



Aspect Approach

Foreword

The Aspect Approach has been developed to provide guidance not only to our people on the autism spectrum, families and carers and staff but also to the wider community. The AA specifies what staff need to know, to do and to say. Through the consistent delivery of the AA by all Aspect staff, we will make a real and positive difference in the lives of the people we support.



Preface

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is Australia's largest service provider for people on the autism spectrum. Autism practice at Aspect refers to our evidence-based autism-specific services, programs, workshops and professional development.

In response to the research reporting universally poor quality of life outcomes for people on the autism spectrum, Aspect's vision is to create the best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum based on their strengths, interests and aspirations. The term 'a different brilliant', adopted by Aspect is used in connection with our purpose, which is 'understanding, engaging and celebrating the strengths, interests and capabilities of people on the autism spectrum'.

Five principles underpin the AA

1. It is applicable to all people on the autism spectrum.

Aspect supports Autistic people of all ages and stages of life, with differing abilities and support needs in a wide range of settings including homes, schools, workplaces and the community. As every person on the autism spectrum is different, our approach includes a comprehensive flexible range of evidence based programs to incorporate the range of abilities and supports that might be required at different times in a person's life. Currently, there is no single evidenced-based approach that supports the needs of all people on the autism spectrum.

2. Interventions support all areas of a person's development and are based on an assessment of individual strengths & needs.

The AA provides for the development of 'individualised' or 'person centred' supports. This means getting to know and understand the person well, identifying their interests, strengths and their aspirations, and then developing individualised supports. The Five Point Star is a relationship based approach for staff to increase their understanding and support of individuals on the autism spectrum. Aspect staff collaborate with students to develop their Five Point Star profiles which are used to guide positive empathetic trusting relationships.

3. The approach is a positive and supportive model rather than a deficit approach.

Aspect's purpose 'a different brilliant' recognises the inherent strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum and the AA embeds a positive strengths-based approach to support. Aspect works towards community participation and inclusion. Inclusion is more than just a presence within a community setting and can only be achieved when the Autistic person feels they belong and are accepted without having to change themselves. Aspect adapts environments to be more autism friendly and educates other people to understand autism and promote inclusive practices.

4. The approach involves collaboration between people on the spectrum, parents/carers and professionals.

Aspect works in partnership with people on the autism spectrum. This means including people directly in whatever service they receive, as well as partnering through Aspect in Governance, research, service planning and delivery. Families are the most committed, enduring and knowledgeable source of support and are vital contributors to their child's support. Aspect staff bring differing professional expertise and collaborate with other professionals to understand and support the whole person.

5. The approach is based on ongoing reference to research, evaluation and continuous review.

As a major provider of services for people on the autism spectrum, Aspect is unique in that it has a research program, the Aspect Research Centre for Autism Practice (ARCAP). The Centre actively partners with people on the autism spectrum, families and staff in research and evaluation to ensure Aspect's autism practice (the AA) is informed by our people and is evidence-based.