

# **EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH**

**WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES**

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# AGENDA



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# WHO IS INVOLVED?



## COMMUNITY PARTNER

Justice for Children and Youth



## UNIVERSITIES

Kings University College  
Trent University  
Brock University  
Carleton University  
University of Toronto (Mississauga)  
Simon Fraser University



## FUNDING

This project draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Kings University College & Trent University

# CONTEXT

- Young people in Canada **experience inequalities** within the justice system (Curling and McMurtry, 2007).
- **Overrepresentation of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)** (Cockram et al., 2009; Jones, 2007; Marinos et al., 2020).
- Justice-involved youth have the **right to participate** in youth justice research to share their viewpoints (Pleysier & Kilkelly, 2023).
- **Limited research about the experiences of justice-involved youth with IDD**



## DEFINING INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (IDD)

- **Criteria for intellectual disability (<https://www.aaid.org/>)**
- **Developmental disability may not have accompanying intellectual disability**
- **Severity along a continuum that can impact adaptive functioning - conceptual, social and practical**
  - **distinct from mental illness; however some overlapping challenges.**

*Youth with IDD may have difficulties with:*

- **problem-solving**
- **focus and attention**
- **communication**
- **learning new things**
- **memory**
- **processing information (amount & pace)**
- **impulsivity**
- **sensory impairments**
- **social difficulties**
- **physical impairments**



**DEFINING INTELLECTUAL  
AND DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES (IDD)**

**Disability is not specifically defined in the YCJA.**

**Rather, the YCJA's Declaration of Principle broadly states that measures taken against youth should consider their 'special requirements' (Section 3(c)(iv)).**



# 01

Evaluate whether the YCJA offers justice-involved young people with IDD appropriate protections consistent with YCJA provisions

# 02

Understand the lived experiences of youth with IDD involved in the youth justice system

## WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

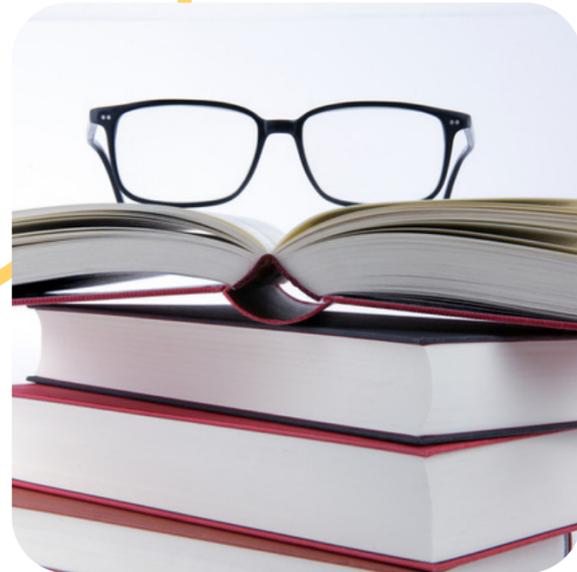


Research

# PHASE 1 - VIEWPOINTS OF JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS

- 38 online interviews (May 2021 – April 2022) with Crown attorneys and defence counsel across Ontario who work with young people
- Questions pertaining to a range of issues - understanding of IDD, experiences working with youth with IDD

# FINDINGS



**TRAINING AND  
KNOWLEDGE**



**SOME CONFLATION OF  
MENTAL HEALTH AND IDD**



**AN 'OVERWHELMING'  
EXPERIENCE**



**SUPPORTING YOUTH  
WITH IDD**

**Important insights but this is only one piece of the puzzle**

# PHASE 2 - VIEWPOINTS OF JUSTICE INVOLVED YOUTH

1. Started with a youth advisory board comprised of 9 neurodiverse justice-involved youth to understand what topics/questions are important to young people

2. Building on this important information, **we are now focusing on carrying out interviews with neurodiverse justice-involved youth**

# PHASE 2 - INTERVIEWS WITH YOUTH

- Seeking 14-20 year old participants (with or without disabilities) who have been/who are involved in the youth justice system
- Interviews will take place online via Zoom (30-60 mins)
- Youth will receive a \$50 e-gift card of their choice or a \$50 e-transfer for their participation in an interview



# ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

**This research has been approved by King's University  
College Research Ethics Board**

All information will be kept confidential

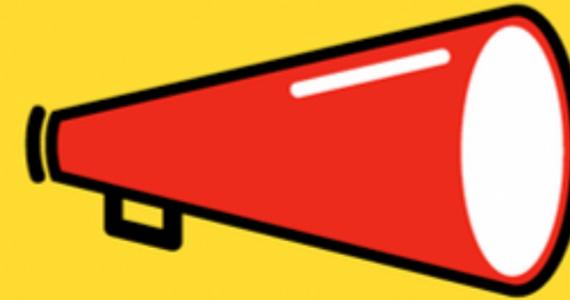
Young people will not be identified and all data will be aggregated

No questions focus on young people's alleged offence or past charges

Interested in the experiences of young people and their interactions with justice professionals and their understanding of the processes at each stage of the youth justice system

# Recruitment Poster

**SEEKING 14-20 YR OLD PARTICIPANTS  
WHO HAVE BEEN/ARE INVOLVED IN THE  
YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM**



**PARTICIPATE IN:**  
**AN ONLINE INTERVIEW**  
TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE  
IN THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM  
**Receive \$50 e-gift card of  
your choice**

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**SCAN QR CODE TO EXPRESS INTEREST IN  
PARTICIPATING OR EMAIL DANIELLA AT  
DBENDO2@UWO.CA**

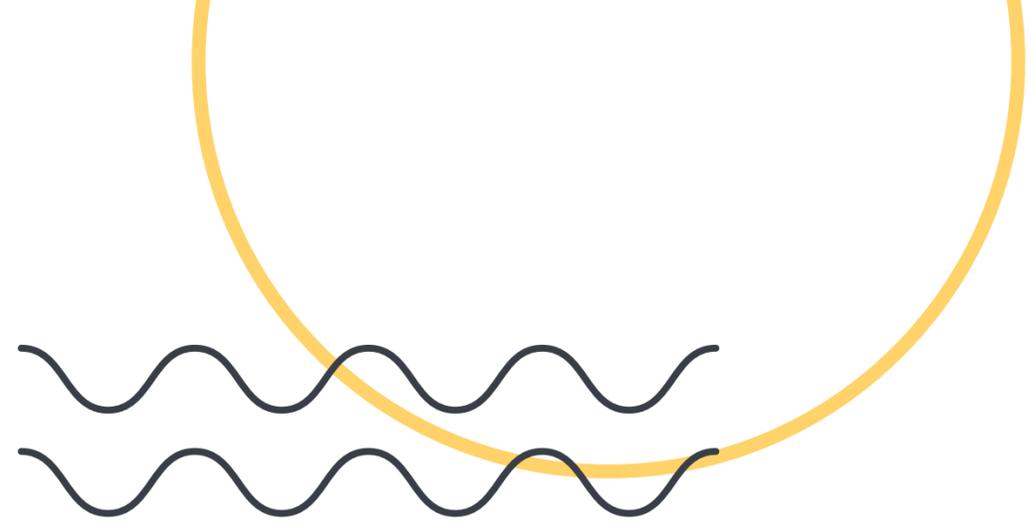


*This research has been approved by  
King's research ethics*



# Impact & Importance

- **Understand the lived experiences of young people given their level of development and needs**
- **Training and development in youth neurodiversity and disabilities within the context of the YCJA**



THANK YOU!

