



Autism CoP Newsletter

For Practitioners

ISSUE 1

JULY 2010

Topic of the Month: Challenging Schools!

The first Community of Practice for practitioners launched on 27 July 2010. The forum was a great success with some very interesting shared discussions and considerations.

The initial meeting attracted Early Intervention Specialists, Psychologists, Counsellors, Speech Pathologists, Managers/Directors and Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation. The members have a very wide range of expertise and knowledge in Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The main themes that were discussed will form the basis for future discussions:

INCLUSION & ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

- Changing policies to meet individual needs in schools and adult training centers
- Environmental impacts, the culture of the school and reluctance of professional supports
- Challenge schools willingness to try different things and consider other professional opinions
- Utilising planning and supports more effectively and consistently
- Most appropriate services at appropriate times
- Higher functioning students with autism

falling through the gaps

- Increase teachers' understanding of issues related to autism and the need for professional development
- There are too many high expectations on inclusion and teachers – the systems need to be supported to make positive changes

DUAL DISABILITY

- Lack of standardisation of assessments—professionals lacking the understanding of people with autism
- Individuals being misdiagnosed leading to incorrect funding
- Over diagnoses issues
- Family impact

FUNDING

- Funding should be aimed at supporting teachers to be confident in their approach in supporting students with autism
- Putting in place effective programs for good support systems
- Creating an autism consultant service targeted to schools
- Providing the right kind of supports at the right level
- Families having difficulty directing funded supports for their child
- Create better pathways for access to funding



Community of Practice for Autism

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The Department of Human Services from the Eastern and North-West Regions have chosen Autism Victoria, and Windermere Support Services for the Southern Region, to train and skill case workers on the awareness of autism through the Secondary Case Consultative Initiative. A component of this initiative is the development of a Community of Practice (CoP) to the community that supports individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), their families and their supports.

This Community of Practice is aimed toward General Practitioners, Psychologists, Pediatricians, Mental Health Professionals, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, Early Childhood Intervention Therapists, Education Specialists and other related professionals.

NEXT FORUM

- Date:** Monday 6th September
- Time:** 10am—12noon
- Venue:** Autism Victoria
- RSVP:** Email or call Tracey or Luke on the contacts above by 27 August
- Parking:** There is 1hr metered parking on Drummond Street & secured parking in close proximity to the venue
- Public Transport:** The closest train station is Parliament Station, click on the following link for a map

http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=d&source=s_d&saddr=parliament+station&daddr=24+Drummond+Street,+Carlton+North,+Victoria&hl=en&geocode=&mra=ls&sil=-25.562265,135.703125&sspn=44.387936,92.724609&ie=UTF8&ll=37.808682,144.969771&spn=0.00968,0.022638&z=16

OUTLINE FOR NEXT MEETING

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES WITHIN SCHOOLS

The next forum's discussion will be based on the theme of 'Inclusion and Active Participation'. Participants will be encouraged to discuss and share positive experiences within the school setting which could be replicated by others to improve outcomes for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. We also encourage sharing of less successful experiences in order to promote group learning...don't let someone else make the same mistake with their students!

This Community of Practice will be aiming to develop some basic 'tip sheets' which could then be distributed to schools and services statewide.

Please join us in creating some positive practical and easy to access resources for yourselves and others within the field.

- Share experiences and knowledge
- Identify useful strategies
- Develop resources