

<Location> Dandelion Program **3 Year Report** **<name>**

Overview

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<Location> Dandelion Program – 3 year report

3 year program overview

The Dandelion Program is an initiative to build Information Technology, life, and executive functioning skills to help establish IT careers for people on the autism spectrum. It is a three-year structured roadmap of transformation initiatives to improve the abilities of Dandelion team members in a number of key areas.

- **Year one** focuses on **job awareness**: on-boarding, introduction to the role, internal training modules, and establishing a pipeline of work with stakeholders, as well as the development of technical and social skills.
- **Year two** focuses on **self-advocacy** to cultivate independence and confidence. Trainees are encouraged to learn their strengths, weaknesses, preferences, learning styles, and needs.
- **Year three** focuses on **transition**, with team members developing to be career ready. This final year is about setting the trainee up to be capable of holding a career outside of the Dandelion team support structure

The 3 year <Location> Dandelion Traineeship finishes on <date>

Over the past 3 years some Dandelion trainees have attained the skills to work independently without supervision by the DXC Dandelion support team and have transitioned to other teams, working under the supervision of DHS management. Some trainees have not yet attained this level of independence performing the type of testing work that the client requires.

On <date> the DXC support team have completed their engagement with <client> on this program and are required to return to DXC for re-assignment. There will no longer be Dandelion technical team support resources available at <client> to provide ongoing daily support. Those team members that have not yet become independent within <client> will also return to DXC. As with all DXC employees returning from customer assignment to DXC the Dandelion trainees and their support team will undergo a search and re-assignment process to determine their next role based upon their technical skills and available roles within DXC and its customers.

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Key Elements to Autism and Work

Autism has a number of elements that create challenges at work:

Cognitive Processing: The mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, and the senses

Executive Functioning: Ability to prioritize and organise ourselves as well as regulate, change, manage our thoughts and actions.

Central Coherence:
Getting the point or gist of things. The ability to pull information together from different sources to establish a greater understanding and see the 'bigger picture'. A lack of central coherence results in misinterpretation of situations and communication.

Adaptive behaviour: A collection of conceptual, social and practical skills learned to enable functioning in everyday life. Adjusting one's behaviours to suit different environments, and apply the rules in that environment.

Theory of Mind: Ability to understand another's perspective, understand emotions, predict behaviour or understand intentions of others. Imagining how others think, feel and react.

Working Memory: The ability to hold information in our minds, keep it active so that it can be used in our thinking. It is critical for following directions, and learning and successfully completing complex tasks.

Context Blindness: Perform well in tests but unable to adapt learning to different contexts or environments. Contextual sensitivity is crucial for social interaction, communication and flexibility in thoughts and behaviour. The autistic brain thinks in an absolute way, rather than a relative, contextually defined way.

Self-determination: The action of understanding oneself: The process of learning your strengths, challenges, preferences, learning styles and needs.

Self-advocacy: The action of representing oneself or one's views or interests: The ability to speak up for yourself, and to have a say in decisions that affect you, and understand what support you need to succeed at work.

<Location> Dandelion Program – 3 year Technical & Autism Overview

The objective of the 3 year program was to become self sufficient Test Analysts to transition and work independently in an office managed by client support staff.

- Year 1** – Focused on introducing Dandelion staff into a work office environment and culture. We commenced training by introducing Dandelion traineeship with the building blocks of a Software Testing lifecycle such as Methodologies, Terminology, and Techniques. <client> provided the team with simple work packages to utilise their learnings from the ongoing training. Work packages involved DXC Support staff guiding the Dandelion team to analyse specifications, planning, writing and execution of test cases.
- Year 2** – Focused on greater responsibility and challenging work packages. <client> provided more complex work packages for Dandelion staff to develop their analytical and technical professionalism. The team learned about competing priorities and scheduling across these work packages. In parallel, DXC Support staff encouraged the team to self advocate by upskilling via external test qualifications and certifications, updating CVs, conducting mock interviews, and joining networking sites and groups.
- Year 3** – Focused on working with <client> to transition Dandelion staff that were ready to work independently in client teams. We commenced exposing Dandelion team members to automated test tools, which enabled them to either create and run automated scripts. The DXC Support team continued to encourage Dandelion staff to learn about accountability, identifying blockers and always delivering quality test outcomes. The final program goal was for Dandelion staff to be a professional Test Analyst creating opportunities in technology & communications.

Over the past 3 years extensive training and self development has occurred in life and adaptive skills:

Cognitive processing: Executive Functioning, Working Memory, Theory of Mind and Central Coherence

Social skills: attending events, team lunches, movies, Christmas parties, birthday morning teas etc

Self Determination and Self Advocacy: understanding self and setting goals for the future

Life skills: NDIS, Nutrition and Finance awareness

Communication: Appropriate communication to team members and other stakeholders; building confidence in writing emails, public speaking and media representation (where appropriate)

1-1 support and intervention. Managing frustrations and developing coping strategies

Translating the unwritten rules of the workplace

Referrals to outside supports and professionals and development of mental health strategies

Autism Awareness training to approximately 250 DXC and DHS staff in Brisbane

<Location> Dandelion Program 3 year report

<Name>

Personal Development

- <Name> has demonstrated excellent growth within the social aspects of the role such as;
 - Coping in work environment
 - Integrating with the team and other staff
- Able to work independently and autonomously
- Quick learner and very good at mentoring others
- Asks questions to ensure work is 100% correct and understands 'big picture'
- Solid organisational skills
- Confidently contributes ideas and suggestions
- Professional, polite, reliable and punctual
- Proactive and always looking for improvements.

Major highlight from the autism consultant::

"<Name> has shown incredible growth in the social aspects of the program. He participates in team meetings, team events and campus events and is highly regarded by his colleagues and his Managers"

~ Example~

Technical Development & Processing

- **Executive Functioning** - <Name> when commencing in a new team requires a clear outline of expectations of staff roles within the team and organisation.
- **Executive Functioning** - <Name> sets very high standards to deliver quality work, he has good time management and calling out blockers. However he can sometimes still take on too many tasks. Ensure work is allocated evenly and conduct Monthly 1 on 1s with <Name> to ensure he is managing stresses of the job.

Major highlight from the autism consultant:

"<Name> is process driven and a valuable asset to any team due to his technical ability. He is always seeks process improvements and implements possible solutions. He is always willing to take on greater responsibility tasks to support the team and client and delivers high quality work."

- *~ Example~*

<Location> Dandelion Program – <Name>

Our Recommendation

Independence: <Name> has attained the level of independence and self determination to perform as the role of a Test Analyst autonomously.

Self Determination & Self Advocacy: <Name> is able self-advocate as he is able to understand what he is working on (Central Coherence), what his employment goals are for the future, or determine his challenges within the workplace.

Suitable Future Role: <Name> enjoys coordinating and prioritising work, or solving issue and providing solutions. One day a possible Senior Test Analyst, Test Lead or Team Lead role would suit him best.

Employment Type: Full time hours would be most suitable.

What ongoing support is needed for success

Ongoing Technical Support <Name> requires someone to manage and check in occasionally on his work allocations to ensure he hasn't overcommitted. However this can be mitigated by providing him with a clear outline of expectations of staff roles within the team and organisation, which enables him to raise blockers as needed.

Ongoing Autism Support Consultant (ASC) to train Support Staff in Cognitive Processes pertaining to autism. This enables Support Staff to be aware of <Name> learning and working needs and the best strategies to apply. The ASC would also need to help <Name> manage his anxiety levels as he is perfectionist and to manage his frustrations with system issues.

Ongoing support strategies required: <Name> needs a Manager who demonstrates strong people skills who is clear and concise with tasks and does not micro manage. He eagerly accepts work tasks and especially ones that challenge him. As <Name> is process driven he really strives when given higher duty roles outside his current position so he can further develop. However a Manager that is well across <Name> workload capacity and can continue to mentor <Name> in calling out when he is taking on too much work.

<Location> Dandelion Program – <Name>

Key Dates & Plan Going Forward

- **Graduation Ceremony** will be held to celebrate the successful completion of the Dandelion 3 year traineeship (date tbc)
- **Friday 7th September 2018** – final day of Dandelion traineeship at <client>
- **Monday 10th September 2018** – remain on-site at <client> until <Date>.
- **Going forward:**
 - Autism Support Consultant (ASC) will provide on-going 1-1 support on an as needed basis
 - DXC Technical Support will still be provided on an 'as needed' basis
 - Technical reviews will be undertaken with <client> Manager in conjunction with DXC Management
 - We will continue to look for other employment opportunities within DXC and our clients
 - We will be investigate suitable APS and Qld Government roles
 - Ongoing upskilling and learning opportunities will continue to be recommended
 - Career Coach, mock interviews, job application processes and CV writing activities
 - NDIS awareness sessions and planning
 - Referrals to outside support services as required
 - Autism Consultant will continue to run Autism Awareness training for DHS staff