

# AUTONOMY FOR IN WITH AND DESIGN

## Incorporating the meaning of autonomy in the design process

In today's society, there are unprecedented opportunities available to us, which has resulted in us as a society becoming more materialistic and individualistic. One of the results of this is that we value autonomy and strive to ensure that everyone can lead a life as autonomous as possible. In fact, we view autonomy as ultimate independence and freedom from outside influence. But by insisting so hard on independence and personal responsibility, it can feel like failing if you do not manage to do everything on your own. Meaning we are actually achieving the opposite effect of what we want: people living their best lives by being autonomous. However, one thing that is missing is what is actually meant by autonomy. It seems that different people have different interpretations of the concept, though this is not often discussed. Autonomy is seen as the ultimate goal without questioning its meaning. Therefore, this thesis set out to explore the meaning of autonomy and use this knowledge to create a tool for designers to communicate the complexity of the concept with their clients.

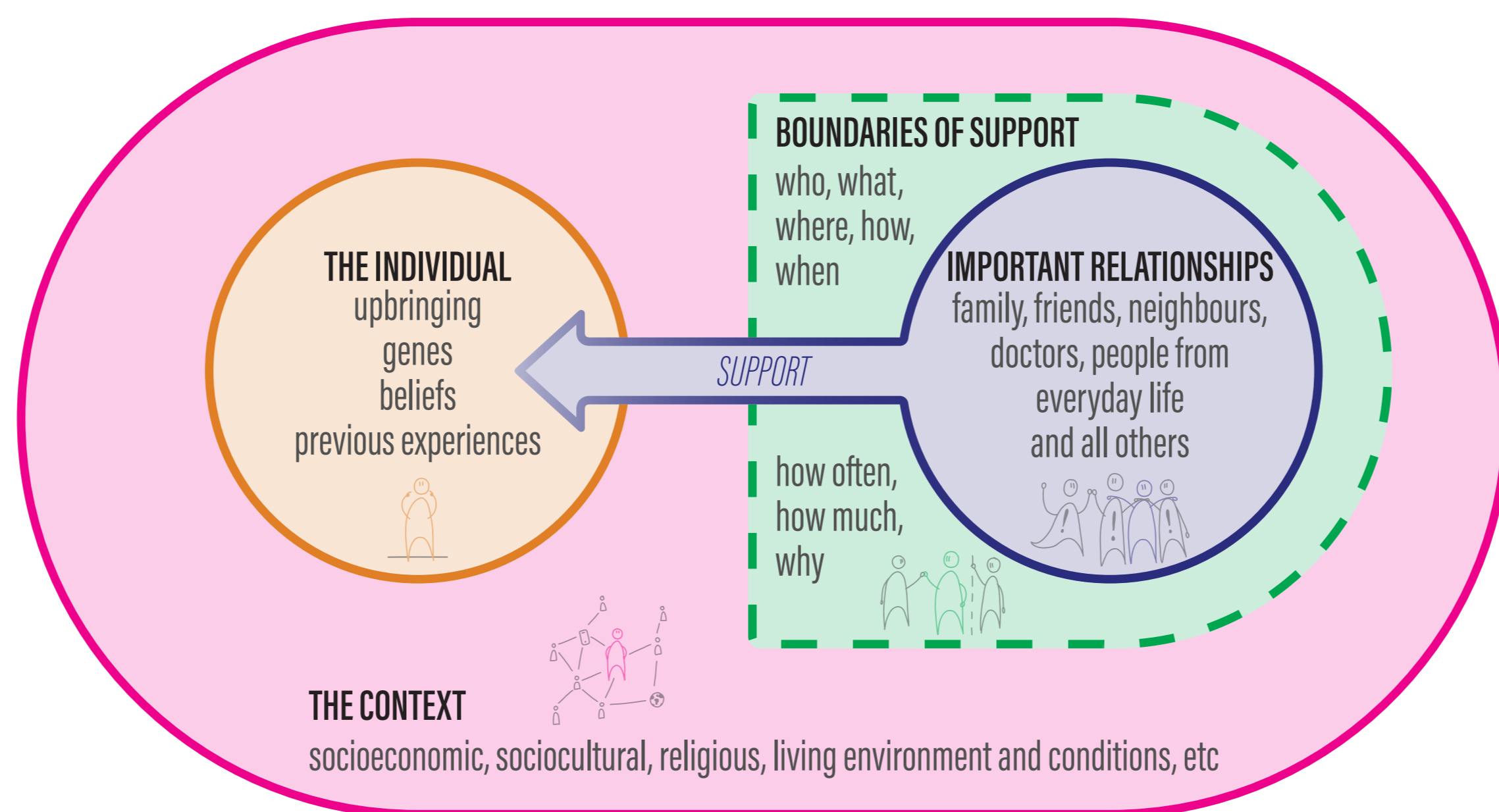
### THE INDIVIDUAL

Everything you do, choose and want to achieve comes from within. So this can mean that you are the only one allowed to make decisions and choices regarding your life, without influence and interference from the world around you. The only things that (subconsciously) influence you are factors that you cannot change, such as your genes, your upbringing and your previous experiences.

### IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS

People need other people to feel connected and to lead meaningful lives. The relationships you are a part of create a network in which you can ask for help and support. This network can support you in making choices and living your life. It is important that these relationships understand not only their own relationship with you, but also the other relationships you are a part of and how those can affect you and your life. Think, for example, of family and friends, but also doctors and teachers or employers.

## THE AUTONOMY FRAMEWORK



### BOUNDARIES OF SUPPORT

Being supported by your network means you can ask for help and support and get it when you need it, for example when you need to make responsible or right choices. This also works the other way around, you being there to support those in your network. Which relationships may help and when, to what extent and with what, differs per individual. Your view of support is not necessarily the same as someone else's, including your relationships.

### THE CONTEXT

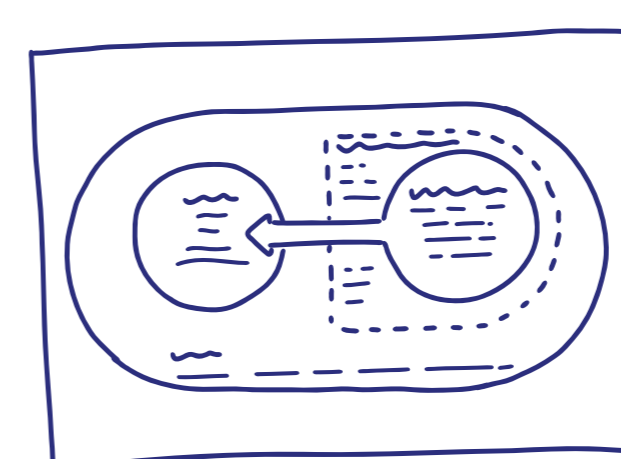
As a person you are not only connected to other people, but also to things such as products, services, and circumstances. All of these things can affect how you live your life, sometimes without you even knowing it. For example, your socioeconomic status and your living environment can influence the amount of information or resources you have access to to live your life the way you want to.

### The Autonomie voor/in/met/en Design toolkit

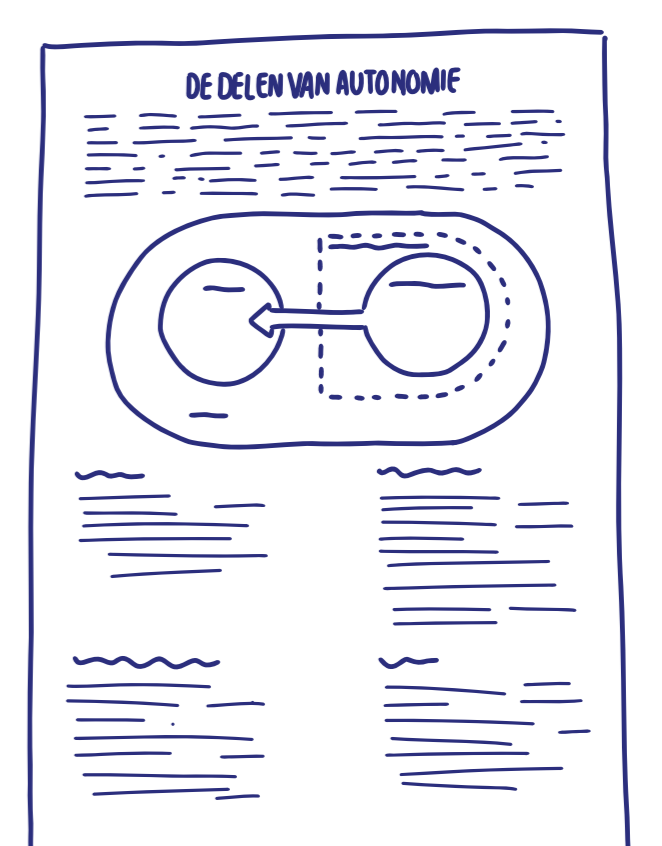
The insights from the research and explorations led to the design of a toolkit. The Autonomie voor/in/met/en Design toolkit contains tools for designers to actively include autonomy in their design practice. The toolkit provides designers with the tools to uncover assumptions clients might have regarding the autonomy of the target group. This will support designers in communicating the importance and complexity of autonomy with their clients at the start of a project. The toolkit consists of a card set with questions about the different parts of the autonomy framework, a visual overview of the framework and a poster explaining the framework and its relevance.



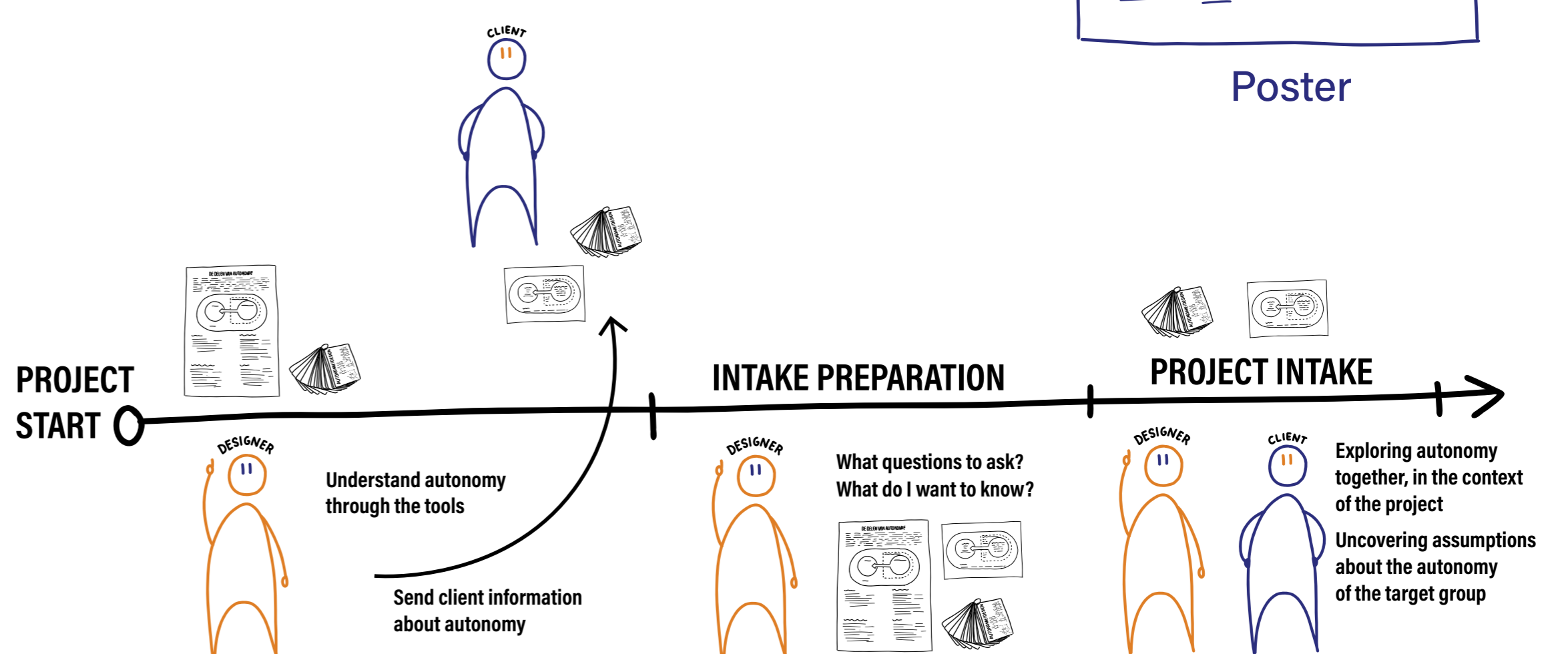
Cardset



Overview



Poster



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