**Autism Hub – How do we design a successful senior pathway?**

 **TRANSCRIPT**

- A Senior Pathway is the process between Years 10 to 12, where we start to look at a student, and the subjects, and the skills that they already have. We ideally like to look at this towards the end of Year 9 and start to track that student through the years of their senior schooling phase.

- What I've learned over the last six or seven years is that autistic people are not included in discussions around their autism and what the impacts of their autism might be in the workforce or in the workplace. And by that, I mean, how do they best process information? How do they prefer to be communicated with? How do they like instructions to be given to them? Those are the sorts of things we need to help these people understand about themselves. We also need to give context around what the work environment is. Why do we work, firstly? What is it about work? So perhaps we need to start exploring what some goals are, why we might need money, and why we go to work all day every day. And then also, what is an employer's objectives of any employee, autistic or not, so that individuals go in to the workplace, understanding what's required of them. What are the expectations in the workplace? What are their behaviours that might need to change?

- I think one of the most influential factors in designing a Senior Pathway for students is the ability to listen well. I think the student voice and the parent voice are incredibly powerful in setting an agenda for success. I think from a student point of view, one of the things to really nurture and to promote is promoting help-seeking behaviours, really encouraging students to ask for help when it's needed, and to be viewing that as an opportunity to expand your own knowledge of the student's needs and their trajectory through the education system.

- The most valuable lesson I've learned is that the student makes the choices. So, student voice is the most important thing. The other thing that is very important is ensuring that we allow students the flexibility to learn, to grow and to take risks, and to be on a journey that might not be what their end goal is, but something that they learn along the way, where they develop skillsets, where they safely access things that might be out of their comfort zone. But most of all, it's in allowing the student to have a voice and be supported in the direction they want to go.