

Adolescent/Adult Goal Setting Tool (AAGST)



Background

Adolescents and adults on the spectrum are often asked to participate in the person-centred goal setting processes of organisations such as schools (during post-school transition planning), disability services and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). **It can be difficult for some people on the spectrum to articulate their goals and prioritise their support needs.**



This project aimed to develop and evaluate the **Adolescent/Adult Goal Setting Tool (AAGST)**. The AAGST utilizes a card-sorting process, to assist adolescents and adults on the spectrum to develop, prioritise and communicate their goals in a broad range of areas. The project sought to answer the following research questions:

- Are the goals relevant, important, and comprehensive?
- Are the wording and pictures on the cards easily understood by a range of people on the spectrum?
- Does the AAGST enable people on the spectrum to identify, prioritise and communicate their goals?
- How does using the AAGST compare to other goal setting processes?

How we did the research

Four phases of participatory action research including:

- Phase 1:** First version of the AAGST co-designed by people on the autism spectrum and professionals including teachers and therapists
- Phase 2:** Survey on the comprehensiveness and relevance of the goals and clarity of the pictures and wording completed by people on the spectrum and their family
- Phase 3:** AAGST refined based on phase 2 findings and then second survey completed by people on the spectrum and their family
- Phase 4:** AAGST refined based on phase 3 findings. AAGST trialed and feedback gathered through:
 - semi-structured interviews of people on the spectrum and family members
 - focus groups involving professional staff
 - researcher observations of the AAGST in use

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What did we find?

The Adolescent/Adult Goal Setting Tool:



Includes **goals that are comprehensive and relevant** to a wide range of people on the spectrum



Includes goal cards with **wording and pictures that facilitate understanding**



Is highly effective in enabling people on the spectrum to **identify and prioritise goals**



Is highly effective in **enabling people on the spectrum to communicate their goals** to parents, carers, teachers, NDIS planners and Disability Employment Services



Engages and empowers people on the spectrum



Is **preferred by most users** over previously used goal-setting methods



Can be **used by a wide range of people on the spectrum** (tried by people aged 14 to 60 years, including people with mild intellectual disability through to above average intelligence)



Who did the research?



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA

- **The Research Team:** Dr. Jill Ashburner, Judy Jones, Vicki Tomkins, Natasha Bobir, Raechel McLucas, Jennifer Taylor and Jessica Lister .
- **The Digital Creative Arts Team:** David Smith and Jermu Hautsalo.

Acknowledgments

- Judy Jones, Occupational Therapist, Autism Queensland, creator of the Family Goal Setting Tool: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Version (Jones, 2013) on which the AAGST is based.
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- Mr. David McCartney, Studio G Program Coordinator at Autism Queensland, for facilitating the design of the goal card artwork.
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Find out more

Download the full report and executive summary on the Autism CRC website: autismcrc.com.au/reports/AAGST

Contact Autism Queensland on research@autismqld.com.au

