



Introduction

Welcome to the next issue in our 'keyworker series', where each month we focus on one of the eight domains of quality of life (QoL) and how you can support them through your weekly keyworker sessions.

This issue focuses on **physical wellbeing**, recreation & health!

Physical well-being includes areas such as sleep, sensory regulation, nutrition, activity, and the overall comfort of one's body.

Research Summary - Edwards et al (2024) & McLean et al (2021)

Edwards et al. (2024) found that while many autistic people are interested in taking part in physical activity, they often stop participating due to sensory overload, social anxiety, and rigid or non-inclusive environments. They found the keys to participation are sensory-friendly spaces, supportive staff who understand neurodivergent needs, flexibility and access to alternative options.

McLean et al. (2021) measured sleep quality, stress and QoL in autistic adults. They found that poor sleep + high stress = significantly lower QoL. Those with better sleep had stronger resilience, more energy, and greater overall wellbeing. The study suggests that developing awareness of how rest and routines affect the body contribute to a more positive QoL.



Chris Edwards



Kiley McLean

The Reality

1. Understand Sensory Experiences

Respect sensory needs and consider reasonable adjustments. Ask what the Occupational Therapist recommends.



2. Listen to Pupil Voice

Explore barriers with curiosity & prepare to work on alleviating anxiety / developing communication to facilitate participation.



3. Acknowledge Effort

Be positive about participation and effort - progress is progress.



4. Approach Health & Hygiene Sensitively

Talk about sleep & self-care routines without judgement. How does it affect them?



5. Establish Motivation

What is important to the pupil? How is this going to benefit them? Explore together.



Further Reading & Links

[Organized physical activity participation among autistic Australians: Barriers, enablers and implications for inclusion](#)

[The impact of sleep quality on quality of life for autistic adults](#)

[LAT Liberty Quality of Life Home](#)