



National
Autistic
Society

Maintaining well-being at home





Introduction

Some families will be facing added challenges, given the current situation with the coronavirus.

Trying to explain changes in routine to an autistic person, be that an adult or child, can be difficult.

This booklet has been developed to provide information and support with a focus on support for well-being.

This booklet signposts you to resources which you may find helpful. In doing so it is recognised that each autistic person is unique and there is no one resource or approach that will be right for all.

What is included?



- Top Tips for parents and carers
- Top Tips for autistic adults and children
- Routine
- Energy Accounting
- Strategies
- Physical Exercise
- Resources

Appendix



- Websites
- Further Reading





Top Tips for Parents and Carers

Model calmness, take care of yourself, find time to exercise, read a book, relax and to manage your consumption of social media and the news.

- Establish a routine
- Give clear and consistent messages
- Remember to use visuals to support communication
- Manage how much information you share on the coronavirus

Here are some visual resources that explain in simple terms what being in lockdown means:

Very simple social story titled, 'No School:'

<http://www.speakingspace.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Easy-read-coronavirus.pdf>



Coronavirus social story:

<http://www.speakingspace.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-lockdown-social-story.pdf>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice on staying at home, an easy read guide for adults: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876715/Coronavirus COVID-19 advice on staying at home 20200328.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876715/Coronavirus_COVID-19_advice_on_staying_at_home_20200328.pdf)

NAS Autism Helpline:

The autism helpline is operating email and web form service only for the time being, find out more information here:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/main.aspx>



More Top Tips



Top tips for autistic adults

Step 1: Give yourself time to absorb and process each piece of news; try only check the news at a few set points a day to stop yourself becoming overwhelmed

Step 2: Create a daily schedule – include time for eating, resting and fun

Step 3: Let people know how you would like to stay in contact during the lock down and your preferred method of communication



Top tips for families

Step 1: Support your autistic family member to understand the changes

Step 2: Put in structure, support and new routines to manage anxiety

Step 3: Focus on activities and learning to keep things positive

A full list of top tips can be accessed here:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/coronavirus/resources/tips.aspx>



Routine

Ensure days are based on a routine, are structured and are predictable.

“Reality to an autistic person is a confusing, interacting mass of events, people, places, sounds and sights... Set routines, times, particular routes and rituals all help to get order into an unbearably chaotic life. Trying to keep everything the same reduces some of the terrible fear.”

(Jolliffe (1992) in Howlin (2004), p.137)



Energy Accounting

Activities that use energy need to be balanced by activities which input energy or rest. It is important to remember this principle when planning the daily schedule.

Find out more about Energy Accounting at:

Purple Ella—Energy Accounting

<https://www.purpleella.com/2018/06/07/energy-accounting/>

Dr Tony Attwood “The energy accounting method”

<https://www.hotdoc.com.au/practices/blog/tony-attwood/>





Visual Schedule/Timetable

Consider introducing a visual schedule for each day. Timetable the whole day with allocated times to shower, eat, watch telly, play computer games, call mum etc.

Routine, routine, routine.

How to make a visual Schedule:

<https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/how-to-make-a-visual-schedule/>

Mindfulness



Mindfulness training is defined as an intervention which aims to help a person examine their current moment in a non-judgemental and accepting way. It is often used to reduce stress and anxiety and can support a person to respond to a situation in a less emotional way and therefore deal with distressing situations better . (Fleming et al 2015)

There are many apps on the app store which support the delivery of mindfulness techniques, some can be found at the link below.

<https://www.eastersealstech.com/2017/04/19/chill-outz-relaxation-techniques-children/>

Develop a sensory tool box

A sensory tool box is a collection of sensory strategies which support self-regulation. The tool box should be based on the sensory preferences/activities and should be available to access throughout the day.

How to create your own sensory toolbox:

<https://assistivetechblog.com/2017/07/create-sensory-toolbox.html>



Physical Exercise



Cosmic Yoga

Yoga, mindfulness and relaxation designed specially for kids aged 3+

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>

Supermovers

Get moving whilst learning. Free curriculum-mapped videos, arranged by age-group and subject from the BBC.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/supermovers>



PE with Joe

Joe Wickes is helping children keep fit whilst schools are closed, follow PE with Joe here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>

Drumbeat Outreach

Share some ideas for activities that can be done with little/no equipment and without needing a large amount of space.

<https://www.drumbeatasd.org/page/?title=My+Health+and+Wellbeing&pid=352>





Resources

How am I feeling today visual resource:

<http://www.speakingspace.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/feeling-boards-57-and-12.pdf>

Speaking Space have developed a number of resources to help during the coronavirus outbreak, they can be found here:

<http://www.speakingspace.co.uk/covid-19-information/>

Drumbeat Outreach have developed a range of social stories relating to COVID 19, they can be found here:

<https://www.drumbeatasd.org/page/?title=Social+Stories&pid=346>



To promote health and wellbeing independence skills should continue to be worked on whilst you are at home.

Drumbeat Outreach have shared some suggestions that can help with this, they can be found here:

<https://www.drumbeatasd.org/page/?title=My+Independence&pid=356>





Relaxation—Resources (Children)

Creating Space to teach mindfulness to kids with autism

<https://www.teachchildrenmeditation.com/toolkit-for-teaching-mindful-activities-kids-on-the-autistic-spectrum/>

Relaxation Training for Kids on the Autism Spectrum

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/autism-and-anxiety/201906/relaxation-training-kids-the-autism-spectrum>

Meditation Apps for Kids

<https://www.common sense media.org/lists/meditation-apps-for-kids>

The Autism Toolbox: Emotional Wellbeing

<https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/advice.page?id=qJAJMuVhovc>

Free Calm Pack

<https://www.relaxkids.com/calm-pack>





Relaxation—Resources (Adults)

Meditation for Autism: Body Mind Relaxation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1cbGCHuUe0>

Autism Calming Sensory

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBetk72xna_fE4kmN1NLtmw

12 best mindfulness apps to help you keep calm during a crisis

<https://www.independent.co.uk/extras/indybest/gadgets-tech/phones-accessories/best-mindfulness-apps-a8217931.html>

Physical Exercise

PE with Joe Wickes is helping children keep fit whilst schools are closed, follow PE with Joe here and also access the workouts he offers for adults):

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>





Appendix

- Further information and activities
- Websites for parents, carers and professionals
- Further Reading

Links are provided in this booklet to signpost you to resources which you may find helpful; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval for all content on the external site or any products or services offered by the organisation who own the site. We also recognise that each autistic person is unique and no one resource will be right for everyone.





Further information and activities

7 Apps to Help Calm Individuals with Autism, Anxiety, Other Special Needs

<https://www.eastersealstech.com/2017/04/19/chill-outz-relaxation-techniques-children/>

Buckinghamshire Family Information Service - advice, activities, resources and services

<https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/advice.page?id=qJAJMuVhovc>

Social distancing easy read

<https://www.sclد.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Section-4-Social-Distancing-Easy-Read.pdf>

Action for Happiness - Active Coping Calendar, PDF available for download

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/active-april>

A free resource of calming activities

<https://www.relaxkids.com/calm-pack>

A list of free, online, boredom-busting resources!

<https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-online-resources-for-anyone-who-is-isolated-at-home>

Virtual Tours of Museums, Educational Sites and Galleries

<https://www.familydaystriedandtested.com/free-virtual-tours-of-world-museums-educational-sites-galleries-for-children/>

Free Online Audio Books

<http://www.openculture.com/freeaudiobooks>





Websites for parents, carers and professionals

BUZZ Training for schools

<https://www.compass-uk.org/buzz-training/>

Video/ information—Guidance for professionals

<https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/our-policy-work/equality-human-rights/mental-health-of-people-with-autism/>

BBC news regarding a new Facebook group sharing useful resources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-52019724>

How to support autistic children and adults during coronavirus pandemic

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/parenting/autism-autistic-children-advice-coronavirus-17974005>

Meherzin Das, Trustwide Professional Lead for Psychology and Psychological Therapies, share advice on how to maintain your health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak:

<https://youtu.be/QjCsfLPhXN4>

Therapists and Counselling

<https://livingautism.com/therapists-and-counselling/>

Teach teens and children meditation

<https://www.teachchildrenmeditation.com/>

Mental Health and Wellbeing—supporting children

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Mental Health and Wellbeing—supporting adults

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Coronavirus guidance translated in to 35 languages

<https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/coronavirus-information/>





Further Reading

Chris Mitchell (2014) “Coping with the effects of Asperger syndrome through Mindfulness techniques”

<https://network.autism.org.uk/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/Mindfulness%20-%20a%20personal%20perspective.pdf>

Der Neil Hammond (2014) “Mindfulness with adults with autism spectrum conditions”

<https://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/mindfulness-adults-autism-spectrum-conditions-professional-perspective>

Empowering Parents: Using parental training to reduce anxiety for children and young people with Autism.

<https://network.autism.org.uk/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/Empowering%20parents%20for%20anxiety%20management%20-%20Sheila%20Cross.pdf>

Emotional wellbeing and mental health in young autistic people

<https://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/emotional-wellbeing-and-mental-health-young-people-asd>

Mindfulness-Based Program for Autism Spectrum Disorder: a Qualitative Study of the Experiences of Children and Parents (Journal)

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12671-019-01202-x>

Mindfulness-Based programmes for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their Parents (Journal)

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320245817_Mindfulness-Based_Program_for_Children_with_Autism_Spectrum_Disorder_and_Their_Parents_Direct_and_Long-Term_Improvements

Meditation as a potential Therapy for Autism: A Review (Journal)

<https://www.hindawi.com/journals/aurt/2012/835847/>

