

Report by:

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I have had many great experiences working with children, youth, and young adults with ASDs in diverse recreational and clinical settings. My burgeoning interest in this unique population has grown throughout my academic career and I am now expanding my experience to include clinical research endeavors. Attending the 2010 IMFAR conference was a fantastic opportunity for me to gain a better understanding of the broad range of current international research related to developmental disabilities and ASDs. During this conference I attended presentations, seminars, and poster sessions, engaged in discussions and networked with researchers and students in the field, and promoted my current research on the evaluation of the York University Asperger Mentorship Program (AMP).

I had the unique opportunity to network with researchers from the University of Alabama, Drs. Mark and Laura Klinger, who are currently providing similar resources for college students with ASDs. Being able to compare and intellectually discuss our programs, research, and evaluations was imperative to our program's development and future research. Furthermore, the Klingers invited the AMP to attend a conference in July 2010 to further discuss and promote the program, as well as brainstorm and collaborate with other universities within the United States who are developing programs to better serve their students with ASDs. I believe this opportunity to present our research findings at the conference was critical to the continuing

development of the AMP and encouraged other professionals to reassess the current supports for university and college students with ASDs within their university/college setting.

Attending the 2010 IMFAR conference was critical to my training and development as an ASD clinician. As I have recently been involved in different types of interventions (e.g., cognitive behavioural therapy, anger management, etc.) for children with ASDs, I was particularly interested in the body of research presented at the conference on the efficacy of such interventions. More specifically, I was impressed with the amount of research that encouraged clinicians to develop adaptations of manualized intervention programs to better service individuals with ASDs, given the vast heterogeneity of this population. This information is invaluable as it provides evidence for different types of methods that would benefit this population and promotes clinicians to critically evaluate interventions designed for typical samples in light of the challenges and strengths of the individuals you are serving, a lesson which is important for the assessment and treatment of all individuals, regardless of diagnosis.

Overall, the 2010 IMFAR conference provided me with invaluable knowledge and I would like to thank Autism Ontario for enabling me to attend. I am already excited to attend the 2011 IMFAR conference next year

