

# Patricia O'Connor

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## ***Professional Profile:***

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- Accomplished career demonstrating consistent success as a leader in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders and Special Education.
- Extensive background in conceiving, developing and implementing workshops, programs and courses.
- Proven competencies in grant writing, administration, project management and staff development.

## ***Education:***

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- Masters of Education, Special Education and Teaching, University of New Brunswick, 1988
- Bachelor of Education, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, 1979
- Bachelor of Arts, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, 1978

## ***Highlights of Professional Experience:***

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**Lakehead University** Orillia, ON

**Faculty of Education: Lecturer and Faculty Advisor**, Apr 2016 - Present

- Provides instruction on educational best practices related to special education and inclusion.
- Faculty Advisor for teacher candidates as they complete in-school practicums.

**Autism Ontario – Provincial** Toronto, ON

**Provincial Consultant**, Sept. 2010 - Present

- Developed and delivered presentations, webinars and programs regarding education, advocacy and adults with ASD
- Consulted to provincial chapters and head office.

**Speak Freely Therapy Services** Barrie, ON

**Education Consultant**, July 2010 - Present

**Integrated Autism Consulting** Barrie, ON

**Founder**, June 2002 - Present

In recognition of the expanding needs of the ASD population as they progress into late teens and adulthood, Patricia focuses on the socialization and transitional challenges of this population. Advocating and developing programs and services that foster acceptance and integration of individuals with ASD, to ensure that they become fully functioning and contributing members of society, is the ultimate goal.

**York Region District School Board** Newmarket, ON

**Autism Spectrum Disorder Education Consultant**, Sept. 2008 - June 2011

- Developed and delivered in-service training for teachers, educational assistants and regional special education staff
- Established and supported six demonstration classrooms for students with ASD. Developed four resource binders and trained new teachers using this material
- Designed and co-developed an Additional Qualifications Course – Special Education- Communication - Autism with a focus on Applied Behaviour Analysis. This course was approved by the College of Teacher's and is currently being taught in York Region

**Geneva Centre for Autism - Training Institute** Toronto, ON

**Consultant, Curriculum Designer and Presenter**, Sept. 2003 - June 2009

- Curriculum design and development of workshop materials; hosting, presenting and facilitation of training events ranging from a half-day to week-long sessions
- Developed and taught a 12 week certificate course specific to Asperger Syndrome
- Consulted to school boards, professionals and families
- Worked with educators and families to create audio-visual materials for training purposes
- Developed and delivered training sessions in ABA across the province
- Provided specialized consultation to school boards across the province to students with complex and challenging needs
- Worked with a specialized team from IMPAC (Interministerial Provincial Advisory Committee) to provide consultation and direct coaching for an aboriginal student in northwestern Ontario.

**Geneva Centre for Autism** Toronto, ON

**Provincial Project Manager**, Provincial Teachers' Assistant Training Project  
June 2006 – Sept. 2007

- Developed curriculum, hired staff, coordinated service delivery with school Boards and delivered training throughout the province.

**Simcoe County District School Board** Barrie, ON

**Regular Class Teacher, Special Education Teacher and Consultant**  
Sept. 1988 - June 2006

***Articles and Publications:***

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**5 Tips for Young Adults with ASD to Ease Your Transition into Adulthood, Autism Ontario, Autism Advisor, August 2015**

**Transition to Life: A Model for Living a Good Life for People with Asperger Syndrome, Autism Matters, Spring 2014**

**7<sup>th</sup> Annual Advanced Issues in Special Education Law, Autism Matters,  
Winter/Spring 2013**

**From the Outside In. Thoughts on Effective Special Education Advocacy, Autism  
Matters, Winter 2012**

**A Good Life: Critical Success Factors for Adults with ASD, Autism Ontario  
Knowledge Base, 2011**

**“Welcoming the Student with ASD to your Classroom – 10 Strategies to Smooth the  
way for a Successful School Experience for Both Student and Teacher”  
Autism Matters, Fall 2006**

**Master’s Thesis, Special Education in a Developing Country: Trinidad and Tobago,  
1988**

**Canadian Teacher’s Federation, Project Overseas: A Summer in Trinidad and  
Tobago, Summer 1986**

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***Additional Skills and Experience:***

Designed, developed and instructed numerous courses for teachers, educational assistants, principals and organizations throughout the province, country and in the United States.

**Course and Workshop Design**

- Designed, developed and instructed the first university “Additional Qualifications Course” in Ontario for teachers on Autism Spectrum Disorders. (Offered by Nipissing University)
- Designed, developed and instructed a 5-day training course for SCDSB educational assistants.
- Developed and delivered a 3-day Individual Educational Plan workshop for teachers of students with Autism.

**Special Program Design**

- Upon request of Becoming Independent of Santa Rosa California, Patricia directed the development and training of a program entitled “Passport to Independence”.
- Designed, developed and instructed the Transition to Life program for young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders. This life work readiness program has been offered throughout the province
- Conceptualized, designed and implemented two pilot classrooms for students with severe autism in the Simcoe County District School Board.
- Developed and instructed special education programs for teachers in Trinidad and Tobago through the Canadian Teacher’s Federation - Project Overseas.

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***Community Service:***

**Barrie Out of The Cold, Barrie, ON  
Board of Directors, Director of Churches and Agencies, 2010-2014**