

## Better Outcomes and Successful Transitions for Autism (BOOST-A)

From research to practice



### Background

Young people on the autism spectrum have poorer post-school employment outcomes than their non-autistic peers. The Better Outcomes and Successful Transitions for Autism (BOOST-A) was developed as a planning tool for young people on the autism spectrum, and the trusted adults in their lives who assist with them in planning for their working life.



### Aims

1. Share information about the BOOST-A to young people on the autism spectrum and the people who support them in planning their transition to employment when they leave school.
2. Provide training in multiple and accessible formats to potential BOOST-A users about evidence-based principles for successful transition planning, and how best to use the tool to commence and progress transition planning activities.

Two more objectives were added to the study to support the use of the BOOST-A in a non-research capacity by the wider community.

3. Develop an autism-specific career interest exploration tool as an alternative to the Career Interest Test, for use in the interests section of the BOOST-A.
4. Develop written content for the *myWAY Employability* web platform – a joint collaboration between the Autism CRC and Curtin University funded through Telstra Foundation.



### Who took part?

102

people attended BOOST-A training workshops in Perth and Kalgoorlie (WA), Melbourne (VIC), Sydney (NSW), and Brisbane and Mackay (QLD). Participants included young people on the spectrum, families, educators, allied health professionals, local coordinators, work placement professionals, mentors, and supporters in the autism and disability communities.

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school students on the spectrum who had participated in the evaluation of the BOOST-A assisted in the development of training and promotional materials. Together with their parent and/or school teacher, they shared their experiences of transition planning using the BOOST-A.

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young people on the spectrum were part of the development of Autism-Career Explorer (A-CE) to ensure the accessibility, clarity of the language and format of the tool. The A-CE was then further validated in broader user testing.

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### How we did the research

- We developed promotional and training resources about the BOOST-A in collaboration with the autistic and autism communities.
- BOOST-A workshop participants took a short survey to tell us about their knowledge and confidence to support a young person on the autism spectrum to transition from school to employment. We did this before and immediately after the workshops and then five months later.
- To develop the A-CE, we did a review of existing generic career interest checklists and tests and identified gaps. We included contemporary personal skills and jobs and incorporated job information to develop a 15-item self-report measure of preferences for different career interests that are across six categories (Practical; Investigative; Artistic; Helping; Enterprising; and Organised).



### What did we find?

Nearly all attendees of the BOOST-A training workshops reported they had increased their knowledge and confidence to support an adolescent on the spectrum in their transition planning as a result of attending the workshops.

In response to feedback, we developed the A-CE as an autism-specific tool for autistic individuals to consider their preferences for type of jobs across a wide range of categories. The A-CE is now available on the *myWAY Employability* website.

The young people reported the A-CE was:



Written in language they could understand, and of an appropriate length

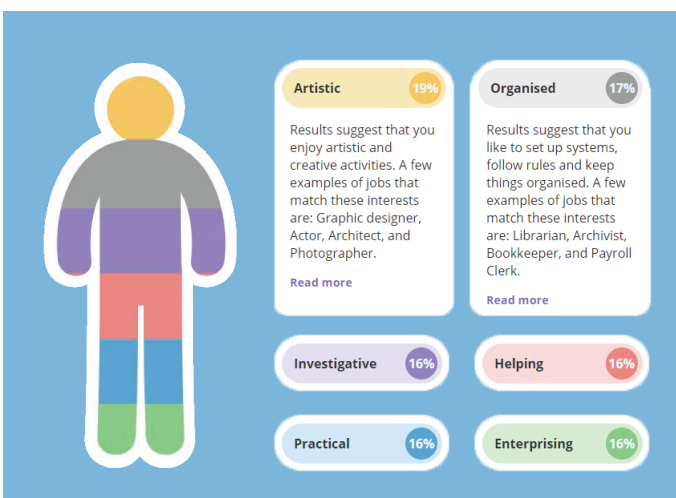


Motivating to complete



In an appealing and flexible format that allowed them to rate their preferences across different types of job categories.

Information articles and audio visual resources have been developed for the *myWAY Employability* website. Topics include planning and attending work experience, disclosure in the workplace, getting around, and workplace communication. All resources were co-designed and co-produced with young people on the autism spectrum.



Career exploration results on [mywayemployability.com.au](http://mywayemployability.com.au)

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### Who did the research?



Curtin University



### Acknowledgments

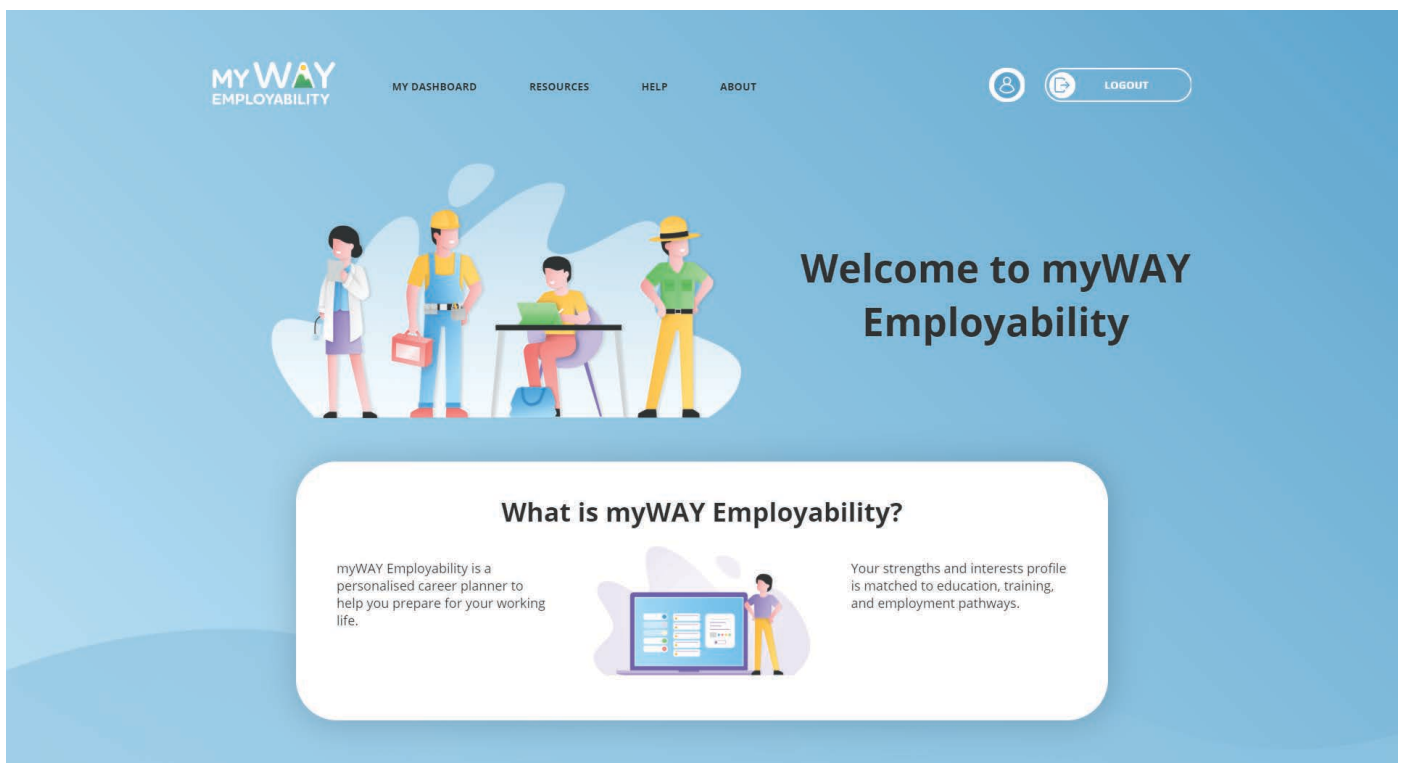
Young people on the spectrum and their supporters, parents, teachers and service providers who shared their transition planning stories and experiences with the BOOST-A for our promotional and training videos; provided user feedback in the development of the A-CE; and co-developed our information articles and resources on *myWAY Employability*.

### Find out more

BOOST-A has been embedded into the career exploration and goal setting components of *myWAY Employability* at [mywayemployability.com.au](http://mywayemployability.com.au).

To apply the employability principles in to practice in schools see Transition Planning on *inclusionED* at [inclusioned.edu.au/transition-planning](http://inclusioned.edu.au/transition-planning).

Download the final report and executive summary on the Autism CRC website: [autismcrc.com.au/reports/BOOST-A](http://autismcrc.com.au/reports/BOOST-A)



The screenshot shows the myWAY Employability website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo 'MY WAY EMPLOYABILITY' and links for 'MY DASHBOARD', 'RESOURCES', 'HELP', and 'ABOUT'. On the right side of the navigation bar, there are icons for a user profile and a 'LOGOUT' button. The main content area features a large illustration of four diverse people (a woman in a white lab coat, a man in blue overalls, a person sitting at a desk with a laptop, and a man in a green shirt and yellow pants) standing together. To the right of this illustration, the text reads 'Welcome to myWAY Employability'. Below this, there is a white rounded rectangle with the heading 'What is myWAY Employability?'. Inside this box, there are two columns of text. The left column states: 'myWAY Employability is a personalised career planner to help you prepare for your working life.' The right column states: 'Your strengths and interests profile is matched to education, training, and employment pathways.' In the center of this box, there is an illustration of a person standing next to a large screen displaying a user interface.

*BOOST-A is embedded into the career exploration and goal setting components of myWAY Employability.*



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