Department of Community Health Sciences

Community Rehabilitation & Disability Studies

CONNECTOR 2022

Connecting students, graduates, and service providers in our community

April 6, 2022
A Virtual Event via Zoom | Calgary, Alberta

cumming.ucalgary.ca/bcr
Welcome / Thank you / About

Welcome to our annual Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies (CRDS) Connector Event!

We would like to welcome each of you to our annual CRDS Connector Event, which has been organized by a dedicated team of students, faculty, and administrative staff. It’s an exciting time for our program and the field as we continue to grow and adapt, and work to cultivate leadership development, innovation, community capacity building, and to encourage students to become allies who work towards improving the well-being of people with diverse abilities, promoting social change and building corresponding knowledge and theory.

Our faculty, students, and partners are dedicated to building and developing partnerships between the university and our community. The participation of each individual at this event demonstrates the ongoing commitment to develop reciprocal relationships. Today, students in the CRDS program who have completed practicums and research in community have the opportunity to share the work that they have completed throughout the year and engage with community partners, program graduates and faculty.

Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies and the field of disability is an exciting area in which to work and study. We hope that opportunities such as this allow all of us in this field to continue to meet and bring people together and to encourage growth, and innovation more widely.

We would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), as well as the Tsuut’ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III. We would also like to note that the University of Calgary is situated on land adjacent to where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, and that the traditional Blackfoot name of this place is “Moh’kins’tsis”, which we now call the City of Calgary.

On behalf of the CRDS Connector Committee, we would like to thank each of your for attending our event and bringing your experience to our gathering. Together we have the vision, the knowledge, the wherewithal, and the experience to help pave the future. We could not accomplish what we do without your support and leadership.

Sincerely,

The CRDS Connector Committee
## Schedule

### Wednesday, April 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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| 11:00 a.m. | Program Welcome  
Dr. Joanna Rankin                                        | Zoom Main Room       |
| 11:05 a.m. | Department Welcome  
Dr. Fiona Clement                                      | Zoom Main Room       |
| 11:10 a.m. | Undergraduate Health & Science Education Welcome  
Dr. Ebba Kurz                      | Zoom Main Room       |
| 11:15 a.m. | Keynote Presentation  
Dr. E. Anne Hughson  
“Social Change out in ‘the World’ – Why it. Matters” | Zoom Main Room       |
| 11:40 a.m. | Student “Three Minute Thesis” Breakout Sessions            | Zoom Break Out Rooms |
| 12:40 p.m. | Wrap Up  
Dr. Joanna Rankin                                         | Zoom Main Room       |
Faculty Speakers & Guests

Dr. Joanna Rankin
Instructor and Director, Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies, Community Health Sciences

Joanna is an Instructor and the Undergraduate Program Director in the Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies program at the University of Calgary. Her interests centre on undergraduate teaching and learning and the intricacies of teaching and learning in Disability Studies and the disability field more widely. Her current focus is on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and the connections between premises of equity, diversity, and inclusion and SoTL. Joanna’s current research focuses, inclusive students-as-partners opportunities, as well as using the doula model as an alternative mental health intervention, and the use of simulations as a teaching and learning tool. All of her work centres on social justice and social change relating to disability. Joanna is also a trained end-of-life doula.

Dr. Fiona Clement
Associate Professor and Department Head, Community Health Sciences

Dr. Fiona Clement is currently the Department Head of Community Health Sciences within the Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary; the Department CRDS calls home. She is relatively new to the role starting in August 2020 but she has been a Department member for just over 10 years. Fiona brings a passion for the work of the Department in the focus areas of research, education and service. We think she is great as do others with her being recognized this year as one of Canada’s Top 100 most powerful women.
Dr. Ebba Kurz  
**Associate Dean, Undergraduate Health and Science Education**  
**Director, Bachelor of Health Sciences Program**

Dr. Kurz is an Associate Professor in the Department of Physiology & Pharmacology, Director of the O’Brien Centre for the Bachelor of Health Sciences program and the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Health & Science Education) in the Cumming School of Medicine, under whom the Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation falls. She obtained her PhD from Queen’s University (Kingston, ON) and undertook post-doctoral training at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and the University of Calgary before launching her own lab in Calgary in 2006. In addition to being an active cancer researcher, Dr. Kurz is a dedicated educator and educational leader focused on student development and wellness both inside the classroom and beyond. For her efforts, she was awarded the inaugural Killam Award for Undergraduate Mentoring in 2014.

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Dr. E. Anne Hughson  
**Associate Professor Emerita, Community Health Sciences**

Dr. E. Anne Hughson is an Associate Professor Emerita and the previous Director of the Program of Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies at the University of Calgary, as well as a Registered Psychologist and a member in good standing with the College of Alberta Psychologists (CAP). Prior to joining the University of Calgary in 1985, Anne had an extensive background in working directly with families and individuals with development disabilities, in particular in addressing issues of violence and abuse, sexual assault, emotional and behavioral concerns related to disability. She has continued that work through her research, teaching and volunteer roles. She is a recipient of the Faculty of Education Excellence in Teaching Award and the author and co-author of a number of texts, chapters and articles on a wide range of disability-related subjects. She has lectured and taught in many countries including, Mexico, United Kingdom, Spain, Malta, Russia, USA, Australia, S. Africa, Ireland and New Zealand. As a researcher in disability studies and a teacher in program evaluation and consultation, community development, reflective practice, advocacy and leadership her work is grounded in the lived experiences of people with disabilities and their families.
Student Speaker Order & Breakout Room Assignments

Room 1
Jenna Procyshen
Kayla Williams
Avril Harrison
Carmen Thien
Souad Abdalla
Nazifah Alemi
Vanessa Dang
Robyn Garrido
Felisa Lonigro
Mariam Ibrahim
Shey Montgomery
Riley Rowe
Kayla Chrunyk
Brenda Luong
Spencer Plunkett-Oldford
Kaylee Dawson
Sophie Morrish

Room 2
Eva Jones
Shiri Dirisina
Wandyer Paquiz
Maryam Ali
Lauren Embree
Brandi Hewitt
Brandon Mu
Kloeve Undag
Christopher Brett
Lexie Rast
Jada Chok
Leigha Grise
Morgan Jenkins
Amanda Denis
Courtney Gautreau
Sarah Fisher
Mylan So

Room 3
Monica Morela
Kristine Kaye Naybe
Hannah Basaraba
Hazel Diaz
Jimmy Huynh
Vera Odoemenam
Noura Hajyouni
Sara Sbeiti
Samantha Whalen
Reese Kilcup
Susanna Chan
Jenae Van hornsved
Sam Mann
Anthony Kers
Johnson Tang
McKenzie Meek
Elyse Dykstra

Room 4
Anthony Ngo
Caylee Wind
Kaitlyn Magee
Sara Barwick
Noelle Cote
Senyun Li
Lexie Shumate
Meghan Robbins
James Idowu
Patricia Fontanilla
Freda Okoma
Madison Hrycenko
Sarah Edward
Erica Hartman
Yohann Santos
Roxette Joson
Cayley Hodgson

Room 5
Julio Chavez Ruiz
Hong Vo
Cindy Tran
Minny Bezel
Faith Anne Gladney
Kailea Hager
Parveer Dhillon
Sarah Campbell
Alison McIvor
Ashley Corpuz
Tayler Kennedy
Nimo Mohamed
Sabrina Pearcey
Joyce Ng
Carolina Nunez
Lauren Seabrook
Paulina Turpin Molina
Student Abstracts

ABDALLA, Souad

My thesis presentation surrounds my experiences working with a team of vocational rehabilitation specialists at Lifemark Health. During my time there, I was provided with the opportunity to explore the process of many re-employment services and in the process learned about the assisted skilling up program (ASU). A major component of this program is assisting a client in finding a career that they are passionate about with their current skillset and finding and understanding the steps a client must take in order to reach those goals. This often includes going back to school or attending a training institute to gain the required skills. In this presentation, I will discuss the research conducted throughout the semester about programs offered and the pre-requisites a client must attain prior to being admitted to training institutes.

ALEMI, Nazifah

Senior Practicum Experience with Research Regarding Community Engagement in Immigrant Communities Involving Health and Wellness

Community engagement is a concept that has been commonly used throughout health and wellness research. However, methods of engagement may vary by definition and understanding, which is what researchers from the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Calgary aimed to explore. My practicum experience was primarily focused on contributing to the research paper which examined how health and wellness was promoted through community engagement in immigrant communities. My presentation will delve into my practicum experience and my investigation through community engagement literature. Over the course of two semesters, I explored how the definition of community engagement can vary alongside the methodology used in individual studies. In addition to understanding the purpose of the research, I assisted team by reviewing and analyzing the literature as well identifying ways to organize the information. Overall, the experience working on this research paper has allowed me to acquire skills that can be applied both academically and professionally.

ALI, Maryam


Background: The sexual and intimate lives of people with intellectual disabilities have been marked by a history of protectionism and infantilization, resulting in their sexual repression. Although there is still limited research on the topic, studies show that this social group is participating (or attempting to participate) in digital sexual fields such as dating sites and social media with a purpose of finding sexual and intimate partners.

Methods and Analysis: Joanna Briggs Institution's scoping review framework will guide the conduct of this scoping review and the scoping review protocol. We propose conducting a systematic review of
evidence generated by qualitative research and a thematic analysis of the data. We will include any study which focuses on navigation through digital media and sexual fields in the context of intellectual disability to provide relevant conclusions.

Discussion: This study aims to better understanding how people with intellectual disabilities use digital sexual spaces to seek romance, intimate relationships, and sexual pleasure. Some preliminary short research pieces and literature reviews for the project suggest that most of the information on sexual health and digital media for people with intellectual disabilities focuses more on dangers of sex and internet such as sexual abuse, STDs, and online risks. Such themes of societal inequalities lead to exclusion between digital fields and people with intellectual disabilities, for instance, missing equality guidelines to address disability on mainstream dating apps and social media. We will address more gaps in research and literature on sexuality and navigating digital sexual fields for people with intellectual disabilities and offer recommendations about improving programs for relevant agencies.

BARWICK, Sara

Inclusive spaces: After school programming for children with neurodiversity

Families of children with disabilities often lack a sense of belonging within their community because of limited inclusive supports and programming. Creating inclusive programs is more than just providing services to children with and without disabilities. For children with neurodiverse needs, or any disability, particular attention needs to be paid to the type of programming and what supports may be needed for them to actively participate and be properly supported. Through my practicum work with Vista Academy, a specialized school for children with neurodiversity, we began the process of developing an after-school program that is inclusive for children with neurodiverse needs. This program was identified as a need within our community based on requests from families currently attending Vista Academy as well as by completing research determining a lack of available after school programming within our community. Part of my practicum project involved completing the application process for afterschool programming/childcare licencing in BC which was an extensive process that involved ensuring that our program design was inclusive to the populations we wished to support but also followed licencing requirements. Overall, a main goal of my project was to increase advocacy, improve community supports and inclusion, and promote diversity. Upon completion of the program, it is hoped that the program will leave a positive lasting impact for the families, children, and staff of Vista Academy as well as for our community and potential future users of the program.

BASARABA, Hannah

Fostering Community Outside the Classroom

Parent involvement is a crucial aspect of a child’s education and the development of a child’s sense of community. Parents whose children reside in group homes or residential programs are often not connected to the day-to-day communication and on their child’s classroom, as information is often passed between teacher and staff from group homes or residential programs. The reduced
communication between parents and their child’s school can generate feelings of isolation and desolation in regard to their child’s education. Over the course of seven months, I have created personalized monthly newsletters which summarize through both pictures and writing what each student has achieved during the month. The intention behind the newsletters is to strengthen student connection between their home and school, while promoting a sense of belonging for parents. The format and content for each newsletter is meticulously chosen to showcase a student’s achievements, participation, and excitement, throughout the month. Parents frequently responded to the newsletters with positive feedback and reported the newsletter to be a meaningful glimpse into their child’s learning at school. Additional consideration for the delivery of the newsletters was suggested, such as email, or mailing. Through the duration of my practicum experience my goal was to develop a strategy which would strengthen a student’s connection between home and school. With the continuation of the personalized newsletters, I aim to establish a standard of communication between classrooms and families which centers on positive aspects of a child’s learning.

BEZEL, Minny

Curriculum Development for Autistic Students in a Classroom Setting: Natural Environment Teaching & Social Skill Development

Prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Janus Academy students often attended field trips and interacted socially with community members independent from the school. As Janus Academy serves students with autism spectrum disorder, the lack of community engagement stemming from Covid-19 has resulted in a reduction of student social skill development, ease of environmental interactions, and diminished mental health. I have worked alongside my practicum supervisor to combat these adverse effects through developing two curriculums: Natural Environment Teaching (NET) and Social Skill Development (SSD). The NET curriculum, offered to grades 1-6, supports students by offering monthly themes simulating real-world environments and situations in a specialized classroom. In contrast, the SSD curriculum, offered to grades 7-12, focuses primarily on growing student understanding of underlying behavioural expectations customary in social interactions. Whereas NET provides age and skill-appropriate activities to expose students to elements of real-world experiences, SSD instructs necessary social behaviours in a naturalistic and adaptable format. Both curriculums encompass experiences common to everyday life, yet activities differ in execution according to age group, skill level, and primary focus. Overall, both activities provide access to the development of necessary skillsets resulting in improved mental health outcomes of participating students.

Keywords: Autism spectrum disorder, specialized education, Curriculum design, Natural Environment Teaching, Social Skill Development
BRETT, Chris

Senior Practicum Experience at Community Options

For my Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies senior practicum classes, I worked closely with the family support worker and program coordinator at Community Options in Edmonton. Community Options is an organization that works mainly with preschool aged children who have disabilities ensuring they have the proper support they need in classrooms. The organization focuses highly on inclusion in the classroom and inclusive education. Community Options also supports families of the children they work with in community access and engagement. Working alongside the family support worker, my main project for my first term with Community Options was creating an inclusive community resource package for Indigenous families that the organization supports. I also assisted in running a festive meal for low income and homeless families in Edmonton to be provided with a Christmas meal, gifts for their children, and clothing. For my second semester, I focused on some of the internal workings of Community Options. I assisted in interviewing for new EA’s that the organization were hoping to hire. I also put together and conducted satisfactory surveys for the employees of the organization, and for families of the children the organization service to see which areas or service were working well, and where there may be gaps. Community Options were incredibly supportive during my practicum and the knowledge I gain will help me moving forward in my career, and in the way I view the world.

CAMPBELL, Sarah

My practicum experience at the Lighthouse Supported Living has opened my eyes to the extreme service gaps for people with intellectual disabilities and comorbid diagnoses of mental illness and substance use that occur within communities. Many of these individuals are denied community supports due to their presentation of difficult behaviors induced from extreme trauma and neglect. The Lighthouse demonstrates an attempt to address these gaps despite the systemic barriers that prevent this population from accessing the care they need. Reconstruction within disability services for those with mental illness and substance use challenges is an emergent need that I had the privilege of attempting to address through my practicum experience.

CHAN, Susanna

The Resources and Education for Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into Adulthood

The purpose of this journal article is to identify the knowledge gap that exists between youth with disabilities transitioning into adulthood and the resource available for them in Alberta. By exploring the gaps that are currently ongoing, a noticeable trend shown includes many youths attempting to transition to adulthood with a lack of resources in places such as rural areas in comparison to urban areas. From uncertainties on how to support their youth going into adulthood to planning a future for their loved one, there is a need for further knowledge, research and advocacy for both parents and youth with disabilities. As such, it was evident that there was a lack of resources and education available
in less populated cities in Central Alberta. By applying a critical disability theory, I will utilize my practicum, the Children’s Link Society, which could expand their full potential by providing and planning ways to educate and inform the parents of these children. Finally, I will analyze the barriers, drawbacks, and helplessness that may prevail among families and their youth with disability transitioning to adulthood.

CHAVEZ-RUIZ, Julio

No abstract submitted

CHOK, Jada

Defying the Odds

Anoxic brain injuries are defined as a complete loss of oxygen to the brain. Family of individuals who have sustained an anoxic brain injury are left with the belief that their loved one will be dependent the rest of their life, unable to walk or speak. At age 8, Nicholas sustained an anoxic brain injury and despite the negative beliefs of his doctors he has made immense progress towards his independence. Nicholas participates daily in a very demanding therapy program at school and at home. Through therapy programs, alternative medication, and the support of his family and outside resources Nicholas is on a path to gaining back his independence as currently he is able to walk with assistance, speak, bike, and attend school. Nicholas and his family have exemplified how perseverance can encourage an individual to overcome and defy the odds of society.

CHRUNYK, Kayla

A primary focus for my 260-hour linked CORE 594 & 595 placements was on the importance in valuing and including the voices of program participants within service planning and delivery in order to ensure inclusive services for all individuals, regardless of abilities or present challenges. Including the voices of those accessing services further promotes dignity and empowers individuals to recognize their own strengths and the value their voices hold. Furthermore, service providers aren’t the experts in the individual needs of those accessing services and it is important to include and value the voices of program participants in any decisions or planning related to them and their needs.

CORPUZ, Ashley

My practicum experience at Cerebral Palsy Kids and Families will be discussed upon in my Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies thesis presentation. I will reflect on how CPKF’s mission and vision are upheld through the projects I have led. With my co-practicum volunteer we curated a fall themed activity kit in the first semester. Then, currently in my second semester I am in charge of creating a Respite/Aide Contact List that will allow easy communication with organizations and universities on spreading job opportunities to students for our CPKF members. Through these projects, I
am able to use my experience toward my future endeavours as I pursue a Master’s Degree in Occupational Therapy abroad.

COTE, Noelle

Developing a Person-Centered Adult Day Program While Navigating Government Funding Programs

Developing a full-time adult day program for individuals with complex needs is an elaborate, multistep process. I had the opportunity to explore this process through my senior practicum project at Families of Alberta for Conductive Education (FACE) where I developed a full-time adult day program. The goal of this day program is to provide a place for disabled adults to go during the day to continue to learn, develop skills, maintain healthy habits and physical abilities, as well as engage in social opportunities. We aimed to create a meaningful space that the adults in the program would enjoy coming to everyday. A person-centered approach to program development was used in order to ensure each individuals needs are met and provide interesting, meaningful, and individualized opportunities. Another key aspect of my project was learning how this program could be partially funded by the government to reduce costs for individuals attending the program. As the project developed it become evident that meeting the requirements to receive government funding for the program acted as a barrier to implementing person centered planning. Namely, Person with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) funding is intended to fund specific services and supports, however these do not always align with individual needs and interests. This presentation will explore the relationship between person centered planning and government funding specifically in my experience of developing an adult day program.

DANG, Vanessa

Senior Practicum Experience: Reflections of an Undergraduate Student Engaging in Longitudinal Research

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unexpected event that has affected the whole world. During the pandemic, the psychological, economic, and social wellbeing of families and communities have been and continues to be impacted. In my fourth-year senior practicum, I had the opportunity to work with the All Our Families (AOF) study during their investigation of how families in Alberta cope with the experiences that they face throughout the pandemic. In my presentation, I will speak about the AOF study and provide an overview of my experience working within a longitudinal community-based study, alongside an academic research team. Primarily focusing on my work with supporting the study’s data access process, the presentation will outline my contributions to the AOF study and follow my research experience as an undergraduate student.
DAWSON Kaylee-Lyn

An exploration of clinical programming for people with developmental disabilities and complex mental health concerns in the community

People with developmental disabilities and complex mental health needs are at greater risk of having negative encounters in the community. My practicum year was focused on an exploration of the importance of individualized plans and services for adults with developmental disabilities and complex needs to avoid overuse of system resources. I learned about leading clinical programming in adult services, risk assessment, and the implementation of adequate programing for adults with developmental disabilities. Adults with developmental disabilities are more vulnerable to being the victims of violent crimes and police brutality in comparison to their nondisabled same age peers. I learned about goal-oriented programs that are precise to the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. I learned about how if these programs are implemented and correctly executed it can mitigate future encounters with law enforcement and other system resources. The continuum of services into adulthood aims to create opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities and complex needs which will foster a sense of self-worth and contribute to a high quality of life.

DENIS, Amanda

Collaboration, Community, and Working Within a Students as Partners Framework

The Students as Partners framework is used in higher education institutions where students are given the opportunity and invited to share their unique perspectives. This is done through the creation of space for faculty and students to engage in reflection and dialogue which allows for human connection and relationships to be built in the classroom and across higher learning. The collaboration on the research project “Nothing about us without us”: Co-developing an EDI informed Students-as-Partners Framework with faculty members and mentors, Dr. Joanna Rankin, Dr. Tiffany Boulton and Dr. Drew Pearl (University of Alabama) along with my research partner Mylan So meant that over a two year span, we created, built, and engaged with one another as equal partners to understand the barriers my fellow students face as they pursue partnerships in research initiatives at the university. For myself, this project was about finding my place in the world, build my own community and connections, and finally recognizing the skills that I already possess and the new ones I acquired through this experience all led me to fully embracing a career path in research.

DHILLON, Parveer

Holistic learning in peer mentoring

As a peer mentor in the first-year courses, I really experienced learning and educating, especially the methods for doing so. Where I saw these courses as a student four years ago, I learned to experience this as a mentor and recognize learning as existential, learning leading to the student constantly becoming through their experiences. Jarvis discussed this notion of holistic and lifelong learning, and
during CORE 207 I truly connected the experiential and reflective aspect of practicum to the content discussed in class. This past year I learned to learn, teach, and mentor while overcoming various challenges presented by COVID-19. Jarvis emphasizes learning through experiences and not the traditional banking method, this was experienced through development of seminars and learning the balance in creating an inviting learning environment for students online and in-person. The lasting impact of creating this environment includes foundational skills for students to use throughout their CRDS program and practicums along the way.

DIAZ, Hazel

Implementation of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework in Remote Learning for Students with Disabilities

The novel COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted and changed the way we socialize, work, and learn. During the pandemic, much human activity transitioned online, resulting in profound effects, especially in the education sector. With the shift to remote learning, students with disabilities—who are already disadvantaged in a traditional learning environment—are left with uncertainties and a lack of support. As educators attempt to address the unique learning needs of students with disabilities, recognizing the impact of remote learning on the students’ mental health remains pertinent. This year, I have had the opportunity to observe the fruitful implementation of inclusive education and the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework in conjunction with remote learning for adults with developmental disabilities. While assisting in a math and literacy class at the Transitional Vocational Program at Mount Royal University, I observed how the instructor had utilized the three overarching principles of UDL to enhance learning and ensure its accessibility to all students. These principles are as follows: multiple means of representation, multiple means of engagement, and multiple means of action and expression. The details of the existing UDL guidelines in my practicum will be investigated and future implications on using UDL in various other university settings, not specific to students with disabilities, will be identified.

DIRISINA, Shiri

The Effects of Virtual Community Engagement and Building Capacity in a Non-Governmental Organization

This presentation will highlight my key learning experiences during my eight-month practicum experience for the Alberta Ability Network: an initiative of Cerebral Palsy Alberta (AAN). My experiences at this practicum have informed my perspective on community advocacy and how it affects community capacity with the goal of community development. When building community capacity, non-governmental organizations such as the AAN must build trust with connections and relations throughout the community. The AAN organization also uses social media formats to grow their community base so they can spread messages to create awareness and generate community action. My experience revolves around the effects of social media in community outreach and capacity building. I will highlight my key learnings when contributing to AAN’s online presence and how virtual participation is effective in community engagement.
This presentation will showcase my social media project called the ‘AISH Story Series’, which collected and dispersed stories of individuals with lived experience on the provincial Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped program. This project was launched onto all AAN’s social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram), spreading awareness to all followers. The results of this campaign showed a large interest from the public and the potential of social media outreach/engagement for future campaigns and advocacy projects.

DYKSTRA, Elyse

**Participatory action research with disabled adults: determining their individual needs in day programs**

Novita is a provider of disability, supports and services for adults. My practicum focussed on ensuring that disabled adults needs were met while attending Novita day option services. Upon reviewing support plans, I noticed that people who are physically disabled but not cognitively impaired did not have their needs met. To address this gap, I conducted participatory action research which involved the following: analysing support plans, meeting with participants, their families, therapists, and staff. These meetings suggested that there needs to be more activities that are mentally stimulating, interactions between other hubs, and opportunities for independence. These findings will be applied to the development of new programs.

EDWARD, Sarah

**Empowerment through Accessibility: The Importance of Family Managed Supports**

Empowering families with the tools to share their vision of a good a life for their loved one with disabilities can create a clear path to inclusion and success. For many people with developmental disabilities, they are restricted within their access to services due to the red tape of larger collectives. I have personally experienced how easy it is for families to get lost in the navigation of the disability service sector, which has displayed the need for more accessible family managed supports. Through my time working with Inclusion Lethbridge over the past few semesters, I have aimed to help reduce the barriers to accessing services by creating a diverse database of disability support workers that share a passion for an inclusive community. Through this project I have seen the abundant advantages to having families be at the forefront of managing their supports, as it provides them with the opportunity to connect with a community of people that share the same inclusive values, thus allowing them to foster success for their loved one. The database is also advantageous for support workers as they have direct access families and a plan that is tailored to each persons unique needs and goals, which allows a person-centered care lens to be executed daily. Overall, this practicum and project experience has allowed me to better understand the needs of families through a Critical Disabilities Lens and has reaffirmed the need for increased accessibility within the disability service navigation system.
EMBREE, Lauren

Family Centred Approach

OSNS is a Child and Youth Developmental Center that envisions a community in which all children and youth reach their full potential. At OSNS, the family centred approach is used when working with families to better understand their circumstances. Listening to families about their experiences and hearing what’s important to them, gives the ability for the healthcare professional to improve their care. The family centred approach is used in a way to enhance the care of the child as well as, support any difficulties the family may be having. The families that come to OSNS are unique in their story but have commonality in their need. Using this approach gives families confidence in OSNS. In my time at there, I got to facilitate the Christmas Hamper project for families facing vulnerability, as well as write a grant to help support services. Both to these projects taught me the importance of listening to families and hearing what is significant to them. Collaboration from the patient, families, healthcare professionals and the community ensure that the needs of the family will be met. Through this approach, OSNS is able to adequately support and meet of the needs of families.

FISHER, Sarah

Collaboration Between Instructor Researchers and Student Co-researchers

My presentation, alongside Amanda Denis, Mylan So, and Courtney Gautoau, will be about my time as a co-researcher with instructors Joanna Rankin and Tiffany Boulton. This semester, I was involved in the Nothing About Us Without Us: Co-Developing an EDI Informed Students as Partners Framework research project which aims to make student research more accessible with an EDI initiative for students at the University of Calgary. I will start by continuing off Courtney’s explanation of the transcription process and dive into the data analysis section of the research process. I will explain how we divided up the workload and found common themes in the transcriptions. I will also give detail about our collaboration in the research meetings and how we all connected and openly explained our sometimes-differing perspectives. I will then connect personally to the data collection process by explaining that I was a participant in a focus group before I was on the research team, and I had a perspective switch from being a part of a research opportunity. I will use this personal experience to highlight the importance of perspective and having the flexibility to change it. I will end my presentation by saying that my practicum taught me flexibility and how instructors see collaboration in research.
FONTANILLA, Patricia

Psycho-Emotional Disablism in Chronic Illness

Psycho-emotional disablism is a term coined by Carol Thomas (1999), which encompasses how disabled people think and feel about themselves. This concept is often applied to physical disabilities. However, in my research practicum, Dr. Tiffany Boulton and I looked at psycho-emotional disablism in relation to invisible, chronic illness. We looked at how men’s experiences with Fibromyalgia syndrome impact psycho-emotional well-being. I argue that more research should be done regarding psycho-emotional disablism and chronic illnesses. Additionally, I discuss how my research experience has directly impacted how I wish to apply my knowledge in my graduate studies and professional career.

GARRIDO, Robyn

Peer-Mentoring in CRDS: Relationship Building and Critical Reflection

In this last academic year, I was a peer mentor for CORE 209 and CORE 207 as my senior practicum. From this experience, I developed skills that encouraged my teaching and facilitation abilities, which fostered my relationships with my students. I explored various learning pedagogies that reinforced the importance of experiential learning, such as our practicums, and how to facilitate critical reflection for my students. One of the methods I incorporated in my mentorship was by Jack Mezirow and his theory of Transformative Learning. Mezirow encouraged individuals to reflect deeply on our habits of minds, points of view, and the value of autonomous thinking in adult learners. As a peer mentor, I have participated in helping my students to re-evaluate their own points of view surrounding disability and reflect on their experiences in their practicums. Mezirow’s theory helped me understand and connect with my students and value the significance of our practicums.

GAUTREAU, Courtney

Giving a Voice to Students as a Research Assistant

Being a research assistant as a practicum placement can be both intimidating and rewarding. Not only did this practicum placement contrast the differences between “fake research” that students learn in coursework but gives a great insight on what it takes to perform “real research”, and the steps that correlate. Real research is not always glamorous however, this presentation will explain some of the tasks that a research student may undertake. I was able to collaborate with a team of professors in the Students as Partners project. My main task of transcribing interviews has made me reflect on the importance research has on people with disabilities. The CRDS program undertakes an inclusive lens and research has solidified that this can happen. While studying within this project one of my main passions was to become an advocate for people with disabilities, however, I wasn’t sure how I would be able to pursue this. Then along came the research. Research has taught me that through interviews and
transcription we can give people with disabilities a voice of issues that may be of importance to them. Participating in the student-as-partners research program has taught me that providing new research for our field is possible while maintaining a safe space for people with disabilities to voice their opinions and concerns.

GLADNEY, Faith Anne

At my senior practicum at North Haven Elementary School, I built meaningful relationships with the students and became familiar with their learning styles, strengths, weaknesses and abilities. I attempted to empower the students to become leaders within their school community. To achieve this, I encouraged independence through tasks, projects, and teaching the students about what it means to lead by example. At North Haven Elementary School, there has been an ongoing naturalization project to be completed by the students, staff and parents of the North Haven Community. This project allowed for me to have the students participate in activities such as, designing banners for the school, creating flyers to deliver in the community, and brainstorming what materials we should gather to begin the naturalization process. In saying this, I advanced my skills in social perceptiveness, initiating boundaries and my problem-solving skills. My hope is the students thrive during the remaining school year and continue to apply their leadership skills through the naturalization process, as well as upcoming school years.

GRISE, Leigha

The Impact of Covid-19 on Maternal and Youth Health and Well-being: the All Our Families Study

Two years into the Covid-19 pandemic, it is difficult to ignore the pervasive psychological, economic, and social effects that have occurred. Thus, this presentation will review the significance of data collected by the All Our Families Study regarding the impact of Covid-19 on contemporary urban families, as this research contributes to better understanding the effects of the pandemic on families over time and could inform potential family well-being strategies and pandemic recovery plans. Additionally, the presenter, Leigha Grise, will share how social change and CRDS values can be recognized regarding maternal health worldwide.

HAGER, Kailea

Is Genetic Testing a Form of Eugenics: A Critical Reflection

Genetic testing of the fetus while in utero has become a common practice for expecting parents in order to determine if there is an abnormality. However, when an abnormality is discovered, and the parents are given the option to abort the fetus there is a risk that the removal of the possibly disabled fetus is an act of eugenics. The purpose of this article is to look through a disability studies lens and evaluate research surrounding the prenatal testing of a fetus and how it relates to the eugenics and discrimination against the disabled population. By analyzing the previous research through a different focus this article will determine whether prenatal testing is a result of an ableist mindset where there is
discrimination against the disabled population, or the genuine care of the parents for their child’s health. This paper will look through both the medical model of disability where the individual's body needs to be fixed, as well as the social model of disability where the disabling factor is not based around the individual, but instead society as a whole.

HAJYOUNI, Noura

Evidence-Based Curriculum Implementation for Students with Autism

A significant gap exists regarding evidence-based curriculum implementation in specialized education programs serving students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Individual learning objectives across all graded divisions must be determined to promote a streamlined approach to programming, assessments, and data collection. Janus Academy, a school serving students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, is currently working toward becoming a centre of excellence. However, achieving the status of a centre of excellence requires factual evidence demonstrating student progress and student success within four key areas: literacy and numeracy, language and communication, self-regulation and behaviour, and independence. My 260-hour practicum project centres on developing a standardized approach to collect data evaluating education effectiveness. As students advance in each key area through Janus Academy’s unique curriculum components, our standardized approach aims to accurately evaluate the overall efficacy of the school’s educational programming.

HARRISON, Avril

Finding Meaningful Employment for Those Facing Barriers

Lifemark provides Career and Employment Services, among other services, to unemployed or underemployed individuals facing barriers to employment such as difficult labour market conditions, skills shortages, and limited work experience. During my time with Lifemark, I worked on many projects to aid the team in closing the gap for individuals facing barriers to meaningful employment in Alberta and across Canada. Not only have I made a meaningful impact at Lifemark, but they have also taught me invaluable skills that will be helpful post-graduation.

HARTMAN, Erica

Role Coverage of Physiotherapy in Relation to Neurotechnology and Robotics Within Academic Literature

Health professionals can fill many roles as professionals and as citizens in the discussions around scientific and technological advancements. Physical therapy and physical therapists use technologies in their work such as neurotechnology’s and robotics. As such, physiotherapists have a role to play in the governance of these technological advancements, as well as many other roles such as: their role in delivering clinical practices, educating patients, families, and other future physiotherapists, participating in research, authorizing work capacity, participating in house adaptations, participating in special
education, creating ethical healthcare practices, supporting families, and empowering patients. Using two search strategies to obtain literature from Scopus and the 70 databases from EBSCO-Host to find literature relevant to the study, we found that robotics and neurotechnology linked to physiotherapy mentioned much less roles. Physiotherapy was mostly mentioned with the clinical role and barely or not at all mentioned in roles such as, role in technology, education role, and modelling movements. Furthermore, governance of these technological advancements was not mentioned. These findings suggest that the coverage in literature and engagement of roles of physiotherapists linked to neurotechnology and robotics are insufficient in comparison of the roles of physiotherapy. This is significant as society continues to integrate more technology into the healthcare system.

HEWITT, Brandi

Empowering Families Through Knowledge: The Development of a Workbook

The empowerment of families with children with disabilities with knowledge is essential for their journey. For my senior practicum project at Gateway Association, I created a workbook for families of children with disabilities to use in conjunction with their workshop, Visioning and Planning for Families with Children 12 and Under. The four-part workbook uses parent-friendly language and focuses on person-centered care planning. It meets parents where they are at in their journey of navigating the system for their child. It aims to help families increase their knowledge and skills through information, activities, and reflective questions. The workbook encourages parents to develop a clear vision for their child’s future by creating and writing a strong vision statement and building valued roles. It aims to help families navigate the various systems, plan for transitions, and locate resources for their family and child.

HODGSON, Cayley

End-of-life care, also called hospice or palliative care, is a multi-dimensional branch of medicine that is often neglected in favour of a curative model of care. It is important to address how different groups of people are impacted by theoretical approaches to palliative care. Older adults with acquired disabilities are unique in the circumstance of their changing ability levels over time, impacted by the unique social institutions that support them. In this presentation I will be discussing a brief overview of the current theoretical and practical approaches to palliative care in older adults with disabilities and why the topic of end-of-life care is so taboo. I will also be discussing a model of how pain is experienced and perceived to use as an analogy of how palliative care is approached ideologically.

HRYCENKO, Madison

Community-Engaged Research in Mental Health: Creating Impactful Change

I joined the Radical Mental Health Doula Project as a research assistant for my senior level practicum with little knowledge of the research process but an eagerness to learn and a passion for topics surrounding mental health. Throughout the past eight-months, I have got to explore how to conduct
authentic community-engaged research through completing a literature review, engaging with mental health service stakeholders, and consulting with individuals with lived experience of mental health challenges. These experiences have not only allowed me to improve my skills as a researcher but also showed me the importance of involving community stakeholders within academia projects. My presentation will discuss the Radical Mental Health Doula Project created by Dr. Joanna Rankin and Dr. Tiffany Boulton and my perspective on how this community-engaged research project will create impactful change in the mental health services sector.

HUYNH, Jimmy

The Covid-19 pandemic had created fundamental challenges and barriers for everyone, however, those labeled as, seniors, are found to face greater challenges in their daily lives. This paper’s objective uses a personal practicum experience along with multiple resources to explore the effects of the COVID-19’s health restrictions in seniors. This includes the consequence of loneliness, reduced social connection, isolation, and other barriers leading to greater distress. In conclusion, the findings notes that effects from the COVID-19 restrictions, had led to greater isolation, and exclusion in many seniors' lives. The results found higher rates of mental and physical health concerns, leading to a higher risk of mortality. Furthermore, although the authors note that there is not much that can be done during the health restrictions; they emphasize the importance of integrating accessible technology, strengthening social connections, using remotely delivered social and psychological interventions, and, mobilizing resources from family and the community to help reduce the isolation and barriers for seniors during COVID-19.

IBRAHIM, Mariam

The Importance of Person-Centred Care for People with Disabilities in All Age Groups

One of the definitions of person-centred care (PCC) that stood out to me while doing research for my journal is from the article by Santana et al. (2017) who defined PCC as caring and understanding of client as a unique human being. Most often, people with disabilities (PWD) are categorized into a general program or settings based on assessment of how similar they are when it comes to capabilities or impairments. However, the use of PCC when applied to clients individually when caring for them yields more positive outcomes than generalized care for PWD. From reviewing articles and comparing my four years of practicum experience, I have been able to elaborate and provide evidence as to why PCC is important in all age groups when caring for PWD. Some of the positive outcomes of PCC highlighted in my journal according to Wigham et al. (2008) and according to some of my experiences of using PCC in practicum places is that use of PCC empowers PWD, PWD are able to feel like they are in control of their lives, their social life and quality of life improves, PWD tend to have more confident in themselves, PWD are able to manage their behavior and lastly, they are able to set fixed goals that they can plan and work towards at their own pace to achieve.
IDOWU, James

**What does it mean for Older Adults with Disabilities to Age Successfully?**

The population of older adults in North America and Canada has gradually increased over the past couple of decades. This increase in the older adult population can be attributed to the baby boomer generation approaching their older years and the advances of modern medicine. These advances in medicine have also improved our understanding of providing care for individuals with a disability, which has positively impacted this population as their mortality rate has significantly reduced with more people living until old age. However, this progress has raised significant concerns about how individuals with disabilities can age successfully. Focusing primarily on the experiences of older adults with disabilities, this paper highlights some key factors that promote successful aging in this population. Factors identified are: individuals with disabilities view successful aging as the ability to have autonomy, stay socially connected and be resilient. Also, successful aging is a life-long process that begins before an individual reaches the age of 65. Therefore, it is crucial for PWD to develop a routine that promotes physical, cognitive, and social activities. However, apparent limitations can impede older adults from aging successfully; therefore, more needs to be done to ensure individuals with disabilities do not fall through the crack and do not lose the elements identified to aid successful aging in this population.

JENKINS, Morgan

**Lacrossing Barriers and Accessible Sports Programs**

Accessibility in sports for disabled athletes remains an issue globally. Offering the only adaptive lacrosse program of its kind for disabled persons in Calgary, Autism and Asperger’s Friendship Society of Calgary (AAFS) prides itself on fostering community, inclusivity, and fun. This presentation will focus specifically on the Lacrossing Barriers program facilitated by AAFS. Through distribution of a manual that can guide sports-program coordinators and coaches through conception, development, and implementation of inclusive lacrosse programs, my practicum project aims to promote greater accessibility for lacrosse internationally.

JONES, Eva

**Student Practicum Experience: The Process of Community Engagement**

Through my practicum experience at the Cerebral Palsy Alberta- Alberta Ability Network on the Human Rights Table, I have joined the Barrier-free initiative to encourage the Government of Alberta to understand the need for a separate accessibility legislation. Although this initiative is not finished, I have helped move the needle forward. This initiative has moved from an idea at the Human Rights Table to a sub-committee group taking action and garnering support from community members. I have learned how to use community engagement to educate both the community and the Government officials on
why this accessibility legislation is necessary. Through various events, I have been able to piece together what it means to build community capacity and to move initiatives one step forward each time.

JOSON, Roxette

Home Sharing: A Housing Model for Older Adults

Home sharing involves the coming together of Vecova’s consumers and supportive roommates. It offers a unique, individualized, and mutually beneficial approach to housing. At Vecova, home sharing currently supports consumers with developmental disabilities. My practicum project involved identifying the need to expand these services to the general older adult population. Using my research of the best and promising practices in home sharing for older adults, a model was developed. Under this housing model, relationship building, choice, and inclusion are facilitated. Currently, organizations offer home sharing models with post-secondary students supporting older adults to prevent social isolation experienced in later life.

KENNEDY, Tayler

Our Words Matter

Within my practicum project I focused on the use of terminology being used by disability serving agencies around Alberta. After completing a literature review on the use of language within the disability field, a survey was conducted with 104 participants. Survey questions included ‘What terminology does your agency currently use to identify the population it serves?’, ‘Have terms changed within the last 1-2 years?’ and ‘Are you aware of identity first language?’. Results showed that the majority of language being used is person first, with an exception to the blind and deaf communities. It was also clear that terms such as ‘client’ and ‘disabled’ are on their way out. The purpose of this project was for my practicum site to be able to be up to date and to accurately reflect the trends of the community. As well as to be able to provide this information to other disability serving agencies.

KERS, Anthony

Chronic Conditions Management in Correctional Facilities and After Return into the Community: A longitudinal Qualitative Investigation

Chronic disease has been disproportionately affecting people who have been incarcerated. Often many people who have been incarcerated have trouble treating their chronic disease while in correctional facilities. The lack of treatment in correctional facilities can result from minimal resources or lack of knowledge available to inmates. There is minimal literature available in Canada on chronic disease and how it affects the incarcerated population. The study that I have been fortunate enough to be a part of is looking at how chronic conditions are managed in correctional facilities and after return to the community. We are taking a qualitative approach to the study, which means our primary data comes from interviews with previously incarcerated individuals. A qualitative approach will allow us to gain a
more thorough examination by getting a first person perspective from previously incarcerated individuals. With a longitudinal design, we have two interviews six months apart. The first interview focuses on how individuals self-manage their chronic condition in the correctional facility, while the second interview focuses on self-managing in the community. With this type of study design, we will be able to see if there is a contrast between the way people who are incarcerated manage their chronic health vs in the community. Our study will close the knowledge gaps in Canadian literature while also helping incarcerated people get better treatment.

KILCUP, Reese

The Autism Asperger Friendship Society (AAFS) is a day program that provides care in both a social and recreational environment for individuals on the spectrum. Through my implementation of Skating to Success, I have helped members growth as athletes and individuals. Skating to Success started as a learn to skate program for the younger members of the AAFS to adapt a new hobby, but turned into an outlet for them to express themselves, make friends, and grow their confidence. The changes we have seen from the members from the start of the program to the end is remarkable.

LI, Senyun

Research for EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) Framework Development in the Domestic Violence Sector

Over the last four months, I have had the opportunity to contribute as a student researcher at my senior practicum placement with the Ethno-culturally Diverse Communities (ECDC) subcommittee of the Calgary Domestic Violence Collective (CDVC). Working alongside the ECDC framework development and implementation subcommittee to develop an equity tool to assess and sustain EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) in domestic violence agencies for ethnocultural diverse individuals. As well as educating the Domestic Violence Sector and beyond about the important issues of EDI. I participated in ongoing research and discussions by reviewing, challenging, and incorporating existing EDI tools. For my 3-minute thesis presentation, I will be presenting on the research findings that I prepared for my practicum site. My research on existing EDI tools focused on unconscious bias, gender equity, and EDI in recruitment, hiring, and performance review. The research findings established a range of challenges and gaps to EDI including limited successful data and results on existing tools; the need for systems change; and the lack of diversity representation in leadership and management positions. In response to these challenges to EDI, suggested solutions include an evaluation framework designed to collect meaningful outcomes data; use of behavioural economics/sciences; structured interviews and technology to mitigate unconscious bias; and grassroots approach to rebuild the system with counter narratives that cater to diversity. The findings demonstrate the need for EDI in the domestic violence sector and I look forward to the committee’s framework development and implementation in the following semester of my senior practicum.
LONIGRO, Felisa

Mathematical Enrichment While Engaging in Social Interactions

The early childhood years serve as the foundation of future development, providing a sturdy base for lifelong learning abilities and achievements. Socioemotional and cognitive development are integral to these foundations and further impact later development. The Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted students of the Sunshine Room at Calgary Quest, as the curriculum now lacks social interaction opportunities and supplementary academic resources. My practicum project predominantly centres on the development of mathematical enrichment activities with a focal point on promoting social play. Detailed observation and documentation of behaviours, interests, and abilities enabled me to develop a robust collection of supplemental mathematics resources relating to shared classroom interests. Each activity aims to promote prosocial behaviours, stimulate learning stressors to challenge cognitive learning, and incorporate group interests to encourage participation.

LUONG, Brenda

How do Arts-Based Communities Address Common Barriers for Marginalized Groups?

Society is largely constructed around stereotypes and biases on disability, class, gender, socio-economic status, etc. that leave marginalized groups disadvantaged. Falling at an intersection of marginalized identities creates a complex interaction, amplifying existing barriers. The value of the arts is often overlooked and under considered as an essential means to respond to barriers within society for marginalized groups. Arts-based communities hold value in fostering inclusive diverse communities through a shared interest. Through identifying the common barriers, recommendations for mitigating these barriers and fostering belonging through arts-based communities can be valued, understood and considered in future practices.

MAGEE, Kaitlyn

Students of the Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies (CRDS) program are introduced to several theoretical pedagogies throughout their degree. Concepts such as Critical Disability Theory, Community-Engaged Learning, Transformative Learning, and Liberatory Learning are key principles in the CRDS teachings. We wanted to take a lens to students’ familiarity and interaction with these theories within their practicum. Whether they find these theories are applied or if there is a disconnect between theory and practice. We also analyzed how these different theories may have changed student’s views on the world.
MANN, Sam

Holistic Therapy Interventions: Equine Gestalt Therapy

Everyone experiences challenges, trauma and stressors that create unreasonable circumstances in one’s life. There are a variety of services available to overcome these past and present experiences, but which one’s are holistic in nature and thinks about the individual as a whole? Gestalt therapy was developed as a style both holistic and humanistic in nature that focuses solely on a person’s present life and challenges. This approach stresses the importance of understanding a person’s life and taking responsibility rather than placing blame and growing from that to become a better version of oneself. Rather than specifically targeting the past and asking clients to purposefully bring up old experiences, gestalt therapists operate from a place of understanding that as clients become increasingly aware, they will overcome existing roadblocks. Amy, my site supervisor is the owner and vision of Sky Coaching. This opportunity for my senior practicum has been informative to understand the benefits for a holistic approach to treatment. This has been an opportunity to educate the community on holistic therapeutic services offered that are unconventional and personalized outside of the regular healthcare system. These services offered within gestalt therapy aim to improve the well-being of people with diverse abilities and focuses on the future for individuals. With building corresponding knowledge and theory around gestalt therapy, clients can use that knowledge along with their own capabilities to form social change towards a holistic approach to therapy rather than the traditional medical model used in healthcare.

MCIVOR, Alison

Cerebral Palsy Kids and Families Student Practicum Thesis Presentation

In my Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation thesis presentation, I will discuss and reflect upon my practicum experience at Cerebral Palsy Kids and Families (CPKF). I was responsible for completing At-Home Activity Kits with a co-practicum student (Ashley) in the fall and the development of a surrounding Calgary area Disability Resource List in the winter. Both projects align with CPKF’s mission and vision while facilitating my understanding of CPKF members’ wants and needs. My experiences and accrued knowledge will benefit my professional practice, community support, and client-centered care as a Therapy Assistant, and hopefully in the future as an Occupational Therapist.

MEEK, McKenzie

Functional Independence Program

The Functional Independence Program (FIP) is an eight-week, in-home rehabilitative program intended to promote client strength, well-being, and safety in a client’s environment to prevent them from entering other healthcare systems. The FIP team is made up of physiotherapists, occupational
therapists, and rehabilitation assistants that work collaboratively with their client, family, and other healthcare professionals. The practicum project I have completed through the FIP was the development of a FIP policy as well as a program manual. The significance of this project is to be able to guide the FIP in a direction that is organized, well-structured, and consistent to ensure the program is executed efficiently.

MOHAMED, Nimo

Building My Research Capacity – A Student Perspective

I am going to talk about what research means to me and how my practicum enhanced my self-development. This practicum was my first experience with research and starting off as a volunteer really helped to give me a snippet of what research entails. I wanted to gain experience in policy and healthcare which the research project Midwifery Care in Alberta with Dr. Boulton provided me with. With this project, I was able to complete an ethics application which helped me to understand the process of gaining an ethics approval and what is required. I was also able to recruit participants, complete transcriptions, and work on my data analysis skills. I also conducted a literature review which helped to inform me of how midwifery practice changed over time in Alberta and how it compares to other provinces. This project helped me to understand how midwifery care is provided in Alberta and the challenges, barriers, and achievements experienced by midwives regarding policies and practices.

MONTGOMERY, Sheyanne

Building Confidence Levels in Elementary Students Through Fine Motor Development

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way of living for many individuals. It has especially influenced the way young children learn and their skill set levels. For many elementary students at Captain John Palliser School, this is the first year of in-person learning. Many of these students have missed prime opportunities to work with and learn from their teachers and peers due to virtual learning. The pandemic has significantly affected the learning environment, as we have observed that classes have significant ability differences. My supervisor and I have found that some students need extra support in their fine motor capabilities, as this level of skill set influences their confidence levels, and their ability to be successful in other curriculum areas. I have been able to connect and collaborate with the schools Occupational Therapist and have taken on the role of supporting the students fine motor development, and independent problem-solving skills with the support of the OT program. By having the opportunity to work with the children in such a close way, I have observed improvement in their writing, ability to recall strategies to support and improve their skills, and improved confidence in their abilities and work outcomes.
MORELA, Monica

A Smart Condo and Rec@Home: Promoting Successful Aging in Place for Older Adults Through Environmental Design and Virtual Recreation

Older adults are choosing to age in place more than ever before. Therefore, it is vital that services provide support for successful independent aging. To help mitigate some of the potential environmental and accessibility issues associated with aging in place the Brenda Strafford Foundation (BSF) purchased a suite with the intention of retrofitting it to make it safe and accessible. The objective is to make this Smart condo accessible for the broadest possible group of people who are 65 and older and who live independently; and then to use this suite as a model for future independent living structures. I was able to assist in first identifying issues within the Smart condo via consultation with professionals and by conducting focus groups with members of the adult day program. I then conducted a literature search on potential solutions for each of these issues.

To help older adults maintain a healthy social life as well as improve individuals’ quality of life the BSF created the Rec@Home virtual recreation program. The virtual recreation program allows seniors to exercise their autonomy in choosing fun, active, accessible, and socially involved activities while staying at home. I used the Precede-Proceed model in planning the Rec@Home program to ensure that community members are involved in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of the program. Using this model, I conducted focus groups and surveys regarding the needs and wants of potential clients as well as barriers to attendance. A literature review was used to determine what interventions might help to mitigate some of these barriers.

MORRISH, Sophie

The Benefits of Adaptive Skiing for Visually Impaired Skiers and the transferability to Autistic Skiers

Being involved in skiing recreationally or competitively positively influences physical and mental health; everyone benefits. In a world where disability reduces opportunities for self-improvement skiing is an excellent way to minimize the gap. Using my experiences guiding and teaching visually impaired (VI) skiers I will examine what has made skiing successful and beneficial. Three long-term guiding partnerships will be the basis of my data collection, with academic sources supporting my arguments. By interpreting and evaluating the benefits of my previous and current partnerships I will explore how the information could benefit autistic skiers. Through previous discussions and personal experiences, I have learned that there is one aspect of skiing blind that are exclusive to VI skiers, they will never have true independence on the hill. With slight modifications the other benefits physical health, mental health, challenge, risk taking, community, social benefits, and self-concept (Frumberg et al., 2019; Malecha, 2016; Mavritakis et al., 2019; Tangen and Kudlacek, 2014; Suc et al., 2015; O’Brien, 2010) are easily transferred to other adaptive skiing groups. In every guiding partnership what each skier considered important was different; all benefits are relevant, but some are more important than others for each VI
skier. My assumption then is that it would be the same for autistic skiers as well. Every single skier enjoys different aspects of the sport and has different motivations for partaking in it, but all skiers enjoy the benefits. This is particularly relevant for disabilities.

MU, Brandon

Student Disability Leadership and Empowerment: Naturalization Learning Grounds

The development of the North Haven School Naturalization Learning Grounds has provided a perfect opportunity to help students with disabilities of the Bridges program feel empowered, build leadership skills and participate as a member in the North Haven Community. By participating in different activities that aims to expand on a future development of the school, the students develop different artifacts with their creativity and ideas which benefit their leadership style and forge meaningful relationships with their peers. By including students with disabilities and giving them a role in school developments, they can be given a sense of empowerment and purpose to build confidence to lead in their future learning as well as create a legacy for others to learn from and look up to.

NAYBE, Kristine Kaye

The Brenda Strafford Foundation’s Project Development: Promoting Aging in Place

Considering the growing demographic population of seniors living in Canada, developing a community-driven project can support older adults to age in place. Therefore, the Brenda Strafford Foundation has been promoting projects that centralize on enhancing the Quality of life of seniors. Since the spread of the Covid-19 disease worldwide, older adults have been affected by the drastic change in their environment. From the anxiety and fear that seniors may have experienced from acquiring the disease to the isolation and depression, they may have encountered from the lack of physical activity and social contact. Throughout my practicum, I was fortunate to work together with BSF’s Adult Day Program in two of their ongoing projects. In the first half of my practicum, I was able to explore multiple technology-based approaches for senior independent living. Writing a literature review about this project enables me to critically recognize potential risks of living independently for seniors such as incidence of falls, fire, lack of social support, and simply performing daily tasks. With limited knowledge about technologies, I discovered several devices that address the concerns of independent living. The second half of my practicum mainly focuses on defining Quality of Life based on Quantitative data to assess the virtual recreational project proposed by BSF. From multiple research articles, music therapy, physical activity, and social interaction have shown a positive influence on the QOL of senior adults. Therefore, aging in place is a vital component for seniors to maintain their independence and improve their Quality of life.
NG, Joyce

Mapping the Vocational Rehabilitation Profession with VRA Canada’s Inventory of Jobs in Canada

Vocational rehabilitation (VR) is an umbrella term used to describe the range of processes and interventions that enable people who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing an injury, health condition or disability to enter, return to, or stay at work. Over the years, opportunities and challenges have necessitated changes in the VR field. VR professionals have been engaging in tasks and roles that are emerging, uncommon, and non-traditional. The VR profession has expanded into different work settings and sectors, and informally taken in various job titles. For my senior practicum, I worked with the Vocational Rehabilitation Association of Canada (VRA Canada) to produce a composite picture of the VR field in Canada. We developed an Inventory of Jobs in Canada to identify all possible jobs where people may provide VR services without knowing it. The Inventory includes a range of jobs where people help those with employment challenges, search for and get a job, stay at or return to work. In my 3-minute thesis presentation, I will present my practicum project and discuss my learning experience of developing a foundational tool that raises awareness of the VR profession and will follow the future changes in the VR field, both of which are crucial to the growth of VR.

NGO, Anthony

The Development of Guidelines for Transformative, Equitable, and Impactful Community Engaged Learning

This research project is a multi-part study that uses interviews with various CRDS stakeholders to develop an understanding of the tension that occurs when students are asked to critique/challenge the systems and structures of their practicum placement. We use the data collected from the interviews to suggest guidelines for transformative, equitable, and impactful community engaged learning to lessen the tension that may be experienced. My presentation, along with the presentations of my team members, will revolve around the data collected over the last few months with students currently enrolled in the program. In this presentation, you will get a chance to learn about why we did this project, the methodology behind it, and about some of the challenges of community engaged learning that our participants shared with us during our interviews.

NUNEZ, Carolina

Nothing Without Us: A Move to Better Data Representation through Research Advocacy

As an undergraduate student, I had the opportunity of learning a variety of research methodology and frameworks of analysis that have served my practicum experiences throughout. Programs such as Social Research in Disability, and Disability Research and Policy offered in our faculty have formed the foundation for this project. It has allowed me to adopt a more critical eye to the policies, frameworks,
and initiatives available for the community organization I have worked with during my final practicum: Between Friends. In this project I focused on existing Community Service Strategies and Initiatives within the City of Calgary and how the language used in defining applicant eligibility criteria, and monitoring systems may be excluding community organizations from receiving funding for projects or pilot programs. I will, briefly, share my learning experience navigating my inclination towards traditional research methods at my practicum site, only to realize the limitations that exist in this data collection method, monitoring system, and my shift to a more inclusive method of data representation. Finally, I will conclude with the benefits of data representation that ultimately advocates through research for the community it supports to provide a well-rounded report of community programs such as those at Between Friends which help members of the community to connect, grow and belong.

ODOEMENAM, Vera

The Best Friends Approach: An Excellent Learning Enabler to Master the Critical Elements of Life Enhancing Activities for Dementia Care

According to the notes that I took during the best friends approach workshop from the Alzheimer Society of Calgary at Club 36, the teachings indicated that seniors who have Dementia do experience aberrant mental, psychological, and varied behavioural changes. With dementia progressive decline episodes, affected seniors encounter mental deficits, leading to cognitive and executive functioning losses. These symptoms of Dementia affect someone’s memories, reasoning, behaviours, remembering, thinking and decision-making capacities. On the other hand, the daily life of people who have Dementia begins to have self-care deficits due to loss of memory, impaired judgment/reasoning, communication issues, changes in mood and behaviours, or difficulties with independent functioning. Overall, the best friend approaches learnt in my Practicum experience at the club 36-day program have given me the opportunities to understand related dementia experiences. In addition, knowing people’s life stories there has helped me to master effective communication strategies. Also, I have come to learn how to develop and implement person-centered approaches. The best friend approach was a great learning/capacity-building reinforcer, which has helped me communicate well with every member, build relationships, understand, nurture, and know the right ways to approach and facilitate meaningful and relevant activities for seniors with Dementia at club 36. For my 260 practicum hours at club 36, I have developed and led several fun/engaging daily activities, such as singing-along songs, sharing inspiring/positive news, leading in approved physical exercises, participating in inclusive bingo activities. My newly introduced final project ended with a fun board ludo game that was beneficial to sharpening people's minds, helping them to understand the value of goal setting and patience in a stress-free environment, know how to spend quality time with peers/staff, and strengthen positive relationships. Furthermore, the ludo game activities helped members think creatively and created an opportunity for members to connect and coordinate/feel more confident, cheerful, fulfilled, included, and develop cognitive/problem-solving and decision-making skills.
OKOMA, Freda

Radical Mental Health Doula: Redefining Support for mental health that embraces diversity and diverse needs

As an immigrant to Canada with little knowledge of the ins and outs of academia, I was grateful to have been invited to be a part of an intriguing research project for my final year. Being part of a minority group (African descent), I think it is crucial to have minority perspectives and input be part of any research because of the culturally diverse backgrounds and outlook it brings that may otherwise never be heard or acknowledged, especially in mental health. Mental health in my community is rarely a topic for conversation so learning through the Radical Mental Health Doula (RMHD) project about how to support holistically, advocate, comfort, and educate people while involving minority groups especially made me excited to be a part of it. Through my role in the research and my learnings from the founders, Dr. Joanna Rankin and Dr. Tiffany Boulton, I have learned that the RMHD project allows for open and honest conversations about challenges many individuals face without the fear of being stigmatized or labelled. The RMHD model can also proffer solutions on efficient ways of finding help that works to cater to individualized needs while working with people with lived experiences. I think it can be an avenue where people from my community and similar communities can feel safe to talk/share about their mental health challenges. These points are just some of the goals the Radical mental health doula project framework and approach to mental health support seeks to tackle.

PAQUIZ, Wandyer

The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Community Engagement

Community engagement is essential in the disability field as it allows deep exploration of the issues facing people with disabilities. Through engaging in a community-led conversation, decision-makers such as non-governmental organizations get to understand what people find helpful in their community and the issues that need to be addressed. Alberta Ability Network or AAN an initiative of Cerebral Palsy Alberta is one of these non-governmental organizations that use community engagement to support and advocate for people with disabilities and influence policy. Throughout the duration of my practicum at AAN I have been able to observe the different ways that non-governmental organizations engage community members. I was also fortunate enough to be part of these community engagement projects that AAN did such as doing an environmental scan. The environmental scan identifies and analyzes existing programs and services that serve people with disabilities. In addition, AAN engages community members by creating events that allow participants to share their experiences about certain issues such as the Anti-Racism strategy event that we did in partnership with ActionDignity and Habitus last October. AAN also uses social media to promote community engagement. In my presentation, I will be talking about the different ways that AAN engages the community and how the projects that I did like doing an environmental scan and managing social media help in supporting and promoting an inclusive community.
PEARCEY, Sabrina  

Senior Practicum Experience at the National accessArts Centre

Within the Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies (CRDS) program at the University of Calgary, my senior practicum was with the National accessArts Centre (NaAC) for the duration of six months. At the NaAC, I had the opportunity to work with artists with varied abilities while working alongside facilitators in studio sessions. I learned from the facilitators and the artists themselves about how I can effectively support people with disabilities within an art setting. My senior practicum project involved creating the foundation for an accessible volunteer program to be developed at the NaAC. This program would onboard only artists at the NaAC who may be looking to expand their leadership skills and further their connection with other artists as well as the organization. The tasks involved in creating the foundation for this volunteer program involved analyzing research and connecting with artists to learn about their experiences volunteering. Research suggested that the main reason why people with disabilities wanted to volunteer was to connect with others in the community. This was consistent with artists at the NaAC, confirming that connection with others is an essential component to maintain the interest of people with disabilities in volunteer programs. The main areas of focus in this project were exploring the ethics of onboarding volunteers with disabilities, distinguishing between paid work and unpaid work, volunteer retention, and accessible task development.

Keywords: artist, practicum, disability, volunteer program, accessible, collaboration, community, organization, research, ethics

PLUNKETT-OLDFORD, Spencer  

Reflection on Student Practicum Experience

For this presentation, I will reflect upon my practicum experience at SMILE Therapy for Kids. Throughout my placement I worked on multiple projects that align with the clinic’s goals of inclusion and accessibility that I can carry forward in my future role as a Physical Therapist. I helped develop a Community Resource Binder for the clinic that allows the clients to have easy access to available resource information while providing me with extensive knowledge on services in the area. I also helped summarize the literature that supports the clinic's interventions to make it more accessible for the families.

PROCYSHEN, Jenna  

Re-Employment Services

Re-employment (RE) services are a resource that are not commonly known throughout society until an individual requires such services. At Lifemark Health, I was introduced to the concepts of Re-employment services, the different services Lifemark offers, the process, as well as the benefits of utilizing such services. The majority of people requiring such services are typically those who have
become injured or ill from within the workplace. Lifemark works with the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) throughout Alberta and are constantly in contact with WCB regarding clients and client information, referrals, appointments, and more. Re-employment services can be referred through WCB or internally from the clinic. The RE services Lifemark offers differ from typical return-to-work services (ie. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, etc). They focus more so on the skills required to apply for employment such as resumes, interview skills, courses to strengthen or add skills, as well as continuous support throughout the job searching process. These services may be beneficial as many of the individuals we work with at Lifemark and through WCB are people that have resided at their occupation for numerous years. Helping promote and spread awareness for RE services is important as it allows people to recognize alternative return-to-work services, brushing up on skills, and having continual support throughout the re-employment process.

RAST, Lexi

Curriculum Development for Autistic Students in a Classroom Setting: School-to-adulthood transition program - Life Skills (LS) & Employment Readiness (ERP)

The school-to-adulthood program at Janus Academy is designed for students in grades 10 through 12 with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). My senior-level practicum projects aim to expand the contents of the Life Skills (LS) and Employment Readiness Program (ERP) curriculums currently in place at Janus Academy. These curriculums aim to assist students in achieving independence and preparation for their lives following high school. Prior to the pandemic, the school-to-adulthood transition program regularly took place within the community, providing the students with opportunities to experience real-life situations and acquire the skills required for full community participation. Covid-19 restrictions and related safety concerns influenced LS and ERP transformations to enable curriculum implementation entirely within specialized Janus Academy classrooms. As a response, my practicum supervisor and I have enhanced the LS and ERP curriculums through revision and new materials designed to best support and prepare students for employment, volunteering, and community integration.

ROBBINS, Meghan

Intersection of Disability and Queerness- What’s Next for Research and Practice?

While critical disability studies scholars recognize the importance of intersectionality, the existing literature largely targets the experiences of heterosexual and cisgender disabled people. This focus ignores the vast array and importance of LGBTQIA2S+ people’s experiences. This practicum project investigates the under-researched intersection of disability and queerness and looks towards a goal for the future of queer disabled literature and practice. Drawing on thirty-one interviews with adults labeled/ with developmental and intellectual disabilities within Alberta, the preliminary findings show our participants must seek sexual health information themselves, causing the internet to be the only source of sexual education. This can be an exceptional source of information, but it can also lead some to problematic experiences and knowledge. We also found that there is little to no representation of
queer disabled voices on the internet and in the media, especially for women and people of colour. The final major theme of the preliminary findings is queer spaces are generally accepting of those with disabilities, but often lack attention to accessibility, which has led some to feel left out and forgotten in these spaces. Queer spaces that allow for accommodation and accessibility are much needed to provide safe(r) spaces for those grappling with this intersection of social and sexual identities. The goal of this project is to allow disabled people to share their unique experiences in navigating their identities and communities. The project provides valuable insights to service providers and caregivers on how to best support queer disabled people.

**ROWE, Riley**

**Fundraising and Events During the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Fundraising and events are essential in the non-profit sector as it supports community development and creates sustainability. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed multiple unseen challenges on acquiring funding for non-profit organizations (NPOs). The COVID-19 pandemic has forced organizations to cancel all in-person events, which has affected fundraising revenue. Fundraising is also the primary means of income for NPOs, and without it, NPOs would not be able to survive and continue their support to their targeted communities. However, the Community Rehabilitation & Disability Studies (CRDS) program has prepared me for this pandemic, as it highlights innovation as one of its core values; if there is one certainty in this pandemic, there is a need for innovative solutions to these unprecedented problems. This semester, I have been placed at Getting Ready for Inclusion Today (G.R.I.T.), with my role within G.R.I.T. being to assist them with their fundraising and events. Over the semester, I have observed the hardship that COVID-19 has placed on G.R.I.T. and the impact of not being able to host in-person events. This struggle motivated me to assist in finding new online routes that could give the same outcome. By using innovative thinking, we discovered multiple websites that allowed us to adapt to online hosting. The discovery of these websites simultaneously brought relief to having these events again while still staying COVID-19 safe. It has been a learning experience to create these new ways to host fundraisers and events yet still highlighted the importance of community sustainability and how essential NPOs are.

**SANTOS, Yohann**

Social isolation is a health risk (Chu, 2020). In this paper, I will promote the importance of social connection for older adults and how communities can benefit from having healthy citizens that are engaged in contributing to their communities. Social isolation indirectly contributes to poorer health statuses and the dignity of individuals who are at the end of life which should be prioritized. The COVID-19 pandemic has opened the doors for more awareness of how to give back to our communities with resources such as the Calgary Seniors Resource Society. Lastly, I will dive into my time as a practicum student at Calgary Seniors and what I have learned at my practicum placement to make my community a better place compared to how it was when I first started the program.
SBEITI, Sarah

Through the Lens of Critical Disability: An Insight to Navigating the Alberta Education System for Newcomers

The purpose of this project is to juxtapose the knowledge gap that exists between newcomer parents who care for children and youth with disabilities, and the resources that exist within Calgary, Alberta. Upon further analyzing the gaps that currently exist, an evident trend presented incorporates many newcomers who struggle to navigate the Calgary Board of Education. From language barriers to uncertainties of understanding the human rights as parents of disabled children, there is an evident need for supplementary knowledge, mental and professional support for newcomer parents. Correspondingly, upon further investigation, it is evident that the professionals within the Calgary Board of Education presume with many biases towards disability as an entity, within this complex education system. By applying a critical disability and disability educational framework analysis, I will analyze how my place of practicum, the Children’s Link Society, could maximize their full capacity by acting as a liaison and an advocacy group between the Calgary Board of Education and newcomer families. Furthermore, I will analyze the impediments, flaws, preconceptions, and marginalization’s that exist within the education realm in terms of newcomers and their children with disabilities.

SEABROOK, Lauren

Supporting staff and families through policy; the importance of adapting to a changing society

I was lucky enough to be placed at Getting Ready for Inclusion Today (G.R.I.T) Calgary Society for my senior-level practicum. This organization supports preschool-aged children with disabilities by providing education, different therapies, and individualized developmental programming. Although I was able to assist G.R.I.T in a variety of different areas, my main project focused on editing and building a more comprehensive and inclusive policy and procedures manual. This updated version will better support families and children at G.R.I.T, as well as staff.

Our society has been gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic for 2 years now, and non-profit organizations (NPOs) have been greatly impacted; G.R.I.T included. While reviewing the existing manual, I was able to gain an understanding of how the organization functioned before the pandemic and the values they upheld, as well as how they have had to shift to new ways of operating during the pandemic. Ensuring that AHS protocols were properly implemented while still maintaining the level of care and programming necessary for these young children at a crucial stage of their development, was quite challenging. This has highlighted the great importance of creating a policy and procedures manual that can adapt to changing times in society while still supporting children, families, and staff. Collaboration is key to developing a strong foundation in an NPO policy manual. I was able to connect with both G.R.I.T staff and families which allowed me to better reflect their wishes in the new manual, ultimately making it more effective, supportive, and inclusive.
SHUMATE, Lexie

This presentation will give you a brief but in-depth description of Rocky Mountain Adaptive (RMA) and the types of programs they provide. RMA is a non-profit organization that resides in the Bow Valley, which promotes adaptive sport, creates independence, and develops opportunities for individuals with intellectual, physical, or developmental challenges. The 20 plus programs that RMA offers, positively correlates with improved self-esteem, strength, coordination, mobility, and overall well-being for the participants. Fundraisers, donations, and community support keeps the programs running. ‘ShredAbility’ is one of the few fundraisers that RMA puts on and will be further discussed in this presentation.

SO, Mylan

Students as Partners Research Project

Students as Partners (SaP) is an emerging framework in higher education that engages students in a more involved role with faculty. This provides opportunities for faculty and students to engage in equitable partnerships, share their unique perspectives, and reflect upon their roles within higher education. Over the past two years, my research partner Amanda Denis and I have collaborated in the role of student co-researchers with faculty from the University of Calgary (Dr. Joanna Rankin, Dr. Tiffany Boulton) and the University of Alabama (Dr. Drew Pearl) on the research project “Nothing about us without us”: Co-developing an EDI informed Students-as-Partners Framework. As student co-researchers, we conducted literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, and interviews to understand the barriers students face when seeking research opportunities and partnerships with faculty. Our preliminary findings suggest that students are intimidated by research opportunities and partnerships with faculty because they are unclear about the roles and expectations in student-faculty partnerships. This was a barrier I faced when I started university but as I engaged as a student partner in this project, I have developed confidence in my skills, shared my perspective, and gained a deeper understanding of faculty perspectives.

TANG, Johnson

Overcoming the systemic inequalities in Disability Studies

Over the course of my CRDS career, one of the main takeaways that I learned from this degree is the type of systemic barriers that people with disability face in their everyday lives. For example, people with a disability come across barriers such as accessibility issues, lack of social services, and a lack of effective policies that prevents them from living a fulfilling life. However, the biggest barrier that people with a disability comes across is discrimination which leads to them being marginalized and excluded from participating within the community. Furthermore, discrimination leads to people with a disability having difficulty entering into the labor force and having the ability to exercise their autonomy when it comes to decision-making. The term that is used to refer to the discrimination that people with a
disability face is known as ableism, and this form of oppression can be overcome by first identifying and addressing these issues that are faced by people with a disability. For example, by following the CRPD it can help implement effective policies that can impact the lives of disabled people more positively. Additionally, shifting away from the medical model perspective to the social model can help abled bodied individuals change their perspectives on people with a disability. For instance, the medical model only views disabled people through a medical lens, and they argue that they are therefore impaired by their disability. In contrast, the social model argues that it is not the disability itself that impairs the individual, but rather it is the ableist perspective of society that impairs the individual.

THIEN, Carmen

Importance of Cultural Competency from a Disability Studies Student Perspective

My definition of cultural competency is the ability to appreciate, understand, interact, and include people from different cultures and backgrounds, and people who have different abilities. I believe that cultural competency is not something that needs to be mastered as there is always room to grow and learn, but it is about embracing, including, and the willingness to learn about different cultures, backgrounds, and abilities. Canada is a dynamic, multicultural, and diverse country comprised of individuals from different cultural backgrounds. As learned during my CRDS degree, there are blurred lines and a lack of literature and education covering the importance of cultural competency. There is longstanding discrimination against persons with disabilities, persons of color, and those who come from a different cultural background. As a practicum student, I have the support of my professors and my practicum supervisor to explore and learn about the different challenges clients and interpreters face while working together, especially with many services and workshops being transitioned online to adapt to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. For my 3-minute thesis, I will explore these gaps and relay the need for researchers to expand their scope to utilize technology and other resources to better include individuals coming from different cultural backgrounds and abilities to bridge the barriers. I will also discuss how more education and awareness on cultural competency could help establish a more trusting professional-client relationship.

TRAN, Cindy

Developing Solutions for Transfer Care Specialists

4Seasons Transportation is dedicated to ensuring the services provided to students with disabilities are exceptional and supports the inclusive and barrier-free environment required to access transportation across Calgary. Once research regarding the potential gaps and additional supports my partner and I could contribute to the company were complete, we identified two possible projects that would enhance the services Transfer Care Specialists (TCSs) provide to their clients. Using the detailed incident reports and joining TCSs on specific routes where more challenging behaviours were recognized, my partner and I developed a trend report to track and analyze the patterns of behaviours happening. The report adds more detail to the incidences happening and what solutions are and have previously been used to attempt to resolve the matter. The final project was a disability workshop tailored towards
drivers at specific schools experiencing difficulties with the students they transport. This entailed providing a deeper understanding as to what disability is from multiple lenses, different invisible disabilities someone may have, and activities focusing on reshaping the way they view disability to change how situations are resolved. The implications of our findings are that TCSs can utilize different strategies than previous ones to de-escalate situations they are experiencing and to further their comprehension of disability through academic workshops and exposure through driving routes. This will change how they critically think about the population they work with and how to redirect, prevent, and resolve future incidences from occurring.

TURPIN MOLINA, Paula

Inclusion of young students with disabilities at school and community engagement

Schools operate quite differently from pre-pandemic life. Students with disabilities feel the impacts of social distancing due to Covid-19 regulations and may feel more disconnected from their schools and communities. Young children with disabilities may have difficulty transitioning into a more inclusive environment after “social distance” measures. Students have been mainly interacting within the same classroom for the past two years. Creating opportunities for students in different classes to interact with students in special education classes is crucial for inclusivity. Many community programs were shut down for some time. Parents may be unsure where to find community engagement opportunities. Creating resources for schools to help young students with disabilities be involved in their community promotes social inclusion.

UNDAG, Kloee

Inclusive education has been prevalent in our society. It is a fundamental human right for all which allows for children with disability to have the right to participate in general education. It promotes universal acceptance and a sense of belonging for everybody. At Heritage Christian Academy, the school embraces diversity through understanding of the diverse culture and learning abilities of the students. They believe in students’ potential and opportunity in learning and succeeding in their own unique ways and abilities. My project has been focused on teaching students with disabilities important life and social skills. These will help them find new ways of thinking and problem solving and help improve their way of communicating and socializing with their peers.

VAN HORNSEVLD, Jenae

Early Intervention and Funding

Throughout my time at Step By Step Early Intervention Society, I worked on a project that focused on the importance of early intervention and the role that funding plays. I started by taking a look at what the literature says on why early intervention is important. Along with this I took a further look into how the brain is impacted by early intervention and how it affects later development. Then I researched the already available funding options both federally and provincially in Alberta. I then addressed some of
the gaps that I found within the funding. During my time in practicum, I also sent out a parental survey asking for their thoughts on early intervention programs such as the one at Step By Step. After this I sought out some potential funding options for parents. Finally, I discuss my experiences as a practicum student and the impacts that I saw throughout my time in an early intervention program.

VO, Hong

**Researching Ways to Improve Services for Students with Disabilities**

4Seasons Transportation has been committed to providing a safe and enjoyable ride to school for students. The process of figuring out the potential support strategies for the bus students requires multi-layers of research, trials, modifications, and support networks. At 4Seasons, my partner and I's practicum project took part in the research stage of the process. The project involved utilizing information from the incident reports, going on routes to see the loading of the students, communicating with the Transfer Care Specialists to have further insights on the incident reports and the students, working on the disability blogs to understand the values and perspective of 4Seasons, and using research articles to find the potential strategies in resolving the incidents. The research step helps us see the gaps and how we could address them.

WHALEN, Samantha

**Community and accessible communication: An exploration in applying theory to practice**

Building inclusive environments both physically, mentally, and online means accepting that accessibility is adaptability. One of the ways that society can promote accessible communication is to engage in the discussion around the gaps in practice and in literature. Practicum is the best place to experience both worlds, as such, this presentation will explore a Universal Design Theory approach to developing templates that enhance people's understanding of accessible communication. The emphasis for this discussion is taking theory and turning it into an applicable product that can be easily modified to meet the needs of an organization which can be used and understood by anyone regardless of educational background. All topic ideas related to this presentation draw from personal experiences from practicum.

Key words: accessibility, communication, templates, application

WILLIAMS, Kayla

**The Importance of Safe, Accessible, and Meaningful Employment for All People: A Practicum Students Perspective Through Experiential Learning**

Given Covid-19, the pandemic has added significant challenges and barriers to all people, especially in terms of employment. In vocational rehabilitation services, the overall goal is to assist individuals to secure, maintain and keep employment. Over these last two semesters, I have gotten the pleasure to work in the vocational department taking initiative on the development of a virtual career resource centre (VCRC). The VCRC's purpose is to allow clients the tools to access the necessary resources to
return to work. These included helping clients create an effective resume, cover letter, updating labour market trends, and researching information on job-related events. In this presentation, I will reflect on the meaningful resources that are required for unemployed or marginally employed Albertans as well as injured workers looking to return to the workforce. The outcome of my experience and the development of the VCRC is for clients to now have a space to find safe, accessible, and meaningful employment throughout Canada with a specific emphasis on areas within Alberta.

WIND, Caylee

The Development of Guidelines for Equitable, and Impactful Community Engaged Learning

Alongside my research team, we have conducted a multi-part study that included interviewing 5 current CRDS students. From our interviews we explored some of the most essential concepts and ideas within our field and how our classmates applied these concepts to their community engaged learning experiences. Upon reflection of our 5 interviewees, the data we collected has allowed us to build recommendations for transformational, equitable, and impactful community engaged learning. This presentation will showcase the importance of self-advocacy and professional development within students’ community experiences.