

# Autistic Identity and Connection

Information Pack

2024

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# Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Sylvia Rodger Academy's Autistic Identity and Connection Program. We are excited to be able to offer autistic adults in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory the opportunity to apply for our program.

This Information Pack will:

- explain the **different activities** in the Autistic Identity and Connection Program
- explain **how to apply**, and
- help you to determine if this Program may be **right for you**.

## Eligibility criteria

To apply for the Autistic Identity and Connection Program, you need to:

- identify as **autistic**
- be **aged 18 or older** as of 23 September 2024
- live in **Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia or Northern Territory \***
- be willing and available to **participate in all Program activities**, and
- have an interest in
  - exploring autism and autistic identity
  - developing skills in wellbeing and self-advocacy from an autistic perspective
  - connecting with other autistic people and community.

You do not need any experience or background to apply for this Program.\* *Some areas of Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia or the Northern Territory are not eligible. You can check your postcode [on our website](#).*

# Program activities

## Versions of the Program

For this Program we offer two versions: an **online** version, and a **face-to-face** version. Both versions of the Program have access to the same modules and online sessions.

Read each of the sections to find out which version is best for you. On the application form, you can then select your preferred option.

In the **online** version of the Program, participants will:

- attend an **online introductory session** with other Program participants (20 - 22 November 2024\*)
- complete 4 **modules** (20 November 2024 to 7 February 2025\*)
- attend 4 online **sessions** with other Program participants (4 December 2024 to 7 February 2025\*)
- attend 5 online **masterclass** sessions with other Program participants (19 February to 17 April 2025\*)
- be part of a **community of autistic peers** who learn from, encourage and support each other
- provide **feedback** on the Program.

In the **face-to-face** version of the Program, participants will:

- attend an **online introductory session** with other Program participants (18 November 2024\*)
- complete 4 **modules** (18 November 2024 to 3 February 2025\*)
- attend 4 online **sessions** with other Program participants (2 December 2024 to 3 February 2025\*)
- attend a 3.5-day/3-night **workshop** in an Australian capital city (28 February to 3 March 2024\*)
- be part of a **community of autistic peers** who learn from, encourage and support each other
- provide **feedback** on the Program.

\*Please refer to the following table for specific date information.

## Program dates

	Online Program 1	Online Program 2	Face-to-face Program
<b>Introduction Session</b>	Wednesday 20 November 2024 6.30pm AEST	Friday 22 November 2024 12pm AEST	Monday 18 November 2024 6.30pm AEST
<b>Module 1</b>	Wednesday 4 December 2024 6.30pm AEST	Friday 6 December 2024 12pm AEST	Monday 2 December 2024 6.30pm AEST
<b>Module 2</b>	Wednesday 18 December 2024 6.30pm AEST	Friday 20 December 2024 12pm AEST	Monday 16 December 2024 6.30pm AEST
<b>Module 3</b>	Wednesday 22 January 2025 6.30pm AEST	Friday 24 January 2025 12pm AEST	Monday 20 January 2025 6.30pm AEST
<b>Module 4</b>	Wednesday 5 February 2025 6.30pm AEST	Friday 7 February 2025 12pm AEST	Monday 3 February 2025 6.30pm AEST
<b>Residential workshop session</b>	n/a	n/a	Monday 17 February 2025 6.30pm AEST
<b>Residential workshop</b>	n/a	n/a	Friday 28 February – Monday 3 March 2025
<b>Masterclass 1</b>	Wednesday 19 February 2025 6.30pm AEST	Friday 21 February 2025 12pm AEST	n/a
<b>Masterclass 2</b>	Wednesday 5 March 2025 6.30pm AEST	Friday 7 March 2025 12pm AEST	n/a
<b>Masterclass 3</b>	Wednesday 19 March 2025 6.30pm AEST	Friday 21 March 2025 12pm AEST	n/a
<b>Masterclass 4</b>	Wednesday 2 April 2025 6.30pm AEST	Friday 4 April 2025 12pm AEST	n/a
<b>Masterclass 5</b>	Wednesday 16 April 2025 6.30pm AEST	Thursday 17 April 2025 12pm AEST	n/a
<b>Graduation and Evaluation</b>	Wednesday 30 April 2025 6.30pm AEST	Friday 2 May 2025 12pm AEST	n/a

Please note that the times shown are in Qld (Brisbane) time. To convert times to your local time zone, go to [World Time Buddy](#).

## Modules

The Autistic Identity and Connection program has four **modules**, each with an **online session**.

The modules will be made available at the beginning of each week. Each module will run for two weeks before the next module opens.

You can download the modules or use a printed version that we will post to you. The first module will start on **Monday 25 November 2024**.

There won't be any tests or graded assessments. Instead, they are a chance to **start thinking about your autistic identity and to learn skills in wellbeing and self-advocacy**.

The modules are:

- Autism
- The autistic experience
- Wellbeing
- Self-advocacy.

For each module, you will be asked to:

- **explore information** (through articles, videos, etc.)
- **reflect on that information and apply it** through activities, and
- **share your thoughts and questions** about the topic with the other participants in the **online session**.

It is estimated that you will need to allow approximately **2 hours a week** to work on the modules.

## Online sessions

There will be five online sessions in total. Each session will be 90 minutes.

Depending on the program version you are enrolled in, the online sessions will be hosted during the day or at night-time.

The sessions will be facilitated by the Project Officer, who is autistic. There will also be approximately 15 other autistic people who are also completing the Program.

## What to expect in the online sessions

The first online session will be an opportunity for the participants to meet each other, ask questions and practise using the technology.

The next four online sessions will be about the module content. Each module has some questions that will be asked in the online session so you can prepare in advance if you'd like.

## Participating in the online sessions

The online sessions will be hosted on Zoom. You can attend the online sessions using your computer, laptop or smart device (such as a tablet or phone).

You can participate in the online sessions in the way you feel most comfortable. Our online sessions are a safe space, where it's okay to:

- have your camera off
- use the chat function instead of speaking
- move around, stim and use sensory tools.

## Residential workshop

*Only participants enrolled in **the face-to-face version** of the Program will attend the residential workshop.*

The residential workshop will be held from 28 February to 3 March 2025 in an Australian capital city for 3-nights. The workshop will be attended by all face-to-face Program participants and Delivery Team members. There may also be some guests and support staff from Autism CRC.

Attendance and participation in the workshop is an **essential** part of the face-to-face version of this Program.

Activities at the workshop may include:

- presentations and discussions
- practical activities
- question and answer sessions, and
- optional social activities (such as a trivia night or walk around the local area).

The workshop will be a **flexible space**. Attendees are free to engage in a way that makes them feel comfortable and able to participate (move about the room, stim, colour, etc.). We will have a variety of seating available, ensure there are no fluorescent lights, have sensory tools available, etc.

### **Here are some useful things to know about the residential workshop:**

- Before the residential workshop, we will hold an online session so you can ask questions.
- Meals, transport, and accommodation will be provided.
- We will organise your travel but will work with you to make sure it is appropriate for you. For example, we can meet you at the airport when you arrive.
- The workshop will take place at the same location as the accommodation, so you can use your room as a retreat space.
- The sessions will be live-streamed, so you can watch from your room if you need a sensory or physical break but don't want to miss out.
- If you live in the same city as the workshop, you still have the option to stay at the hotel with the rest of the group.



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Information about the workshop venue, including menus and photos (of the venue and the people who will be there) will be provided in advance. As part of accepting your place in the program, you will be asked to complete an online form which asks you for:

- your emergency contacts
- dietary requirements
- sensory and accessibility needs and preferences.

It is expected that Autistic Identity and Connection Program participants provide feedback about the Program and its content. This will involve participating in a 1-hour focus group. This will take place on the last day of the residential workshop.

## Masterclasses

*Only participants enrolled in **the online version** of the Program will attend masterclasses.*

Attendance and participation of the masterclasses is an **essential** part of the online version of this Program.

Activities during the masterclasses may include:

- presentations and discussions
- practical activities, and
- question and answer sessions.

Masterclasses will be 90 minutes every 2 weeks, with a total of 5 masterclasses. Masterclasses will run from **February to April 2025**. A final additional session will be held that will be both a graduation and an opportunity to provide feedback about the Program.

## Program Evaluation

It is expected that Autistic Identity and Connection Program participants provide feedback about the program and its content. This will involve participation in a 1-hour focus group. For online-only participants, this will be during the graduation and evaluation session.

# Application process

Applications for Autistic Identity and Connection will **close at 11.59pm Sunday 13 October 2024**.

The application is an online form.

You can complete the form via text or using speech-to-text software on your device. For some questions, uploading files is also an option (i.e. an audio or video file).

In the form we will ask you questions about:

- yourself, such as your name and contact details
- which version of the program you want to apply for (i.e. online, face-to-face or either version)
- why you are interested in the Program. These questions can be answered using text, an audio file or a video file. You can find these questions below.

## Application questions

1. **Please give us a brief summary of why you are interested in the Autistic Identity and Connection Program.** *Up to 250 words.*
2. **Optional: Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?** *Up to 200 words.*

## Structured ‘check-in’

The Autistic Identity and Connection Program will involve a **structured, friendly ‘check-in’** as a second step in the application process.

Not everyone who applies will be asked to have a ‘check-in’, and not everyone who has a ‘check-in’ will be offered a place in the Program.

The chat will involve you meeting members of the Delivery Team over Zoom. The chat will last for approximately ten minutes. You can speak or type your responses. You can have your camera on or off. If you are asked to have a chat, we will provide you with information about who you will meet and the questions that will be asked so that you have time to prepare in advance.

## Being offered a place

Applicants will be offered a place via email or be notified that they were unsuccessful by **11 November 2024**.

The Program will start from **Monday 18 November 2024**.

## Key dates for applications

<b>Q&amp;A webinar</b>	Monday 9 September 2024
<b>Applications open</b>	Monday 23 September 2024
<b>Applications close</b>	Friday 4 October 2024 at 11.59pm
<b>Notification of application outcome</b>	by Monday 11 November 2024
<b>Program starts</b>	Monday 18 November 2024

# Is this program right for you?

If you would like to **learn more about autism, autistic identity, wellbeing and self-advocacy**, and **connect with other autistic people and community**, we encourage you to consider applying for the Program.

If you are still unsure if this is the right program for you, the following resource has been created which may help you work out whether to apply for the Program.

## Self-assessment checklist

The following dot points highlight some of the reasons you might like to apply for this Program.

We won't be asking you to tell us which dot points apply to you. Instead, they are to **help you to decide whether this Program is for you**, and to help you to start thinking about what you might want to tell us about yourself in your application.

- You have recently identified as autistic or recently been diagnosed, and would like to learn more about what this means for you
- You identified as autistic or were diagnosed years ago, but have never had the opportunity to learn about autism or what being autistic means
- You want to learn more about different autistic experiences
- You want to learn how other autistic people take care of themselves
- You want to learn how you can advocate for yourself
- You want to connect with other autistic people and community
- You want to learn more about yourself as an autistic person.

If you already have a lot of knowledge about autism, or are already very connected with the autistic community, this Program may not suit you.

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# Privacy

The Sylvia Rodger Academy recognises the importance of protecting your privacy when it comes to your personal information. Any information that is collected from you, including your application, is protected under Australian law and kept private. This means that your application is stored securely, and we legally cannot share details of your application (or that you've applied to this Program) with unauthorised staff, visitors, or the general public. This includes family members and support persons.

For more information on Autism CRC's Privacy Policy, which has been guided by the *Privacy Act 1988*, [please click here](#).

## Find out more information

Please see [our website](#) for more information about the Program, including answers to some of the questions you may have.

If the question you'd like to ask is not answered on the website (including the FAQs) or in this Applicant Information Pack, please email Hayley Clapham at [hclapham@autismcrc.com.au](mailto:hclapham@autismcrc.com.au).



*The Sylvia Rodger Academy is an initiative of Autism CRC*