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A career developmental perspective on autism spectrum disorder**Francesca Dansereau**

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In the early 1990s, there was an increase in individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). One response was to facilitate early intervention and support with the hopes of increasing positive post-high school outcomes for opportunities for this group. The individual characteristics related to negative outcomes have been extensively researched (e.g., neurology, processing speed, executive functioning, language and communication, learning disabilities and psychiatric comorbidities) through the environmental and societal contributors have been largely ignored. This study will consider the career development trajectories of individuals on the autism spectrum by exploring the sequences of

their occupational positions and their decision-making processes during transitional stages in lifespan development such as growth, exploration and establishment (defined in more detail below). A visual timeline of their roles and their re-cycling of roles during specific transition times in their lives provides a visual representation of the process each participant underwent to get to their post-high school education program. Recycling represents the transitions and explorations that occur throughout a person's lifespan that culminate in the establishment, maintenance or decline in a phase or role. According to super, a person plays many roles that evolve through specific life experiences. As this study is currently ongoing, preliminary data will be discussed in this presentation in such to provide the audience with examples of developmental processes, the sequence of occupations and

life experiences of individuals on the autism spectrum currently attending a university program. This exploratory study will, in essence, provide career counseling support for individuals with autism who wish to attend a post-high school program and acquire a career path.

Biography

Francesca Dansereau is a PhD candidate in Human Development at McGill University. She worked as an integration technology specialist, an adaptive technology trainer for Microcomputer Science and as an RDI certified consultant in private practice. The research she has conducted in the field focuses on neurodevelopmental disabilities (down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities), quality of life and education technology. Expanding her expertise, her dissertation focuses on career development and autism spectrum disorder for which she founded The Social Tree Foundation in 2017 to open a career center with a multidisciplinary team of professional in the Montreal area. Through her private practice work, she has recently received a contract part of the Cree Health Board as part of the Neurodevelopmental Diagnostic and Intervention Clinic. She administers various academic assessments and supports the neurodiagnostic team for fetal alcohol syndrome disorders.

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