

The Pillars of self-determination in transition

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Session Plan

Me as a researcher

Transitions – what are they and why are they important?

The 3 pillars of self-determination

Autism

Self-determined transitions for autistic students


Connecting to context


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Me as Researcher







Mum



Teacher



Lecturer



Researcher

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My research

Purpose of research

- To determine what transition practices support self-determination and post school Quality of Life (QoL) for young autistic adults

Key aspects of research

- Experiences of transition, self-determination, and Quality of Life for young autistic adults
- How do we (educators) better support this transition process


Strengths-based focus

- What we can do **NOT** what we cannot do


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Young autistic adults




Generally good QoL and self-determination



High levels of anxiety



High levels of resilience



High levels of family support

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Key findings

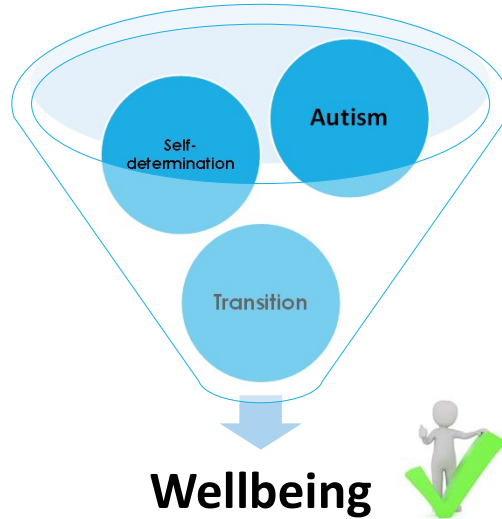
- Work closely with families on school to post school transitions
- Focus on student's strengths and interests
- Provide social/emotional support and strategies
- Provide strong school connectedness

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Current work

How to link the three concepts of **autism**, **transition**, and **self-determination** together to support the **wellbeing** of autistic people as they move through life's transitions



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Wellbeing



Wellbeing – Complex combination of a person’s physical, mental, emotional and social health factors (BetterHealth Channel, Victoria State Government)

‘How you feel about yourself and your life’

Happiness

Health

Challenge

Comfort

Friendship

Contribution

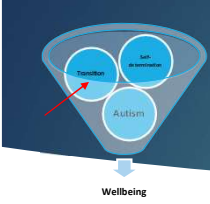


Balance

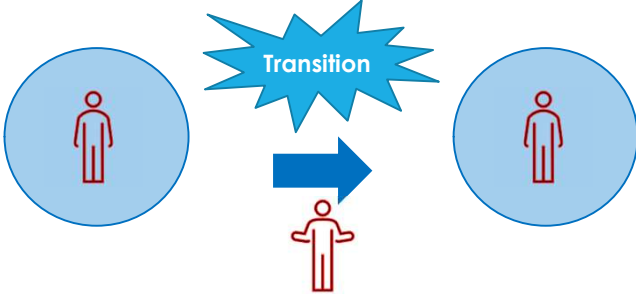
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Transition



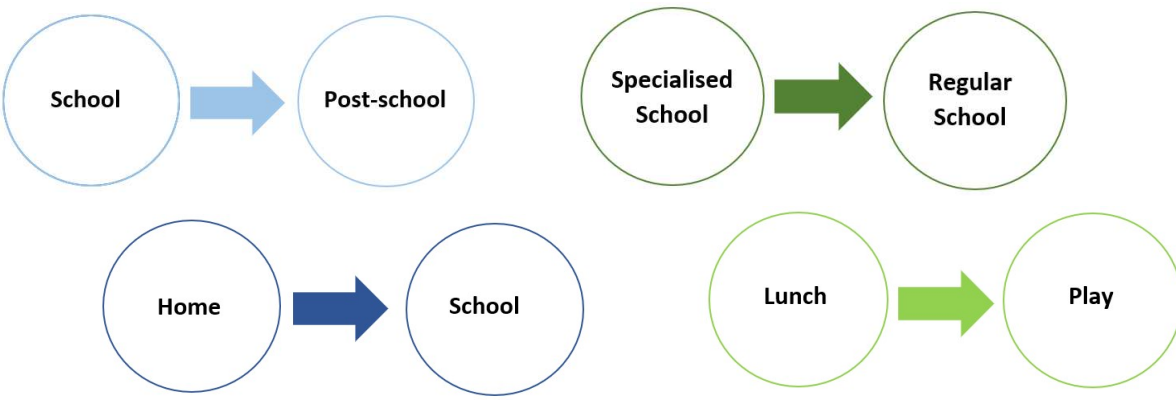
▶ A change or shift from one state, subject, place, etc. to another (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)



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Life transitions

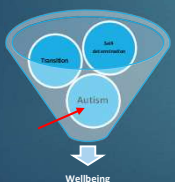



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Autism:

Key characteristics related to transition







Rigid, repetitive behaviours / interests / activities



Anxiety



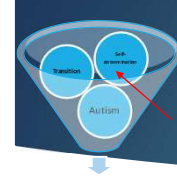
Executive functioning



Social / Communication

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Self-determination theory


- ▶ An overarching theory used to describe how individuals develop psychologically to become happy, healthy, functional adults who determine their own life outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000)
- ▶ Under Self-determination theory **both individuals and their environments** are considered critical players in psychological development and in the outcome of self-determination and wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2017)
- ▶ Basic psychological needs are those needs that are a requirement for all individuals to achieve positive wellbeing and functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2020)

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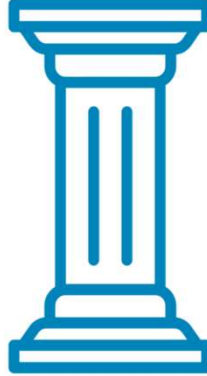
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**Basic psychological needs:
The 3 pillars of self-determination**

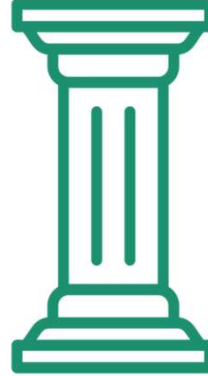
Autonomy



Competence



Relatedness



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Autonomy

▶ Individuals feeling willingness and volition with respect to their own behaviours (Ryan & Deci, 2017)

Autonomy

Even when actions are influenced by outside sources, the person agrees with those influences, feeling both initiative and value with regard to them
(Deci & Ryan, 2002)



Independence

Freedom from outside control or support
(Merriam-Webster, 2022)

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Competence

- ▶ Feelings of mastery - A sense that one can learn and use the skills needed to succeed and grow in areas they consider important
- ▶ Skills needed to be competent change across the lifespan but the need for competence remains
- ▶ Competence is best satisfied within well-structured environments that provide optimal challenges, positive feedback and opportunities for growth (Ryan & Deci, 2017)

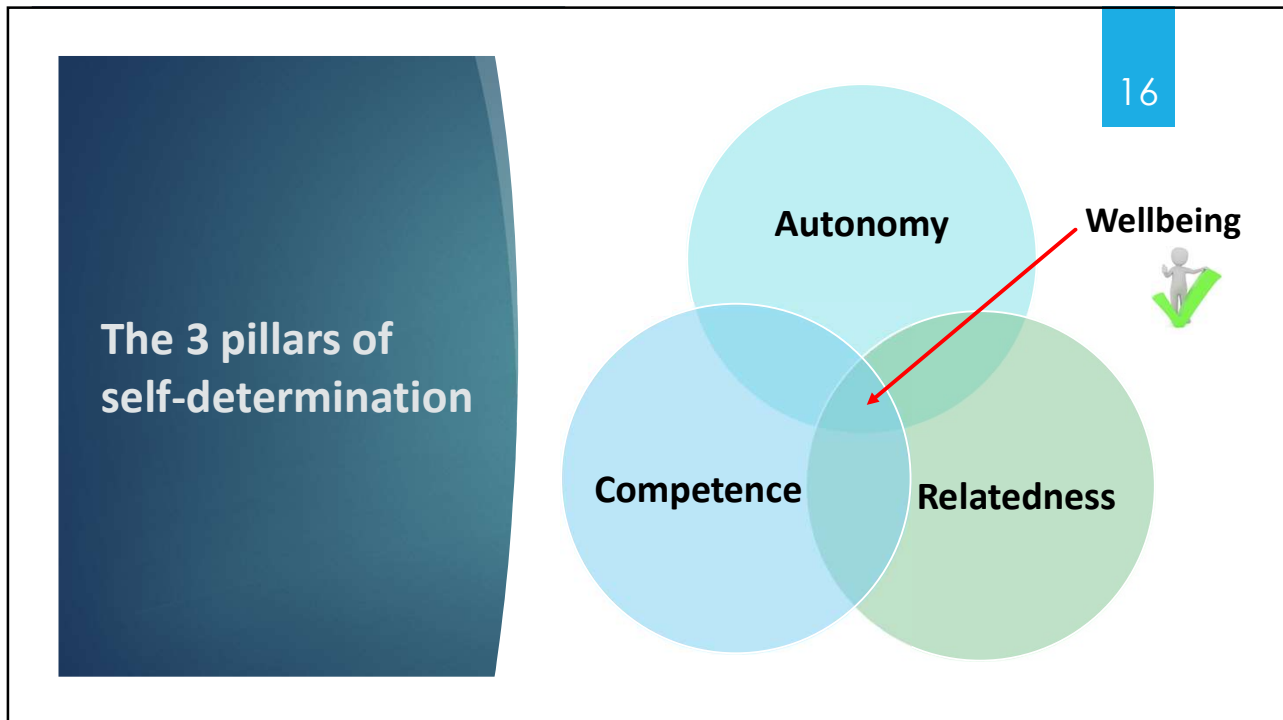
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Relatedness

- ▶ Having a sense of belonging and connection to others within the environment
- ▶ Relatedness is experienced both in being cared about and in caring
- ▶ It has been suggested that one of the primary goals of any behaviour is to feel a sense of belonging and connection with others (Ryan & Deci, 2017)

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Wellbeing through self-determination

- ▶ Typically, there is a natural readiness on the part of individuals to take on the social expectations that are valued by groups to whom they are attached, as doing so means that individuals can satisfy their basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017)

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Autistic wellbeing
 - Autonomy
 - Competence
 - Relatedness



Autonomy
 Cultural association with independence



Competence
 Culturally valued competence is typically viewed within a very narrow construct



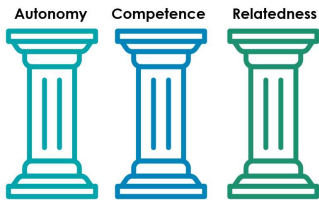
Relatedness
 Non-autistic social/communication expectations can be very difficult to understand and self-endorse as they are so different

Self-determined transitions for autistic students

Family involvement



Strengths & interests

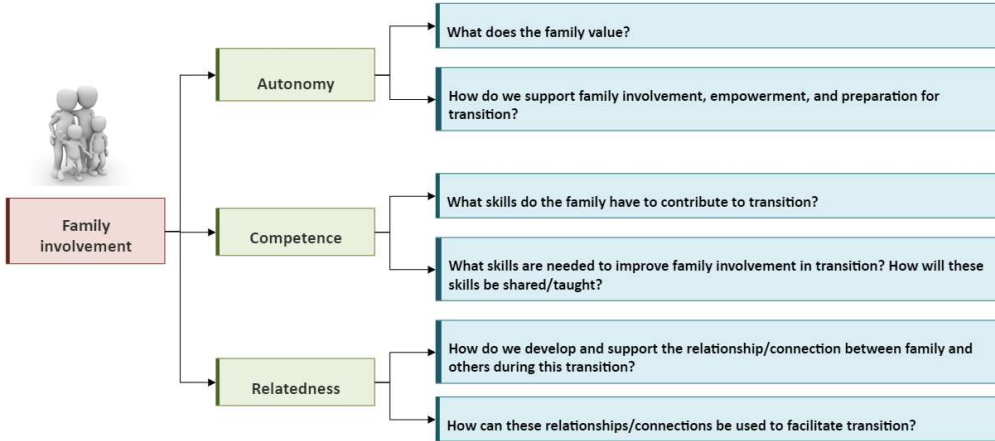


Social/emotional wellbeing



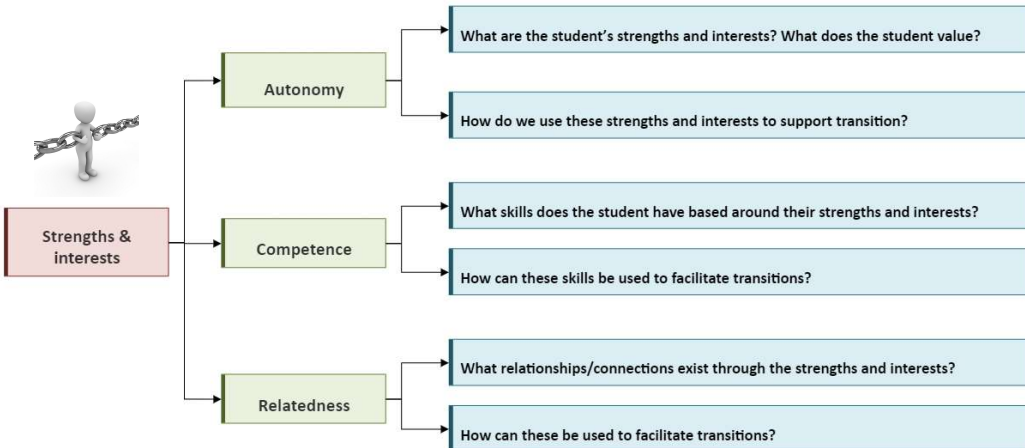
School connectedness

Transition - Family involvement



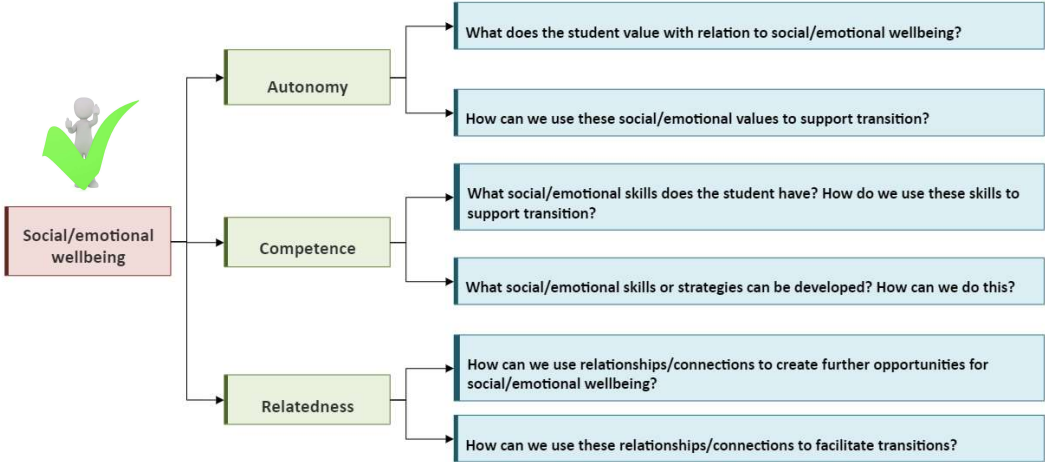
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Transition – Strengths & interests



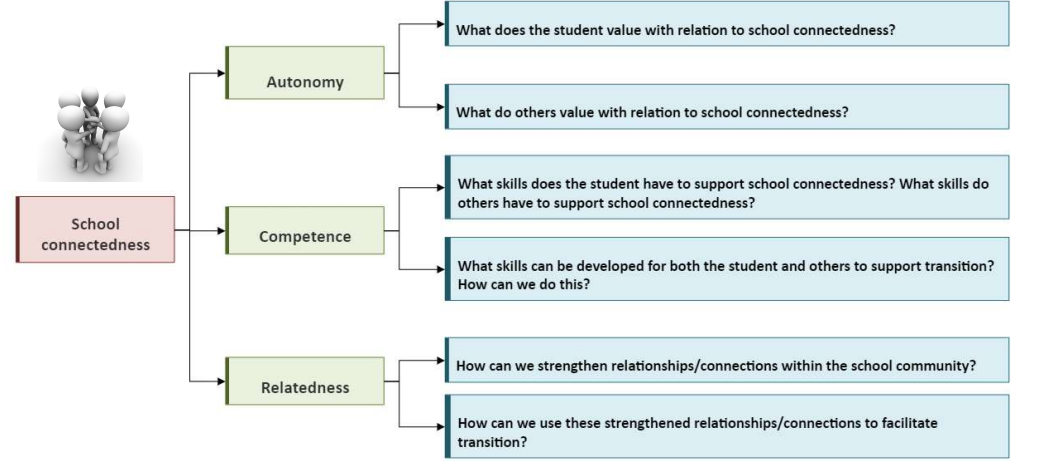
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Transition – Social/Emotional wellbeing



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Transition – School connectedness



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Transition - Family involvement

- ▶ What does the family value?
- ▶ How do we support family involvement, empowerment, and preparation for transition?
- ▶ What skills do the family have to contribute to transition?
- ▶ What skills are needed to improve family involvement in transition? How will these skills be shared or taught?
- ▶ How do we develop and support the relationship/connection between family and others during this transition?
- ▶ How can these relationships/connections be used to facilitate transition?

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Transition – Strengths & interests

- ▶ What are the student's strengths & interests? What does the student value?
- ▶ How do we use these strengths & interests to support transition?
- ▶ What skills does the student have based around their strengths & interests? How can these be used to facilitate transition?
- ▶ What relationships/connections exist through these strengths & interests? How can these be used to facilitate transitions?

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Transition – Social/emotional wellbeing

- ▶ What does the student value with relation to social/emotional wellbeing? How can we use these social/emotional values to support transition?
- ▶ What social/emotional skills does the student have? How can we use these skills to support transition?
- ▶ What social/emotional skills or strategies can be developed? How can we do this?
- ▶ How can we use relationships/connections to create further opportunities social/emotional wellbeing?
- ▶ How can we use these relationships/connections to facilitate transitions?

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Transition – School connectedness

- ▶ What does the student value with relation to school connectedness?
- ▶ What do others value with relation to school connectedness?
- ▶ What skills does the student have to support school connectedness? What skills do others have to support school connectedness?
- ▶ What skills can be developed for both the student and others to support transition? How can we do this?
- ▶ How can we strengthen relationships/connections within the school community?
- ▶ How can we use these strengthened relationships/connections to facilitate transition?

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References

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Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) Transition. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved 19 July,2024, from [Transition Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster](#)

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Questions

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