

Depression can have a huge, negative impact on someone's quality of life, reducing their motivation to build relationships, to find employment and independence. Often a person who is feeling stressed and overwhelmed may not even realise that this is depression. Even for typically developing individuals, adolescence is a crucial life stage and is usually associated with increased rates of depression.

However, for an adolescent with ASD, they are also quite commonly faced with bullying, ostracism, and the realisation of how different they are from their peers.

This presentation discusses the outcome from UQ PhD candidate, and presenter Damian Santomauro's research in Emotion Regulation in Adolescents and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders

A free depression intervention was offered for young adults with high functioning autism spectrum disorders (ASD) who were feeling sad, depressed, or stressed. The program was part of a trial study designed by world experts in Asperger's syndrome: Professor Tony Attwood and Dr Michelle Garnett from the Minds and Hearts Clinic in West End, Brisbane, a centre of excellence for Autism Spectrum Conditions.

The trial was the first of its kind in the world and involved adolescents with Asperger's syndrome or high functioning autism aged between 13 and 18 years. The intervention consisted of 10 weekly sessions of group cognitive behavioural therapy followed by an extra booster that Damian completed by recruiting participants for his research.