



PROGRAM 3: PROJECT 3.014 (1)

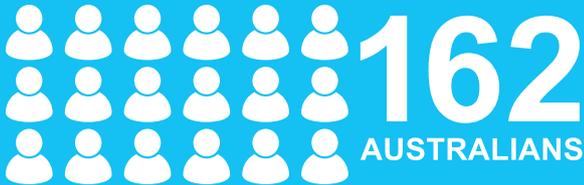
TRANSITION PLANNING FOR TEENAGERS

AIM



To look at the current and ideal transition planning process for teenagers with High Functioning Autism/Asperger's Syndrome (HFA/AS). Transition planning means preparing for leaving high school and doing further study/training or getting a job.

WHO TOOK PART?



26 teenagers and young adults with HFA/AS (mostly male, half had left school and the other half were still at school in Years 9 to 12).

83 parents (mainly female and mostly had children still at school).

53 professionals who worked in transition planning, including Disability Employment Coordinators/Officers, therapists, and teachers.

Most participants were from Western Australia.

HOW WE DID THE RESEARCH



162 people did an online survey



13 people also took part in interviews

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Autism CRC and the research partners sincerely thank the participants in this study for their time and their willingness to share their opinions and ideas.

FIND OUT MORE

Visit autismcrc.com.au for more information.

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WHAT WE FOUND

KEY STRATEGIES FOR TRANSITION PLANNING INCLUDE



1. START EARLY

Most people wanted transition planning to start early. This helps relieve anxiety.



2. STRONG TRANSITION TEAM

- a) Adolescent-led planning: Include teens in the process to give them a sense of 'control' and increase their motivation;
- b) Family and community collaboration: A strong transition team was described as cohesive and collaborative, with a variety of team members who provide different, but equally useful, perspectives.



3. AUTISM SPECIFIC AND STRENGTHS-BASED ASSESSMENT

Autism specific factors, such as sensory preferences and anxiety are a very important part of transition planning and need consideration.



4. CLEAR PROCESS

- a) Goal setting: Goal setting assists in promoting a 'future focus' and keeps everyone task-orientated and on track;
- b) Regular meetings and communication: Most people wanted frequent meetings;
- c) Documentation: Document and communicate the plan in a way that is meaningful.



5. ACTIVE COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES

The following activities helped teenagers reach their transition planning goals:

- a) Career exploration and future study;
- b) Life and employability skills training; and
- c) Practical experiences like part-time work and volunteering.

These activities encouraged independence, self-esteem and resilience.

“ The more input that he has, the more likely he is to want to do it...he needs to feel that he has control. – **Parent** ”

“ It's more difficult to have less experience no matter if you have a diagnosis or not. – **Professional** ”

SUMMARY



1. Use a strengths-focused approach: Teens are more motivated when there is a focus on the positives and 'failures' are viewed as learning experiences.
2. Foster independence through high expectations: Encouraging teens to dream big develops resilience and motivates them to get involved.
3. Develop a transition plan: Start early, identify team and set clear goals.

“ We always encouraged him to take those leaps of faith and we're always there to help him if he fails, but never took the experience of failing away from him...High expectations but flexible. – **Parent** ”