

PhD Trainee for Research Study: Position Available

September 10, 2020

Study Short Title: Pathways to Belonging

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

Information about Study: See the description of the project below and visit the project website at: pathwaystobelonging.ca

Funding: The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada, Insight Grant.

Research Team:

Investigators: Dr. Rebecca Renwick and Dr. Debra Cameron

Collaborators from Community Organizations: Sharon Gabison, Ontario Developmental Disability Advocacy and Support Network; Melissa Ngo, Hand Over Hand Community Organization, and Chanelle Salonia VITA Community Living Services

Project Consultants/Community Members: Zoe Stanley, Michael Goldberg, Thomas Finucan, Tessa Prashun, and Chris Beesley

Project Coordinator: Jen Estrella

Research Sites:

This ongoing research project is based in downtown Toronto at the Rehabilitation Sciences Building (500 University Avenue), University of Toronto. Some travel may be required to various community sites in the Greater Toronto area, as and when appropriate based on pandemic advisories by government and the University of Toronto.

Position Description and Responsibilities:

This training opportunity is expected to complement the nature of the PhD trainee's 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 their PhD work and prepare the trainee for postdoctoral work and an academic career through development of qualitative research skills, participation in multiple stages of research under supervision, and experience with innovative and inclusive methods.

The PhD trainee will:

- have ongoing training related to the research as well as meet regularly with and be supervised by the principal investigator throughout the project.
- be oriented in detail to the research and its specific methods; read literature related to the research; participate in arranging appointments and collecting data from participants; make field notes; and participate in qualitative data analysis.

- participate in regular project and team meetings
- participate in knowledge mobilization, for example through: national/international conference, presentations; writing manuscript(s) (with authorship) for peer-reviewed journal(s); preparation of a final report; creating a film and graphic novella on findings; involvement in a public forum

PhD Trainee Qualifications:

- 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).
- Engaged in doctoral work related to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are preferred.
- Have a strong interest in and experience (e.g., through paid or voluntary work or other sustained experience) with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Have a good understanding of qualitative methodology and hands-on experience with qualitative data analysis, and be familiar with inclusive and participatory methods, and critical disability theory.
- Willing to engage in all stages of the research process, including ethics board submissions, literature reviews, interviewing and data collection, data analysis using NVivo software), and knowledge mobilization/dissemination

Term of traineeship: The trainee will have an initial 12-month contract beginning as early as September 2020 with the opportunity for extension beyond the initial 12 months (length of time TBD). While the number of hours per week is flexible, it is expected that the PhD trainee will devote an average of 12 to 15 hours per week to the Pathways to Belonging project.

Remuneration: TBD

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 three academic and professional references. **Applications are being accepted now.**

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, the Voices of Youths project conducted by the current team, identified a theoretical framework comprising four aspects of belonging. This framework provides a foundation to build on and expand theoretical and practical knowledge about how YA with IDD achieve belonging as well as 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., video-recorded community-based interviews, socio-spatial mapping).** Up to forty-five participants will be recruited, 15 participants (or to saturation) from three groups: (a) YA with IDD (18-35 years) living with family, (b) family members of YA with IDD; and (c) service providers from community organizations supporting YA with IDD. Groups (b) and (c) participate in individual, voice-recorded interviews. YA with IDD participate in two video-recorded sessions allowing those who communicate in different ways to respond, and also draw a personal socio-spatial map showing key people/relationships/places they associate with belonging. **The multimodal data for the three participant groups will be analyzed, using constructivist grounded theory methods, to produce a theoretical framework of pathways to belonging.**

The framework revealed by this analysis will guide/inform 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; and (d) potential applications with other marginalized groups; and (e) foregrounding the voices of YA with IDD.