Loneliness levels in adolescent populations are higher than ever before. High degrees of loneliness in adolescence are associated with negative biopsychosocial outcomes that can negatively impact later life adjustment. Youth with disabilities (YWD) tend to experience higher rates of loneliness than typical adolescents, as they often encounter multiple barriers to social participation. A negative association between physical activity and loneliness has been established outside of YWD populations, while few studies have examined this association among YWD. Further, research investigating the negative association between physical activity and loneliness has not systematically and thoroughly examined the mechanisms through which these variables relate. The purpose of this study is to use Realist Evaluation and the Quality Participation Model (QP) to: 1) examine the relationship between physical activity and loneliness among YWD, 2) examine the six building blocks of the QP as possible mediators of this relationship, and 3) examine any contextual factors (covariates) that may influence this tripartite model. This study will be a cross-sectional sub analysis of data from The National Physical Activity Measurement Study. Participants include Canadian youth, ages 10 to 17, with any type of disability. Measures of physical activity (i.e., The IPAQ-A), the six building blocks of the QP (i.e., The MeEAP), loneliness (i.e., The UCLA LS-3), and covariates (i.e., socio-demographics and The NLSCY) will be administered. Pearson’s correlations will be used to test research objective one, and to determine which mediator and covariate variables warrant inclusion in the multivariate analysis. A multi-mediation analysis via Process Macro will test
research objectives two and three. The findings of this study will help further our understanding of the mechanisms through which physical activity may mitigate feelings of loneliness among YWD.