

# **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 Network

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

### Number of Activities

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

### 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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