



# ONLINE MENTORING – SEPTEMBER 2020 INTAKE)

## **INFORMATION FOR AUSTRALIA-BASED PARTICIPANTS**

We are very excited to share information about our Autistic-led online mentoring groups that will commence the **week of 14 September**.

Our online mentoring groups, which help participants **build confidence and social connections**, draw upon our very successful and highly acclaimed school-based and community-based mentoring programs and adapt them to the comfort of a home setting. All of our groups are offered on a mixed gender basis.

Each online mentoring group includes up to 8-9 "mentees" led by two experienced I CAN mentors in a safe, engaging, supportive environment. The current support ratio is 1:4 (one staff member to 4 mentees) and please note that not all sessions will have full attendance by mentees for numerous reasons such as special occasions or previous commitments.

Our program is designed to ensure that even if you miss one session, it will not have an impact on subsequent sessions. Each cycle contains a one-hour session at the same time each week (6 weekly sessions in total).

*For our September cycle, we are offering groups at the time slots below for the following cohorts.*

### **September Online Mentoring Groups**

*(all times are listed in AEDT)\**

#### **Mondays 4:30-5:30pm (AEDT)**

Ages 9-13

#### **Mondays 6:50-7:50pm (AEDT)**

Ages 9-12 (*Imagination Club-Non Autism Specific*) - please see additional information below

Ages 10-13

#### **Tuesdays 4:30-5:30pm (AEDT)**

Ages 9-13

#### **Tuesdays: 6:50-8:50 (AEDT)**

Ages 13-15

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**Wednesdays: 4:30-5:30pm (AEDT)**

Ages 9-13

**Wednesdays: 6:50-7:50 (AEDT)**

Ages 13-15

Ages 16-20

**Thursdays: 6:50-7:50pm (AEDT)**

LGBTQIA+ (Ages 13-17)

Screens, Tunes & Characters (Interest-Based Group for Ages 9-13)

Screens, Tunes & Characters (Interest-Based Group for Ages 13-15)

Screens, Tunes & Characters (Interest-Based Group for Ages 16-20)

*\* When daylight savings goes into effect in Australia on 4 October, sessions will run at the same time AEDT. For instance, effective 4 October, a group that had been starting at 6:50pm AEST will now start at 6:50pm AEDT.*

All of our mentors have experience as school-based and online mentors and are particularly passionate about working with Autistic young people and young adults. To date, all of our online mentoring team are Autistic. *Please note: our mentors are not trained counsellors and not intended to replace mental health or medical professionals.*

We have found that the online mentoring delivery model can be a very effective way to bring the **positive messages and powerful mentorship model of the I CAN Network** to participants who are navigating school life and post-school paths.

Our engaging group mentoring sessions, which take place for one hour each week via live video conference, allow participants to connect with others who will understand and accept them while developing strategies for managing changes, challenges and opportunities that can arise as an Autistic young person/young adult.

**To be considered for any of the small group programs above, the conditions below need to be met and accepted:**

- Currently in one of the age cohorts specified
- Located in Australia or New Zealand
- Aware that they are Autistic, *unless participating in the Imagination Club group*
- Comfortable engaging online and understanding that this may provide some sensory challenges for individuals who are sound sensitive as the online environment may prove to be noisy in some sessions.



- Willing to take part in a group activity (this can be difficult for some individuals who need significant "down time" in the late afternoon or evening, so please consider preferences and needs)
- Can attend the allocated day and time
- Are aware that an Expression of Interest form has been submitted and are willing to participate.
- Understand that a cancellation policy is in place and is willing to accept its terms upon acceptance of a spot.
- Will need to be able to abide by our ICT terms and conditions that ensure online safety and positive cyber participation.

## KEY PROGRAM DETAILS

### **TIMING**

Weekly group mentoring sessions will run for 6 weekly sessions. If your cycle date includes school holidays, please note that sessions still run through this time, however we will not run on the week coinciding with a public (Australian) holiday. We run new cycles roughly every eight weeks and currently have 6 Intakes per year.

Each online session will run for one hour at a consistent time each week, for the duration of 2020. Most, but not all of our sessions run between 6:50-7:50 PM AEST. We have three groups this cycle that will run from 4:30-5:30pm AEST. As our program expands, we anticipate adding more groups that are held at different times in order to better accommodate participants across various time zones..

### **COST**

\$270 for a 6-session program

\$150 for a NDIS progress report at completion of program (optional)

### **NDIS**

We have had many families who are self-managing under NDIS or plan managed who use their funds to cover the cost of online mentoring. Please note we do not provide specific line numbers and most families will use funds from Core Funding due to its flexibility. We will invoice for the full six weeks.



If you are NDIS/NDIA Managed we cannot submit our invoice to them for processing as we have chosen not to be NDIS registered due to the small size of our organisation. You can request to the NDIS/NDIA that the program fee to be released as self managed to participate in the program. However, if this is not possible you will need to privately fund the program as per many of our families.

If you have elected to receive an NDIS report at the end of the program, it will be invoiced separately; program invoice will be sent post Week 2 and report invoice Week 5. Please note that your report may take a few weeks post program due to the sheer number we write up. Our staff will take notes on individuals who require a report during each session.

### **MENTORS**

Each group is directed by a lead mentor and assisted by another experienced I CAN mentor or assistant mentor. All of our online mentoring teams include at least one Autistic mentor, and in most cases, both/all of the mentors involved are Autistic. Currently all of our online mentoring staff are Autistic.

### **PLATFORM/TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

All online sessions are held in a private video conferencing room using ZOOM ([www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)). Zoom is compatible with various operating systems and is accessible via computer, tablet or mobile devices (as a free download).

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697-Getting-Started>. Additionally, we acknowledge that many of our participants experience anxiety prior or during sessions and we are very understanding and flexible, we allow video and/or audio off, and Zoom has a chat function that allows communication with the group via typing. There is no fee to use Zoom as we are running meetings. It is a free download.

We recommend testing the Zoom link ahead of schedule to ensure that it works on the preferred device. Please contact us if you need assistance with the Zoom platform.

### **STRUCTURE OF THE SESSIONS**

Above all, the sessions are designed to be a respectful, safe place for young people/young adults to connect and be accepted and celebrated for who they are. The mentors invest a lot of time each week in coming up with angles and content that will resonate with the specific "mentees" in their group. Although the sessions are very fluid, they do tend to follow a certain general order each week.



As with all I CAN programs and our team meetings, sessions open with "Good News Sharing," followed by some sort of engaging "ice breaking activity" designed to draw mentees in and highlight their interests. The thrust of the sessions center around a particular theme, presented in a way that invites engagement, including: building friendships; managing change and challenges; getting organised and navigating classes; managing stress/pacing yourself; building confidence/believing in yourself. Our mentors will also ensure that there is sufficient time to address questions and themes that the mentees raise.

Interest-based groups such as "Screens, Tunes & Characters" allow mentors and mentees to come together in a safe space to discuss shared passion around things like gaming, movies, music and various characters.

To learn more about session content, please see this February 2020 I CAN video overview, "Accessing I CAN Programs." Online mentoring is covered at the 16:58 mark:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=m31Ktl5nbGc&t=1588s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m31Ktl5nbGc&t=1588s).

### **IMAGINATION CLUB**

Imagination Club Online is based on our very successful school-based programs for students in Upper Primary. It is not necessary for a participant to have an Autism diagnosis; the group is designed to accommodate students who have not yet received a formal diagnosis, are not yet aware that they are Autistic, are different in some other way or simply need additional encouragement and support. Autistic participants are also welcome to take part, although unlike our other group programs, there are no explicit themes around Autism or being Autistic (rather, the emphasis is on embracing differences more broadly). Remaining themes are similar to those in our other online groups.

### **OFFERS & CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

Submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) form is the gateway for being considered for an online group. EOI link: <https://www.tfaforms.com/4842640>

You will be contacted as soon as a space is available in the group you have listed as your preference.

### **REPEAT PARTICIPANTS**

As we launch each new online group mentoring cycle (roughly every 8-10 weeks), you will need to re-submit the Expression of Interest form to be considered for another online group:



### **ACCEPTING AN OFFER**

You will receive an email from [online@icannetwork.com.au](mailto:online@icannetwork.com.au) informing you that a spot has been made available. The email will outline how many days you have to respond to the offer before the offer is passed on to another individual. It is important to check your spam folder as unfortunately at times our emails will end up there.

You need to accept or decline the invitation. The process is outlined in the offer email. Please ensure that the participant has been asked before committing to a spot.

If you wish to accept, please fill in the online service agreement and familiarise yourself with the cancellation policy. You will receive a second email with the final logistical information including Zoom links, session prompts and staff allocations closer to the start date.

Please note this information usually comes within one week prior to the sessions as we have many families to bring onboard and formalise groups and staffing.

An invoice will be sent with a link to pay by credit card shortly after completion of the online service agreement. Full payment by credit card should be made no later than 10 days before the first session.

### **WAITING LIST**

Those who meet the participation criteria but do not receive an offer for the next available group will automatically be placed on a waiting list in the order that your Expression of Interest was received. We will contact you when the first space becomes available in a new program cycle.

### **CANCELLATION. POLICY & WITHDRAWING**

Please note that we have a strict cancellation policy in place for our program. We understand that certain circumstances may arise which means withdrawing from the program, however we are proud employers of Autistic individuals and we are unable to replace a participant spot with very short notice or once a program has commenced. Please familiarise yourself with the policy that is at the end of the document.

Parents are responsible for monitoring their child's attendance, due to the large amount of groups running at one time. Please email us if your child will be absent or if there are any other problems or concerns.

### **FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS**

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If you have further questions not covered in this document, please reach out to our online team:  
[online@icannetwork.com.au](mailto:online@icannetwork.com.au).

## ICAN NETWORK LTD. CANCELLATION POLICY

### **No charge if notice of cancellation is given 10 days prior to commencement of Session #1**

I CAN Network will not charge the participant if they provide notice of cancellation 10 days prior to commencement of the Online Group Mentoring start date.

### **\$125 AUD administrative fee if notice of cancellation with less than 10 days notice**

If less than 10 days notice has been given to withdraw completely from the Online Group Mentoring program an administration fee of \$125 will be payable.

### **\$125 AUD administrative fee if notice of cancellation given after Session #1**

Participants who withdraw from the Online Group Mentoring Program within 48 hours after Session #1 (participant has either completed the first session or did not attend but did not provide 10 days notice) will incur a \$125 administration fee.

### **Full \$270 AUD charge applied if notice of cancellation given 48 hrs after Session #1**

Participants who withdraw 48 hours after Session #1 will be required to pay the full amount (\$270).

Participants who miss a single session will forfeit that session and no refund or reduction in invoice amount will apply.

### **Missed sessions (partial attendance)**



If the participant misses a session, you are still required to pay the cost and you will not be offered a discount or a replacement session.

If you do not contact us within the prescribed time limits as listed above and do not attend any sessions you are still liable for the cost due to us having to pay staff and running of the programs.

## **I CAN NETWORK LTD. ICT POLICY**

### **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Agreement**

At the I CAN NETWORK we support the right of all participants to access safe and inclusive learning environments, including digital and online spaces. This form outlines the I CAN Network's roles and responsibilities in supporting safe digital learning, as well as the expected behaviors we have of our participants when using digital or online spaces.

When I use digital technologies, I communicate respectfully by:

- always thinking and checking that what I write or post is polite and respectful
- being kind to my friends and other participants and thinking about how the things I do or say online might make them feel.
- not sending mean or bullying messages or forwarding them to other people.

When I use digital technologies, I protect personal information by being aware that my full name, photo, birthday, address and phone number is personal information and is not to be shared online. This means I:

- protect my friends' information in the same way
- protect my passwords and don't share them with anyone except my parent
- never answer questions online that ask for my personal information

When I use digital technologies, I respect myself and others by thinking about what I share online. This means I:

- stop to think about what I post or share online
- use spaces or sites that are appropriate, and if I am not sure I ask a trusted adult for help
- protect my friends' full names, birthdays, school names, addresses and phone numbers because this is their personal information
- speak to a trusted adult if I see something that makes me feel upset or if I need help
- speak to a trusted adult if someone is unkind to me or if I know someone else is upset or scared
- don't deliberately search for something rude or violent





- turn off or close the screen if I see something I don't like and tell a trusted adult

I agree to be a polite, safe and responsible and ethical user of digital technologies (*Agreement to be acknowledged in Service Agreement*)