

# CURTIN SPECIALIST PEER MENTORING PROGRAM (CSMP) UPDATE

NUMBER ONE, 2017

## About Us

CSMP provides postgraduate peer mentoring for students on the autism spectrum and related conditions. Since CSMP was first implemented by Dr. Jasmine McDonald and Theresa Kidd in 2014 it has grown dramatically. From 9 mentors and 5 mentees in 2014 to 46 mentors and 58 mentees today. The post graduate mentors receive specific training enabling them to provide individualized support and guidance to help their mentee navigate university life. Long term, mentors work toward helping their mentee gain confidence, independence, self-advocacy and employment skills, preparing them for success in their personal life and careers beyond university. The program has a valuable connection with the Autism Academy for Software Quality Assurance (AASQA). AASQA aims to enable individuals on the autism spectrum to harness their unique skills in order to create pathways to long term, valued employment. Many mentees have participated in their Hackathons, some gaining paid internships at companies such as Deloitte and Bankwest.

## CSMP Norton Gold Fields Common Room

In late 2014, it was recognized that a dedicated, welcoming space for CSMP students to meet on campus was essential. In the following two years, with the generous donation of \$50,000 from Norton Gold Fields, two rooms on campus were

fitted out and in February 2016, the Norton Gold Fields Common Room was officially opened.



**"It has been such a pleasure to now have our designated common room. We can now have all our meetings in a familiar, safe, quiet and readily available area."**

*Cameron (CSMP Mentee)*



[Pick the date]

## Social Group

The CSMP Curtin Social Group (CSG) takes place every Wednesday during the semester from 12:15pm - 1:45pm. The first half an hour is comprised of a presentation related to an important topic aimed at helping mentees learn and develop their skills during their time at university. These skills are directly transferable to university life and can be implemented in their everyday life outside of university.

The topics presented cover aspects of anxiety, social media, assertiveness, employment, procrastination, time management, self-care, dealing with exam / assessment stress and many more. The presentations are delivered from Counselling and Disability Services (CDS), CSG committee members, mentees and mentors.

The remaining time during the social group is focused around socialization, building friendships and communication in a safe and friendly environment. Generally, this is facilitated through board games and computer games. CSG also aims to organise one or two extra social functions twice a month. These functions vary including such activities as laser tag, frisbee, golf, coffee or a movie night. All in all it is a very welcoming environment for both mentees and mentors.

## Moving Forward

CSMP continues to grow from year to year with a limited increase in resources. The program has reached its capacity with its current location and staffing. Donations and partnerships with business are continually sought in the hope of securing scholarships, more staffing, a dedicated psychologist and a larger space on campus

## Contact Us

Please contact Theresa and Jasmine if you, or someone that you know, are able to assist the program to grow and service more students with autism to realise their potential at Curtin University.

**Email: [autism.mentoring@curtin.edu.au](mailto:autism.mentoring@curtin.edu.au)**

