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## D5: Peer Mentored Wheelchair Skills Training – putting it into practice

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### Learning objectives:

Upon completing this session, participants will:

1. Experience a condensed wheelchair skills training session as a 'user' and as a 'spotter'.
2. Have an awareness of the benefits (celebrations) and pitfalls of wheelchair skills sessions from the perspective of the user, spotter, mentor and therapist involved.
3. Have a starting point of how to implement a wheelchair skills training program with a group or 1:1.

### Session description:

This is a practical workshop for up to 20 participants based on the Wheelchair Skills Programme developed by the Wheelchair Research team at Dalhousie University, Canada. The focus will be on experiencing using both manual and power wheelchairs to navigate a condensed wheelchair skills course as both user and spotter (safety person). Participants will negotiate ramps, platforms, directional changes and manoeuvre through narrow spaces in their wheelchairs, and learn practical tips and life applications from experienced wheelchair users who work at Seating To Go as peer mentors. Presenters will speak about their experiences of;

- Implementing wheelchair skills sessions with adults, primary school, and preschool age children.
- The highs, lows, benefits, celebrations and pitfalls of attending wheelchair skills from the perspective of the participant, mentor and spotter.
- Balancing safety and risk (how much cotton wool is actually required?)
- What is required to train responsible spotters and mentors when setting up a wheelchair skills session
- The role of the therapist within the group (not necessarily the one 'in control').

- How skills are adapted during the sessions to remain responsive to the needs of the participants.
- How we see Wheelchair Skills training evolving in the future within our service.

There will be opportunity for the workshop participants to ask questions.

### Content references:

1. Worobey, L. A., Kirby, R. L., Heinemann, A. W., Krobot, E. A., Dyson-Hudson, T. A., Cowan, R., Presperin Pederson, J., Shea, M., & Boninger, M. L. (2016). Effectiveness of Group Wheelchair Skills Training for People with Spinal Cord Injury: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Archives of physical medicine and rehabilitation*.
2. Dalhousie University. (n.d.). *Wheelchair Skills Program*. Retrieved from <http://www.wheelchairskillsprogram.ca>
3. Smith, E. M., Sakakibara, B. M., & Miller, W. C. (2014). A review of factors influencing participation in social and community activities for wheelchair users. *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, 1-14. doi: 10.3109/17483107.2014.989420
4. Axelson, P., Chesney, D., Minkel, J. & Perr, A. (1998). *Manual Wheelchair Training Guide*. Santa Cruz, USA: PAX Press.