

Autism Canada releases comprehensive new report on Aging and Autism

(Toronto, April 4, 2018) Autism Canada is pleased to release a comprehensive report today on aging and autism.

The newly released ***Summary Report on Aging and Autism*** is the first comprehensive report of its kind in North America and comes out of an international delegation of autistic seniors, clinicians and researchers co-hosted by Autism Canada. The meeting, held in Vancouver in 2017, included presentations from five countries across three continents.

The ***Summary Report on Aging and Autism*** addresses strategies and solutions and begins building a framework for best practices for aging adults on the autism spectrum. The report focuses on three themes: 1) Understanding aging on the autism spectrum; 2) Supporting autistic adults; 3) Developing appropriate research methodologies and outcome measures for future work on autism and aging.

“It is imperative that we understand the needs of older adults and autistic seniors. Every year, more and more adults are transitioning into middle age and with that comes health and service challenges,” says Laurie Mawlam, Executive Director of Autism Canada. “We want to be well-prepared.”

Every parent with a child on the spectrum wonders what will happen when they are gone -- and when their autistic son or daughter is an older adult or senior. While there is a robust understanding of life course, gerontological and geriatric conditions for most aging individuals, little is known about aging with autism. This report is intended to enlighten policy makers, professionals, researchers, clinicians and families.

“We need to be looking at this issue now,” says Dr. Suzanne Lewis, Director and Chair of Autism Canada’s Professional Advisors Committee. “Collaboration is the best way forward to avoid duplication of research and expeditiously find the answers we need.”

Dr. Kevin Stoddart, Director of The Redpath Centre and Member of the Autism Canada Professional Advisors Committee, agrees: “So much emphasis in research and clinical supports continues to be on early intervention and children. Our lack of recognition that autism is a life-long condition is especially troubling when we think of those over 50. We need to work with autistic adults and their families to ensure we get this right.”

The report will generate momentum and opportunity to expand its scope and reach. Autism Canada intends to build on its success and to further the conversation and research into autism and aging.

[Click here to read the full ***Summary Report on Aging and Autism***.](#)

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About Autism Canada

Autism Canada is the only autism advocacy organization with a national perspective on the issues currently facing those with autism spectrum disorder, their families and other stakeholders. Together with our counterparts, we collaboratively work to share expertise, build consensus and help inform public policy and research. In addition to encouraging the sharing of best practices across provincial and territorial boundaries, Autism Canada actively promotes national dialogue on the most effective strategies for building equitable access to funding and services.

About Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder causing most individuals to experience communication problems, difficulty with social interactions and a tendency to repeat specific patterns of behaviour. With an estimated 1 in 66 children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, it is the most commonly diagnosed neurodevelopmental condition.