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?
162 AUSTRALIANS
- 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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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.

WHAT WE FOUND

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