canadian YA with IDD presents several challenges for which an expanded, multi-perspective framework will provide theoretical guidance. Specifically, aging parental carers, a growing population of YA with IDD, and longer lifespans with complex disabilities for adults with IDD, combined with a community residential system in crisis indicate the need to better understand pathways to belonging for YA with IDD living with their families. Research on belonging for this group, however, is quite sparse.

Existing research is limited by the use of proxy-report measures/surveys with: (a) underdeveloped and narrow conceptualizations of belonging; (b) minimal perspectives from YA with IDD; and (c) measures/tools created for other populations. This body of research has also focused primarily on adults with IDD who live in group homes, rarely including those living with family. Yet currently, most YA with IDD live with their families well into adulthood. This study takes a collaborative, inclusive approach by: (a) including YA with IDD, family members, and partners from community organizations on the research team, and (b) using innovative methods to ensure accessibility and active involvement for all research team members and study participants (e.g., filmed community-based interviews, socio-spatial mapping). Forty-five participants will be recruited, 15 participants from 3 groups: (a) YA with IDD (18-35 years) living with family, (b) family members of YA with IDD; and (c) service providers of community organizations serving YA with IDD. Groups b and c will participate in individual, voice-recorded interviews. YA with IDD will participate in 2 filmed sessions allowing those who communicate in different ways to respond, to draw a personal socio-spatial map showing key people/relationships/places they associate with belonging. The multimodal data for the 3 participant groups will be analyzed, using constructivist grounded theory methods, to produce a theoretical framework of pathways to belonging.

This framework will guide/inform about how to approach practical challenges for YA with IDD and their families. Specifically, findings will have implications for (a) researchers focused on inclusion and belonging, policymakers, community organizations, and families; (b) new community-based approaches/programs for YA; (c) developing inclusive research methodologies; (d) potential applications with other marginalized groups; and (e) foregrounding the voices of YA with IDD.