

THE MONTHLY POINT

Pivot Point Newsletter



FEBRUARY



Understanding the Invisible: A Broader Look at CTE Awareness Month

As we observe Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) Awareness Month this February, we are expanding the conversation to include a frequently overlooked community. While CTE is often associated with contact sports, the risk of cumulative brain trauma is also a reality for some Autistic and neurodiverse individuals, particularly those who engage in self-injurious behaviours, such as head-banging. We recognize that these actions are rarely random; they are often a form of communication or sensory seeking due to overwhelming sensory experiences. However, over time, these repeated impacts can lead to long-term cognitive and emotional challenges that mirror the symptoms of CTE found in athletes.

The ripple effects of these complex injuries extend far beyond the individual, deeply impacting the entire family unit. Parents and siblings often live in a state of heightened vigilance, balancing the physical safety of their loved one with the emotional weight of seeing them struggle. This creates a unique form of complex grief and anxiety within the home, as families navigate the unpredictable nature of mood swings, memory lapses, and behavioural volatility.

This intersection of physical safety and emotional well-being is where our Mental Health and Complex Care services have become essential partners. We know that effective support must look at the whole picture; providing therapeutic outlets for families to process their experiences while implementing practical, evidence-based strategies to ensure safety. Crucially, this includes specialized counselling to address the profound anxiety, depression, and loss of identity that often accompany changes in brain function. By addressing the neurological, emotional, and sensory aspects of these challenges, we can help families move from a place of crisis to one of connection.

Ultimately, our goal is to walk alongside you, ensuring that despite the complexities of the past, there is a path toward a safer, happier, and more fulfilling life for everyone involved.

For more than 22 years, Pivot Point's team of dedicated professionals and staff have shared their extensive experience in supporting individuals with Autism and Diverse Abilities. [Our services](#) are client-centred, family-oriented, and evidence-based, drawing from Applied Behavior Analysis, Mental Health, Education, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychiatry, Neurofeedback, and other interventions as needed. All creating Positive Change!

Newsletter Content Submissions

If you would like to participate in writing content, sending in photographs and/or sharing ideas for the staff newsletter, please contact Rochelle at: marketing@pivotpoint.ca

Newsletter Feedback

Rochelle would like to hear from you! Please provide her with your feedback or let her know of specific topics that you would like to see in upcoming newsletters by completing our [Feedback & Suggestion Form](#). Thank you for your input!

Pivot Point Ontario Celebrates One Year Strong!

On January 24th, our Milton community came together to celebrate the 1st Anniversary of our sister agency, [Pivot Point Family Services Canada Inc.](#), and the energy was electric. From the arrival of the Mayor to the final slice of cake, the day was defined by pure joy and belonging.

While the photos below speak volumes, a few heartwarming highlights defined the day:

- The Entertainment: A high-energy performance by The Finnegan School of Irish Dance.
- The Pride: Our Adult Life Program participants took the stage to perform the Pivot Point Anthem, a moment months in the making!
- The Heart: A moving speech shared by a client and their mother reminded us all of the transformative power of the past year.

Thank you to everyone who made this milestone unforgettable. We can't wait to see what Year 2 brings!



Bridging the Gap in Sexual Health Education

As we mark Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Week this February (8-14), we are addressing a critical but often hesitant topic: healthy sexuality for neurodiverse youth and diverse abilities adults. For [individuals on the autism spectrum, puberty is not just a biological shift](#), it is a sensory and social overhaul that can feel chaotic without a clear roadmap.

Standard health education frequently relies on social nuance, implied norms, and "learning by osmosis." However, neurodiverse minds often thrive on explicit, concrete information. The challenges here are distinct. First, the physical changes of puberty, from hygiene needs to bodily sensations, can be overwhelming for those with sensory sensitivities, requiring patient, step-by-step adaptation. Second, the "hidden curriculum" of dating and socializing is often invisible to our clients. [Understanding the difference between a "friend" and a "partner,"](#) or interpreting non-verbal cues, requires direct, evidence-based instruction rather than vague advice.

We approach sexual health through the lens of safety and autonomy. A crucial part of this work is distinguishing **compliance** from **consent**. Many neurodiverse individuals are conditioned to comply with requests, which can inadvertently increase vulnerability. By teaching concrete boundaries, [the difference between "public" and "private" behaviours](#), and the right to say "no," we empower individuals to advocate for their own well-being.

This conversation remains equally vital for adults with diverse abilities. Sexual health is not merely a phase of puberty to be managed; it is a lifelong aspect of human connection. For adults, support evolves to focus on navigating the nuances of dating, understanding online safety, and affirming their right to intimacy and companionship. Recognizing that a fulfilling adult life includes the dignity to pursue relationships safely is a cornerstone of holistic well-being.

Building these skills starts early. For practical strategies and insights, read our blog, [Supporting Neurodiverse Teens through Puberty and Sexuality](#).