



Australian Government

Department of Health  
and Aged Care



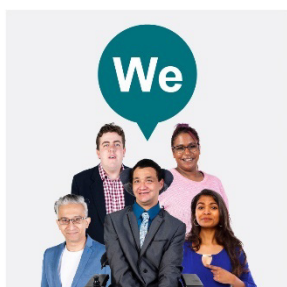
# Autism Health Roadmap

Our plan to improve the health and  
mental health of Autistic people

Easy Read guide

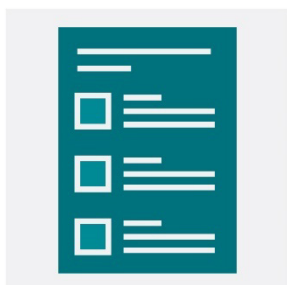


# How to use this guide



We are the Department of Health and Aged Care.

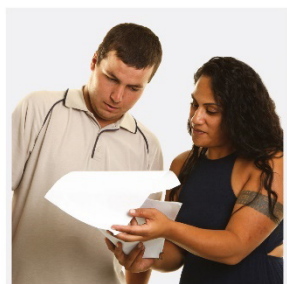
We wrote this Easy Read guide.



We wrote some words in **bold**.

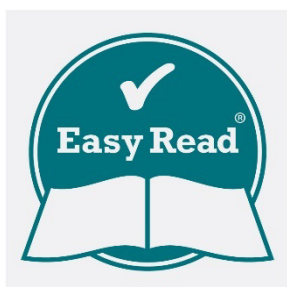
We explain what these words mean.

There is also a list of these words on page **30**.



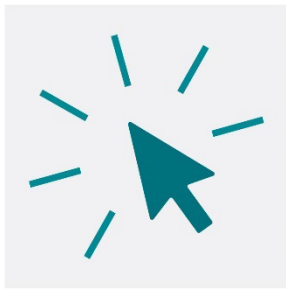
You can ask someone you trust for support to:

- read this guide
- find more information.



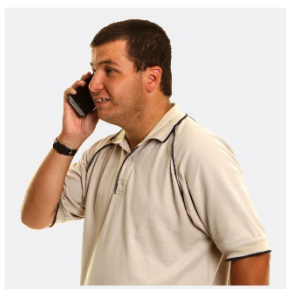
This is an Easy Read summary of a plan.

It only includes the most important ideas.



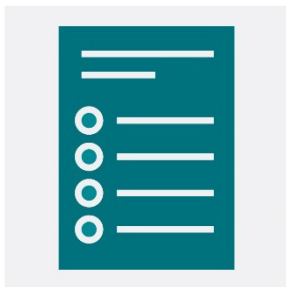
You can find the plan on our website.

**[www.health.gov.au/autism-health-roadmap](http://www.health.gov.au/autism-health-roadmap)**



The information in this guide might upset some people.

You can get support if you need to talk to someone about the information in this guide.



We have a list of supports you can contact on page **24**.

# Acknowledgement of Country



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples of Australia.



They have always looked after Country.

Country means the land, water, sky and everything within them.



We respect the important connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with Country.



And we respect their Elders from the past and now.

# What's in this guide?

About the Autism Health Roadmap 6

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How autism affects people 8

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Important ideas in the plan 10

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Areas the plan will focus on 13

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Support you can get 24

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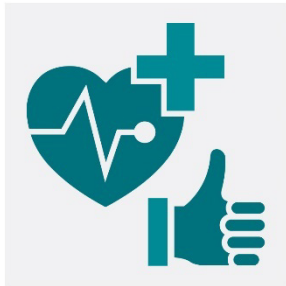
Word list 30

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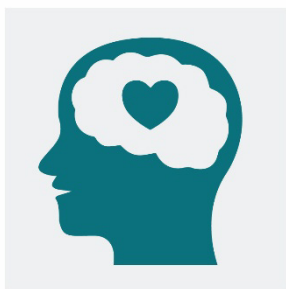
Contact us 32

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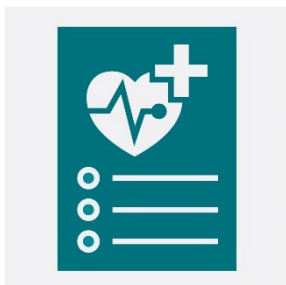
# About the Autism Health Roadmap



We made a plan to improve the health of Autistic people in Australia.



This includes the mental health of Autistic people.

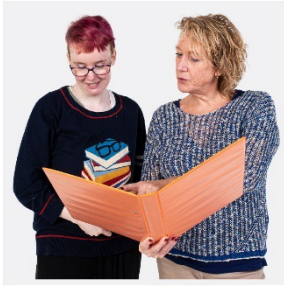


We call this plan the Autism Health Roadmap.



**Autism** can affect how you:

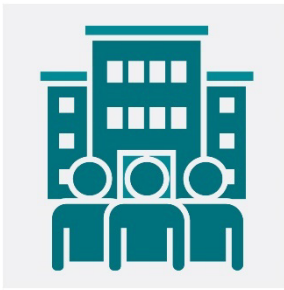
- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect and deal with others.



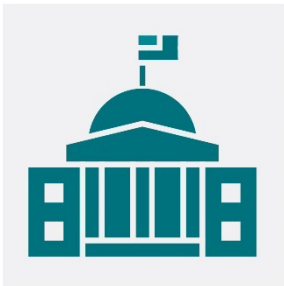
We worked with many Autistic people and leaders to make our plan.

We will keep working with Autistic people and leaders while we use the plan.

We will also work with:



- community organisations that support Autistic people



- state and territory governments.



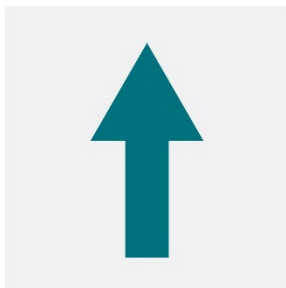
We will use the plan for 10 years.



# How autism affects people



In **2022**, about **290,000** Australians said they were Autistic.



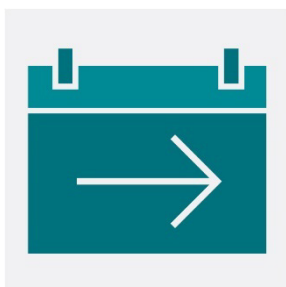
This number might be higher now.



Every Autistic person is different.

For example, they have different:

- backgrounds
- experiences.

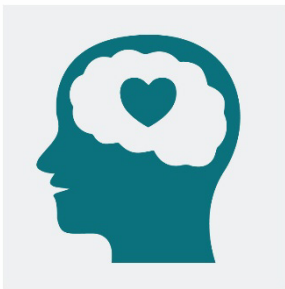


Autism affects people for their whole lives.





Many Autistic people also experience issues with their health.



This includes their mental health.

# Important ideas in the plan



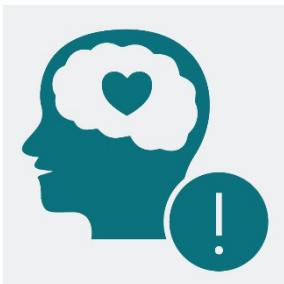
There are **7** important ideas that we want people to think about when they work on the plan.



1. Understand and support the way Autistic people are different from each other.



2. Understand and support the needs of Autistic people, families and carers in health services.



3. Understand that mental health is an important part of good health.

This includes work to stop people taking their own lives.

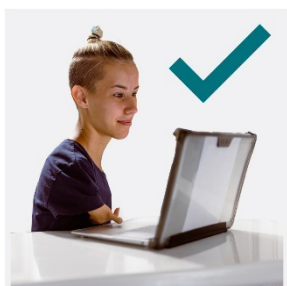


4. Make sure that Autistic people are part of how health services are created and delivered.



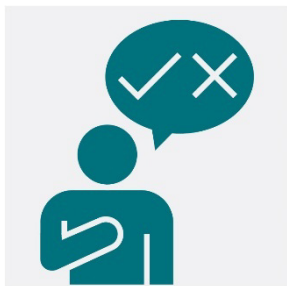
5. Services for Autistic people, families and carers should:

- treat people with respect
- not cost too much.



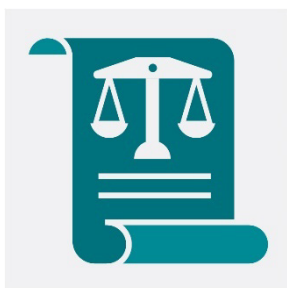
Services should also be easy to:

- find and use
- understand.



6. Everyone needs to respect the **rights** of Autistic people.

This includes the right to make their own decisions about their lives.



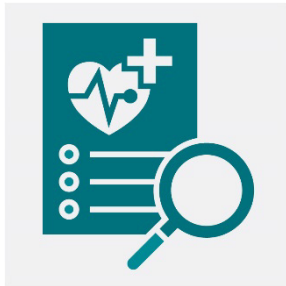
Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.

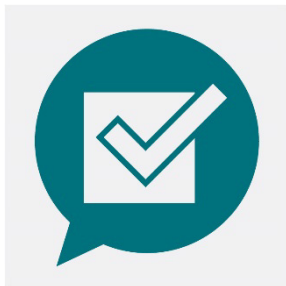


7. Services should meet the different needs of Autistic people.

## Areas the plan will focus on

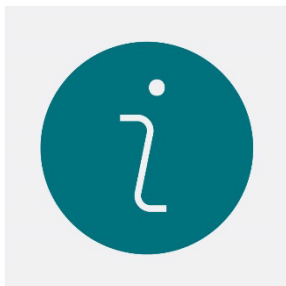


The plan has **6** areas we want to focus on.



Each of these areas explains:

- the goals we want to achieve
- how we will achieve the goals.



The full plan has more information about the **6** areas.



You can find the full plan on our website.

You might need support to read the full plan.

**[www.health.gov.au/autism-health-roadmap](http://www.health.gov.au/autism-health-roadmap)**

## 1. Improve health services for Autistic people

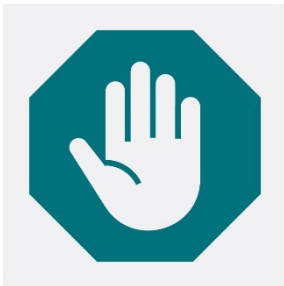


We want to improve health services for:

- Autistic people
- families and carers.

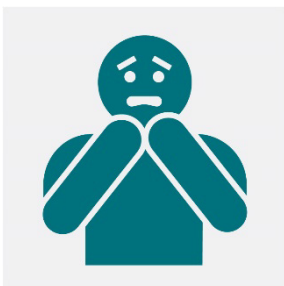


We want to take away **barriers** that stop Autistic people from using health services.



A barrier is something that stops you from doing what you:

- need to do
- want to do.



Autistic people might feel uncomfortable getting health services.



For example, a health service might be:

- too bright
- too noisy.



Information from health services can also be hard to understand.



## 2. Make sure health services work well for Autistic people



We want to make sure health services work well for:

- Autistic people
- families and carers.



Autistic people have told us that health services don't work well for them.



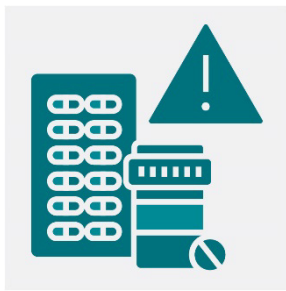
Autistic people can have bad experiences with health services.

For example, health services might include **restrictive practices**.

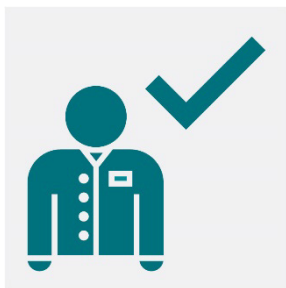


Restrictive practices are actions that can stop people from:

- moving
- making choices about their body.



This can include giving someone medicine that doesn't make their health better.



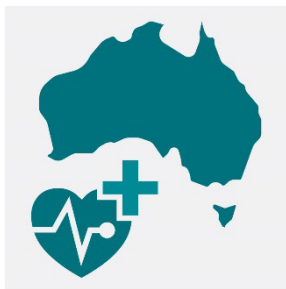
More health services need to work well for Autistic people.

### 3. Improve the way health services work with other services

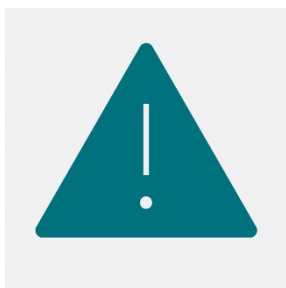


We want to improve the way health services work with other services.

This includes the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



There are a lot of services and organisations that support people's health in Australia.



But these services and organisations:

- don't always work well together
- can be confusing.



Services and organisations should be able to share information with each other.

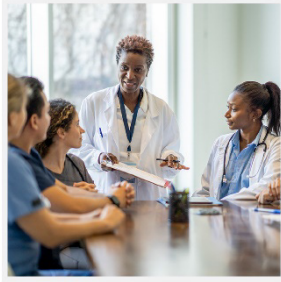


This means Autistic people don't need to repeat information about their health to different services and organisations.



But it's important that Autistic people's personal information is still safe and private.

## 4. Give health care workers better training about autism



We want to give health care workers training about autism.

This includes people like:



- doctors and nurses



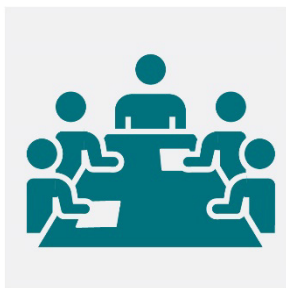
- professionals that people can talk to about their mental health.



This training will help health care workers give better care to Autistic people.

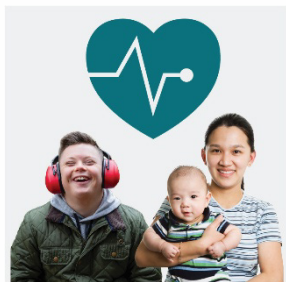


Autistic people should feel that their health care workers respect and understand them.



Autistic people should be part of creating this training for health care workers.

## 5. Improve the health data about Autistic people



We want to improve the health **data** about:

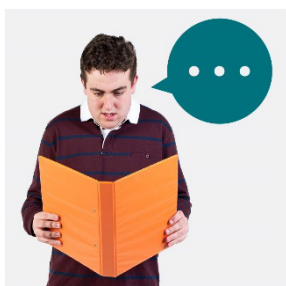
- Autistic people
- families and carers.



Data includes information and facts we collect to help us learn about something.



Collecting more data will help us understand the needs of Autistic people.



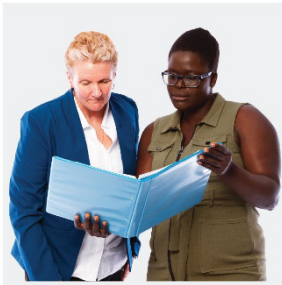
Autistic people should be part of deciding how we collect data.



## 6. Make sure we manage and use the plan well



We want to make sure we manage and use the plan well.



This includes making sure that different parts of the community work together to support the plan.

For example:



- the autism community



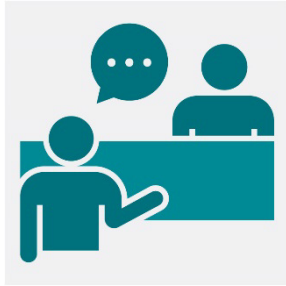
- governments



- health services.

# Support you can get

## Autism Connect



Autism Connect is a service that supports:

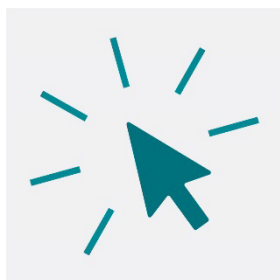
- Autistic people
- families and carers
- people who want to learn more about autism.



You can call Autism Connect:

- Monday to Friday
- from 8 am to 7 pm.

**1300 308 699**



You can also visit their website.

**[www.amaze.org.au/autismconnect](http://www.amaze.org.au/autismconnect)**

## Beyond Blue

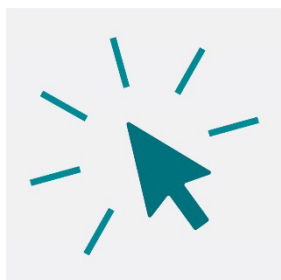


Beyond Blue is a service that can support people with their mental health.



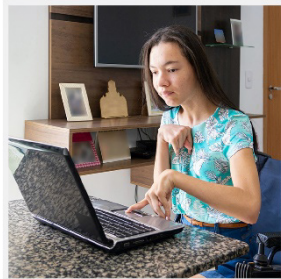
You can call Beyond Blue any time.

**1300 224 636**



You can visit their website.

**[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)**



eheadspace supports people who are 25 years old or younger with their mental health.



You can call them between 9 am and 1 am.

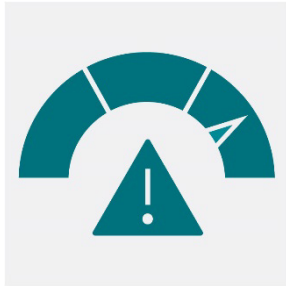
**1800 650 890**



You can use their online chat to talk to someone.

**[www.headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/connect-with-us](http://www.headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/connect-with-us)**

## Lifeline



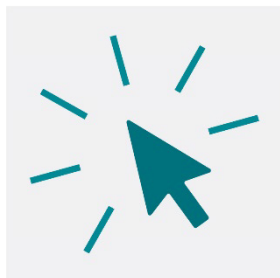
Lifeline is a service for people at risk of:

- hurting themselves because of their mental health
- ending their own life.



You can call Lifeline any time.

**13 11 14**



You can visit their website.

**[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)**



QLife supports **LGBTIQ+** people and their families.



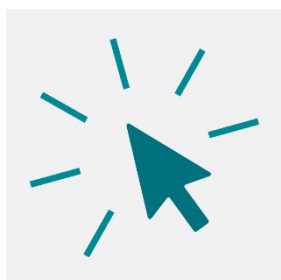
The letters LGBTIQ stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer or questioning.

The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTIQ+ community but do not talk about themselves using a word from this list.



You can call them between 3 pm and midnight.

**1800 184 527**



You can visit their website.

**[www.qlife.org.au](http://www.qlife.org.au)**

# 13YARN

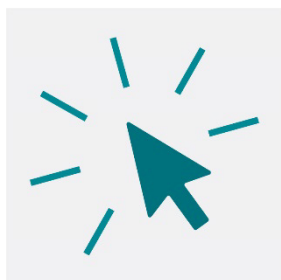


13YARN supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



You can call them at any time.

**13 92 76**



You can visit the 13YARN website for more information.

**[www.13yarn.org.au](http://www.13yarn.org.au)**



# Word list

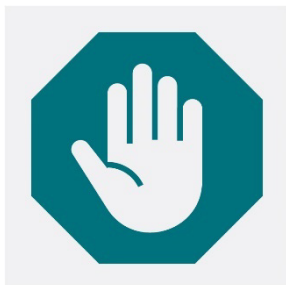
This list explains what the **bold** words in this guide mean.



## **Autism**

Autism can affect how you:

- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect and deal with others.



## **Barrier**

A barrier is something that stops you from doing what you:

- need to do
- want to do.



## **Data**

Data includes information and facts we collect to help us learn about something.



## LGBTIQ+

The letters LGBTIQ stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer or questioning.

The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTIQ+ community but do not talk about themselves using a word from this list.



## Restrictive practices

Restrictive practices are actions that can stop people from:

- moving
- making choices about their body.

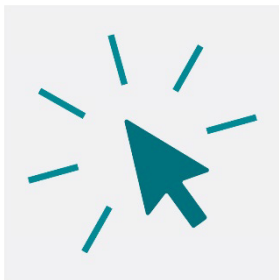


## Rights

Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.

## Contact us



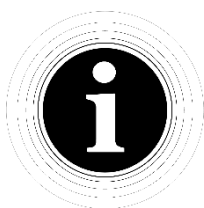
You can visit our website for more information about the plan.

**[www.health.gov.au/autism-health-roadmap](http://www.health.gov.au/autism-health-roadmap)**



You can send us an email.

**[AutismHealthRoadmap@Health.gov.au](mailto:AutismHealthRoadmap@Health.gov.au)**



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