



# **I CAN ONLINE MENTORING PROGRAM**

## **KEY DETAILS DOCUMENT**

Approved by CEO 29 November 2023

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# ABOUT I CAN ONLINE

## OUR MISSION

Our I CAN Online Mentoring Program aims to provide support to young Autistic people aged between 5 – 22 years-old, Australia-wide. Successive evaluations of I CAN Online have shown that the program builds confidence and social connection in a safe environment, led by our predominantly Autistic/ neurodivergent staff. We endeavour to provide an accepting, non-judgemental space in which we meet young people where they're at, so they feel comfortable being themselves.

- We run 4 x 8-session cycles per year from January through to December. We also run school holiday online programs which are outlined on our website: <https://icannetwork.online/online/>
- We offer online group mentoring programs for 5 – 22-year-old Autistic people.
- All of our groups are offered on a mixed gender basis.
- Each online mentoring group includes up to 9 mentees (or participants) led by two experienced I CAN staff in a safe, engaging and supportive environment.
- Each cycle contains a one-hour session at the same time each week (8-weekly sessions in total).
- Our program is designed to ensure that even if you miss one session, it will not have an impact on your engagement with subsequent sessions.

**PLEASE NOTE** that our content and arrangement of information is protected by copyright and intellectual property laws.

You will find the most recent full list of online groups available on the [I CAN Online Expression Of Interest Form](#).

**Age groups** are advertised broadly, however we group participants as close to their age bracket as possible. As a guide, we generally group within the following age brackets: 8- 12 years, 13-17 years & 17-22 years. However, this may vary in special interest groups.

## **TYPES OF GROUPS**

### **I CAN Groups- 8-22 years old**

I CAN Groups are designed for Autistic children, teens & young adults and cover numerous topics including but not limited to: self esteem, change, transitions, Autistic identity, self-care, relaxation, stress, strengths and many more topics that change on a rotating basis. These groups offer a safe space for participants to connect with peers who they can relate to due to shared experiences.

### **I CAN Imagination Club® - 7-12 years old**

I CAN Imagination Club® offers a safe, engaging environment where mentees are encouraged to recognise and celebrate their own strengths. Participants do not need a diagnosis of any sort in order to join and benefit from the I CAN Imagination Club®. They are invited to take part because of their 'big imaginations' and we do not explicitly discuss Autism. All topics will be covered in an age-appropriate way and may include but are not limited to: belonging, self-esteem, self-care, social groups, interests, sensory needs, change and transitions. This is most suited to those in their primary school years.

### **Special Interest Groups (Topics Vary) - 8-22 years old**

I CAN Special Interest Groups are designed for Autistic children, teens & young adults to connect with peers and mentors who have the same special interest. Collectively these participants share their interest and enjoyment of the specific topic in a safe and fun environment. The content is based on the chosen special interest and the content changes on a rotating basis to cater for ongoing participation across the year.

### **LGBTIQA+ - 13-22 years old**

I CAN LGBTIQA+ is designed for Autistic teens and young adults who identify as LGBTIQA+ (including those who are questioning). This group offers a safe space for participants to connect with peers and mentors who can relate to one another, and explore topics including, but not limited to: Autistic & Queer identity, Queer culture, belonging, social connections, self-care, emotion regulation and sensory needs. Please note I CAN has [credible resources](#) on Autistic LGBTIQA+ identity and support.

### **Transition Programs- 13-22 years old**

I CAN Transition Programs are designed for Autistic children, teens, & young adults undergoing educational

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<https://icannetwork.online/online/>

transitions into the first year of primary and secondary school, as well as the first year of university/ TAFE following the completion of Year 12.

**PLEASE NOTE:** There is no game playing on shared servers during the sessions, which includes the facilitation of sharing gamer tags. This rule applies to all game-based groups, including but not limited to Minecraft, Roblox, Dungeons & Dragons, and Gaming.

## MENTORS

All of our staff are experienced and trained in online mentoring and have a passion for working with Autistic and neurodivergent young people. The majority of our online mentoring team are Autistic. We ensure that at least one Autistic mentor is assigned to each group.

*Please note: our mentors are not trained counselors and are not intended to replace mental health or medical professionals. All of our online mentoring sessions are recorded with the purpose of ensuring that we are able to access information in a quick manner for health and wellbeing purposes if the need arises.*

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.

## CONDITIONS/ PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

Our online group mentoring sessions, which take place for one hour each week via live Zoom 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, we have conditions that the young person is:**

- Aware that an Expression of Interest form has been submitted and they're willing to participate.
- Currently in one of the age cohorts specified.
- Understands that this is group mentoring, not individual or 1:1 mentoring.
- Located in Australia or New Zealand.
- Aware that they are Autistic/ neurodivergent, *unless participating in the I CAN 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.
- 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.
- Understands that the session will be recorded and the recording will only be accessed for health,

wellbeing and safety circumstances.

## KEY PROGRAM DETAILS

### TIMING

Weekly group mentoring sessions will run for **8-weekly sessions**. **Please note** we will not run on the week coinciding with an Australian public holiday (you will be advised). We run new cycles roughly every school term and currently have **4 intakes** per year.

Each online session will run for one hour at a consistent time each week, for the duration of the Cycle. Most of our sessions run between 6:30-7:30 PM AEST/AEDT. We also have some afternoon groups that run from **5:00-6:00 PM** AEST/AEDT. 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. Please ensure that you check your local time against the program time zone, including Daylight Savings.

### COST

**\$388 for a 8-session program**

**\$169.50 for a NDIS Progress Report at completion of Program (optional)**

### NDIS FUNDING

We have had many families who are self-managing NDIS plans or who are **Plan Managed** who use their funds to cover the cost of online group mentoring.

### RE NDIS PLEASE NOTE

- We do not provide specific line numbers
- Most families will use funds from the Core Funding **Category** due to its flexibility.
- We will invoice for the full 8-weeks of online group mentoring sessions.

If you are NDIS/ NDIA Managed we cannot submit our invoice to **the NDIA** for processing as we have chosen not to be a NDIS Registered Provider due to the small size of our organisation. You can request to the NDIS/ NDIA that the program fee 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.

Please note that if you are Plan Managed, we strongly recommend that you seek prior approval from

your Plan Manager to ensure that they will cover the payment when the invoice arrives. If your Plan Manager refuses responsibility for the payment, you will be liable to cover the costs privately. This also extends to expired plans that you are unable to recover the funds from.

If you have elected to receive an NDIS report at the end of the program, it will be invoiced separately to the invoice for the 8-weekly sessions. Invoices will be sent to plan managers directly when their email addresses have been provided when a young person has been registered for the I CAN Online program. NDIS reports will only be emailed once payment has been received for both the sessions, and for the report.

## NDIS REPORTS

NDIS Reports are written at the end of the 8-week program. You will receive these reports in 4-6 weeks following the end of a program (if you have a planning meeting sooner, you need to email [online@icannetwork.com.au](mailto:online@icannetwork.com.au) to let them know to fast track the report). NDIS Reports evidence a young person's participation to the NDIS, and includes notes on how the online mentoring has helped build the participant's capacity to meet NDIS plan goals and any recommendations for further participation. NDIS Reports are also beneficial if you are wanting to secure more funding for your young person to continue in our Online Mentoring Program for more cycles.

## PLATFORM/TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

All online sessions are held in a private video conferencing room using Zoom ([www.zoom.us](https://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 with this. We allow video and/or audio off, and Zoom has a chat function which allows communication with the group via typing. There is no fee to use Zoom as we are running the online mentoring sessions as 'Zoom 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.

We do utilise the Zoom waiting room option for all sessions. If your young person joins early, they will not be let into the session until the start time. We strongly encourage all participants to use their preferred first name only when signing into Zoom. This ensures individual privacy and also ensures that we can identify those in the waiting room. Please note that we also may ask the participant to turn their camera on momentarily to identify who is in the session.

All online sessions will be recorded and stored for a specific period of time. Access to the recordings is restricted to those responsible for carrying out duties relating to our [Child Protection Policy](#) and will be accessed when deemed necessary in relation to participants' health, wellbeing and safety.

## OFFERS & CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) form is the gateway for being considered for an online group. Here is the I CAN Online Program EOI link: <https://icannetwork.tfaforms.net/5072098>

You will be contacted and sent an offer as soon as a space is available in the group you have listed as your preference. Please note that we process expressions of interest based on a time stamp system.

## REPEAT PARTICIPANTS

As we launch each new online group mentoring cycle (every school term), you will need to re-submit the [I CAN Online Program Expression of Interest Form](#) to be considered for another online group. If you would like your young person to participate in more than one group, you will need to fill out a form for each group.

## ACCEPTING OR DECLINING 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 will 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 on board, and formalise groups and staffing.

An invoice will be sent to your nominated email address and a text message reminder to the number you provided.

If you would like to decline and participate at a later date, please decline the invitation and fill out an EOI when the time is right for your family.

## WAITING LIST

Those who meet the participation criteria (see above) but do not receive an offer in the upcoming cycle will be automatically placed on a waiting list in the order in which your expression of interest was received. We will contact you when the first space becomes available in a new program cycle.

## CANCELLATION POLICY & WITHDRAWALS

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. You will receive a copy of our cancellation policy with your offer of a spot in the program. Please make sure you read and accept the terms before accepting your spot. Please note that a cancellation fee will still be applied during times of state or national lockdowns associated with COVID due to the online nature of the program. Parents are responsible for monitoring their child's attendance, due to the large number of groups running at one time. Please email us if your child will be absent or if there are any other problems or concerns.

## EVALUATION SURVEYS

Evaluations are an important part of ensuring that our program is meeting the I CAN program outcomes and that the content and staff delivery is at a high standard.

In Week One and Week Eight, all mentees will be invited to participate in a Zoom poll during the session.

The Zoom Evaluation Poll is:

- Anonymous
- Optional
- Multiple Choice

The only identifying data which is collected is the State/ Territory which a young person resides in. If you do not wish your young person to participate, please ensure you advise your young person of this. As we have no way of identifying the responses, we are unable to remove your young person's responses. Similarly, if your young person does not wish to participate, we respect their decision and they do not need to engage with the evaluation Zoom poll.

**PLEASE NOTE:** By accepting an I CAN Online Cycle Offer, you are deemed to have consented to your young person participating in a Week One and Week Eight evaluation poll.

If you have any privacy questions about the evaluation zoom polls, please contact [privacy@icannetwork.com.au](mailto:privacy@icannetwork.com.au)

## SHARING OF INFORMATION AND PERSONAL DETAILS

We currently have a strict policy that we cannot facilitate the exchange of personal information between participants or their families. Due to Child Safety, Privacy and Child Protection, we cannot facilitate in any way the exchange of contact details.

## FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS

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).