

IN PURSUIT of HAPPINESS & INDEPENDENCE – identifying the strengths and exceptional abilities of people on the autism spectrum to enhance positive post-school outcomes

Dr Trevor Clark, National Director, Aspect Research and Senior Education Consultant

The focus of all services and interventions for people on the autism spectrum, including those who display high or exceptional abilities should be to increase quality of life outcomes that result in improved levels of happiness and independence. Great human achievement is associated with innate natural abilities, intensive interest and practice. This session will overview the strengths, and for some, the high or exceptional abilities of children, young people and adults on the autism spectrum, and which will be illustrated with a number of cases of applied abilities in adult on the spectrum. The case will be made for the early identification of these skills in young students on the spectrum and the corresponding need to differentiate their educational programs. By doing so, the facilitation of positive post-school outcomes will result and associated increases in happiness and independence – the very things we all strive for in life.