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I am a doctoral candidate in York University's Clinical-Developmental psychology program where I do research involving families of children with autism. I would like to thank Autism Ontario for the travel bursary to attend this year's Research Special Interest Group (RSIG) of the Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities conference. This is the seventh year that I have attended RSIG. The conference is extremely accepting and encouraging of students' contributions. RSIG provides a unique opportunity to meet with others involved in the field of developmental disabilities. I appreciate having a chance to learn from multidisciplinary professionals in a variety of fields. I recognize the importance of being aware of developments in the broader field of disabilities, not exclusively from my current perspective as a future psychologist currently doing autism research.

A number of presentations made lasting impressions. Psychologist, Dr. Yona Lunsky, provided the keynote address entitled "A Clinical Researcher's Journal Toward Mental Health Promotion". Dr. Lunsky spoke eloquently about her evolving program of research, including her exploration of the experiences of individuals with dual diagnoses (developmental disabilities and mental health challenges) and their families, as well as the health system that serves these individuals. During the conference, Dr.

Lunsky was presented with the OADD RSIG Professional Award for Excellence in Research. It is clear that Dr. Lunsky has made countless contributions to the field of developmental disabilities through her research, mentorship, and clinical practice.

Dr. Valerie Temple and Trudy Clifford presented information about Ontario's first fetal alcohol spectrum disorders clinic for adults at Surrey Place Centre in Toronto. The clinic is staffed by numerous interdisciplinary team members, including a psychologist, a behaviour therapist, a nurse practitioner, and a consulting physician to name a few. The presenters shared with the audience the challenges and exciting successes that they have experienced in the first year of running this clinic.

RSIG provides a wonderful opportunity for students to share the results of their research. I was particularly interested to hear about work being done at Queen's University by Julia Burbidge, a doctoral student, about the "Participation in Activities of High School Students with and without Intellectual Disabilities". Ksusha Blacklock, a York University student, discussed the results of a pilot study that she conducted about the proposed benchmarks for the Ontario Intensive Behavioural Intervention Program. In addition, Tiziana Bontempo, an Occupational Therapy student

at Queen's University, presented her research about sensory processing patterns of adults with autism spectrum disorders in the workplace.

In summary, I believe that attending RSIG is beneficial for a variety of reasons. RSIG affords an opportunity to meet other researchers, to learn and to stay on top of new theories

and developments in the field. It also provides a unique occasion to learn from diverse and knowledgeable professionals. Finally, RSIG continually proves to be a conference where I can network; making connections and meeting with individuals with whom I will hopefully be working in the future.