Planning the next steps after school.

Practical tips from our November 2026 webinar, *Life After School: Exploring Post-School Pathways*, with clinical psychologist Dr Hugh Walker and parent Helen Whelan, co-founder of Chill for Autism.

School gives your young person structure every day. When it ends, that structure goes too. Planning early makes the change easier to manage.

2+ years before school ends

- Start the conversation early about what they'd like to do next.
- Non-speaking or minimally speaking? Work with their support team, including a speech pathologist where appropriate, to support them to express preferences.
- Understand their interests and explore how these could shape life after school.
- Find out what other families and young adults in your area are doing.
- Practise taking public transport and other living skills.
- In Years 10 and 11, ask the school about opportunities to explore different pathways of study, work experience and community activities.

In the final year of school

- Don't wait for school to make the plan.
- Consider an assessment of their skills and goals.
- Have a plan B and a plan C.
- Register with disability support at TAFE or uni before they start.
- Check your NDIS plan wording.
- Build a weekly visual calendar.

After school

- Go slow to go far. Start with fewer subjects or fewer work days.
- Plan three things each week: something enjoyable, something to build a skill, and something social.
- Autistic burnout needs rest and recovery.
- Try volunteering or supported work experience to match interests and goals.
- Using a disability employment service? Check the placement suits their sensory needs.