

Kids Grow Up: Teens and Adults on the Autism Spectrum Advocacy Campaign Tool Kit

-Talking Points-

- ✓ Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life. It is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain.
- ✓ Autism impacts the typical development of the brain in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Adults with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or recreation activities.
- ✓ Based on recent studies by Canadian researchers, the prevalence rate of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is 1 in 165. In Ontario, there is an estimated 70,000 individuals with ASD.
- ✓ Adults with Autism remain among society's most vulnerable and poorly served people. The scarcity of properly trained staff and expertise on Autism means that people with autism are often denied integration and inclusive opportunities in communities where they live.
- ✓ Individuals in the autism spectrum need specialized services. Generic programs for people with developmental disabilities just won't do.
- ✓ Major needs of people with autism:
 - the need to communicate wants and desires and to interact meaningfully with others;
 - the need for highly structured, predictable and familiar surroundings;

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- the need for meaningful work and recreational-leisure activities to give meaning to existence and provide a sense of accomplishment and being valued by others;
 - the need for a safe and caring place of residence chosen from options along a continuum of residential services;
 - the need for adequate and sensitive health and social services; and
 - the need for advocates to ensure that rights and needs are respected and not violated, and that existing services are appropriate and adequate for each individual.
- ✓ Patches of programs and services are in place but need to be greatly enhanced, better coordinated, and more **specialized** to meet the needs of individuals with ASD and their families. What needs to happen is a **cross-sector cooperation and collaboration among various ministries** to achieve real wrap-around services for adults with ASD. Areas to focus on are:
- Transition planning and supports
 - SSAH and other forms of individualized funding
 - Housing options
 - Service coordination
 - Residential and Day supports
 - Respite services
 - School support programs
 - Vocational training and income support
 - Clinical support
 - Support groups for individuals and their families
 - Mandatory training for professionals in education, health, and developmental services sectors.
 - Public awareness campaign
- ✓ Adults on the autism spectrum have potential and can live a full, meaningful life. It takes a village to make that possible.