



Specialist Peer Mentoring Module

Providing Support to Tertiary Students on the Autism spectrum and Related Conditions



Specialist Mentor Toolkit

June 2016



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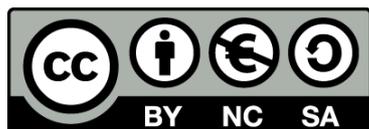
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The Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC)

The Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC) is the world's first
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autism focusing on diagnosis, education and adult life, Autism CRC researchers are working
with end-users to provide evidence-based outcomes which can be translated into practical
solutions for governments, service providers, education and health professionals, families and
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“For weeks you see what you think is little or no improvement. What you don't realize is that it is happening without you knowing and all of a sudden you see them taking on board what you have said, encouraging fellow mentees to go out and try things and inviting them along to study groups. Without the program they wouldn't have this, it's fantastic to see and very rewarding that you can make a difference.”

(CSMP Mentor)

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Specialist Mentor Toolkit

Congratulations on your new role as a specialist mentor for a tertiary student on the autism spectrum and related conditions. The Specialist Peer Mentoring Program is based on the successful Curtin University Specialist Mentoring Program (CSMP) situated in Perth, Western Australia – (<http://life.curtin.edu.au/health-and-wellbeing/autism-related-conditions-peer-mentoring.htm>), and is designed to specifically support students on the autism spectrum and related conditions in a tertiary education setting. The following Toolkit provides some valuable background information and tools that you may find assist in your role as a specialist mentor.*

***Please Note:** Mentors should be familiar with the contents of this Toolkit, the National Autistic Society (NAS) *Student Mentor Guidelines* (<http://www.autism.org.uk/studentmentors>) and the National Disability Coordination Officer Programme (NDCO) *Transition to Tertiary Education: Helpful Hints for People with Autism spectrum Disorder* (www.adcet.edu.au/autism-transition) booklet before they undertake their Specialist Mentor Training. Along with the Specialist Mentor Toolkit, these documents will be distributed by your Coordinator at the initial Mentor Induction Meeting. Mentors should be aware that their mentee will also be issued with a copy of the NDCO booklet and a Mentee Information Booklet when they join the Specialist Peer Mentoring Program.

PROGRAM RATIONALE

The Specialist Peer Mentoring Module has been designed to respond to the growing number of students on the Autism spectrum and related conditions now enrolling in tertiary education courses worldwide (Bebko, Schroeder, & Ames, 2011; Hastwell, Harding, Baron Cohen & Martin, 2012; Hastwell, Harding, Martin, & Baron-Cohen, 2013). Preliminary research indicates that the prevalence of tertiary students on the autism spectrum is approximately 1% of the overall student population, as high as prevalence rates of individuals on the autism spectrum for the general population (White, Ollendick, & Bray, 2011).

The reported increases in the number of tertiary students on the autism spectrum range between two to as much as eight-fold over five years (Bebko, et al., 2011; Hastwell, et al., 2012). International research indicates that these individuals are not performing to their full academic potential (Equality Challenge Unit, 2011). Researchers in the United Kingdom (UK) have found that those with an autism spectrum diagnosis have the lowest percentage of first or upper second degree classifications achievement of any disability groups who are engaged in higher education (Equality Challenge Unit, 2011).

Research into life outcomes for adults on the autism spectrum indicates they are a significantly disadvantaged group. A recent international research review investigating the prognosis, outcomes and effective interventions for adults on the autism spectrum found that they are significantly disadvantaged in the areas of employment, social relationships, physical/mental health and quality of life (Howlin & Moss, 2012). More recent UK research of 374 adults on the Autism spectrum (specifically Asperger Syndrome [AS]) indicates that 66% experienced suicidal ideation, 35% experienced planned or attempted suicide with rates that are more than nine times higher than that found in the normal UK population (Cassidy, Bradley, Robinson, Allison, McHugh &

Baron-Cohen, 2014). Support to facilitate this population's inclusion into mainstream society has been lacking with little research investigating the most effective ways to intervene and improve outcomes for these adults (Howlin & Moss, 2012).

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), individuals on the autism spectrum experience impairment in the two domains of social communication and restricted interests/repetitive behaviour. Beyond these impairments there are often more cognitive characteristics to consider including deficits in 'theory of mind' skills, difficulties with executive functioning, weak central coherence, difficulties with sensory processing and motor functioning problems (Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium (AAETC), 2008). Such students may also have a number of relative cognitive strengths in the areas of rote memory, visual spatial abilities, compartmentalized learning, preference for routine and rules, intense interests, savant skills and being logical (AAETC, 2008).

Students on the autism spectrum have been increasingly included in mainstream education settings (Frederickson, Jones & Lang, 2010; Jordan, 2005; Leach & Duffy, 2009; Ravet, 2011). However, research has shown that students with intellectual disabilities, including those on the Autism spectrum, often experience many challenges in accessing the necessary supports in these environments (Ford, 2007; Forlin, Keen & Barrett, 2008; Humphrey & Lewis, 2008a, 2008b; Humphrey & Symes, 2010; Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010; MacDermott, 2008; McDonald, 2010, 2014; Shaddock, 2005; Shaddock, Smyth King & Giorcelli, 2007; Wing, 2007).

Concerns have been raised about the lack of appropriate, individualized attention and support available, the high attrition rates and the inordinate degree of bullying experienced by such students in mainstream educational settings (Attwood, 2007; Humphrey & Lewis, 2008b; Humphrey & Symes, 2010; Lynch & Irvine, 2009). Additionally, such students often experience social isolation, anxiety and sensory difficulties in mainstream settings where their need for routine and predictability is often at odds with the chaotic, noisy happenings of mainstream education (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008a; Knott & Taylor, 2014; Symes & Humphrey, 2010; Trembath, Germano, Johanson & Dissanayake, 2012; Wing, 2007).

Prior research has also shown that students on the autism spectrum have high dropout rates from secondary school, low rates of post-secondary education, poor post compulsory school integration, reduced independent living and community participation outcomes (Attwood, 2007; AAETC, 2008). Students on the autism spectrum are a particularly vulnerable group whose academic success is highly dependent on the quality of inclusiveness that they experience in an educational environment (Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010; Leach & Duffey, 2009; McDonald, 2010, 2014; Van Hees, Moyson & Roeyers, 2014).

In the Australian context, one recent survey (Autism Spectrum Australia or Aspect, 2012) investigating the experiences, aspirations and needs of 300 adults with AS and High Functioning Autism (HFA) from every state and territory in Australia confirmed that, despite this group's aptitude for study, they experience significant struggles to reach their full potential in education. At the time of the survey more than 80% of the 300 respondents with AS and HFA had commenced or completed a tertiary qualification. Of this group, almost 75% identified that they needed support to help

them study. Almost 50% of the 300 respondents reported that they received no, or insufficient, additional support for their learning needs during their time in education.

In the same survey, tertiary education disability officers reported that students on the autism spectrum experienced difficulties in verbal comprehension, planning, organisation, social awareness and group work. Disability officers also perceived a lack of awareness and understanding of autism spectrum Conditions among tertiary educators. Over 66% of parents surveyed stated that educators in Australia are not well-informed about autism spectrum Conditions. Approximately 50% of the parents surveyed indicated that their child had not performed to his or her full potential while in education. The same survey found that in contrast to an Australian national employment rate of 95%, just 54% of adults with AS and HFA had a paid job at the time of completing the survey - and of those 54% in employment, 33% were found to be working in casual employment (Aspect, 2012).

Current preliminary research indicates that successful inclusion of students on the Autism spectrum in tertiary education environments incorporates a community of practice where a number of supports and initiatives are available (Barnhill, 2014; Gelbar, Smith & Reichow, 2014; Hastwell, et al., 2012; Hastwell, et al., 2013; Van Hees, Moyson & Roeyers, 2014; Wolf, Brown & Bork, 2009). Promising programs at the tertiary level include many different types of support with the student voice often being given increased importance to ensure that programs remain of greatest, practical benefit to this population of students (Bebko, et al., 2011; Hastwell et al., 2012; Hastwell et al., 2013; Wolf et al., 2009). Peer-to-peer mentoring where tertiary students on the autism spectrum are provided with trained, specialist student mentors to help them navigate university life has been highlighted as an effective means of providing support to these students (Bebko, et al., 2011; Hastwell et al., 2013; Wolf et al., 2009).

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In 2014, inspired by the success of a small number of recent, promising peer-to-peer tertiary mentoring programs operating in Canada (Bebko, et al., 2011), the United Kingdom (Hastwell, et al., 2012; Hastwell, et al., 2013; Mowat, Cooper, & Gilson, 2011) and the United States (Wolf, et al., 2009), Curtin University and Autism West funded Dr Jasmine McDonald and Theresa Kidd to develop and implement one of the first Specialist Peer Mentoring Programs for students on the Autism spectrum in Australia – the Curtin Specialist Mentoring Program (CSMP). This was in line with federal Disability Discrimination legislation (Disability Discrimination Act, 1992, Disability Standards for Education 2005) and Curtin’s Disability, Access and Inclusion Plan (2012-2017) which states a commitment to provide “equitable and inclusive access for people with a disability to its facilities, services, events and academic programs” (p.7).

In its inaugural year CSMP provided specialist mentoring to 17 students over the 2014 academic year, with most mentees electing to retain a specialist mentor for the 2015 academic year. In its second year CSMP provided specialist mentoring to 32 students during the 2015 academic year with most mentees electing to retain a specialist mentor for the 2016 academic year. CSMP also initiated a social group that has become an integral part of the Specialist Peer Mentoring Program.

The Toolkit is part of a modified, generic version of the Curtin University Specialist Mentoring Program (CSMP). Two independent evaluations of CSMP were conducted

during its first semester of operation in 2014 (Hamilton, 2015; Hamilton, Stevens & Girdler, 2016; Siew, 2014). Additionally, a comparative replication study of the CSMP program, based on the draft CRC module, was conducted at the University of Western Australia (UWA) during semester two, 2015.

Evaluation results of the 2014 CSMP program from the mentee perspective indicate that there was a significant improvement in mentee participants' sense of support and a significant decrease in their apprehension in communicating with others over the course of the program. Mentee participants also reported being highly satisfied with the program with a mean satisfaction score of 4.31 out of 5 (Siew, 2014). Evaluation results of the CSMP 2014 mentor training and program from the mentor perspective indicate that the training was well received with an overall mean satisfaction score of 4.7 out of 5 (Hamilton, 2015; Hamilton, Stevens & Girdler, 2016). Final results from the UWA comparative, replication study are yet to be released. Research papers based on these studies are in development.

The Toolkit is provided with the intention that other tertiary institutions may use the experience and resources developed by CSMP, UWA and the Autism CRC to adapt to their own circumstances so that tertiary students on the Autism spectrum and those with related conditions will have a greater chance to realise their educational potential in tertiary environments.

SPECIALIST PEER MENTORING PROGRAM MODEL

The Specialist Peer Mentoring Program Model draws on the CSMP experience and research (Hamilton, Stevens & Girdler; 2016) that indicates the quality of mentoring is impacted by such factors as:

- Specialised mentor training (prior to meeting mentees).
- Mentor's approach and self-efficacy (based on training / mentor experience).
- Mentor-mentee relationship (supported by an experienced Coordinator).
- Group mentor supervision (on a regular basis).
- Structural supports (Coordinator, Disability / Counselling Support).
- Social group (inclusive of mentors / mentees on a weekly basis).



Mentoring Program Model



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THE PEER MENTORING ROLE

“Being a part of CSMP has been an incredibly rewarding, memorable and an invaluable learning experience. As a mentor, I had the honour of working with C., a first year student on the Autism spectrum. Prior to working with the program, I knew little about the daily challenges and anxieties that those on the Autism spectrum faced. However, working with C. has made me profoundly aware of how courageous these mentees are in confronting the challenge of university life. The program means that the mentees do not have to do it alone. I saw how CSMP program provided the scaffolding and support needed for the mentees to adjust to university and develop meaningful friendships. I feel very proud and honoured to be involved in such a worthwhile project that makes such a difference in these students’ lives.”

(CSMP Mentor)

Roberts (2000) defined mentoring as a:

Formalised process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitate that persons’ career and development. (p.162)

According to Bebko, Schroeder, & Ames, (2011) who developed the York University Asperger Mentorship Program (AMP) in Canada:

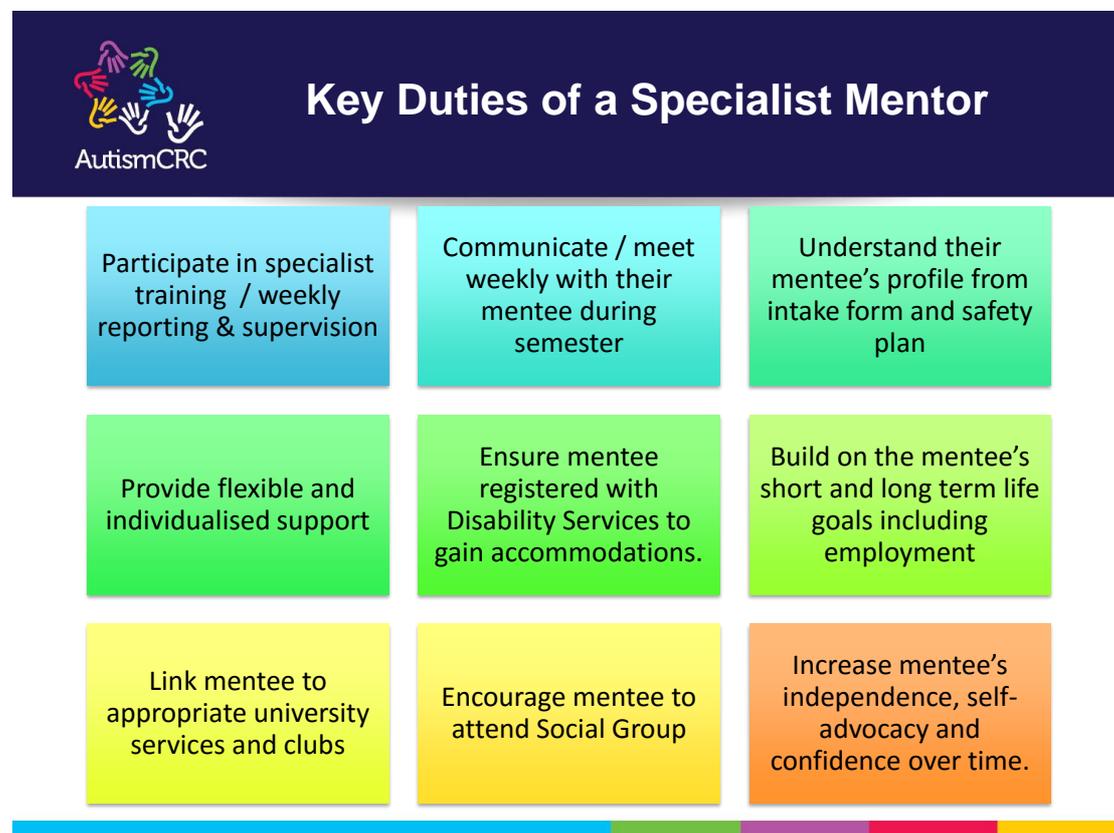
The role of the mentor is akin to that of a “coach,”... A coach helps you practice skills, they help you prepare for the game, they cheer you along, and work with you after the game to talk about what went well and how to practice for the next game – but a coach does not play the game for or with you. This analogy is used to clarify that the role of the mentor is different from a counsellor or a friend. (p.5)

Mentors help ‘coach’ their mentees by communicating and/or meeting with their mentees for one or more hours per week generally during the teaching weeks of the semester. The communication channels used are determined by both parties and may also depend upon whether the student is internal (on campus) or external (off campus) to the university.

Some mentees may need more mentoring than others depending upon the complexity of their profiles. No two mentees will be alike in their needs. Mentors should not take

on the role of counsellor, tutor or parent but encourage their mentee to make contact with appropriate staff and services on campus to meet their needs.

Please Note: The CSMP experience has shown that Facebook should not be used by mentors as a preferred, individual communication method with their mentee as this does not establish appropriate professional boundaries between the mentor and mentee and problems of over familiarity have arisen because of this.



The mentor role involves the following duties:

- Completing appropriate specialist mentor training.
- Familiarising yourself with the profile / needs of your mentee and maintaining confidentiality (See relevant information held in mentee's record/file such as completed *Intake Form / Handover Form / Safety plan* etc.).
- Establishing boundaries and responsibilities of the mentee/mentor role (See Appendix A - *Mentor/Mentee Responsibilities Form*).
- Being available to work as a specialist mentor for one or more hours during the teaching weeks of the semester.
- Being available to attend a regular, group supervision meeting during the teaching weeks of the semester.

- Providing a short weekly report detailing meeting times, issues arising and referrals by the specified time and date during the teaching weeks of the semester (See Appendix A – *Weekly Reporting Sheet and Sample*).
- Providing a fortnightly time sheet detailing working hours if required (See Appendix A – *Mentor Time Sheet*).
- Encouraging your mentee to indicate what difficulties (social, academic, etc.) they may be experiencing with university life.
- Giving advice and guidance to your mentee about how to handle these difficulties or where to gain appropriate support/advice from within the tertiary environment given your own successful tertiary student experience.
- Ensuring your mentee has registered with Disability Services and has investigated whether he/she is eligible for accommodations/modifications.
- Helping coordinate and providing feedback to the social group (See Appendix A – *Social Group Weekly Report Form and Sample*).
- Encouraging your mentee to attend the Social Group and attending with them as required.
- Encouraging and supporting your mentee to prepare their resume and seek out suitable work experience/work preferably in their respective fields of study (See Appendix A – *Brief Information Sheet for Work Experience/Employment [Sample]*).
- Working toward the long term goal of trying to help your mentee gain as much confidence, independence and self-advocacy as possible in preparation for a more successful adult life.
- Completing a handover sheet summarising the strengths, difficulties etc. of your mentee (See Appendix A – *Mentor Handover Sheet*) when your mentoring role finishes.
- Participating in an evaluation process as required.
- Developing appropriate self-care and crisis management skills (See Section 4 and Appendix B - *Crisis Management Information*).
- Making individual contact with your Coordinator as needed.

As a mentor you will potentially gain:

- Valuable professional practice experience in a supervised, supportive setting.
- Work experience for future employment.
- Leadership training and experience.
- Improved personal development, confidence and articulation skills.

- Personal satisfaction from giving and sharing knowledge.
- Networking opportunities with people from different cultures, nationalities, ages and backgrounds.
- Experience working as part of a team in a collegial setting.
- Experience as a positive role model for your mentee.
- Experience being part of a social group with students on the autism spectrum.
- Knowledge of autism spectrum Conditions and disability issues.
- Possible payment and official recognition of your role.

SOCIAL GROUP COORDINATING COMMITTEE

“The mentoring program offers the mentees a rare opportunity to meet like-minded people their age and fosters the development of interpersonal relationships. There is a scarcity of such opportunities for adults on the spectrum. My mentee has been at Curtin for 3 years and had never made any friends. He now attends the weekly social club meetings as well as plays cards with another mentee weekly. These social gatherings mean a lot to my mentee, he continually indicates that he wants to improve his social skills. I believe the mentoring program provides him with an opportunity to reach this goal.”

(CSMP Mentor)

“It is rewarding to see a group of strangers all become great friends by the end of semester. The social connections formed provide a valuable social support network for the mentees.”

(CSMP Social Group Coordinator)

As a mentor you will also be asked to be part of a Social Group Coordinating Committee. The Social Group:

- Is coordinated and attended by mentors and mentees.
- Is held on a regular basis during the teaching weeks of semester.
- Has a Social Group report written and delivered by the relevant coordinating committee mentors at the regular supervision meeting where feedback is given (See Appendix A – *Social Group Report Form and Sample*).

- Is a safe, welcoming social space to commune / make friends / practise social skills / experience belonging.
- Is organised in two parts:
 - A short (approx. 15 - 30 minutes) formal aspect delivered/organised by the social group committee (e.g. social skills, guest speakers, dating advice, careers etc. based on mentee needs and wants).
 - A longer (approx. 45 - 60 mins) informal aspect (e.g. electronic and board game playing – CSMP favourites Jenga, Fibbage and Pandemic).
- Is advertised through a specific, private Social Group Facebook page (posting of events etc.) coordinated by the mentors (and mentees when possible).

BOUNDARIES OF THE MENTOR ROLE

It is important that both mentors and mentees understand the boundaries of the mentor/ mentee relationship so that misunderstandings and resultant difficult situations do not arise. At the beginning of involvement with the Specialist Peer Mentoring Program, both mentors and mentees will be issued with information outlining the boundaries of the mentor/mentee relationship. Mentors will be asked to engage in conversation with their mentee about the mentor/mentee role culminating in the signing of the *Mentor/Mentee Responsibilities Contract* (See Appendix A - *Mentor/Mentee Responsibilities Contract*).

The CSMP experience has shown that difficulties can arise when appropriate professional boundaries have not been observed by either the mentor or the mentee. Given the emotional vulnerability of many students on the autism spectrum it is important that a respectful and professional distance be established between you and your mentee. Caution should be exercised regarding self-disclosure of very personal information. While you should be friendly and empathetic when working with your mentee you should not take on the role of a friend who the mentee becomes reliant upon to be part of their permanent social circle. The support and encouragement of other friendships through the social group and other clubs on campus should be the mentor's goal for their mentee.

If you and your mentee choose to become friends after your involvement with the Specialist Peer Mentoring Program finishes then this will need to be negotiated by both parties on a case-by-case basis with no expectation or pressure to be placed on either party.

To help establish and explain boundaries, mentors are asked to sign and request their mentees to sign a *Mentor/Mentee Responsibilities Contract* as soon as possible which outlines the following mentor/mentee responsibilities (see Appendix A).

Responsibilities of a Mentor are to:

- Respect the professional boundaries between the mentor and the mentee.

- Respond ASAP to any communications from their mentee during the semester.
- Contact or meet their mentee at agreed times (and locations if applicable).
- Advise their mentee by email/text of any unavoidable changes to arrangements at least 24 hours in advance.
- Lodge a regular report documenting issues arising for supervision purposes.
- Communicate with their mentee in clear and specific terms providing a written and/or diagrammatic representation of the communication (if needed).
- Attend the Social Group when possible and regular supervision meetings to gain advice and guidance.
- Support their mentee to prepare their resume and seek out relevant work experience / work over time.
- Provide guidance consistent with the defined role of a specialist student mentor.
- Provide feedback about the program through participation in evaluation research.

Responsibilities of a Mentee are to:

- Respect the professional boundaries between the mentor and the mentee.
- Respond ASAP to any communications from their mentor during the semester.
- Contact or meet their mentor at agreed times (and locations if applicable).
- Advise their mentor by email/text of any unavoidable changes to arrangements at least 24 hours in advance.
- Try to attend any meetings requested including the Social Group.
- Be open to try different techniques to improve difficulties they may be experiencing.
- Communicate any difficulties they may be experiencing to their mentor (or the Coordinators should the need arise).
- Provide feedback about the program through participation in evaluation research.
- Contact the Coordinator if they are experiencing concerns / difficulties working with their mentor.

FIRST AND SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS

At your first and subsequent meetings with your mentee it will be helpful to:

- Exchange contact details and establish favoured communication channels (not Facebook).
- Book communication / meeting times and meeting places (encourage face-to-face if possible).
- Discuss your mentee's interests & hobbies to develop trust / rapport (see Appendix C - *NAS Mentor Guidelines* pp. 16 - 18).
- Explain the mentoring role and how it differs from other roles (counsellor, parent etc.).
- Review & sign off 'Mentor / Mentee Responsibilities Contract' with mentee (see Appendix A – *Mentor/Mentee Responsibilities Contract*) and return to your Coordinator.
- Ensure mentee is registered with Disability Services & has appropriate accommodations / modifications in place.
- Encourage them to attend the Social Group.
- Answer any initial queries they may have.
- Establish short, medium & long term goals with your mentee (See *Recommended Methods of Communication* next section of this document).
- Help your mentee review & plan their class, study & assignment schedule & syllabi for the semester (See Appendix C - *NAS Mentor Guidelines* pp. 30 - 33).
- Link them with appropriate academic & social support (other services / clubs on campus) and tailor your support to their individual needs.

RECOMMENDED METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

Apart from the many communication ideas and tips found in the *National Autistic Society (NAS) Student Mentor Guidelines* (See Appendix C), previous CSMP mentors have found the following communication tips to be helpful:

- **Active / Reflective Listening** - Active / reflective listening is a communication technique used in counselling, training and conflict resolution, which requires the listener to feedback what they hear to the speaker, by re-stating or paraphrasing what they have heard in their own words and to confirm the understanding of both parties. Your mentee will appreciate it if you reserve judgement, show empathy and encourage them to speak openly about their situation using active / reflective listening techniques. It is important to help the mentee feel that their words are being respected and validated by asking clarifying reflective, open-ended questions until you more fully understand their situation.

Example: Your mentee reveals to you that they are very upset about how their brother is treating them at home. You acknowledge their emotion and message by reflecting back to them such statements as: “It sounds like home life is very difficult for you at the moment. From what you have said it seems like it is hard for you to gain the right sort of support from your brother. How do you feel about that situation? What sort of support would you like?”

And so on ... you can offer reflective feedback until you can understand the mentee’s situation more clearly. Remember you cannot be your mentee’s teacher, therapist or parent but you can listen and offer a range of possible solutions from your own experience and also recommend appropriate support services from different specialist departments on campus (such as Counselling Services etc.).

- **Making use of ‘I’ Statements, Appropriate Self-Disclosure & Normalising** – It has been found by mentors when giving advice that the use of ‘I’ statements can be more effective than ‘you’ statements which may be misinterpreted as personal criticism by some mentees. Additionally, use of ‘I’ statements often allows your mentee to feel empowered to make their own decisions and choices regarding the advice being given. Appropriate self-disclosure of similar situations experienced or known about by the mentor can also help the mentee realise that many problems that they experience are a normal part of student life and as such can often be solved by seeking out appropriate advice and expertise located on campus.

Example: Your mentee is pacing up and down when you meet them. They are very distressed about an upcoming assignment. After using active listening techniques to find out about their difficulties more fully, you attempt to discuss possible solutions by framing the advice using ‘I’ statements in the following way: “I remember that last semester I had a very difficult assignment as well. It felt like I was never going to be able to complete it. I felt very overwhelmed. I

asked one of the other students in my course what they were doing about the assignment and they said they were going to segment their work over a number of weeks so that it did not have to be done all in the final week that it was due. That advice really helped me and I ended doing the same by putting in mini-deadlines for myself”.

And so on ... you can brainstorm a range of solutions with your mentee as each person on the autism spectrum will be different regarding what solutions suit their situation best.

- **Setting Short, Medium and Long Term Goals** – It is important to ask your mentee about the life dreams they wish to realise. When discussing their dreams it is helpful to explore and set realistic, achievable short, medium and long term goals preferably within a timeframe. These goals will also need to be regularly reviewed and revised together. Each mentee will have their own academic profile and demonstrate very individual rates of progress that will need to be understood and appreciated by their mentor in relation to helping set realistic goals within time-frames. The setting of measurable goals helps both the mentee and mentor see what progress is being made toward the realisation of the mentee’s life goals.

Example – Your mentee is studying Astrophysics and indicates that one of her life dreams is to become a Science Communicator. You decide to translate this dream into a discussion about how to realise her dream by expressing the following: “I have found it helpful to draw up a goal setting plan where realistic short, medium and term goals are organised within suggested time frames to help me see and do what is needed to help me achieve my dreams. I am wondering if you would like to explore this as an option for helping you realise one or more of your life-dreams?”

And so on ... you can then both explore together the things that will need to be done to help realise one or more of your mentee’s life goals. This may include such things as your mentee ensuring that their present academic course will lead to such a career. Investigating what demand there is for such a career path. It may also include visiting the careers section on campus to discuss suitable work experience placements and getting a resume completed and so on.

Please Note: Goal setting sheets are available on the Centre for Clinical Interventions website (See *Useful Resources* section p. 25 - www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/).

- **Respecting the Self-Determination Rights of the Mentee** – Many individuals on the autism spectrum have had much of their lives supported and directed by others and their decision making skills may be limited because of this. When they begin tertiary education it is often a time of transition into adulthood where mentees must begin to make informed choices about their future. It is important to support their own agency and self-determination about their own lives. At

times it may feel easier to make decisions for your mentee based on your own experience but this may disempower them and rob them of the opportunity to grow in this regard. It is important to encourage your mentee to have their own voice in decisions being made about their current life and future. This can be done by asking open-ended questions and encouraging critical thinking when exploring an issue with your mentee.

Example: Your mentee is studying Physiotherapy. He tells you that he can cope with the theoretical side of his studies but the practical side of things is very difficult for him because he has to deal with live clients. You can help your mentee explore the range of options available to him by asking such open-ended questions as: “What would you like to do about this situation? I find investigating the pros and cons of a situation often help me make informed decisions. Would it help if we drew up a visual diagram of the consequences of making such a decision? What areas do you think need to be investigated more fully before any decisions are made?”

And so on ... it is important to encourage and allow your mentee the opportunity to make informed choices about their own life. Providing scaffolding to the decision making process is potentially helpful for your mentee and provides a way forward for them that they will be able to re-use when making other difficult decisions about their life.

SENSORY DIFFERENCES

Stress and anxiety can occur for your mentee due to the often unknown aspects of campus life. This may escalate their sensory challenges. Hyper or hypo sensitivity in sensory domains may impact on your mentee’s ability to function in the social world and potentially increase their level of anxiety. The CSMP experience has shown that the following strategies may assist if these difficulties arise.

Firstly, review with your mentee how sensory issues are normally handled in other environments. The Mentee Intake Form in your mentee’s file may provide some useful information on specific sensory issues. Mentees should also be encouraged to consider using the following strategies/interventions to help with sensory issues:

Auditory Sensitivity

- Encourage use of headphones that muffle/reduce sounds or that provide music.
- Find a quiet study location together, away from the noisiest or busiest areas.
- Minimize background noise by encouraging them to get to lectures early and sit at the front.
- Encourage them to record or download lectures to replay later.
- Use earplugs in noisy areas.

- Arrange a scribe for lectures through Disability Services.
- Seek specific accommodations through their Disability Access Plan.

Smell Sensitivity or Preferences

- Remove or reduce exposure to foods, perfumes, air fresheners, printing inks, markers/ pens etc. with offending odours by noting trouble spots on campus and avoiding them.
- Remind them that some individuals can become more alert with the addition of certain smells such as natural scents.
- Suggest they bring a desired smell with them on a piece of cloth to mask unpleasant smells.
- Seek specific accommodations through their Disability Access Plan.

Visual Organization Needs

- Remind them to remove clutter or visual distractions in their study and assessment areas.
- Advise them how and where on campus they can create an organized workspace.
- Discuss appropriate study organisation techniques e.g. Google Calendar.
- Help them outline their assessment due dates on a visual semester planner.
- Seek specific accommodations through their Disability Access Plan.

Visual-Light Sensitivity

- Remind them to use sunglasses, hats/caps and to investigate Irlin lenses.
- Help them to seek out places on campus with appropriate lighting, such as indirect lighting, low lighting or natural lighting instead of overhead fluorescent lighting if that is the problem.
- Seek specific accommodations through their Disability Access Plan.

Touch Sensitivity/Personal Space

- Remind them to seek appropriate accommodations to gain adequate personal space during assessment and study activities.

- Seek out appropriate, quiet, study work areas on campus.
- Seek specific accommodations through their Disability Access Plan.

MENTOR / MENTEE REAL LIFE SCENARIOS

The following section provides four real life scenarios produced by previous CSMP specialist mentors detailing how they managed difficult situations with their mentees. There are also helpful tips for new mentors.

It should be noted that each mentee's profile, needs and progress were different and the mentors adapted their style of mentoring accordingly.

Scenario 1:

X and his housemates (he lives on campus) were fined \$55 each after a failing a random house inspection. It came after a stressful week for X as he had not done as much study or assignment work as he had planned and was starting to fall behind in his units. I met him that afternoon and he looked very worried, stressed and tired.

How did the mentor manage this situation?

We sat down and he told me what had happened with the house. I asked him about his uni work (because I knew it was an ongoing issue) and he said that he was very annoyed and angry at himself for having wasted the previous weekend by not doing any study. After telling me everything he had to do I calmed him down and we made a plan. I said that there was nothing we could do about the weekend just gone, let's not worry about it – we'll learn from it and let's work out what we're going to do from here on in. I said I would compose an email to the housing people for him to send asking about the legitimacy of the \$55 fine – so that was that sorted for the time being. Next were his assignments – I asked which were due tomorrow and the next day. I find that he becomes overwhelmed with the amount of work that needs doing and this affects his ability to focus. Rather, I broke his tasks down into more manageable chunks so they didn't seem as big a load. I advised that he work on his assignment due the next day that night and said I would meet him in the library the next night to assist him in concentrating on the one due the day after.

Tips that may be helpful for new mentors:

It takes a while to get to know the mentees, how they tick, what works for them and what doesn't etc. – especially because they don't give much back. For this reason, don't think you aren't assisting them – trust that you are making a difference, even if it is small. I found self-disclosure very useful and posing advice in a round-a-bout way a bit more effective than simply telling them what to do. In the above situation – just being able to meet X when he was stressed was useful for him as I think it was reassuring that there was someone else there. Get used to silences! It took me a while to get used to silences and allow X to speak before jumping in and answering a question for him or providing options.

Scenario 2:

In the beginning of our relationship X would not respond to texts/emails and would frequently be late to our meetings.

How did the mentor manage this situation?

This was managed by directly addressing the situation with X during mentoring sessions. I explained to him that it comes across as rude when he does not respond to my emails or texts, and it makes me feel like he is not paying attention to my advice or is not interested in what I have to say. I asked him if this was true, and he reported it was not. I also explained that according to social norms, X should let people know when he is going to be late for a meeting, interview, date, etc. We practiced (e.g., text role plays) polite/appropriate ways to indicate when one is running late. I emphasized the importance of this in professional or academic settings (e.g., if he was going to be late for work).

I had to follow up on this a few times by reminding him of what we had covered in sessions when he slipped up. For example, if he did not respond to a text message after a few hours, I would text him again and say something like, "Hi X, as we discussed in our meeting, can you let me know that you have received my text messages, that is how I know things are confirmed." I only had to remind him 3 or 4 times and ever since he always responds to my texts/emails and also lets me know when he is running late for a session (usually only when he can't find parking).

Tips that may be helpful for new mentors:

I think it is important to remember that "beating around the bush" in an attempt to be polite when giving advice to the mentees is likely not the best approach. Although it may feel rude or confronting, I think it is best to be as direct and to the point as possible when giving advice or providing information.

Scenario 3:

I was very fortunate with the mentee I worked with this year. He was incredibly intelligent, cooperative, engaging and a total joy to work with. He was very organised and prepared for his classes and academically excelling in all his courses. His mother was also very organised and an incredible support for him. However, this left me wondering: what was my role? After a couple of meetings, I started asking myself was I really necessary? What was left for me to do? At our mentor meetings every week, I would hear how much work the other mentors were doing for their mentees with helping them organize their timetables, scholarships, classes etc. I started to feel superfluous and I noticed that the meetings with my mentee were getting shorter, as the mentee seemed to be just as confused about my role.

How did the mentor manage this situation?

I decided to address this issue by first speaking with the Coordinators. I told them about my concerns. I was surprised and reassured to hear that my role was important and that my mentee could still benefit from working with me.

I looked over the initial documentation we were given at orientation and familiarized myself with areas that he said he found challenging (i.e. initiating conversation, crowded places, speaking to strangers). I decided to speak about these concerns with him, and see if his concerns could be identified as goals to address over the semester. My mentee was very enthusiastic about the idea. We developed a social situation fear hierarchy and agreed upon weekly goals to set each week. We identified skills that we wanted to learn from one other, for example we agreed that he could assist me with me being more organised and I could assist him by developing his social skills. All of a sudden, we both saw me as having a role: To mentor him in developing his social skills. Harrah!

Tips that may be helpful for new mentors:

- Speak to your Coordinators.
- Identify what your strengths are and look at how you could use these to assist your mentee.
- Find out what the mentee needs. He or she might not know or be able to tell you, so be prepared to offer suggestions.
- Mentoring is not just about assisting the mentee with academic and administrative difficulties. My mentee was more knowledgeable than me about these matters. Mentoring is about assisting the students to transition into university life, and all that involves - such as making friends, knowing how to order hot chips from the cafeteria, asking for directions, developing a timetable, asking for extensions etc.
- These students have plenty of needs that you could help them meet. You just have to work out what their needs are and how you can help.

Scenario 4:

Throughout the year, it was difficult to see the impact that I was having on X and his time at university. X is a very quiet and reserved individual, which worried me when one weekend during the second semester, I received a text telling me that he was very anxious and didn't know what to do. Unexpectedly, he opened up to me and was able to discuss very personal stressors that were impacting on his anxiety levels and therefore his overall well-being. He did not want to speak on the phone, so we continued messaging and I was worried that he was a risk to himself as he felt he had no other supports.

How did the mentor manage this situation?

After many text messages I was able to convey my support for X, and organised to meet with him at university on the Sunday to talk over his problems. I was able to get in contact with the Coordinator who was very helpful and reassuring. I then met with X on the Sunday and was able to listen to how he was feeling, and with the help of the Coordinators was able to organise a meeting with his Disability Advisor a couple of days later. I think it made me realize that X had trusted me with a very personal secret, and that over time (without realising) I had developed a good rapport with him. I think it was so important for X to have someone to talk to during such a complicated and stressful time in his life and I was glad that I could be there for him. Over the coming weeks, myself and the Coordinators helped to organize counselling support for X at the University. The amount of support given to me by the Coordinators was very reassuring, and being able to discuss my worries or concerns with others made me more confident in my abilities to help X.

Tips that may be helpful for new mentors:

You may not know the impact that you are having on other peoples' lives, however I think just being there to support someone is crucial. It is important that everyone feels comfortable being himself or herself, and understanding and believing in their own self-worth.

- Don't be afraid to ask for help or seek advice from others. I learnt so much through hearing other mentors' experiences during our meetings.

- At the start I would feel awkward pointing out obvious things such as: appropriate conversation topics; facial expressions; asking questions back to me; trying to keep eye contact etc. however it is important to realise that they may need those prompts, and that you are helping them develop skills that they will use in everyday life.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Appendix B provides Crisis Management Information. **In situations of crisis - remember your own self-care and limitations as a specialist student mentor.** Situations may arise where your mentee may confide in you regarding difficulties they may be experiencing. Some of these issues may involve:

- Serious mental health problems (depression / anxiety / suicidal thoughts).
- Substance and Alcohol abuse.
- Emotional, Physical and/or Sexual Abuse.
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) issues.
- Harm to self or others.

Your task is to:

- Stay calm, be non-judgmental and use active, reflective listening skills to understand your mentee's difficulties.
- Reassure them that any information given will be treated as confidential (unless there is risk of harm to self or others).
- Remember the boundaries of your role – you are there to listen but you are not your mentee's counsellor, therapist or parent.
- Remind them to use recommended calming strategies noted in their initial intake form and Safety Plan (See Appendix B – Crisis Management Information).
- Find out their location especially if they threaten self-harm or harm to others.
- Note down any important information about their situation ready to pass onto other relevant staff if the need should arise – Police / Campus Security Personnel / Coordinator / Disability/ Counselling staff.
- Follow your institution's Crisis Response Plan and ring emergency personnel if needed ASAP (see Appendix B – Crisis Management Information).
- Contact your program Coordinator ASAP by phone or email about the situation to receive further help.

- Help refer your mentee onto appropriate campus personnel and services ASAP to receive professional help especially if suicidal thoughts have been expressed.
- Debrief during individual meetings with your Coordinator and the supervision meetings to gain personal support and feedback.
- Seek counselling for yourself if your own situation needs ongoing support.

According to Wolf et al. (2009, pp. 150-152), Myles (2005, pp. 59-73) and the CSMP experience, after a critical incident has occurred it is important that a functional assessment of the behaviour be conducted as most mentee behaviour will be associated with a reason, cause or condition under which the behaviour occurs.

After a mentee has experienced a crisis, the mentor should notify the Coordinator as soon as possible and provide details about the crisis situation. The Coordinator will contact other appropriate personnel, disability and counselling staff who can provide ongoing support and investigate the situation more fully. Parents or support persons (nominated on the initial intake form) may also be contacted to help provide background information regarding the mentee's behaviour.

Wolf et al. (2009) recommend the following stress management techniques for this population of students:

- Identify potentially stressful situations.
- Determine what precipitates crises.
- Identify how stress manifests itself (e.g., what behaviours are demonstrated).
- Identify calming methods.
- Determine medications used in past with medical/clinical support. (p.151)

Wolf et al. (2009) also nominate the following stress-relieving activities on campus:

- Regular exercise.
- Outings with peers, friends, or family.
- Maintaining a healthy eating and sleeping schedule.
- Scheduled downtime every day and during each study period.
- Structured time for TV, movies, or video games (with an alarm to end time).

- Yoga or meditation (also a good group activity).
- Listening to music. (p.152)

See Appendix B for Crisis Management Response Plan Information.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Publications (many authored by those on the Autism spectrum)

Attwood, S. (2008). *Making Sense of Sex: A Forthright Guide to Puberty, Sex and Relationships for People with Asperger's Syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Attwood, T. (2007). *The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

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Goodall, E. (2016) *The Autism spectrum Guide to Sexuality and Relationships: Understand Yourself and Make Choices that are Right for You*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

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- Purkis, J. (2006). *Finding a Different Kind of Normal: Misadventures with Asperger Syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Purkis, J. (2014). *The Wonderful World of Work: A Workbook for Asperiteens*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
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DVDs

Radtke, M. (2012). A 9th Planet Video Behavior Modeling Course. USA: 9th Planet.

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Websites

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<http://www.tonyattwood.com.au/>

www.templegrandin.com/

www.facebook.com/autismdiscussionpage

www.suelarkey.com.au/

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/otarc/>

<http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/consumers.cfm>

<http://www.autism.org.uk/>

<http://www.autismresearchcentre.com/>

<http://www.researchautism.org/resources/AspergerDVDSeries.asp>

http://raisingchildren.net.au/children_with_autism/children_with_autism_spectrum_disorder.html

<http://www.autism-uni.org/>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/>

<http://www.autism.com/>

Please Note:

<http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/consumers.cfm>

Centre for Clinical Interventions (CCI) WA website (Consumer Resources Section) – provides online modules on Social Anxiety, Worrying, Assertiveness, Depression etc. that may be useful to a mentee depending upon their individual needs. CSMP has found these modules to be very helpful to mentees who wish to address the specific psychological difficulties that affect their ability to maintain good mental health. Mentors may need to help their mentee access and complete appropriate modules during their sessions.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/otarc/>

Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) provides information on supporting tertiary university and TAFE students diagnosed with an Autism spectrum Condition (ASC), their parents, and tertiary staff interested in learning more about ASCs. This information pertains to supporting students with an ASC in academic settings and comes from a variety of sources including local and international information, peer reviewed research and research conducted at OTARC (funded by DHS, Victoria). The information provided is general and not targeted for specific tertiary institutions.

<http://www.autism-uni.org/>

Autism & Uni is a multinational EU-funded project that helps greater numbers of young adults on the Autism spectrum to gain access to Higher Education (HE) and to navigate the transition successfully. They have created two FREE resources that HE Institutions across Europe can adopt. These include a set of Best Practice Guides for HE managers, academics and support staff. The guides are written in an accessible way and inform staff about Autism in the HE context, what is considered good practice and what staff can do to support autistic students well. There is also an Online Toolkit for students to give them the information and strategies needed to manage the transition to university.

Computer Applications (as recommended by CSMP mentors and mentees)

- **Lost on Campus** (Free App. - Australia's biggest campus mapping app, with 42 campuses and over 36,000 locations).
- **Smiling Mind** (Free App. - Modern mediation program developed by psychologists for young people).
- **Anti-Social** (Small cost to buy App. - Makes it easy to target and block any distracting websites).
- **Procrastination** (Free App. - for all procrastinators).
- **SafeZone** (Free App. - for all students and staff that connects directly to the university security team while on campus.)
- **MindShift** (Free App. for young adults to help learn ways to relax, develop more helpful ways of thinking, and identify active steps that will help take charge of anxiety. This app includes strategies to deal with everyday anxiety, as well as specific tools to tackle:
 - Test Anxiety.
 - Perfectionism.
 - Social Anxiety.
 - Performance Anxiety.
 - Worry.
 - Panic.
 - Conflict.

- **Friendmaker** (Small cost to buy App. - companion to Dr E. Laugeson's book, *The Science of Making Friends*, and contains important skills, strategies, role-play videos, and tools for making and keeping friends based on guidance from the UCLA Peers program).

NAS MENTOR GUIDELINES & NDCO TRANSITION TO TERTIARY EDUCATION

The National Autistic Society (NAS) of the United Kingdom has produced a very helpful *Student Mentor Guidelines* booklet (see separate document). Prior to training mentors will be issued with this document and should be familiar with its contents.

The NAS booklet covers the following areas:

- Understanding the Autism spectrum.
- Your role as a student mentor.
- Getting started.
- Supporting a student with Asperger Syndrome.
- Useful resources.
- Further reading.

The National Autistic Society (NAS) of the United Kingdom *Student Mentor Guidelines* booklet (PDF format) can be downloaded through the NAS website: <http://www.autism.org.uk/studentmentors>.

Additionally, the National Disability Coordination Officer Programme (NDCO) of Australia has produced another helpful booklet titled *Tertiary Education: Helpful Hints for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder* (see separate document). Prior to training mentors will be issued with this document and should be familiar with its contents.

The NDCO booklet covers the following areas:

- Awareness of yourself and others.
- Knowing your strengths.
- Familiarising yourself with the campus.
- Studying at university or TAFE.
- Organising your study.
- What support could be helpful.
- Finding key people who can help you.
- Communication tips.
- Managing stress and anxiety.

The NDCO *Tertiary Education: Helpful Hints for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Transition to Tertiary - Short Version PRINT)* can be downloaded through www.adcet.edu.au/autism-transition.

Appendix A

MENTOR/MENTEE RESPONSIBILITIES CONTRACT

Responsibilities of a CSMP Mentor

I agree to:

- Respect the professional boundaries between the mentor and the mentee.
- Respond ASAP to any communications from my mentee during the semester.
- Contact or meet my mentee at agreed times (and locations if applicable).
- Advise my mentee by email/text of any unavoidable changes to arrangements at least 24 hours in advance.
- Lodge a regular report documenting issues arising for supervision purposes.
- Communicate with my mentee in clear and specific terms providing a written and/or diagrammatic representation of the communication (if needed).
- Attend the Social Group (when possible) and regular supervision meetings to gain advice and guidance.
- Support my mentee to prepare their resume and seek out relevant work experience / work over time.
- Provide guidance consistent with the defined role of a specialist student mentor.
- Provide feedback about the program through participation in evaluation research.

Responsibilities of a CSMP Mentee

I agree to:

- Respect the professional boundaries between the mentor and the mentee.
- Respond ASAP to any communications from my mentor during the semester.
- Contact or meet my mentor at agreed times (and locations if applicable).
- Advise my mentor by email/text of any unavoidable changes to arrangements at least 24 hours in advance.
- Try to attend any meetings requested by the Mentoring Program including the Social Group.
- Work toward my own short, medium and long term life goals including employment.
- Communicate any difficulties I may be experiencing to my mentor (or the Coordinators should the need arise).
- Be open to try different techniques to improve difficulties I may be experiencing.
- Provide feedback about the program through participation in evaluation research.
- Contact the Coordinator if I am experiencing concerns / difficulties working with my mentor.

We, (print mentor name) _____ and
(print mentee name) _____ have

read and understood the above Mentor/Mentee Responsibilities Form. We agree to these conditions for the mentoring service provided by CSMP.

Mentor Signature _____ **Date** _____

Mentee Signature _____ **Date** _____

SPECIALIST PEER MENTOR WEEKLY REPORTING FORM

Mentor Name: _____

Mentee Name: _____

For Week Ending Friday

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Times, Types and Place of Contact:-

<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••

Session Content:-

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Strengths:-

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Difficulties:-

Possible Solutions:-

Referrals (Where, Reason for referral):-

MENTOR WEEKLY REPORTING FORM (SAMPLE)

Mentor Name: _____ G _____

Mentee Name: _____ W _____

For Week Ending Friday

14	03	20xx
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Times, Types and Place of Contact:-

- 12/3 Meeting with mentee – waited didn't turn up
- 12/3 emailed mentee
- 13/3 emailed mentee and text
- 14/3 reminder text
- 14/3 meeting with mentee

Session Content:-

Emailed W after I waited on Wed and he didn't show up just enquired about how he was and let him know that I waited and that I could meet either Thurs or Fri. Received email from W, had a busy day and remembered Wed night after it was too late. Was happy to rearrange and scheduled time for Fri afternoon to catch up.

Was early for meeting on Fri, explained the situation on wed needed to do shopping and had phoned a friend, didn't expect him to say he was going right then. Has transport issues, is able to drive but doesn't have a car, relies on friends in order to do shopping. Does use public transport and is competent. Asked if he had a diary has never liked using them, showed him the semester planner and explained how he could map out his assignments felt this might be quite useful.

He advised until today did not have internet access in his room, showed me that he had purchased wireless internet, had also arranged with other students in student housing to share and had advised them that he wouldn't purchase until everyone paid the first month in advance (Check at supervision meeting how others in student housing organise this). Let him know that was good and suggested he use the same strategy if they were cooking for each other so he wasn't always paying.

Doesn't have any goals at the moment is happy with the way things are going, and is finding the work easy. Finds the catch up's helpful, he advised his major problem is usually around exam time, which I suggested it may be good to book in with the counselling service early so he has that added support. He did feel that knowing I would be around e.g. our catch up's would be helpful.

Looked at his timetable and suggested that maybe Tuesday would be a better day for meeting as he had fewer classes, so would possibly feel less overwhelmed, he

agreed and we arranged to meet Tuesday's 12pm from now on suggested he put a reminder in his phone, as I didn't want to be reminding him every week as I felt like I was nagging him, felt this was a good idea.

Spoke about the Social Group and advised him that J. was now studying her Masters at Curtin too and was keen to go along, he thought he might attend next week as we had also moved our catch up which would free him up to attend.

He told me he has also made a friend in Physics, someone who doesn't like being around people, prefers his own company. His house mates were surprised as this was the first person he had brought home.

Also spoke about being safety conscious when catching public transport late at night, keeping to well-lit areas. He felt comfortable with this as where he lived in UK was rural and was a rough area.

Strengths:-

Planning and Organising.

Difficulties:-

Time management.
Transport – more around relying on other people or public transport.
Stress around exam time.

Possible Solutions:-

Continue seeking out appropriate help re time management on campus and alert W to what is available. Check at supervision meeting how others in student housing organise internet access and payment.

Referrals (Where, Reason for referral):-

Refer W to Counselling so he can start to get some help for anxiety prior to the exam period.

SOCIAL GROUP REPORT FORM

Date:

Mentees in Attendance:

Mentors in Attendance:

What happened at the social group?

What areas could be improved?

What is planned for future weeks?

SOCIAL GROUP REPORT FORM (SAMPLE)

Date: Wednesday 4th of March 20xx

Attendance:

Mentees:

Mentors:

What happened at the social group?

- The session started on time at 12.15pm.
- Firstly K. facilitated an icebreaking activity “If’s & What’s” and “Candy Confessions”
- Everyone participated in the activity, all were engaged
- We then played board and table games in groups such as Jenga, Poker, Zombie card game
- E. performed a song she has written herself
- The meeting finished on time at 1.45pm.

What areas could be improved?

- Make sure that any important information about the next meeting is announced before the social group ends e.g. Next week M. is facilitating a session where participants bring something meaningful along with them to talk about – but we didn’t manage to tell the attendees to bring something along with them next week. We will have to ask Mentors to remind mentee’s and post it on the social group Facebook page instead.

What is planned for future weeks?

- M. will be running a social activity session focusing on Mentee’s interests and passions
- Working on listening and talking – asking questions to find out more about others, starting conversations about other people’s interests etc.

MENTOR HANDOVER FORM

To help with the handover process, please complete the form below and return to your Specialist Mentoring Coordinator:

Mentor Name:

Mentee Name:

1. My mentee's main strengths are:

2. My mentee's main difficulties are:

3. The goals that I see as being useful and achievable for my mentee are:

a) Short term:

Have you discussed these with your mentee? Yes/No

b) Long term:

Have you discussed these with your mentee? Yes/No

4. Please provide any additional information that the new mentor may find useful.

MENTOR TIME SHEET

Mentor Name:

Student ID:

Staff ID:

School:

I have undertaken the following support services for:

Mentee Name:

Student ID:

School:

SEMESTER 1 2 Year: 20__

Date: Hours Worked:

Mentor Signature: Date:

Mentee Signature: Date:

Coordinator Signature: Date:

INFORMATION SHEET FOR WORK EXPERIENCE/EMPLOYMENT (SAMPLE)

Brief Information Sheet on J.

Individuals on the autism spectrum can experience difficulties in four key areas:

- Social Understanding
- Communication
- Change/Limited Interests
- Sensory Hyper/Hypo sensitivity

They can also offer strengths in the following ways:

- Honesty / loyalty
- Excellent rote memory for areas of interest
- Visual spatial abilities
- Detail focused
- Preference for organized procedures
- Intense interests / savant skills
- Being logical

J. is a highly intelligent young woman who has worked hard to build on her strengths, however, at times she will need support and guidance with her difficulties. It is recommended that J. be assigned a work mentor who can help J. if the need arises.

J.'s Specific Profile

- Social Understanding
 1. May not always understand sarcasm/figurative language etc.
 2. May not fully understand the social nuances of situations
 3. May have difficulty navigating office politics
 4. May become shy in large crowds of peers of similar ages.**(Solution - Provide a Supportive Mentor / Encourage J. to communicate difficulties to Mentor)**
- Communication
 1. May not always seek help when needed
 2. Prefers to have visual information to support verbal instructions
 3. Needs to have feedback sought regarding her understanding of requirements
 4. Needs to be encouraged to advocate on her own behalf
 5. Needs clear list of instructions and tasks**(Solution - Have written information to support verbal instructions / Check J.'s understanding of tasks to be undertaken / Use of Mentor)**
- Change/Limited Interests
 1. Prefers order, timelines and logicity
 2. Appreciates being informed of change prior to situations occurring
 3. Appreciates knowledge and use of established work procedures and practices
 4. Enjoys playing video games / board games / cards / dancing/ astronomy / drawing / and watching fantasy or action movies

(Solution - Have an ordered, organised workplace where change is communicated as early as possible / Communicate J.'s interests to other staff members so that a common bond can be established / Use of Mentor)

- Sensory Hyper/Hypo sensitivity
 1. Limited Food Preferences
 2. Difficulty with loud sounds
 3. Difficulty with strong smells

(Solution - Allow J. to order/have her own food preferences when social events arise / Seat J. in a quiet area in the workplace / Use of Mentor)

Appendix B

CRISIS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION & SAFETY PLAN

[Program Coordinator to Insert
Institution's Crisis Management Information & Safety Plan]