



I CAN Network referenced resources



Making an I CAN Mentor available to every Victorian autistic government student.

Resources



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Resources For Fostering More Autism-Friendly School Environments

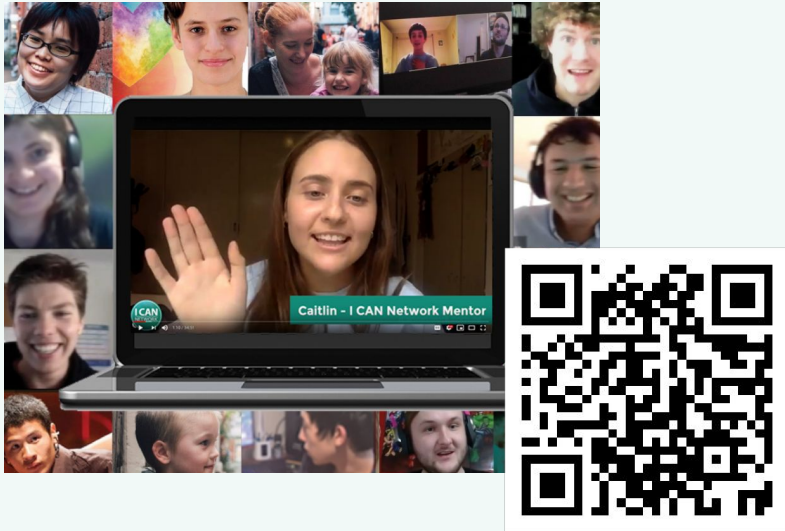
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I CAN Network Today

- Australia's largest **Autistic-led organisation**
- Each year, we empower more than **3000 Autistic young people** with a sense of optimism, confidence & pride through our school-based (primary & secondary) and online group mentoring programs
- We also offer professional development, training and consultancy based on our near-decade of leadership in mentoring Autistic young people



Our Autistic-led group mentoring is available across Victoria to young people ages 8-22



ONLINE GROUP MENTORING

- Offered nationally throughout the school year and during school holidays
- Dozens of different groups/themes offered each cycle
- Most participants cover costs via NDIS funding



SCHOOL-BASED GROUP MENTORING

- Primary and secondary programs across the state (face-to-face or online delivery depending on location)
- Partnerships with over 100 Victorian schools

I CAN Imagination Club® is our primary school program



WHAT IS I CAN NETWORK IMAGINATION CLUB®

I CAN Imagination Club® is a mentoring program for primary students who have learning differences or experience social anxiety who may or may not have an Autism diagnosis.

Program Details

- 10-15 x 1-hour sessions, weekly or fortnightly
- Run by two I CAN Mentors
- Program held in a school or interschool

What is Covered?

- Emotional literacy
- Listening & compromise
- Communication & public speaking
- Teamwork
- Team projects

What is Achieved?

- Self-confidence
- Social connections
- Belonging
- Self-esteem
- Emotional literacy
- Social skills
- Communication skills

HOW DO WE EVALUATE?

1. 'Mentees' complete two surveys: one before and one after the program.

2. We compile and analyse the evaluation responses.

3. Then we write a report describing the results and outcomes of the program.

"Our students really connected with Imagination Club and made strong bonds with the students from other schools and the mentors from I CAN. They always looked forward to the sessions and enjoyed sharing their experiences with their peers and families."

Steve Crossley - Principal, Portland Bay Primary School.

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

Changes among mentees at Portland Interschool Imagination Club

Statement	Before	After
I feel confident trying new things.	38%	55%
I find it easy to meet new people.	22%	78%
I usually feel comfortable at school.	18%	73%

Legend: Disagree or Strongly Disagree (blue), I am not sure (grey), Agree or Strongly Agree (green)

JOIN US

To enquire about I CAN Imagination Club write to us at: hello@icannetwork.com.au
Or for more information visit our website at: icannetwork.online or follow us on social media.

I CAN NETWORK IMAGINATION CLUB

© I CAN Network Ltd.

- For students with learning differences and/or experience social anxiety
- Non Autism-specific - we engage students with 'big imaginations!'
- Offers a safe, engaging spaces where students are encouraged to recognise and celebrate their own strengths
- Designed to help students develop peer connectedness, optimism, belonging and confidence



I CAN Network social media



- Lived experience insights that can help parents, teachers and other adults understand and support their Autistic young person/young people
 - Respectful depictions of what Autistics CAN do
 - Research, resources and articles that foster a more respectful, accurate narrative on Autism
- **Website:** icannetwork.online/
 - **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/theicannetwork
 - **Instagram:** @ican_rethinkautism
 - **LinkedIn:**
www.linkedin.com/company/i-can-network;
www.linkedin.com/in/icanceochris-varney
 - **YouTube:** @TheICANNetwork

Examples of 'people like me', including AWETISM Expo presentations



Humans on the Autism Spectrum 2020
I CAN Network
10 videos 356 views Last updated on Jun 13, 2020

1 Jake - Humans on the Autism Spectrum
I CAN Network • 406 views • 3 years ago

2 Ryan - Humans on the Spectrum
I CAN Network • 156 views • 3 years ago

3 Madi Humans on the Spectrum
I CAN Network • 175 views • 3 years ago

4 Caitlin - Humans on the Autism Spectrum
I CAN Network • 641 views • 3 years ago

5 Sam - Humans on the Autism Spectrum 2020
I CAN Network • 238 views • 3 years ago

6 Tim - Humans on the Autism Spectrum 2020
I CAN Network • 552 views • 3 years ago

7 Ayesha - Humans on the Autism Spectrum 2020
I CAN Network • 318 views • 3 years ago

8 Max - Humans on the Autism Spectrum 2020
I CAN Network • 488 views • 3 years ago

9 Kitara - Humans on the Autism Spectrum
I CAN Network • 288 views • 2 years ago

1 About the Online Mentoring Program, and what I enjoyed about it?
I CAN Online - Kobi (Pokemon)
10 views • 5 months ago

2 Pokémon Facts
I CAN Online - Patrick (Pokemon)
16 views • 5 months ago

3 This is my most recent build.
It's a horse stable.
I CAN Online - Shaun (Minecraft)
10 views • 5 months ago

4 No. 7 - Troodon VS Velociraptor.
I CAN Online - Thomas (Dinosaurs)
30 views • 5 months ago

5 Ethan
I CAN Online - Ethan (Pokemon)
5 views • 5 months ago

6 Special Interest - Anime
I CAN Online - Alessia (Anime)
21 views • 5 months ago

7 How did I enjoy I CAN in 2022?
I CAN Online - Archie (Minecraft)
22 views • 5 months ago

8 My Favourite Things in the Minecraft Mentoring Program and a cool build I made to go along with it.
I CAN Online - Aiden (Minecraft)
11 views • 5 months ago

9 Alex
I CAN Online - Alex (I CAN Imagination Club®)
8 views • 5 months ago

Why our work matters



INTERNAL SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2022

- Highlights of the I CAN School® evaluation, over a 10-session period
- Findings
 - 16% increase in mentees' self confidence
 - 18% increase in social connection
 - 15% increase in public speaking skills



Key resources for parents/carers seeking Autism-related information and support



Autism Connect

Run by AMAZE



A free, national Autism helpline, offering independent and expert over phone, email and web chat. Autism Connect supports Autistic people, their families and carers, teachers, health professionals, researchers and the broader community. Operates 8am-7pm (Eastern) from Monday-Friday. 1-300-308-699.

<https://www.amaze.org.au/autismconnect>

TARA

Private support space for parents & carers led by The Autistic Realm Australia

Australia-based, Autistic-led closed Facebook group for parents & carers of Autistic young people (or those suspected of being). The space is neuro-affirming, highly supportive and very popular with many of our I CAN families. Members have the option of posting anonymously as well. Formal diagnosis is not required in order to join.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/581453665321975>

National support services for young people & carers



The links provided below are not intended to provide immediate practical or intensive support in times of crisis or emergency. Individuals or family members experiencing mental health or wellbeing crisis should contact emergency services (000), Local Crisis and Assessment Treatment Team (CATT) or present to your closest emergency department.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SUPPORT

Lifeline	Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.	Telephone crisis support: 13 11 14 Crisis Support Chat: https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat
Beyond Blue	Beyondblue provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health whatever their age and wherever they live.	Phone: 1 300 22 4636 https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/talk-to-a-counsellor
Relationships Australia	Relationships Australia is a provider of relationship support services for individuals, families and communities. They aim to support all people in Australia to achieve positive and respectful relationships.	Phone: 1 300 364 277 https://relationships.org.au/

National support services (cont.)



The links provided below are not intended to provide immediate practical or intensive support in times of crisis or emergency. Individuals or family members experiencing mental health or wellbeing crisis should contact emergency services (000), Local Crisis and Assessment Treatment Team (CATT) or present to your closest emergency department.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SUPPORT

Kids Helpline	Kids Helpline is a free, 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.	Phone: 1800 55 1800; Web Counselling: https://kidshelpline.com.au/kids/get-help/web-chat-counselling/
eHeadspace	eHeadspace is a confidential, free and secure space where young people 12-25 or their family can chat, email or speak on the phone with a qualified youth mental health professional.	Phone: 1800 650 890 Website: https://www.eheadspace.org.au/
Carers Australia	Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia's carers and delivers a range of essential national carer services	Phone: 1 800 242 636 Website: http://carersaustralia.siteindex.com.au/home/
SANE Australia	Carers and Lived Experience forums are online communities for people affected by mental illness. They're safe, anonymous and moderated 24/7 by mental health professionals.	Phone: 1 800 18 7263 Website: https://saneforums.org/

Department of Education Victoria - School Mental Health Menu (1 of 2)



The **Schools Mental Health Menu** is designed to give schools confidence identifying evidence-based programs, staff and resources to improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes for students.

The Menu provides over 56 evidence-based programs and initiatives for schools to access across three tiers of intervention, including:

- positive mental health promotion, such as social and emotional learning programs, wellbeing dog programs and support for positive body image
- early intervention and cohort specific support, including training for teachers in trauma-informed practice, and support for diverse cohorts
- more targeted and individualised support for students who need it.

You can view I CAN's tile on the Menu [here](#)

Department of Education Victoria - School Mental Health Menu (2 of 2)



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & TOOLS

- Professional learning is available for department staff on the [Mental Health Reform Division Arc](#) page. School staff are encouraged to follow this page to keep up to date with new learning and development opportunities.
- [The Schools Mental Health Planning Tool](#) has been developed to support schools to think about how they spend their funding. The tool helps schools align their Mental Health funding with the FISO Improvement Cycle.
- The [Skills Checklist](#) outlines the professional roles, key activities, and minimum expected qualifications of staff available for schools to purchase through the Menu. Additional mental health supports

ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- The [Mental Health and Wellbeing Toolkit](#) provides expert guidance and resources on mental health and wellbeing promotion and support aimed at schools and school communities, health and wellbeing workforces and mental health practitioners.
- A [Quick Guide to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) resource is also available for students, parents and carers looking to access expert guidance and resources to support wellbeing in one place.

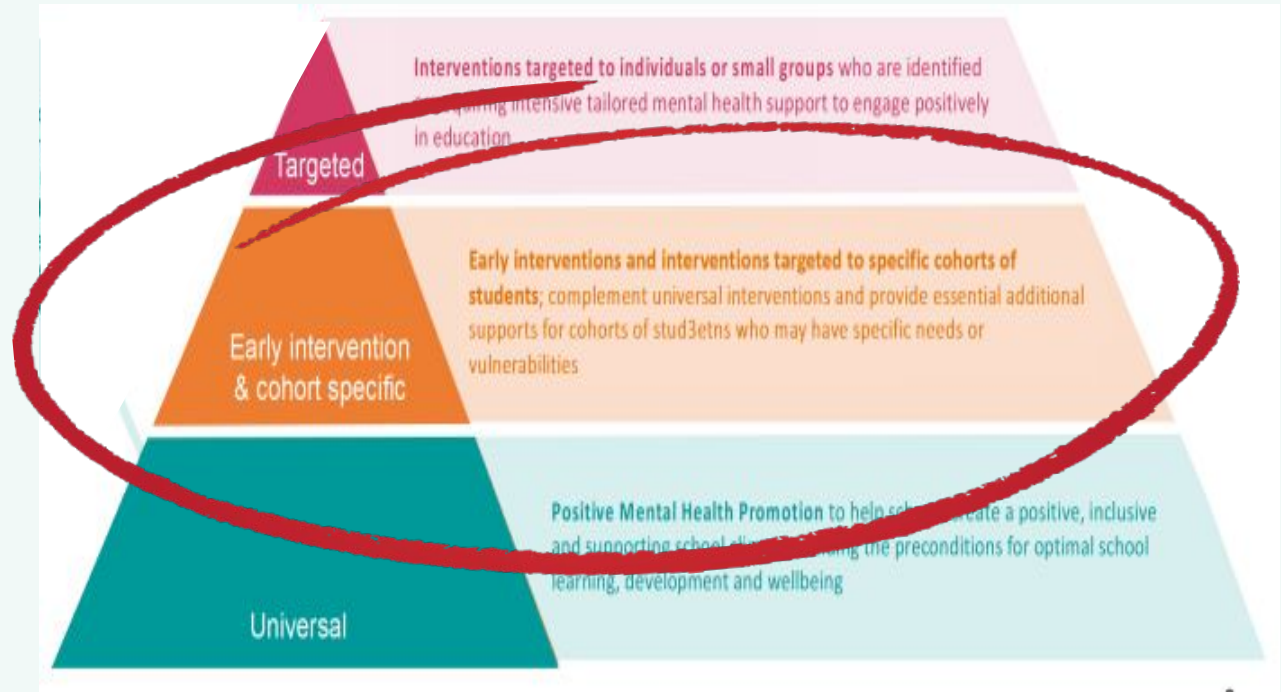
I CAN is a Tier 2 Program on the Schools Mental Health Menu List



Schools Mental Health Menu List

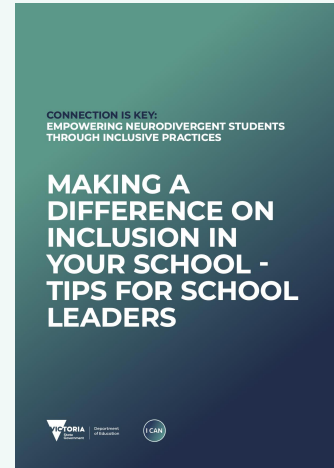
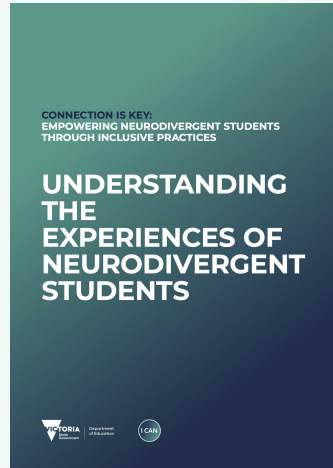
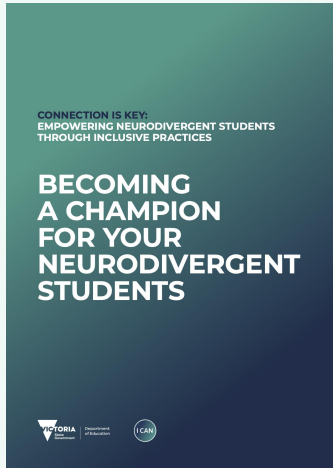
[Return to Schools Mental Health Menu](#)

- [Responding to self-harm, including suicide attempts in students: a guide to assist secondary schools](#)
- [Responding to the suicide of a student: a guide to assist secondary schools](#)
- [Reverb: Culturally Responsive Mental Health and Wellbeing for School Communities](#)
- [Safe Schools](#)
- [School's In for Refugees - professional learning workshops](#)
- [Schools of Substance - Comprehensive support for school-based alcohol and other drug education](#)
- [Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support](#)
- [Seasons for Growth](#)
- [Secret Agent Society](#)
- [Secret Agent Society Small Group Program - Digital Edition](#)
- [Smiling Mind Primary Schools Program](#)
- [Smiling Mind VCE Support](#)
- [Staff Release \(Casual Relief Teachers - CRTs\)](#)
- [Stormbirds - growing from natural disasters](#)
- [Study without Stress](#)
- [Take Two: Trauma-informed CoRE \(Communication and Regulating Emotions\)](#)
- [Teen Mental Health First Aid](#)
- [The I CAN School® Mentoring Program](#)
- [The Resilience Project - School Partnership Program](#)
- [The Hang Room](#)
- [The Young Carer Project](#)
- [Trauma Consultancy Service](#)
- [Trauma Informed Care \(TIC\)](#)
- [URSTRONG Workshops](#)
- [Westmead Feelings Program](#)
- [Youth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid](#)
- [Youth and Teen Mental Health First Aid \(Central Highlands\)](#)
- [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#)
- [Youth Mental Health First Aid - Life Savers](#)



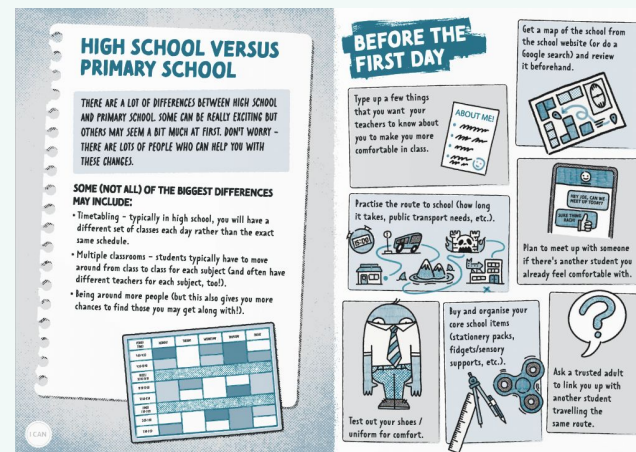
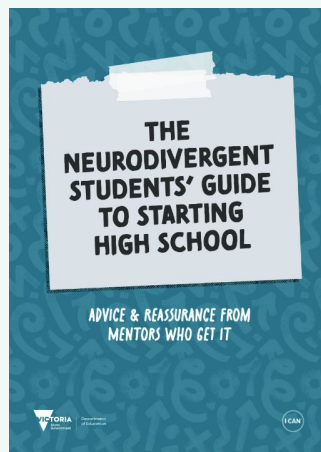
[The I CAN School® Mentoring Program](#)

We are excited to share our brand new micro site developed in collaboration with the Department of Education (Vic.)



The microsite has a multitude of resources that support building understanding of the experiences of and becoming a champion for neurodivergent students.

Including the amazing “*The Neurodivergent Students’ Guide to Starting High School*” graphic novel - designed to support neurodivergent students in their transition to high school.





Key Autistic-led resources to support mental health needs of Autistic young people

Spectrum Gaming (UK)

Barriers To Education: Understanding Trauma



A free, neurodiversity-affirming guide for parents & professionals on understanding, preventing and reducing trauma and anxiety in Autistic young people. Informed by 350 Autistic youth voices, along with 150 Autistic adults, 600 parents and 80 professionals. ***The detailed section on preventing and defusing meltdowns is particularly valuable.***

<https://www.barrierstoeducation.co.uk/trauma>

Yellow Ladybugs



Supporting the Mental Health of Autistic Girls & Gender Diverse Young People

A free, neurodiversity-affirming guide for parents & professionals, developed in collaboration with Autistic adults, parents, teachers, allied health professionals and academic researchers.

<https://www.yellowladybugs.com.au/>

**** Please also search our [I CAN Network Facebook page](#) for a multitude of valuable posts on meltdowns, shutdowns & burnout and other mental health-related content ****

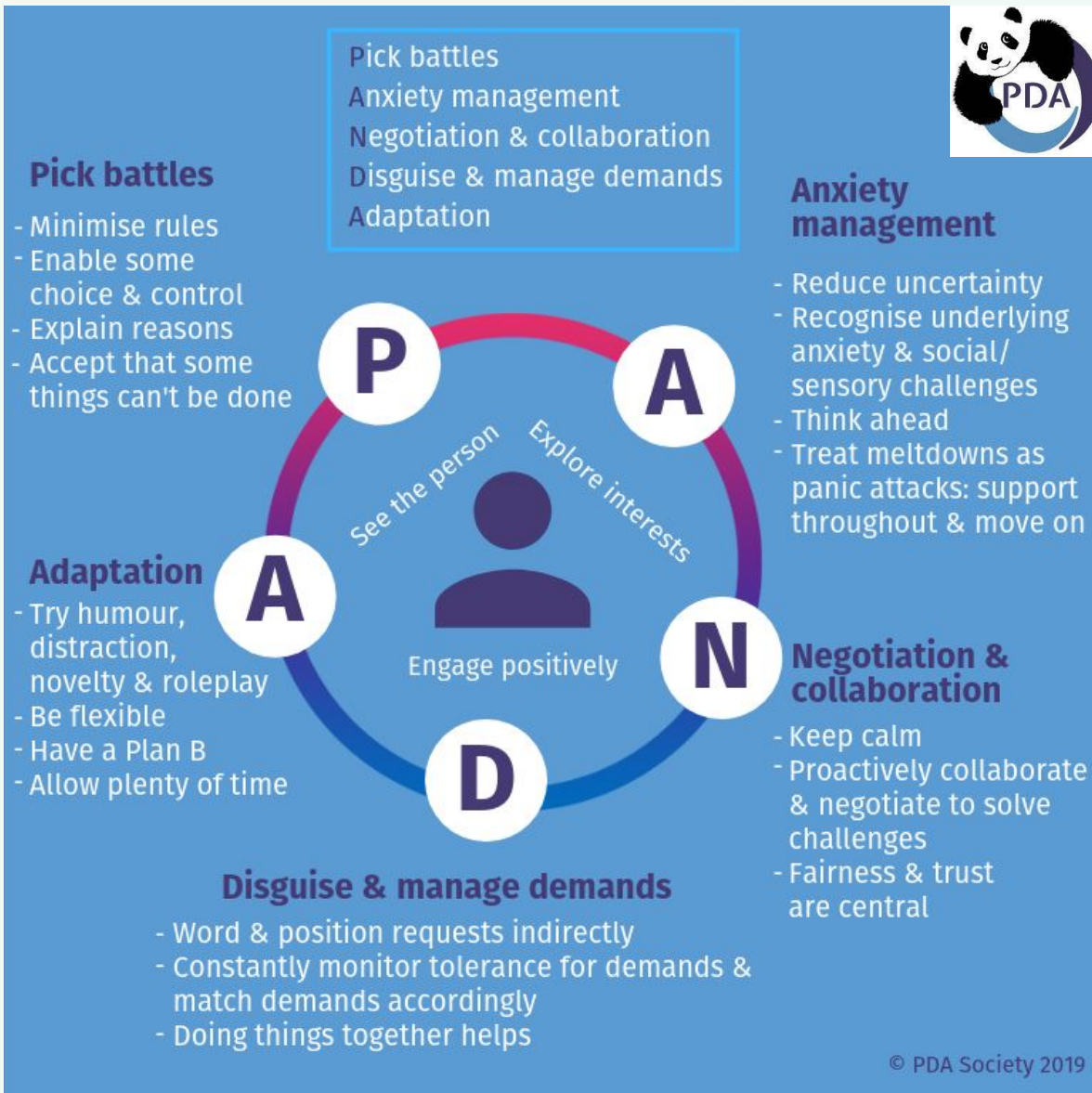
Safe spaces & safe people for this doubly marginalised group are especially critical



- We have created an outstanding suite of youth-informed resources with an array of valuable embedded resources/support & information spaces specifically for:
 - Autistic LGBTIQ+ young people
 - Parents/carers, teachers
 - Service providers
- We also offer online mentoring groups for Autistic & LGBTIQ+ teens (13-17) and young adults (18-22), led by young adult mentors who are also Autistic & LGBTIQ+

KEY RESOURCE LINK: <https://icannetwork.online/autistic-lgbtqia/>

Supporting students with PDA profile



PDA Society

A registered charity in the UK, with a strong global reputation, that provides information, support and training about PDA for individuals, families and professionals. Their aim is to increase acceptance and understanding of the PDA profile to improve outcomes for individuals & families by focusing everyone on 'what helps'.

<https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/>

Pro tip: Lived experience expertise from people such as I CAN Ambassador Dr Wenn Lawson & former teacher Kristy Forbes is invaluable.

Respectful resources for talking to your students about Autism & Neurodiversity



"The more people who hear positive things about Autism when they are young, the better chance we have of building a world that is inclusive."

THOMAS
I CAN MENTEE (NOW MENTOR)



Our carefully curated list of recommended resources, including materials for young people, their teachers and parents/carers.

<https://icannetwork.online/talking-about-autism/>

Video for student assemblies or school newsletter



[‘The Art of Learning With Autism’](#)

- 3-minute video featuring insights from Autistic young people
- Features a former I CAN mentor (now speech pathology student)
- Created by Department of Education Victoria



Autistic-crafted tip sheets for school newsletter or staff meeting



NURTURING SELF-ESTEEM & PRIDE IN AUTISTIC YOUNG PEOPLE

Parents, carers, teachers and other adults of influence can play an important part in helping an Autistic young person develop self-esteem and pride in who they are. Below are some tips (not exhaustive) from Autistic members of our ICAN family - Autistic young people and adults -- on how you can help nurture that positive sense of self.

ACCEPT AND SUPPORT THEM AS THEY ARE. Autistic young people deserve to know that they are accepted for who they are as they are. Strive to understand how an Autistic young person experiences the world so that they can have more meaningful support and opportunities.

REMINDE THEM OF THEIR STRENGTHS. So much of the societal narrative around Autism is around a "deficits model". Recognising, leveraging and celebrating a young person's strengths can go a long way toward helping them feel good about who they are and giving them confidence to take on new challenges.

BE THAT SAFE PERSON WHO WILL LISTEN. Many of us can point to one key adult who believed in us before we believed in ourselves. Never underestimate the positive impact that an adult can have when they offer unconditional support to an Autistic young person and listen without judgement.

SHOW GENUINE INTEREST IN AND SEEK OPPORTUNITIES AROUND THEIR PASSIONS. Autistic passions can be a source of immense joy, comfort, learning, connection with others and, in some cases, a pathway to our future study or employment. Showing a genuine interest in these passions is a powerful way to forge a deeper, trusting relationship with an Autistic young person you care about. Look for opportunities for them to connect with others who share similar passions.

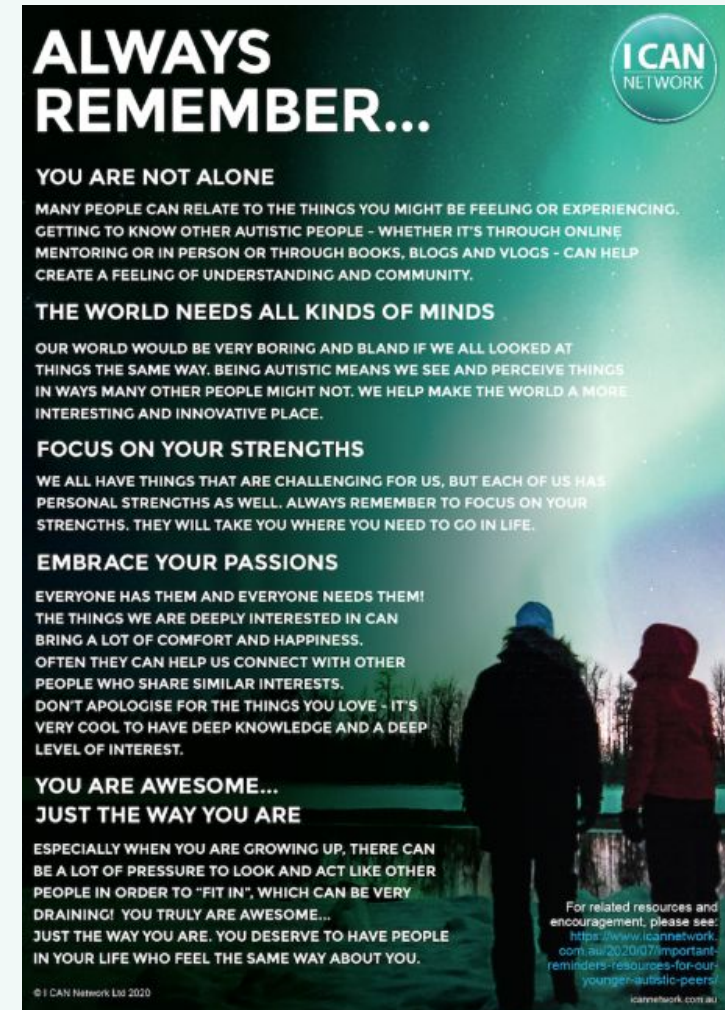
See valuable related resources and more Autistic reflections at: <https://www.icannetwork.com.au/2020/09/nurturing-self-esteem-pride-in-autistic-young-people/>

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Nurturing Self-Esteem & Pride In Autistic Young People

Always Remember... Tips & Encouragement For Our Younger Autistic Peers

These and other resources shaped by Autistic young adults can be found on our website: (<https://icannetwork.online/online-resources/>)



ALWAYS REMEMBER...

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

MANY PEOPLE CAN RELATE TO THE THINGS YOU MIGHT BE FEELING OR EXPERIENCING. GETTING TO KNOW OTHER AUTISTIC PEOPLE - WHETHER IT'S THROUGH ONLINE MENTORING OR IN PERSON OR THROUGH BOOKS, BLOGS AND VLOGS - CAN HELP CREATE A FEELING OF UNDERSTANDING AND COMMUNITY.

THE WORLD NEEDS ALL KINDS OF MINDS

OUR WORLD WOULD BE VERY BORING AND BLAND IF WE ALL LOOKED AT THINGS THE SAME WAY. BEING AUTISTIC MEANS WE SEE AND PERCEIVE THINGS IN WAYS MANY OTHER PEOPLE MIGHT NOT. WE HELP MAKE THE WORLD A MORE INTERESTING AND INNOVATIVE PLACE.

FOCUS ON YOUR STRENGTHS

WE ALL HAVE THINGS THAT ARE CHALLENGING FOR US, BUT EACH OF US HAS PERSONAL STRENGTHS AS WELL. ALWAYS REMEMBER TO FOCUS ON YOUR STRENGTHS. THEY WILL TAKE YOU WHERE YOU NEED TO GO IN LIFE.

EMBRACE YOUR PASSIONS

EVERYONE HAS THEM AND EVERYONE NEEDS THEM! THE THINGS WE ARE DEEPLY INTERESTED IN CAN BRING A LOT OF COMFORT AND HAPPINESS. OFTEN THEY CAN HELP US CONNECT WITH OTHER PEOPLE WHO SHARE SIMILAR INTERESTS. DON'T APOLOGISE FOR THE THINGS YOU LOVE - IT'S VERY COOL TO HAVE DEEP KNOWLEDGE AND A DEEP LEVEL OF INTEREST.

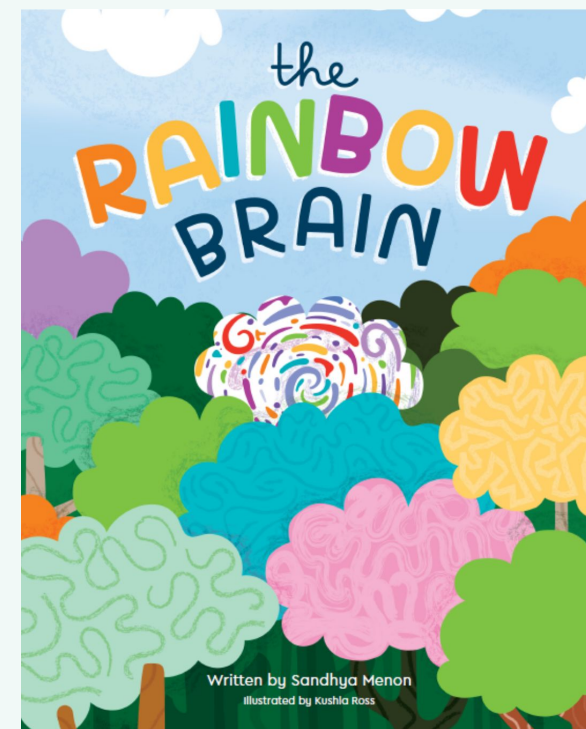
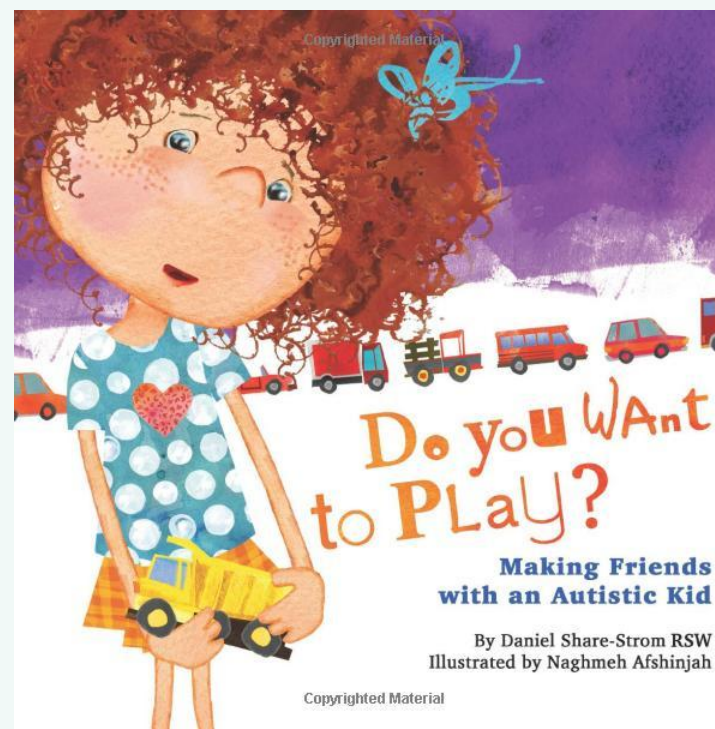
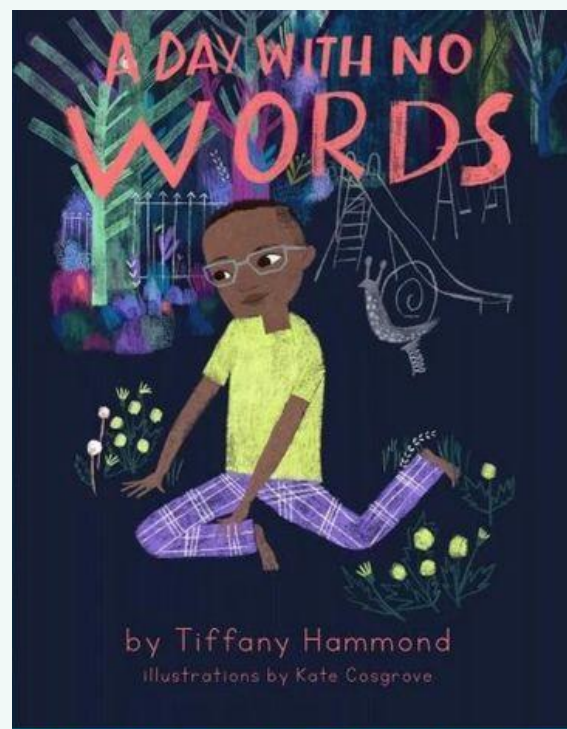
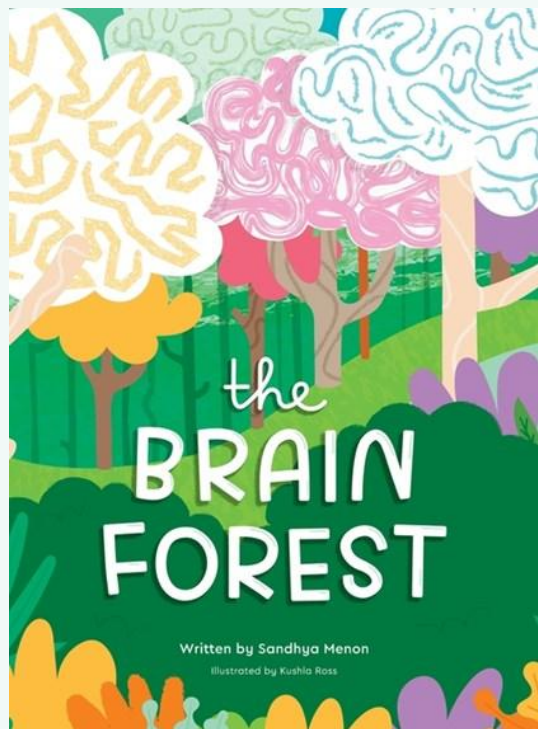
YOU ARE AWESOME... JUST THE WAY YOU ARE

ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU ARE GROWING UP, THERE CAN BE A LOT OF PRESSURE TO LOOK AND ACT LIKE OTHER PEOPLE IN ORDER TO "FIT IN", WHICH CAN BE VERY DRAINING! YOU TRULY ARE AWESOME... JUST THE WAY YOU ARE. YOU DESERVE TO HAVE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE WHO FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT YOU.

For related resources and encouragement, please see: <https://www.icannetwork.com.au/2020/07/important-reminders-resources-for-our-younger-autistic-peers/>

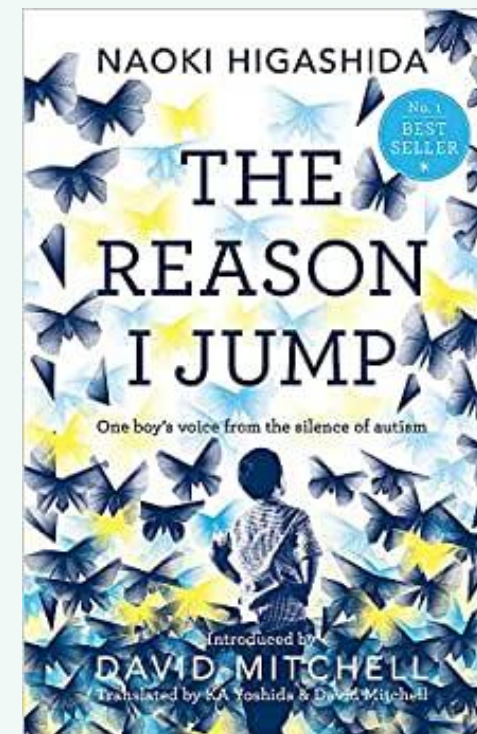
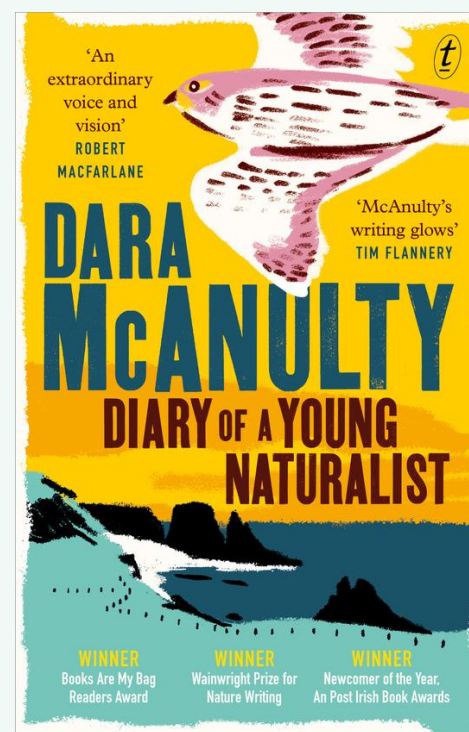
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Primary - Books for school newsletter or library display (Autistic authors)



From the curated booklist, [*100-ish Inclusive Children's Books On Autism & Neurodiversity*](#) (includes storybooks and young fiction featuring Autistic characters, guides and autobiographies and resources for parents/carers and teachers), created by *That Au-Some Book Club*, an international online book club that explores respectful depictions of Autism and Neurodiversity.

Secondary: Books for school newsletter or library display (Autistic authors)



From the curated booklist, [‘100ish Books For Autistic Adolescents, Teens & Tweens’](#) (includes fiction featuring Autistic characters, guides and autobiographies and resources for parents/carers and teachers), created by *That Au-Some Book Club*, an international online book club that explores respectful depictions of Autism and Neurodiversity.

Diverse Learners Hub - Department of Education Victoria



Information, tools and guidance to support students with diverse learning needs.
<https://www.vic.gov.au/diverse-learners-hub>



Disability Inclusion Profile video

<https://vimeo.com/792121041/319694be40>



Disability Inclusion Profile - Surf Coast Secondary College

More from Dept of Education Victoria

Autoplay next video



Disability Inclusion

inclusionED

(initiative of the Autism CRC)



Online professional learning community co-designed with educators for educators. Provides free, evidence-based and research-informed teaching practices to support diverse learners in inclusive classrooms.

<https://www.inclusioned.edu.au/>

Education Services Australia



Among its services, offers online learning resources for teachers & parents to support wellbeing in the classroom and at home.

<https://www.esa.edu.au/resources/online-resources>

School refusal support



- [Navigator Program](#) - Department of Education, Victoria
- [School Can't \[Formerly School Phobia/School Refusal Australia\]](#) closed Facebook Group: trauma-informed support & information space for parents & carers



Autistic employment programs/resources

PROGRAM	FOCUS	WEBSITE
myWAY Employability	Smart Web platform that supports career planning specifically for Autistic people	www.mywayemployability.com.au/
Specialisterne	Assists businesses in recruiting and supporting Autistic talent	specialisterne.com.au/
DXC Dandelion Program	Helping neurodivergent people find meaningful employment (IT field)	dxc.com/au/en/about-us/social-impact-practice/dxc-dandelion-program
Xceptional	Helping businesses attract neurodivergent talent & create accessible, inclusive workplaces	https://xceptional.io/
Untapped	Bringing together organisations that are passionate about the inclusion of neurodivergent people in the workplace	https://www.untapped-group.com/
auticon	Offering inclusion and technology solutions that benefit from Autistic skill sets	https://auticon.com/us/
Australian Spatial Analytics	Opportunities in spatial and data analytics	https://www.asanalytics.com.au/
ANZ Spectrum Program	Opportunities in cyber security, coding, testing and data services.	www.anz.com.au/about-us/esg/workplace-participation-diversity/accessible-workplace/