

## Annual Congress on **APPLIED PSYCHIATRY**

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### **SUPPORTING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF LEARNERS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM: PROMOTING A COLLECTIVE VOICE FROM PARENTS, EDUCATORS, SPECIALISTS AND LEARNERS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM**

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Educators often continue to find adequately meeting the needs of learners on the autism spectrum challenging and this group of learners at higher risk of not meeting their potential if their often more unique and individualised needs are not addressed adequately. This mixed methods 2-phase Australian Autism CRC study investigated the educational needs of learners on the spectrum from a range of different stakeholder perspectives to gain a collective voice of what is required to support this group of learners. The different stakeholders involved including parents of learners on the autism spectrum, educators, specialist working within educational settings and learners on the spectrum from 12-18 years of age. There were a number of key themes to emerge from the data that highlighted several areas of support that go beyond the traditional realms of academic support in schools. This Australian wide educational needs analysis informs not only future practice in schools but also future educational research. Furthermore, the results can also help to inform educational support for other learning cohorts in schools and have application internationally.

#### **Biography**

Dr Sagers originally trained as a primary and special education teacher and has 30 years teaching experience working across all age groups and a diverse range of educational contexts. Beth has been a full time academic for the last 12 years and is an active research participant in the Australian Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC) which is the world's first national cooperative research centre focused on autism taking a whole-of-life approach to autism focusing on diagnosis, education and adult life. She has been the chief investigator on a range of different educational research projects within the Autism CRC and has more than 60 + international publications.