

# Psychiatrists, Schools, Special Needs and COVID: Learning as We Go

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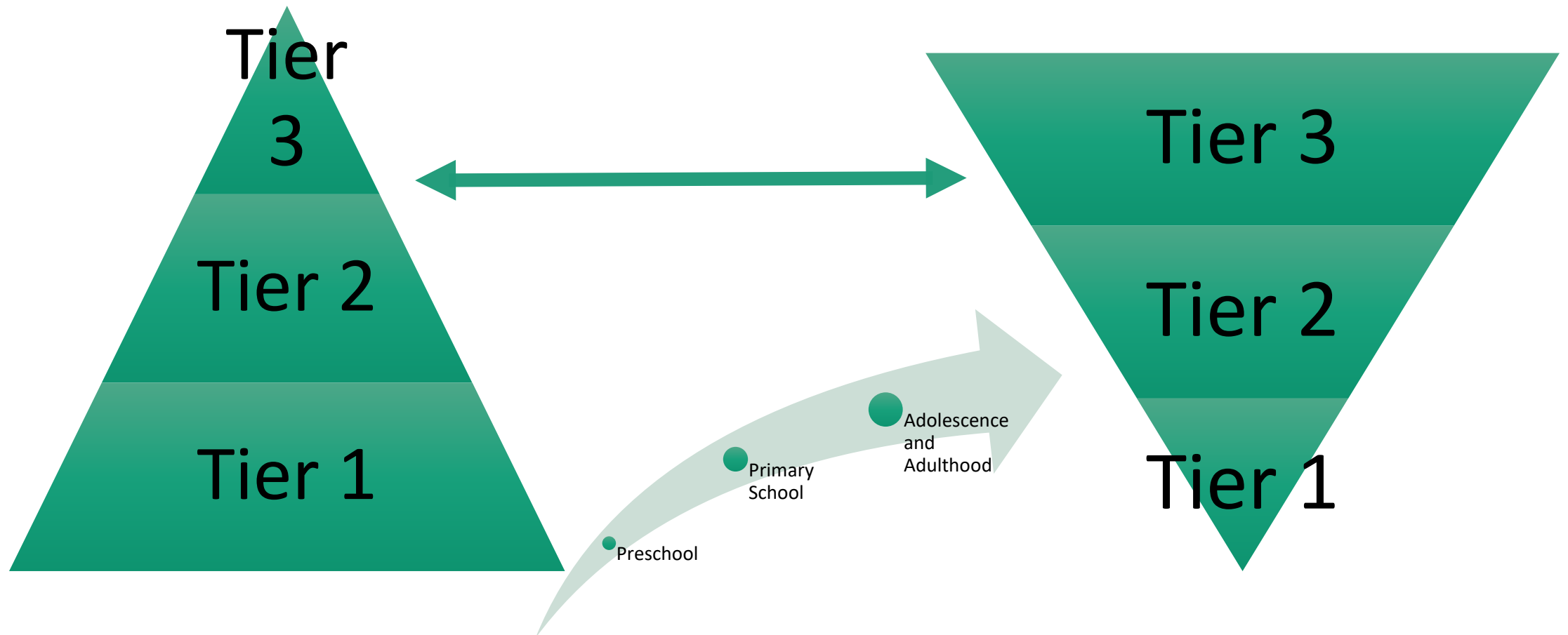
POND November 19, 2020



# In the Past 2 Weeks...

- The 11 year-old boy with severe ADHD who has been recommended to complete school online. He plays video games all day.
- The 14 year-old girl with mild intellectual disability (ID) and anxiety, who initially loved being away from school, but has not left her bedroom and is depressed and self-harms.
- The 9 year-old boy with autism, who has left in-person classes because the teachers and EAs, have had to change so much. He misses his friends, and has been talking with strangers online.
- The 6 year-old girl, who has witnessed increased interpersonal conflict and experiences food insecurity every day at home. She doesn't want to go back to school, because she worries about her mother.

# A Developmental Approach to the Tiers

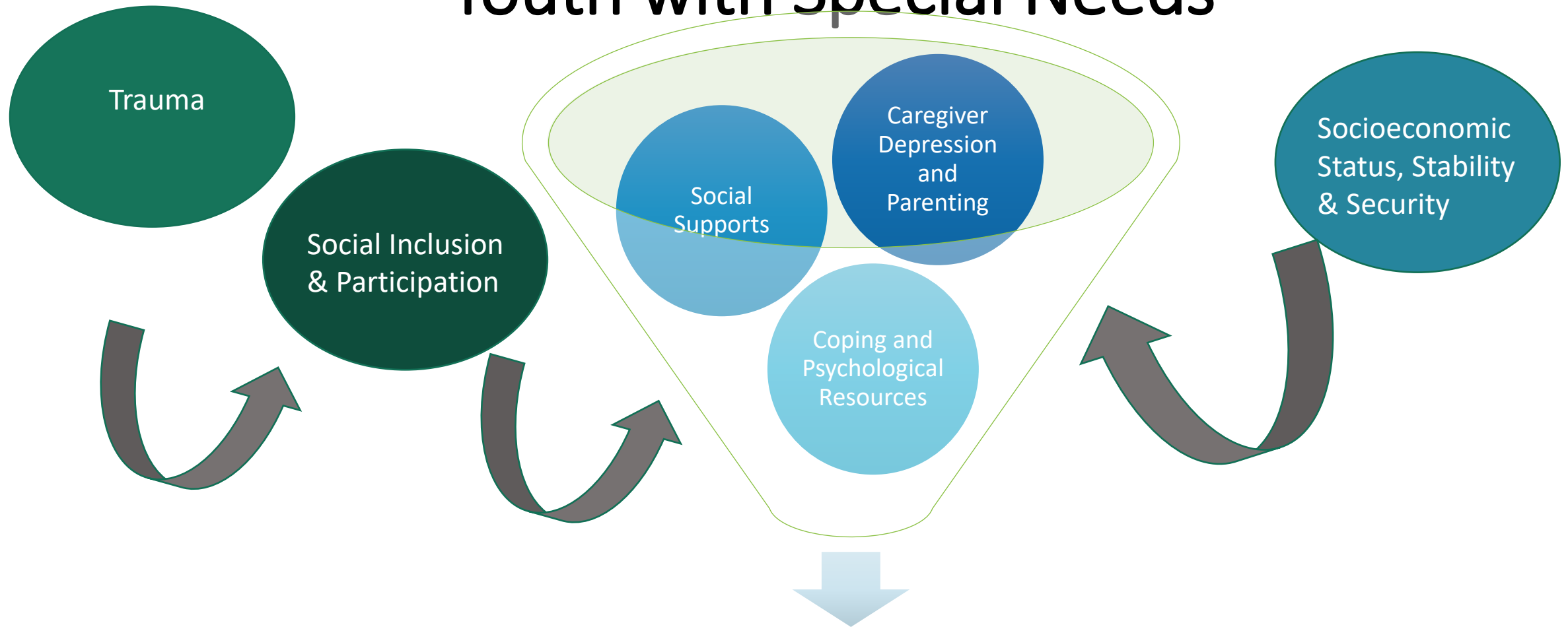


# Mental Health Starts and Ends Outside the Clinical Walls

- How is a changing social landscape influencing our patient's mental health?
- Can we intervene earlier in children's trajectories?
- Are we changing "real-world" outcomes?
- How can we leverage our population health research expertise to enhance our clinical models of care?



# The Ecology of Mental Health and Distress in Youth with Special Needs



Zaidman-Zait et al., 2018;  
Vaillancourt et al., 2017

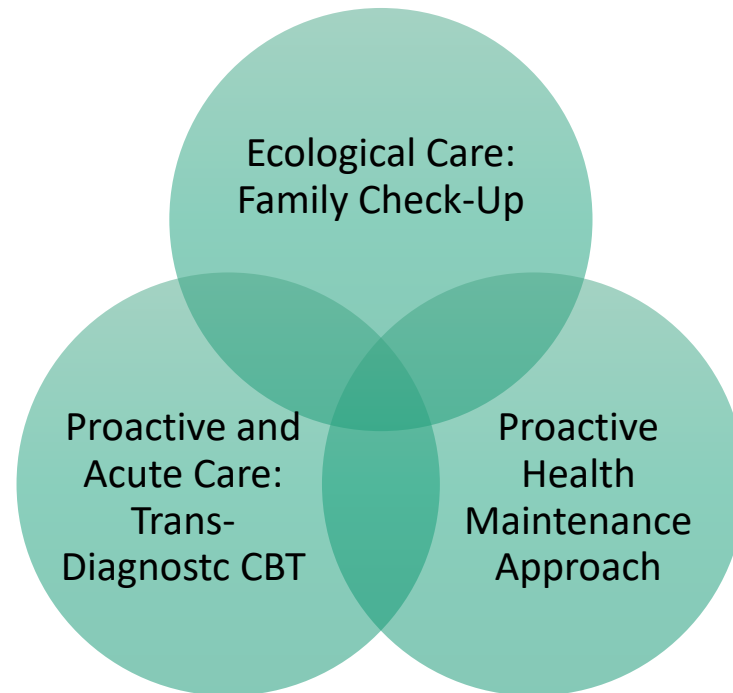
**Child and Adult Mental Health,  
Development and Functioning**

Smith, L. E., Greenberg, J. S., & Mailick, M. R. (2014). The family context of autism spectrum disorders: Influence on the behavioral phenotype and quality of life. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics*, 23(1), 143-155.

- Trans-diagnostic
- Family-centered
- Evidence—based
- Inter-connected
- Staged prevention and proactive care

# MacMIND: A New Collaboration in Mental Health and Neurodevelopmental Care

- Clinical and capacity-building hub for child mental health and neurodevelopmental (NDD) care



Advancing autism care through meaningful research







“We have more and more effective interventions, but we have to figure out how to *bake them* into health care systems so they are used more automatically...”

Dr. Jane Pearson, chairwoman of NIMH  
Suicide Research Consortium



# We Are All In This Together!

Many thanks to all!



**HELP**

# When Behaviours Signal Distress



**Developed by:**

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Dual  
Dual...

DIAGNOSES

Developmental

Disability

&

Mental health  
problem(s)

# Dueling Diagnoses

GDD>ADHD>ODD>CD>DMDD>

SAD>GAD>OCD>ASD>BPD>PTSD>

XYZ NOS





# Antipsychotics common for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities



**Six-year Canadian study shows prescriptions often occur in adults with no psychiatric diagnosis**

**Study looked at health care data of 51,881 adults 18 to 64 years of age with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) from 2010 to 2016.**

IDD includes conditions such as Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome and autism.

**39%** of Ontario adults with IDD were dispensed antipsychotic medication.

*Among them:*

**Almost 1/3** did not have a documented psychiatric diagnosis.



**Researchers say more scrutiny is needed in how antipsychotics are prescribed for this vulnerable population.**

Lunsky Y et al. *Can J Psychiatry*. 2017.



# HELP



Requires understanding

# HELP

When Behaviours Signal Distress  
and there is no...



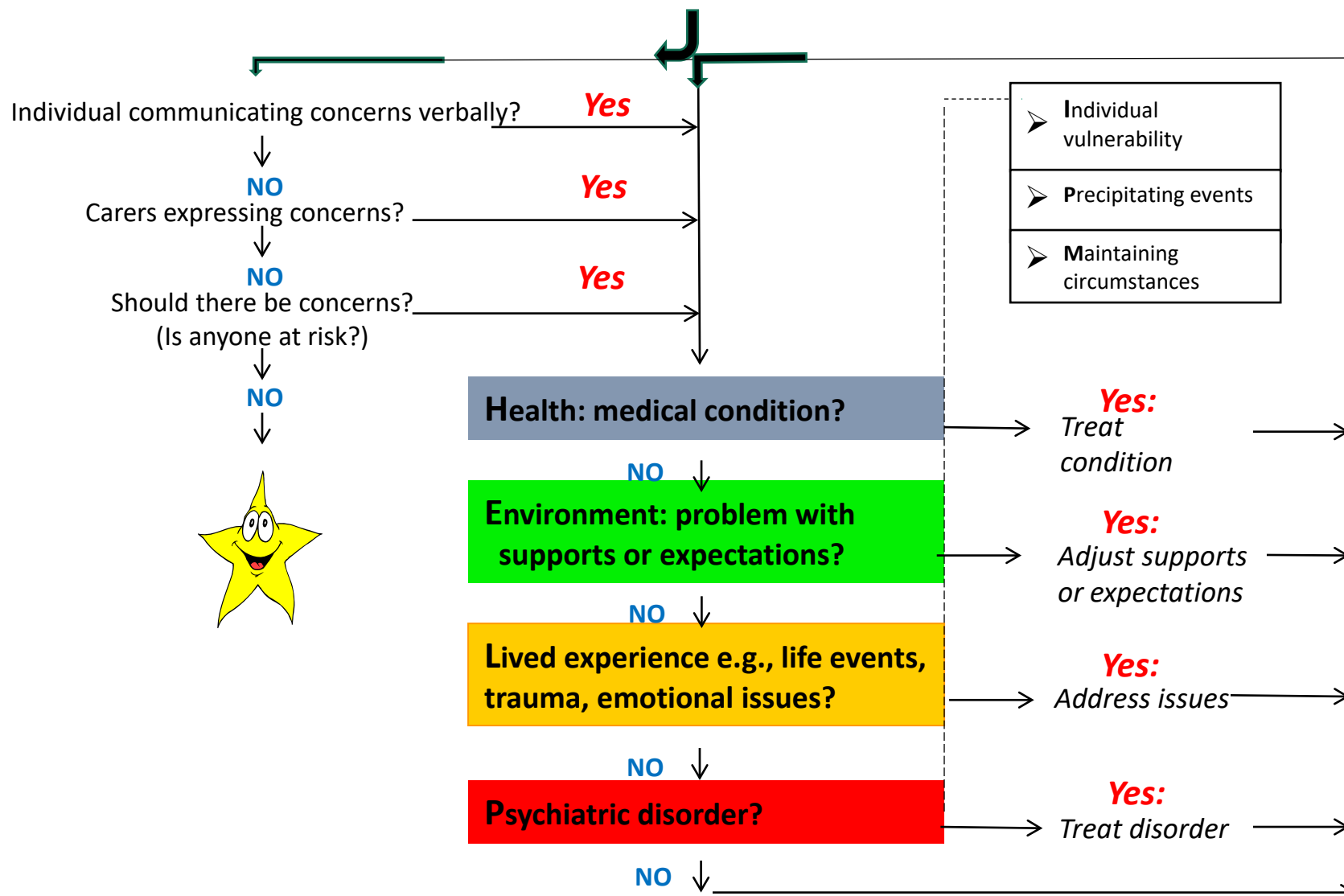
# Minnie in maximum distress!

- Minnie has a developmental disability
- Hyper, distractible and impulsive  
(Dx: \_ \_ \_ \_)
- Reactive aggression worsening
- Parents in survival mode...24/7
- 'We've tried so many meds!'
- Nothing works!

Minnie in maximum distress!

This family needs **HELP!**

# HELP When Behaviours Signal Distress



# HELP When Behaviours Signal Distress

**H**health: medical condition or medications?

**E**nvironment: triggers, expectations?

**L**ived experience: life event, emotional issues?

**P**sychiatric disorder and/or medications?



Thanks to Elspeth Bradley...

# HELP Resources & References

HELP for Behavioural Problems and Emotional Concerns.  
Developmental Disability Primary Care Program

[DDPCP-Behaviours That Challenge](#)

Dr. Elspeth Bradley describes HELP, Curriculum of Caring  
[CommunicateCARE.machealth.ca](#)

SpotLight & Friends HELP music video  
<https://vimeo.com/125914430>

**Thank you for your**  
**HELP**











Sara  
Pot

*parent voice*

