**Abstract**

This research proposal seeks to develop a tool for measuring future thinking among people at different points on the autism spectrum. Future thinking is an ability that includes numerous components of the neurophysiological processes that occur in the brain (Bar, 2011). The sum total of these neurological processes and their cognitive complexity leads individuals to project themselves into the future, experience future events, anticipate, imagine, and plan.

People with autism have a neurological deficit characterized, among other features, by a deficit in social communication and social interaction (DSM-5). Studies conducted in recent years show that people with autism encounter difficulties in their ability to remember past experiences, and accordingly their cognitive skills in future thinking would also seem to be impaired (Shamay-Tsoory, 2010; Goddard, 2011; Lind & Bowler, 2009; Pring, 2012). One of the assumptions explaining the difficulties in remembering past events is that this stems from the deficit in self-awareness and awareness of the other (theory of mind – ToM) (Lind, Bowler, & Raber, 2014).

The question we seek to examine in this proposal concerns the nature of the connection between the extent of the planning ability that is characteristic of future thinking and the severity of autism among adolescents with medium-to-low functioning, on the one hand, and the ability to anticipate future events. Do the characteristics of the specific level of autism (awareness of the other, ability to remember) contribute to the subject’s abilit5y to plan and anticipate future events?

The innovative aspect of this research proposal is the examination of the connection between the characteristic variables of future thinking, such as planning and memory, and the ability of people with moderate-to-severe autism to predict future events, as well as the development of a tool examining future thinking capability.

A small number of studies conducted in recent years have examined future thinking among high-functioning adults with autism. The two research tools developed in recent years that we are aware of were adapted for people with autism who are capable of reading and writing at to an age-appropriate standard. To the best of our knowledge, however, no studies have as yet been undertaken regarding future thinking among adolescents with autism with medium-to-low functioning that do not require the completion of written and/or oral questionnaires.

The research will include 90 subjects with autism – boys and girls aged 13-18 with medium-to-low functioning. The study will use the following tools: a demographic questionnaire; ADOS; TOL; a tool examining memory capacity; and a tool examining planning and prediction to be developed and validated for the purposes of this research.