



## SHP Student Interns for Research and Scholarly Activities Application of Project Proposal Form

### Instructions:

Please fill out the form and return via email to Nipa Sahasrabuddhe ([ns1115@shp.rutgers.edu](mailto:ns1115@shp.rutgers.edu)) by **March 31, 2023**. Please fill each box to the right of each required field. If you are sending attachments, please ensure your contact information is added to all your forms.

### Faculty Contact Information:

|                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Date submitted:     | 03/23/23               |
| Faculty Name:       | Dr. Aaron Dallman      |
| Department/Program: | RBHS / OTD             |
| Telephone number:   | 254-371-6350           |
| E-mail:             | Ad1764@shp.rutgers.edu |

### Project Detail:

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|--|--|
| Project Title: (56 characters max)   | Strengths-Based Assessment and Measure Development in Autism   |
| Hypothesis:  | We hypothesize that the Autism Affect and Emotion Scale (AAES), a novel patient-generated outcome measure, will be a valid tool for measuring emotional experiences among autistic adults.   |
| Description:<br>(Include design, methodology, data collection, techniques, data analysis to be employed, evaluation and interpretation methodology for research component) | <p>This application requests funds to develop and validate a novel measure targeting the presentation of emotions and affect in autistic youth and adults. The emotion/affect domain captures experiences that are both momentary and long-lasting; both types are clinically significant psychological experiences that can be indicative of problematic conditions such as depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders. The measure will be developed with autistic stakeholder feedback. The Autism Affect and Emotion Scale (AAES) will be a novel measure developed in this project consisting of two parts: a clinical interview, and a personalized ecological momentary assessment questionnaire.</p> <p>Participants in this project included individuals with a self-reported diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or similar condition (e.g., Asperger's syndrome), aged 18-35, who were able to participate in a virtual interview or</p> |

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
|                                    | <p>focus group. Participants were excluded from the study if they had a co-occurring intellectual disability.</p> <p>Autistic adults (n = 24) participated in one of six Zoom focus-group interviews to discuss their emotional experiences. Topics for the interview included experiences of positive emotions, negative emotions, the influence of activity on emotion, and measuring emotions. The Zoom software generated an initial transcript automatically which was corrected by a research assistant. Data were coded and subsequently analyzed using an interpretative phenomenological analysis framework (IPA; Smith et al., 2009). In line with the principles of IPA, the focus of the interview questions was how participants describe and make sense of their emotions and emotional experiences.</p> <p>From these qualitative findings, the PI has developed a new measure, the Autism Affect and Emotion Scale. During this summer research activity, we aim to establish the face validity of the measure. To this end, we will conduct individual interviews with faculty and research experts in the autism field. These experts will be asked to review measure and provide feedback about the AAES. The student and PI will then revise the measure based on this feedback.</p> |
| Specific Student Responsibilities: | <p>During the summer experience, the student will assist with organizing interviews with clinical and research experts in the autism field. The student will then co-conduct the interviews with the faculty mentor. The faculty mentor and student will then jointly analyze the feedback from the research experts and modify the AAES accordingly.</p> <p>The PI will then aim to validate the measure with a group of autistic adults. The student will have the opportunity to continue working on the project after the summer period has ended if they are still interested in contributing to the project.</p>   |
| Start / end date of project:       | May 2023 to August 2023 (possible opportunity for the student to extend)   |

#### **Educational:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>WHAT OTHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS?<br/>(e.g., journal club, seminars, clinic, rounds)</p> | <p>The student will have the opportunity to participate in a monthly journal club/ research discussion with the PI and other student members of the research team.</p> |
|---|--|

WHERE DO YOU PLAN TO PRESENT OR PUBLISH THE FINDINGS WITH THE STUDENT?

(e.g., national or state meetings, newsletter or journal, SHP poster day)

Findings will be presented at the national American Occupational Therapy Association Conference. Findings will also be published in a peer-reviewed journal (e.g., *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *Frontiers in Psychology*).

**CHECK ALL APPROPRIATE BOXES BELOW AND PROVIDE REQUESTED INFORMATION.**

This project is: ☒ clinical ☐ laboratory ☐ behavioral ☒ survey ☐ educational

☐ Other: please specify \_\_\_\_\_

☒ This project involves the use of human subjects (including chart review, retrospective studies and questionnaires).

Pending ☒ Approved ☐ IRB Protocol Number: PRO2022002176

***IRB approval must be obtained by June 2023***

 PT, DPT, PhD.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Department Chair

March 28, 2023  
Date

OR-For internal use

Form: (1)

Reviewed date: 4/4/23

Date processed on website: \_\_\_\_\_