



TREATED AS A BACKGROUND CONCERN: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS AS A BIDIRECTIONAL MEDIATOR OF ADHD OUTCOMES IN PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

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Abstract:

This critique examines ten recent studies on teacher-student relationships (TSR) in the context of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in primary school classrooms, addressing the extent to which the literature accounts for TSR's simultaneous influence on student outcomes and teacher wellbeing. While the reviewed research consistently establishes that TSR quality predicts academic, behavioural and emotional outcomes for students with ADHD, most studies treat teacher wellbeing as an explanatory background variable rather than a co-equal concern. Only a minority of articles, notably DeShazer *et al.* (2023), Aldabbagh *et al.* (2024a, 2024b) and Tavlin *et al.* (2025), frame teacher stress and burnout as outcomes in their own right. The critique further identifies a theoretical gap: although several studies gesture toward a bidirectional, cyclical relationship between ADHD behaviour and teacher stress, none model this cycle as a unified system. These findings expose a disconnect between strong outcome evidence and limited practice-based evidence for building sustainable TSR.

Keywords: teacher-student relationships; ADHD; teacher wellbeing; inclusive education; classroom behaviour management

1. Introduction

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder is one of the most prevalent neurodevelopmental conditions that affects primary school classrooms, with an estimated five to nine per cent of students meeting the diagnostic criteria of the DSM-5 manual of the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2022) (Ayano, 2023; APA, 2022; Davidovitch *et al.*, 2017; MacLean *et al.*, 2023). Although ADHD is classified as a neurodevelopmental disorder, as stated by the DSM-5 (APA, 2022), Soler-Gutiérrez *et al.* (2023) also propose that individuals with ADHD will suffer significantly from emotional

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and behavioural regulation difficulties, which manifest in perceived overt unproductive behaviours. ADHD's difficulties in emotional and behavioural regulation significantly influence students' academic achievement, peer relationships, and classroom environment (Ewe, 2019; Weiner & Daniels, 2016). At the same time, there is an increased expectation on teachers to provide an inclusive education for all students within the mainstream classroom, as stipulated by the Western Australia (WA) Department of Education (n.d.), that teachers are obligated to support students with diverse needs while delivering curriculum outcomes and managing their own wellbeing (Rushton *et al.*, 2020; Graham, 2020).

2. Problem

The quality of teacher-student relationships (TSR) plays a critical contribution influencing academic success, behavioural outcomes and emotional development of students with ADHD (Aldabbagh *et al.*, 2024a; Aldabbagh *et al.*, 2024b; Roorda, 2011; Rushton *et al.*, 2020; Weiner & Daniels, 2016). Compounding this influence are the associated implications for teachers in supporting students with ADHD. Implications for teacher wellbeing include increased burnout, additional stress, and reduced self-efficacy, in particular when teachers lack appropriate training or support (Aldabbagh *et al.*, 2024a; MacLean, 2023). Despite growing research on ADHD interventions, limited attention has been paid to how TSR simultaneously mediates student and teacher outcomes, especially within inclusive Australian primary school classrooms (Ayano *et al.*, 2023; Rushton *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, this critique examines recent research on ADHD inclusive classrooms, with a focus on TSR's and its implications for student achievement and teacher wellbeing. Ten articles were selected for the critique due to their direct relevance to the identified problem: mediating the role of TSR in shaping academic, behavioural, and emotional outcomes for students with ADHD and overall teacher wellbeing.

3. Critique

3.1 MacLean, J., Krause, A., & Rogers, M. A. (2023). The Student-teacher Relationship and ADHD Symptomatology

The scope of the literature review in MacLean *et al.* (2023) is among the most extensive and comprehensive of the reviewed articles, covering ADHD epidemiology and the cognitive and executive function barriers to classroom participation for ADHD students. It is the evidence base for TSR quality as a predictor of student outcomes. MacLean *et al.* (2023) explicitly survey competing frameworks for conceptualising TSR quality, including attachment theory, bioecological systems theory and the social support model. However, a notable limitation of the article is its near-complete silence on teacher wellbeing. While the article extensively acknowledges the unique relational demands placed on teachers by teaching ADHD students, it fails to address research that includes

teacher burnout, stress and self-efficacy as teacher outcomes that are influenced by ADHD related TSR dynamics, creating a significant omission.

The article is highly relevant to the student outcomes aspect of the identified problem. It is supported by meta-analytical rigour that demonstrates that ADHD symptomatology is associated with lower TSR closeness and higher conflict. Furthermore, the article suggests that this conflict within TSR's is compounded by cascading consequences for ADHD students that lead to poor engagement, peer relationships and long-term academic trajectories. Unfortunately, the article's relevance to teacher wellbeing is limited, only noting that TSR's are mostly conflictual when they are involved with ADHD students and have negative interactions for teachers. In relation to the identified problem of teacher wellbeing alongside student outcomes, this presents a significant research gap in framing why TSR quality matters.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) serves as the organising framework for MacLean *et al.*'s (2023) research, which positions the classroom TSR as a proximal microsystem influence on student development. The framework is supplemented by the attachment theory of Bowlby (1969) and Hamre and Pianta (2001) as cited by MacLean *et al.* (2023). The bioecological framework aligns with the WA Department of Education inclusion frameworks (Department of Education, n.d.) that shape relational pedagogy in mainstream education. However, neither framework accounts for the significant impact on teacher wellbeing that maintaining attachment-like relationships with ADHD students has, leading to a theoretical gap in the article's contribution to the identified problem.

3.2 DeShazer, M. R., Owens, J. S., & Himawan, L. K. (2023). Understanding Factors that Moderate the Relationship Between Student ADHD Behaviors and Teacher Stress

DeShazer *et al.* (2023) present the most explicit literature review of the selected articles focusing on wellbeing, with teacher stress as its primary focus. The article reviews teacher occupational stress and its consequences, including job dissatisfaction, attrition, and reduced instructional quality. DeShazer *et al.* (2023) propose that ADHD associated behavioural issues are specific stressors for teachers who view ADHD students as disproportionately effortful and distressing to teach. Crucially, the article suggests that TSR quality is a potential moderating variable, examining how conflict with ADHD students is amplified. At the same time, the article acknowledges the bidirectional nature of stress and the TSR dynamic, namely that ADHD behaviour raises teacher stress, and a stressed teacher is less resourceful to manage ADHD behaviour effectively, causing a feedback loop that may destabilise wellbeing and outcomes. However, the article does not address how professional development or systemic support may act as potential buffers.

The article is most directly relevant to the teacher wellbeing dimension of the identified problem. DeShazer *et al.* (2023) indicate that ninety-three per cent of teachers reported high occupational stress, and ADHD students are a primary factor in contributing to that stress. The article frames TSR closeness as a protective factor for

teachers' wellbeing, not merely for student outcomes. This framing is theoretically and practically significant, as it suggests that strong TSR's benefit students and teachers, which is central to the identified problem of treating teacher and student outcomes as separable.

Herman *et al.*'s (2023) 3C Theory of teacher stress is used by DeShazer *et al.* (2023) to structure the article's literature review. The theory identifies three pathways of coping capacity, classroom competence and institutional context through which student behaviour leads to stress. The 3C theory situates ADHD related stress within systemic and individual variables, highlighting the reality that teachers who are supporting ADHD students may encounter stress not only from in-classroom demands but also inadequate institutional support. The integration of TSR quality as an ADHD linked stress moderator is innovative. However, the article acknowledges that there is insufficient evidence to support the proposal, especially outside of North America.

3.3 Aldabbagh, R., Daley, D., Sayal, K., & Glazebrook, C. (2024a). Exploring the Unmet Needs of Teachers of Young Children with ADHD Symptoms: A Qualitative Study

Aldabbagh *et al.* (2024a) directly address research on the emotional and occupational demands that ADHD behaviours place on teachers. The article draws on the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), which contextualises the scale of the problem by showing that sixty per cent of teachers report dissatisfaction with behaviour management, and also reviews evidence of heightened teacher stress levels as a consequence of supporting ADHD students' symptomatology. The article's discussion covering labelling and stigma highlights how overwhelmed teachers can resort to labelling ADHD students as naughty, with subsequent consequences of the TSR impacting both teacher and student outcomes. Absent from the scope of the article is any Australian policy data or engagement of teacher professional development as a wellbeing support mechanism.

The article is highly relevant to both dimensions of the identified problem, establishing that ADHD behaviour is directly associated with teacher stress, emotional exhaustion and a poor sense of professional efficacy, which is particularly present when teachers lack the necessary training or support. Importantly, the article connects teacher wellbeing directly to TSR quality, namely that when teachers feel helpless or overwhelmed by ADHD students' behaviour, they are more likely to engage in punitive or stigmatising relational practices, which further erode the TSR and detrimentally impact student outcomes. This bidirectional framing is critical to the identified problem and validates the argument that teacher wellbeing is directly linked to the TSR quality associated with ADHD students.

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) provide the primary theoretical lens for the article, conceptualising teacher stress as the impact of the demands associated with supporting ADHD students exceeding available coping resources. This theoretical lens is well aligned to the identified problem as it explains why similar challenging ADHD behaviour produces different stress levels in different

teachers, depending on their knowledge, self-efficacy and institutional support. The article also utilises attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) as a secondary framework, positioning the teacher as a figure whose own emotional regulation can directly impact the quality of the relational environments experienced by ADHD students.

3.4 Aldabbagh, R., Glazebrook, C., Sayal, K., & Daley, D. (2024b). Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Effectiveness of Teacher-Delivered Interventions for Externalizing Behaviors

The literature review in Aldabbagh *et al.* (2024b) provides the most significant scope within the corpus, which is intervention-focused. The authors synthesise the evidence from extensive research on teacher-delivered interventions for students who exhibit externalised behaviours, with teacher outcomes, including stress, self-efficacy and conflict in the TSR, as co-equal foci alongside student outcomes. The article makes a critical observation that, despite extensive evidence that ADHD behaviour impacts teacher wellbeing, most intervention literature overwhelmingly focuses on student behaviour, with limited research measuring the effects of interventions on teacher self-efficacy or wellbeing. Aldabbagh *et al.* (2024b) also include other conduct disorders alongside ADHD that introduce heterogeneity, which may obscure ADHD specific effects, and the review does not address Australian educational contexts.

Due to explicitly addressing the intervention dimension of the identified problem, specifically, the question of whether a high-quality TSR can improve outcomes for teachers and students simultaneously makes this article highly relevant. The article suggests that teacher-mediated interventions contribute to improving closeness, reducing conflict and reducing externalised ADHD behaviours. At the same time, the article highlights that teacher wellbeing is an under-researched outcome that reinforces a key argument of the identified problem, namely that current research is limited to the proposal that teacher experience is instrumental to student outcomes, rather than intrinsically significant.

The article is methodical in its structure, following the evidence-based reporting guidelines of PRISMA (Moher *et al.*, 2010). However, it lacks a clear, identifiable overarching framework for conceptualising how teacher interventions can produce improved TSR, which in turn influences overall improved wellbeing. Aldabbagh *et al.* (2024b) fail to theorise the mechanisms through which teacher training can modify relational patterns, thereby identifying a theoretical gap that limits the article's ability to explain how variability in the interventions applied impacts teacher and student outcomes.

3.5 Rushton, S., Giallo, R., & Efron, D. (2020). ADHD and Emotional Engagement with School in the Primary Years: Investigating the Role of Student-teacher Relationships

The literature review in Rushton *et al.* (2020) addresses ADHD epidemiology, functional impairments and the role of TSR in mediating engagement outcomes. It is the only article in the corpus grounded in Australian primary school data, providing it with particular

ecological validity for the identified problem. However, the article's lack of teacher wellbeing as an analytical concern is a limiting factor when addressing the identified problem. Rushton *et al.* (2020) acknowledge that ADHD behaviour places increased demands on teachers and argue that teachers should be encouraged to build stronger engagement. However, they do not examine how TSR conflict contributes to poor teacher emotions and professional sustainability.

Rushton *et al.* (2020) is strongly relevant to the identified problem, in particular, the article's suggestion that ADHD symptom severity predicts lower emotional engagement, which is mediated by TSR conflict across Australian primary schools. The article provides compelling evidence for early proactive intervention in TSR quality; however, its relevance to the teacher wellbeing proponent of the identified problem is limited to acknowledging that managing TSR conflict is effortful for teachers, without theorising the potential consequences of that effort.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) organises the literature review and positions school engagement as a result of reciprocal interactions between students and their environment, which is similar to Maclean *et al.* (2023). Unfortunately, it does not naturally extend to teacher wellbeing to account for how the same relational demands that influence student outcomes also deplete teacher resources.

3.6 Ewe, L. P. (2019). ADHD Symptoms and the Teacher-student Relationship: A Systematic Literature Review

Ewe (2019) specifically focuses on the TSR and ADHD intersection by surveying both qualitative and quantitative research that measures closeness, conflict, and teacher and student perceptions. A distinctive feature of Ewe (2019) is the attention given to student voice, namely foregrounding what ADHD students want from their teachers: approachability, understanding and a non-punitive relational stance. In relation to teacher wellbeing, the article notes that teachers suffer from negative emotions, including stress and frustration, when attempting to support ADHD students, resulting in a reliance on punitive relations, which escalates the TSR conflict. A limitation of the review is that it treats TSR quality as a behavioural observation rather than a systematic wellbeing concern.

The article is highly relevant to both TSR quality and teacher wellbeing dimensions of the identified problem. Ewe (2019) highlights that punitive teachers' responses to ADHD behaviour are rooted in stress and frustration, which triggers an emotional escalation in students, further compounding the TSR. In consolidating their research, the authors indicate that teachers experience less emotional closeness and heightened conflict with ADHD students, which validates the identified problems' central premise: a gap in research on interventions that address both the relational and wellbeing of teachers and ADHD students simultaneously.

Ewe (2019) draws on attachment theory and grounded theory in their theoretical approach, noting that significant research lacks an explicit theoretical framework,

signalling a field-wide problem. From a wellbeing perspective, the theoretical frameworks in the article are most adaptable for explaining the effectiveness of TSR quality rather than for accounting for the psychological burden placed on teachers in sustaining such relationships.

3.7 Rogers, M., Bélanger-Lejars, V., Toste, J. R., & Heath, N. L. (2015). Mismatched: ADHD Symptomatology and the Teacher-student Relationship

A theoretical departure from attachment theory, dominant in other reviewed articles, is introduced by the classroom working alliance model (Toste *et al.*, 2014), which adds task and goal alignment to the emotional bond dimension of the TSR. Rogers *et al.* (2015) argue that the near-exclusive reliance on teacher-reported TSR data systematically silences student agency and produces research that demonstrates only adult perceptions and fails to consider students' own relational experiences. The article additionally demonstrates that teachers regularly report that supporting ADHD students is more effortful and stressful, and many teachers lack the required skills and knowledge that are needed to form productive relationships with ADHD students. However, like most of the reviewed articles in the corpus, Rogers *et al.* (2015) use teacher experience as a context for explaining TSR quality rather than as an outcome.

The article is relevant to the TSR quality dimension of the identified problem, and moderately applicable to the teacher wellbeing dimension. Rogers *et al.* (2015) acknowledge that teachers without the appropriate training to support ADHD students are inclined to view the unproductive behaviours of ADHD as wilful misbehaviour, resulting in frustration and punitive responses. This acknowledgement connects teacher knowledge, emotional experience, and the TSR quality into a single explanatory chain.

The classroom working alliance model (Toste *et al.*, 2014) is the primary theoretical framework of Rogers *et al.* (2015). This framework is productive for the identified problem, as it frames the TSR as a collaborative professional relationship with shared goals rather than merely an affective attachment dynamic. When considering the teacher wellbeing perspective of the identified problem, the working alliance model is particularly interesting, as it indicates that experiences of the TSR are influenced not only by emotional closeness but also by the degree to which teachers and students share a common understanding of learning tasks.

3.8 Ewe, L. P., & Aspelin, J. (2022). Relational Competence Regarding Students with ADHD – An Intervention Study with In-service Teachers

In their work, Ewe and Aspelin (2022) strongly emphasise that professional development for teachers is a solution to both poor TSR and its associated impacts on ADHD students and teachers. The article highlights the negative interpersonal skills that teachers encounter with ADHD students, which lead to loneliness and the exclusion of ADHD students. Importantly, the article suggests that relational competence is not only beneficial for ADHD students but also a resource that reduces teacher stress. Ewe and Aspelin (2022) argue that teachers who can successfully and sensitively read and respond

to ADHD student cues are less likely to experience the escalating cycle that generates exhaustion, stress, and diminished self-efficacy.

The article is directly relevant to the identified problem and establishes that TSR quality for ADHD students is a trainable and professional competency, and not a personality disposition. The argument Ewe and Aspelin (2022) make is a hopeful finding for the identified problem. It suggests that the chronic relational strain between ADHD students and their teachers is not a permanent feature but a potentially modifiable condition through targeted professional development.

The Relational Competence Model ([RCM], Aspelin & Jonsson, 2019) provides the theoretical framework, articulating three professional sub-competencies: communicative competence, differentiation competence and socioemotional competence. Socioemotional competence is particularly relevant to the identified problem of teacher wellbeing, as it focuses on the management of teachers' own and students' emotions within the TSR. Ewe and Aspelin (2022) propose that a teacher's ability to manage their own emotional reactions to ADHD students is a professional skill, rather than a purely personal disposition, shifting the teacher wellbeing consideration from individual resilience to a case of systemic professional development.

3.9 Olivier, E., & Archambault, I. (2017). Hyperactivity, Inattention, and Student Engagement: The Protective Role of Relationships with Teachers and Peers

The literature review in Olivier and Archambault (2017) concentrates on the protective role of TSR closeness and the prosocial skills of ADHD students in reducing school disengagement. The article is centred around engagement and its positive effects on TSR, and the specific challenges associated with ADHD. The article makes a passing comment on teacher wellbeing, noting that teachers find it more difficult to teach ADHD students and frame this as a context for why engagement interventions are needed. The article does not engage with teacher burnout or the sustainability of relational investment.

The finding by Olivier and Archambault (2017) that ADHD has a direct impact on student engagement, and the protective factor of a strong TSR, makes the article relevant to the identified problem in part. While this framing is predominantly student outcomes focused, it does have an indirect but important implication for teacher wellbeing, namely that teachers who have a less conflictual TSR with ADHD students are less likely to be stressed by them (DeShazer *et al.*, 2023). Although the article does not explicitly make this connection, it reinforces the argument that student and teacher outcomes are bidirectionally linked through TSR quality.

The Self-System Model of Motivational Development ([SSMMD]; Connell & Wellborn, 1991), as cited by Olivier and Archambault (2017), provides the theoretical underpinning for the article, which links the fundamental basic psychological needs to school engagement. Such a framework supports a need-based approach to ADHD students, who are at particular risk of disengagement due to their difficulties with self-regulation and social functioning. These difficulties mean that relatedness is frequently unmet in the classroom discourse that rewards conformity. The SSMMD is limited in its

focus on teacher wellbeing, as it only considers students' psychological needs without addressing teachers' equivalent needs.

3.10 Tavlin, S., Ariol, M., & Lawson, G. M. (2025). Strengthening Relationships with Students with ADHD Symptomology: A Qualitative Study about Teacher Perspectives

Tavlin *et al.* (2025) is the most practitioner-focused article in the corpus and is contemporarily relevant. The article reviews research concerning the TSR quality as a predictor of student outcomes, including motivation, academic achievement and social skills. Furthermore, the article also considers the specific challenges that teachers encounter when building TSR with ADHD students, most notably failing to establish an affective closeness and increased conflict with students who externalise ADHD symptomatology (Kincade, 2020). Critically, the article addresses teacher wellbeing by explicitly identifying growing evidence that strong TSR's provide a more enjoyable work environment for teachers and reduce the emotional burden of managing ADHD related behaviour. However, student voice is absent, and there is no engagement with Australian policy or neurodiversity frameworks.

The review is the most relevant in the corpus when considering the identified problem as a whole. It addresses the impact that TSR has on student outcomes and teacher wellbeing as a bidirectional product, rather than siloed, as in some of the reviewed articles. The article argues that teachers who invest time and resources in building strong relationships with ADHD students achieve improved student outcomes and greater self-regulation and empathy, providing an evidence base for prioritising relational practice as sustainable.

The dynamics system theory of Wubbels *et al.* (2014), as cited by Tavlin *et al.* (2025), provides the primary theoretical framework that conceptualises TSR and classroom management as reciprocal. This framework is well aligned with the identified problem as it positions ADHD related TSR strain not as a unidirectional result of student behaviour, but as co-constructed by teacher responses, student experiences and the institutional discourse. The Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (PBIS) frameworks place relational building strategies within a layered, multi-tiered system that aligns with the WA Department of Education's (2026) expectations for tiered, inclusive practice.

4. Synthesising the Critique

Engaging critically with the ten articles has fundamentally deepened and complicated the understanding of the identified problem. What has emerged through the critique establishes a multi-layered problem of practice in which the TSR dimensions are more deeply bidirectional than the literature typically acknowledges. A common insight of the critique is that the majority of reviewed articles use a consistent theoretical approach to how teacher and student outcomes are treated, with teacher wellbeing treated as a background concern rather than a co-equal research concern (Maclean *et al.*, 2023; Rogers

et al., 2015; Rushton *et al.*, 2020; Olivier & Archambault, 2017). While teacher stress, burnout, and frustration are noted, they are instrumentalised as explanatory variables for student outcomes. Only DeShazer *et al.* (2023), Aldabbagh *et al.* (2024a, 2024b), and Tavlin *et al.* (2025) depart from this pattern by positioning teacher wellbeing as a distinct focus.

A second insight is that the articles collectively describe the bidirectional nature of TSR dynamics but rarely theorise it in depth. DeShazer *et al.* (2023) come closest to articulating the cyclical nature of the TSR, namely that ADHD behaviour elevates teacher stress, which leads to teachers being less equipped to manage ADHD behaviour effectively, instead using punitive and inconsistent responses, escalating the TSR conflict further. The critique reveals that the TSR conflict influences ADHD symptomology and school disengagement, with frustrated teachers' emotional responses manifesting as punitive reactions that only serve to damage the very relationships they seek to manage (Rushton *et al.*, 2020; Ewe, 2019). However, across the corpus, this cycle is rarely modelled as a unified system.

The most important finding from the critique is the significant contradiction within the corpus. While the articles collectively and consistently posit that strong TSR quality protects ADHD students from lack of engagement, poor academic achievement and peer rejection, the intervention articles (Aldabbagh *et al.*, 2024b; Tavlin *et al.*, 2025) reveal that research into how TSR quality is built and sustained in practice is limited at best. This contradiction of strong outcome evidence alongside weak practice evidence reveals that the identified problem is not an empirical one. Addressing this transnational gap is the justification and central challenge of the identified gap.

5. Conclusion

This critique demonstrates that while the reviewed literature offers a consistent and well-evidenced account of how TSR quality shapes academic, behavioural and emotional outcomes for students with ADHD, it treats teacher wellbeing inconsistently, and largely as a secondary consequence of student behaviour rather than as an outcome deserving of equal theoretical and empirical attention. The bidirectional cycle through which ADHD-related behaviour elevates teacher stress, which in turn diminishes teachers' capacity to sustain positive relational practice, is acknowledged piecemeal across the corpus but is rarely modelled as an integrated system, and no reviewed study offers a unifying framework capable of explaining both directions of this relationship simultaneously. Compounding this theoretical gap is a practical one: although the literature robustly supports the protective value of strong TSR for ADHD students, evidence on how such relationships are built, sustained, and supported in everyday practice, particularly within the Australian inclusive education context, remains sparse. Addressing this dual gap will require research that positions teacher wellbeing as a primary outcome alongside student outcomes, draws on integrative theoretical models capable of capturing the cyclical nature of TSR dynamics, and generates practice-oriented evidence suited to the specific policy and classroom conditions of Australian primary schools.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

Mark McInnes brings a unique perspective to inclusive education, shaped by an extraordinary career transition from community service to educational practice. After 25 years in policing, where he dedicated himself to supporting and protecting the community, Mark recognised an opportunity to create even greater impact by working with young people during their formative years. This realisation led him to transition into primary education, where he could intervene earlier in children's lives and help shape positive futures. Mark's passion centres on inclusive education and ensuring every student feels as though they belong, with the opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or circumstances. He believes that education is the cornerstone of social equity and that all learners deserve access to quality, supportive learning environments where they feel valued and capable. Mark recently completed a Master of Education (Special and Inclusive Education) at the University of New England, Australia, and is now completing a Graduate Certificate in Autism Studies at Griffith University. He combines his extensive community engagement experience with evidence-based pedagogical practice, and his research interests focus on inclusive frameworks, relational pedagogy, and practical strategies for embedding equity in mainstream educational settings. Mark's unique journey from policing to education enriches his understanding of systemic support, collaborative practice, and the importance of building trusting relationships to foster student success and wellbeing.

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