

# Social Network Comparison of College Students with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Undergraduate Peers

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## Literature Review

- Limited research exists about the social networks of undergraduate college students
- People with intellectual disabilities tend to have smaller less diverse networks than typically developing peers
- Social networks are a source of support, protection and friendship
- There is a trend toward expanding post-secondary opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities

## Terminology

**Social Network:** Defined in terms activities a person participates in and the people they connect with in those activities

**CLSC:** Career Life Studies Certificate program, 2-year certificate program for students with intellectual disabilities, academic and career instruction

## Research Question

What are some of the differences in social networks between students in the CLSC program and their peers?

## Methods

### Participants

- 2 years college experience
- Undergraduate students (n=8)
- CLSC Students (n=9)

### Data Collection

- Semi-structured interview focused on the past year
  - ❖ Social Network Activities
    - Location, frequency, purpose, integration
  - ❖ Social Network People
    - Relation, sex, time known, how met, close, reciprocity

### Analysis

- Descriptive Statistics
  - ❖ Size and composition of network
  - ❖ Number and type of activities

## Results

### Number of People in Networks

	Undergraduate	CLSC
Average	27	20
Range	19-32	7-37

### Number of Activities

	Undergraduate	CLSC
Average	8	10
Range	8-9	7-20

## Results

### Relationship Types

%	Undergraduate	CLSC
Family	15	12
Peers	69	60
Incidental	5	5
Caregiver	0	0
Authority	9	23

### Reciprocity

%	Undergraduate	CLSC
Equal	76	63
Receive	14	9
Give	9	16
Mix	0	6
Undecided	0	2

### Closeness

%	Undergraduate	CLSC
Very Close	55	44
Sort of	33	43
Mix	0	6
Undecided	12	1

### Social Activities

%	Undergraduate	CLSC
Weekly	73	41
Monthly	8	10
Occasional	11	35
Annual	8	14

## Discussion Points

- \*Small Exploratory Study\*
- Some differences include:
- CLSC students had more activities but lower weekly frequency of recreational activities
  - CLSC students had slightly smaller networks on average with more authority figures
  - CLSC students have more variability in their social networks related to both numbers of people and activities

## Directions for Future Research

- Current Focus:
- Size and composition of networks in comparison
- Future:
- Use larger sample
  - Look at variables that predict long term outcomes
  - Different types of social networks
  - Longitudinal analysis

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