



# Parents of Autistic Adolescents: Who Supports the Supporters?

Batel Wachspress, Adina Maeir, Shlomit Tsafrir & Tal Mazor-Karsenty

## Adolescence in Autistic Individuals

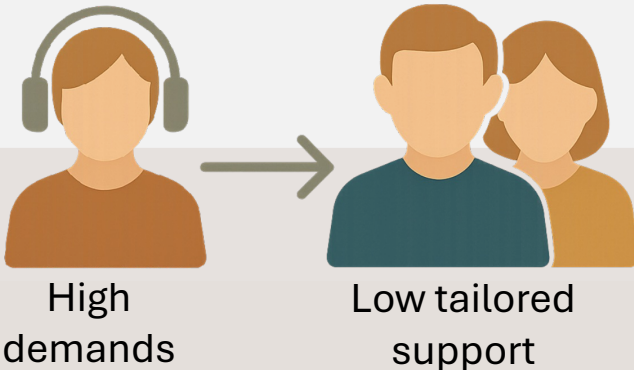
- Emotional regulation
- Executive functioning
- Participation & independence
- Increased expectations

## Parents of Autistic Adolescents

- High and ongoing caregiving burden
- Concern for child's success
- Parental distress and mental pressure



## Diminished parental resilience



- Interventions primarily focus on the child
- Parents' resilience are rarely outcomes

Fisher, M. H., & Taylor, J. L. (2016). Let's talk about it: Peer victimization experiences as reported by adolescents with autism spectrum disorder. *Autism, 20*(4), 402411.

Rutherford, M., Singh-Roy, A., Rush, R., McCartney, D., O'Hare, A., & Forsyth, K. (2019). Parent focused interventions for older children or adults with ASD and parent wellbeing outcomes: A systematic review with meta-analysis. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders, 68*, 101450.

# OT-Parentship Effectiveness on Parental Resilience, Self-Determination, and Occupational Performance of Parents and Their Autistic Adolescents: Pragmatic Randomized Controlled Trial

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## A short-term intervention program for parents of autistic adolescents

### Study design

- Pragmatic randomized controlled trial (pRCT)
- Parents of autistic adolescents (ages 12–18)

#### Research group

**OT-ParentShip**  
intervention

11 sessions,  
90 min. each

#### Control group

Psycho educational  
**video-based**  
intervention

6 videos,  
20-30 min. each

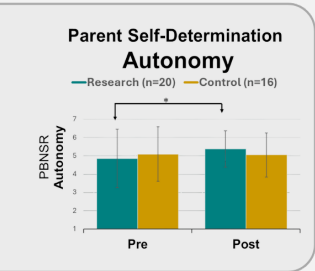
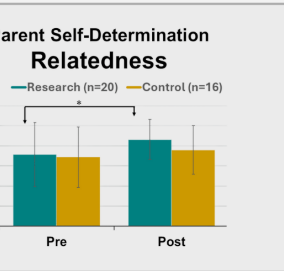
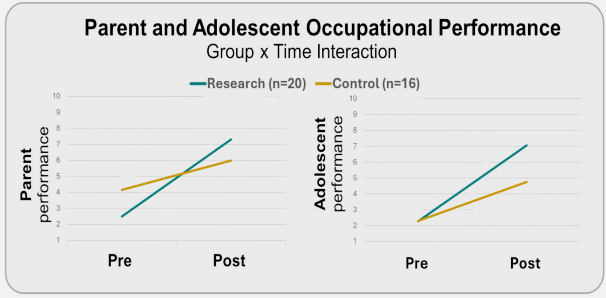
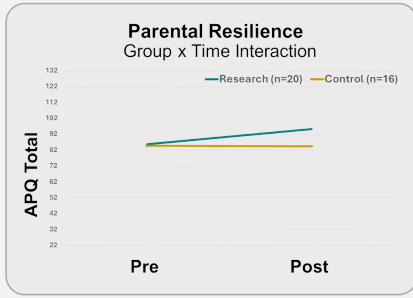


**Parental resilience** → APQ

**Parent Self-Determination** → BPNSR

**Occupational Performance  
Parent & Adolescent** → COPM

# Intervention Effects and Clinical Implications



\*Effects were maintained at the three-month follow-up



**Supporting parents as occupational agents of change promotes sustainable outcomes at the family level**

## Implications for Practice

The OT-Parentship:

- Stands as an **efficient** and **effective** intervention.
- Provides occupational therapists with a **structured, research-based protocol**.
- Enhances parental resilience, self-determination and occupational performance.

\*Further research is needed to explore the intervention's long-term impact and address limitations.

APQ:  $F(1, 34) = 6.6, p = 0.015, \eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.162$ ;

BPNSR: Competence:  $F(1, 34) = 6.35, p = 0.017, \eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.16$ ; Research group: Autonomy-  $F(1, 34) = 5.03, p = 0.032, \eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.13$ ; relatedness:  $F(1, 34) = 10.87, p = 0.002, \eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.24$ . Control group: Autonomy:  $F(1, 34) = 0.04, p = 0.84, \eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.001$ ; relatedness:  $F(1, 34) = 2.18, p = 0.15, \eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.06$ .

COPM: parents:  $F(1, 28) = 15.01, p < 0.001, \eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.35$ ; Adolescent:  $F(1, 28) = 12.7, p < 0.001, \eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.31$ ;