

# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress on MENTAL HEALTH

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## Development of a novel multi-disciplinary specialized care service for children and adolescent with autism spectrum disorder and/or intellectual/developmental disability in a tertiary children's hospital setting

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**Statement of the Problem:** Children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or Intellectual/Developmental Disability (IDD) are at greater risk of developing comorbid medical conditions, mental health diagnoses, behavioral challenges, and having overall poorer health outcomes. Hospital environments present unique stressors for children and adolescents with ASD/IDD. While many school boards have specialized multi-disciplinary teams to support students with ASD/IDD, most hospitals do not have a formal multidisciplinary ASD/IDD support team.

**Methodology:** Integrated, semi-structured stakeholder interviews were conducted with a range of relevant stakeholders, including hospital leadership and multi-disciplinary care professionals across the hospital and the developmental sector. The purpose of stakeholder engagement was to obtain their perspectives by identifying themes surrounding gaps in care for children and adolescents with ASD/IDD. Program development arose based on themes identified.

**Findings:** Themes identifying gaps in developmental/behavioural pediatric expertise at a tertiary care children's hospital emerged, including the need for specialized, comprehensive, cohesive and multidisciplinary developmental-behavioural and psychiatric care. The program was developed based on these identified gaps in care, literature review, on models of adaptive care and multi-disciplinary teams in the school setting, applied to the hospital setting. (See ProgramPathways and Consultation Criteria, Figure 1).

**Conclusion & Significance:** There is an emerging recognition of the need for specialized multi-disciplinary developmental-behavioural and mental health expertise in hospital inpatient settings to improve individualized care for children and youth with IDD/ASD. This session will describe the framework for development of a multi-disciplinary program to better support children and adolescents with ASD/IDD within a tertiary children's hospital setting including practical tips for behavioural screening strategies, adaptive care planning for patient behavioural event prevention, understanding the function of behaviour in the context of the health care setting, and pathways to support hospital patients from a behavioural and mental health perspective.

### Biography

Dr. Joelene Huber is a developmental paediatrician at the hospital for sick children. She helped develop the ABILITY@SickKids program which aims to improve healthcare delivery for children and youth with autism spectrum disorder and developmental disabilities. She has a special interest in autism spectrum disorder, behavioural and social paediatrics. She completed medical school at McMaster University, an MSc at McGill University, and a PhD in medical science and neuroscience at University of Toronto. He did her paediatric residency training and fellowship in developmental paediatrics at the hospital for Sick Children/UofT. She also completed a fellowship in medical journalism at the Munk School of global affairs, University of Toronto. She recently received the heroes for children courage award in recognition of her years of leadership as a pediatrician, public engagement, and advocacy efforts for the health of mothers and new-borns as a volunteer through the ENRICH:1000 day journey grant in Bangladesh.