Autism Strategies

Jordanhill School

AUTISTIC QUALITIES
© 2018 ASPERGERS REALITY
THINKING DIFFERENTLY
BUT YOU'RE NAKED...
EMPEROR
YOU LOOK GREAT!
HONESTY
ANALYSING
LONG-TERM MEMORY
NEEDLE
HAYSTACK
DETAIL-ORIENTED
hello
blackbird
LOYAL FRIEND
HYPERFOCUS
CREATIVITY
HUG
EMPATHETIC

Love Autism

Triad of Impairment

People with an ASD have significant difficulty in all three areas of what is known as the Triad of Impairment.

Diagnosticians look for certain patterns of behaviour in the three areas;

1. Social interaction
2. Social communication
3. Social imagination and flexible thinking

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1. Social Interaction

…understanding all those unwritten social rules …

- eye contact!!!
- how to read/understand and use body language & facial expression – i.e. how to read people
- personal space
- what's socially appropriate/boundaries
- how to join in and play/work with/get along with others
- friendship – how to get and keep a friend - not the absence of will but skill

If they don't know the rules, how do they know when they are breaking them?

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I can remember the frustration of not being able to talk. I knew what I wanted to say, but I could not get the words out, so I would just scream - Temple Grandin

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2. Social communication It's about understanding …

- words are useful (and often necessary)
- social situations – how to 'read' them/expectations/boundaries
- people don't always mean what they say – literal/figures of speech
- fact v fiction
- your tone, volume, words matter - depending on who you are speaking to (so can come across as cheeky)
- how to manage and grade/regulate your emotions

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- how to start, sustain and end a conversation. Appropriate language/topics
- level of emotional/social maturity!
- just because I talk a lot it doesn't mean I understand easily.

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‘English (the spoken word) is my second language. Autism is my first’.

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Communication with an Autistic person is our responsibility. Speaking clearly, and allowing time for them to process information is key. Visuals are often helpful.
Joy of Autism 💙

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3. Social Imagination/Flexible Thinking Being able to think what to do, say, how to behave …

- resistance to change
- difficulty planning/organising – themselves, belongings, thoughts, actions -> problem solving (poor executive function)
- obsessions & rituals
- extreme distractibility/focus (weak central coherence)
- share/co-operate -> egocentric
- difficulty understanding thoughts, needs, intentions of others (poor theory of mind)

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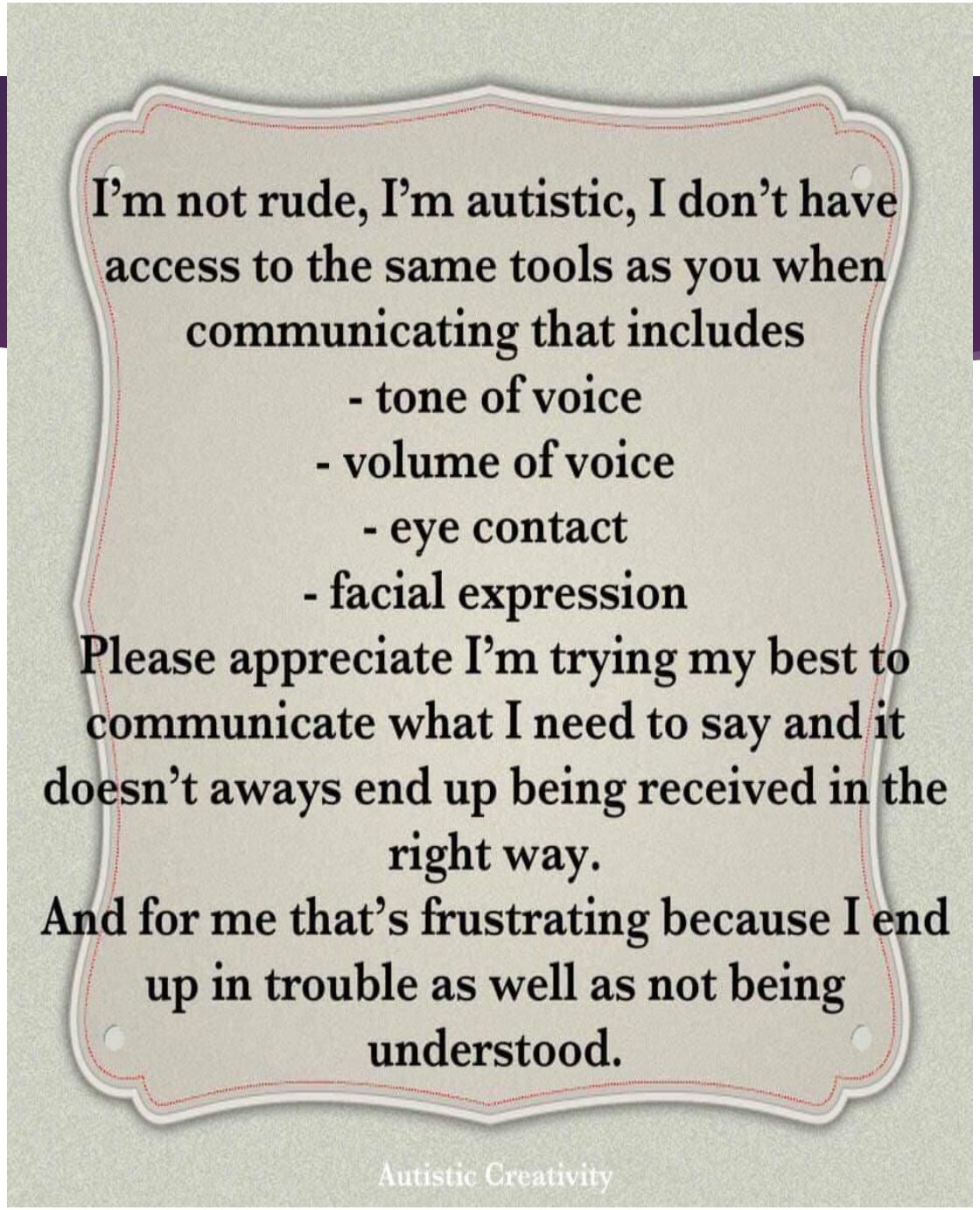
I'm not rude, I'm autistic, I don't have access to the same tools as you when communicating that includes
- tone of voice
- volume of voice
- eye contact
- facial expression
Please appreciate I'm trying my best to communicate what I need to say and it doesn't aways end up being received in the right way.
And for me that's frustrating because I end up in trouble as well as not being understood.
Autistic Creativity

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Neurotypical social toolbox

(Sarah Hendrickx)

- Understand unwritten social rules
- Know how you feel and tell others in a social appropriate way
- Able to read social situations – and understand what's going on
- Look at the bigger picture/put things into perspective
- Recognise others aren't 'freaking out' so it's ok
- Able to work out what to do, say, how to behave
- Cope when things change – accurately guess what's going to happen and if things go wrong you'll work out a strategy (that won't have an impact on your future)
- Read other people – good guesses about their thoughts, feelings, needs
- Ask for help in a socially appropriate way …

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Autistic social toolbox

(Sarah Hendrickx)

Either nothing

or a hammer!

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The hammer approach …

(Sarah Hendrickx)

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Or you may see nothing at all - particularly in school

(masking)!

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MASKING!!!

- Conscious and unconscious.
- Defence mechanism – keeps people safe. More neurotypical -> more liked, not picked on -> life easier.
- Boys mask too!
- Masking v personas.
- Its about suppressing the fact you are autistic

And it's EXHAUSTING!

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ANXIETY

Is the overarching emotion of autism

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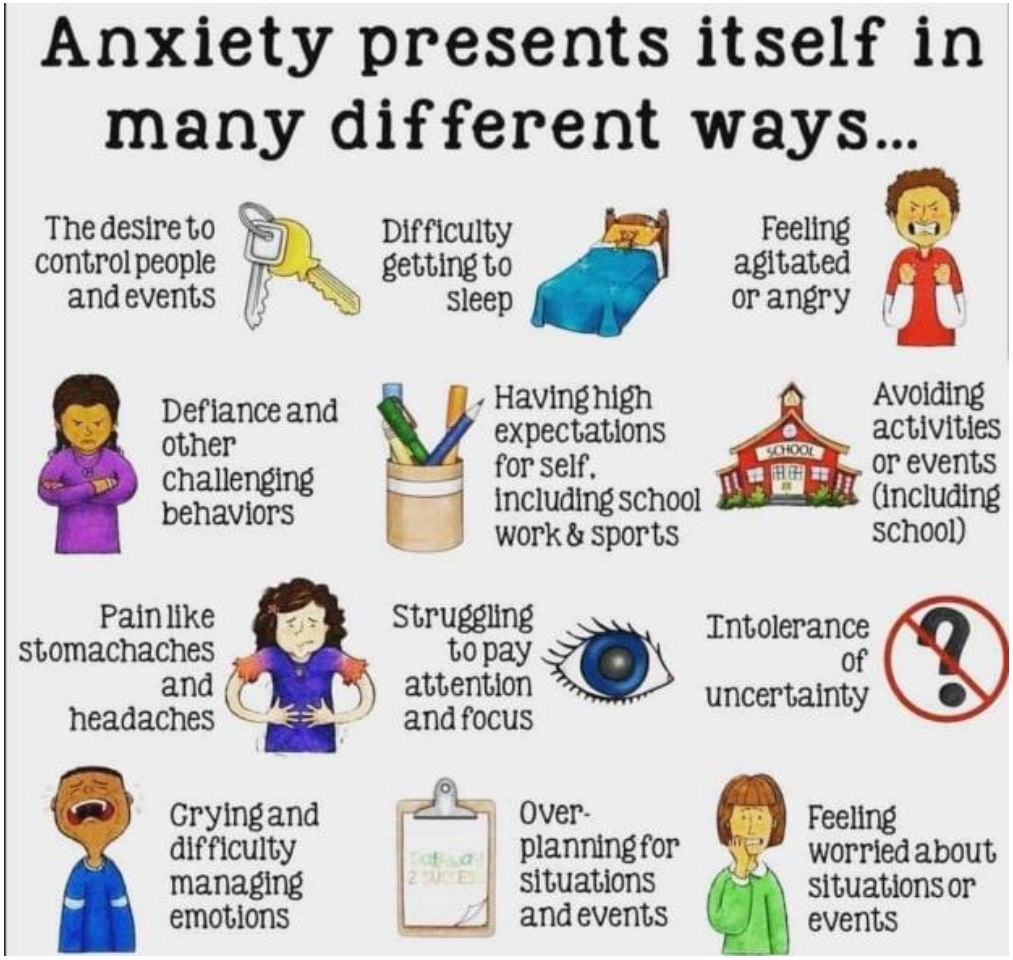
How do I know when a child is anxious?



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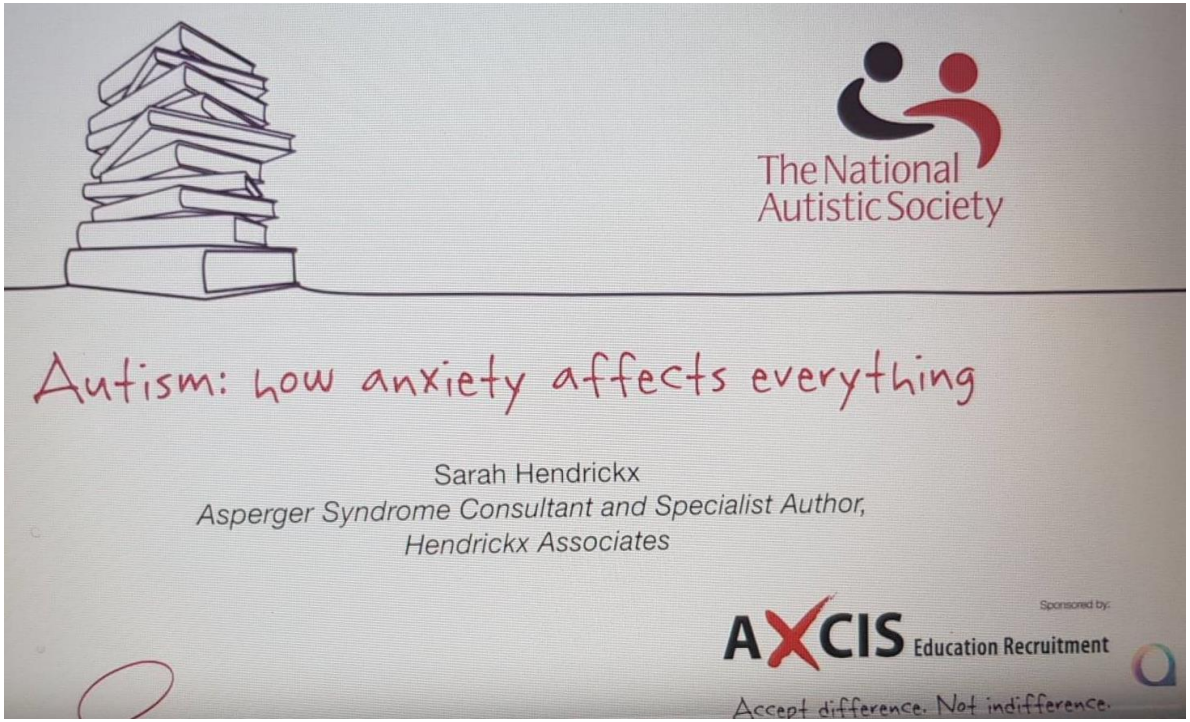

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPD_yzMHJIs&t=2155s&authuser=0

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Let's Think Behaviour

Behaviour is a form of communication

If this is so... what is the communication behind the behaviour?

Think about what the child is telling you before you respond!

Let's Think Posters © www.theplaydoctors.co.uk 2015 01234 391436
Widgit Symbols © Widgit Software 2000-2015 www.widgit.com

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Some short films … what is autism?

- Scottish Autism 'What is autism?'

http://www.scottishautism.org/about-autism/about-autism/what-autism

- Amazing things Happen

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JdCY-cdgkI&t=3s

- NAS 'Do you know somebody with autism?'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4G0HTIUBII

- 'We are all different'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fy7gUIp8Ms&t=7s

- You tube 'Rosie King'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejpWWP1HNGQ

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Main Psychological Theories

Ideas which try to explain what autism is …

1. Poor Theory of mind
2. Weak Central coherence
3. Poor Executive functioning

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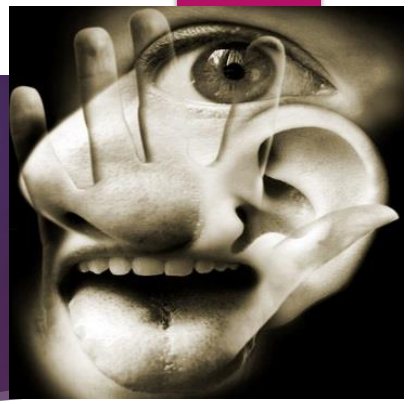
Sensory differences



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Can you name our senses?

- Sight
- Taste
- Smell
- Touch
- Sound
- Vestibular – balance. Helps us to maintain balance and posture and understand how fast/force
- Proprioception – body awareness, helps us know where our body is in space and how different body parts are moving

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… but now there's an 8th

- Interoception

Close your eyes … what do you 'feel' inside your body?

Heart – fast or slow?

Breathing – deep or shallow?

Do you need the loo?

Muscles - tense or loose?

Tummy – hungry?

Are you feeling hot or cold?

Most of us … able to 'feel' all of these sensations … interoception.

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Interoceptive system

- Receptors -> brain interprets hunger, fullness, itch, pain, body temperature, nausea, need for loo etc.
- Influences self-regulation. Thirsty? – get a drink. Full? – stop eating. Cold? – get a jumper. Anxious? – seek comfort. Frustrated? – seek help.
- Helps us feel our emotions. Each emotion feels differently in the body.
- Difficult to identify emotions without these sensations.

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Hollie, an 18-year old with autism reports:

'I went and got a plate of food thinking that I was hungry. I wasn't hungry. I was bored. My body was not giving me clear signals, so I did not know what I was feeling'.

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Alex, aged 14, said:

'When I was young I used to scream the place down when my mum took me swimming because it had a bobbly floor and I simply couldn't walk on it. It was like a painful fear'.

'The labels on clothes often feel like they are slicing me open like a nasty paper cut'.

'I hate anything tight. Tight things make me feel sick'.

(NAS EarlyBird Plus Healthy Minds Programme)

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'Some adults ... consider their sensory sensitivity has a greater impact on their daily lives than problems with making friends, managing emotions and finding appropriate employment'.

(Dr. Tony Attwood)

http://www.autism.org.uk/sensory (info and video from NAS)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plPNhooUUuc (a walk down the street …)

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I don't like to brush my teeth

I can be sensitive to loud sounds

I don't like to brush, wash or cut my hair

I don't like bright lights

I like to smell people and objects sometimes

Some smells really bother me

I don't like tags on my clothes

I am a picky eater

I don't like to wear clothes

I can be clumsy and fall over things sometimes

I enjoy being squeezed, I like pressure

I have poor gross motor skills

I don't want my hands dirty

I have poor fine motor skills

Sometimes I don't like to be touched

I get overstimulated and meltdown

I like wearing the same clothes

I get fearful and anxious sometimes

I lose my balance

I overreact to minor scrapes and cuts

I crave fast spinning

I cling to adults I trust

Poor body awareness

I sometimes walk on my toes

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Implications of sensory differences?

- Difficulty processing everyday sensory information.
- Any of the senses may be over or under-sensitive, or both, at different times.
- Can affect behaviour and can have a profound effect on a person's life.

Sometimes an autistic person may behave in a way that you wouldn't immediately link to sensory sensitivities. A person who struggles to deal with everyday sensory information can experience sensory overload, or information overload. Too much information can cause stress, anxiety, and possibly physical pain. This can result in withdrawal, challenging behavior or meltdown.

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Let's talk about meltdowns …

When young person is in the middle of a 'meltdown' it means they are in the middle of overwhelming distress.
'Fight/flight/freeze' mechanism has kicked in. When this is triggered … all our energies are focussed on muscular strength and the thinking part of the brain (make judgements, control impulse, listen to reason, respond to requests) temporarily shuts down. In this heightened state a child is extremely frightened, very confused and unable to process thoughts or ideas clearly.

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Tantrums

Goal oriented

A scene is made so person making it can get what they want

Watches for reactions

Depending on the reactions of whoever's 'in charge' intensity or nature of tantrum may change

Will Avoid Getting Hurt

Individual is careful to avoid injury

Ends Quickly

When goal is acheived, or individual gets tired of the tantrum, it ends quickly

Individual is in Control

Individual is in control of their actions the entire time

Meltdowns

No Goals

No demands are made before or during the meltdown

No Interest in Reactions

Individual has no interest in how others react to their behavior

May Hurt Themselves

Because they're reacting on a primal level to being overloaded, they don't take action to avoid injury, so they may be injured during the meltdown

Slow to End

Meltdowns last longer than tantrums, and slow down only when child acclimates to surroundings at their own pace

Individual is Not In Control

Because the individual is massively overstimulated, they're put in survival mode and react instinctively to the distress they're in

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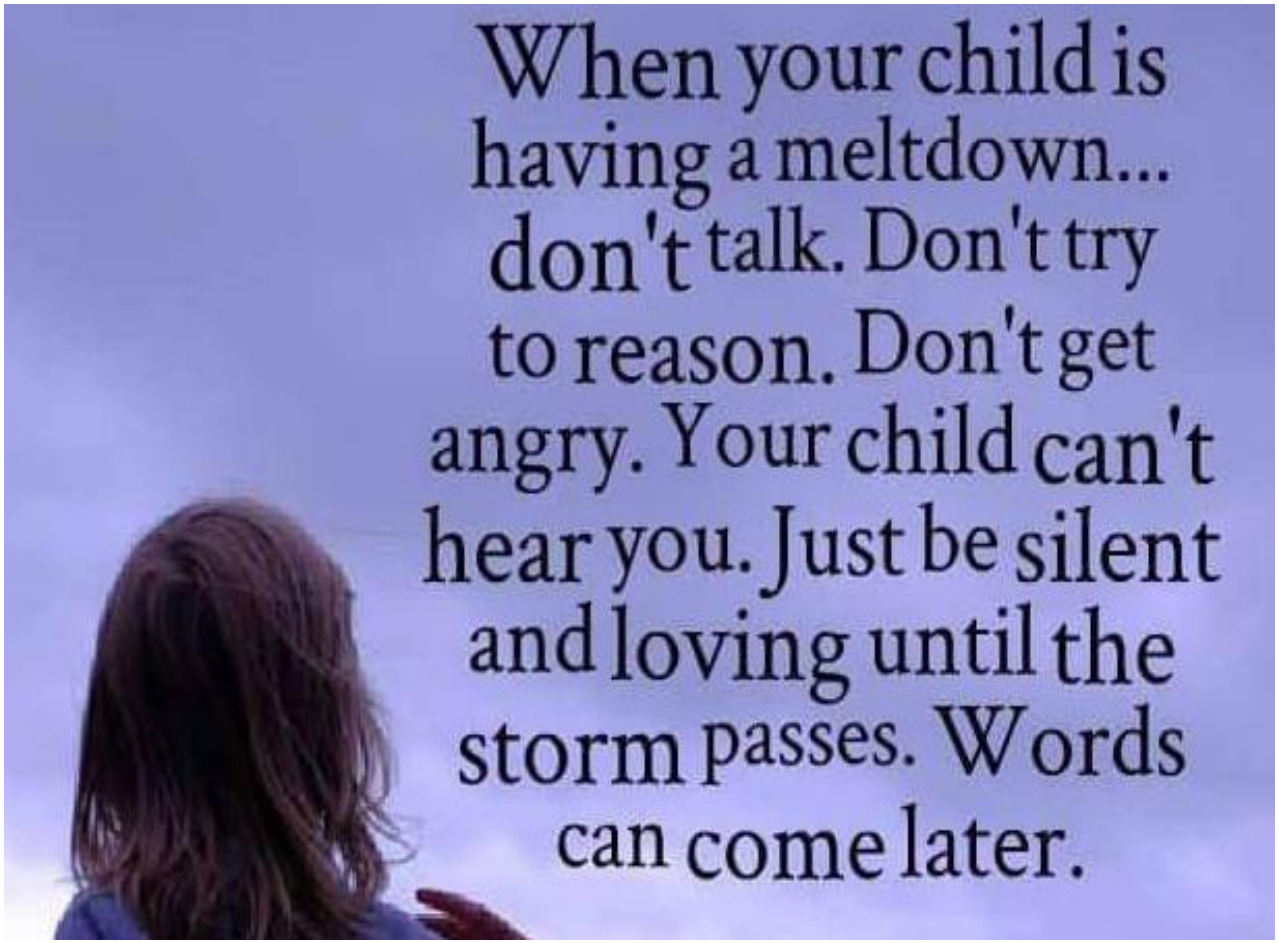
When your child is having a meltdown... don't talk. Don't try to reason. Don't get angry. Your child can't hear you. Just be silent and loving until the storm passes. Words can come later.

So … how do I best support the autistic person I know?

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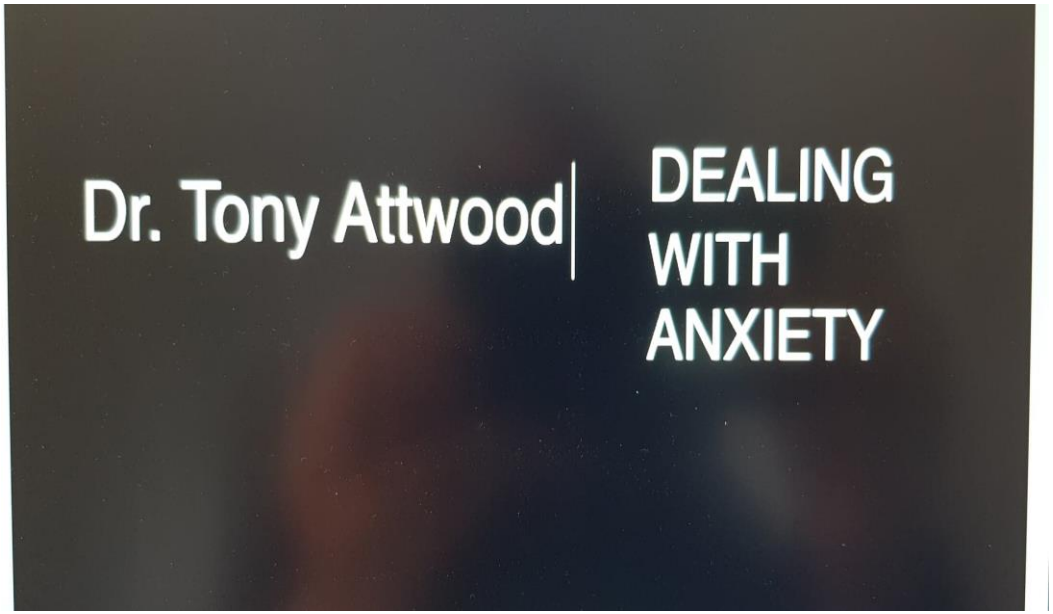
Some advice from …



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLoHfU-WEUw

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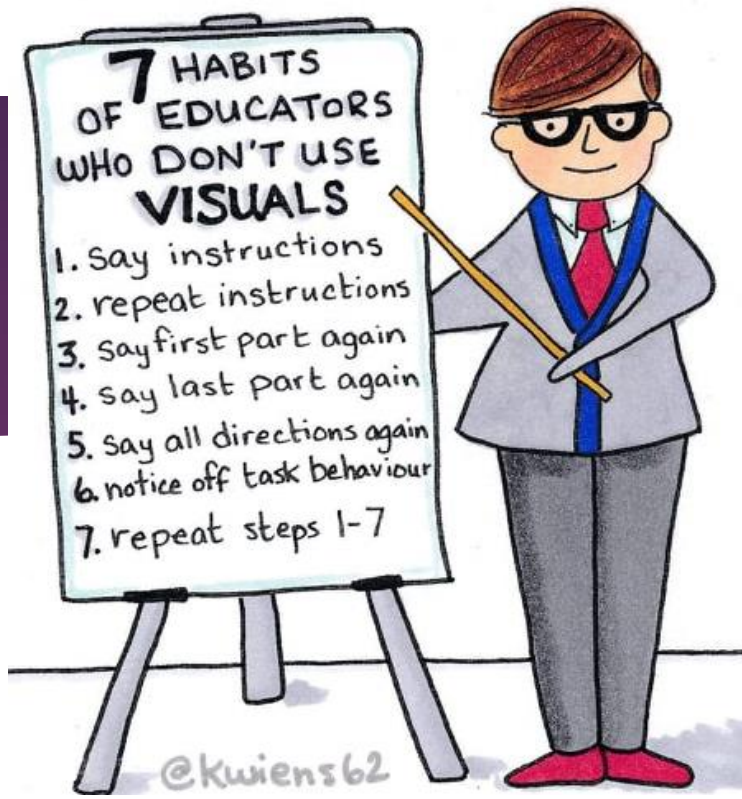
1. Use visuals …



- ✓ Diary/calendar
- ✓ 'to do' list – text
- ✓ IKEA instructions
- ✓ Road signs
- ✓ Recipes
- ✓ Post it notes
- ✓ Physical boundaries – screens, art area, different departments
- ✓ Timetables
- ✓ Photographs
- ✓ Text
- ✓ **Social stories and comic strip conversations**
- ✓ Timers (watch, sand, clock)
- ✓ Visual boundaries (tape on floor)/carpet tiles
- ✓ **1-5 or 1-10 scales**
- ✓ Gesture
- ✓ Behaviour prompts/visuals
- ✓ Class rules

2. Structure, routine, predictability …

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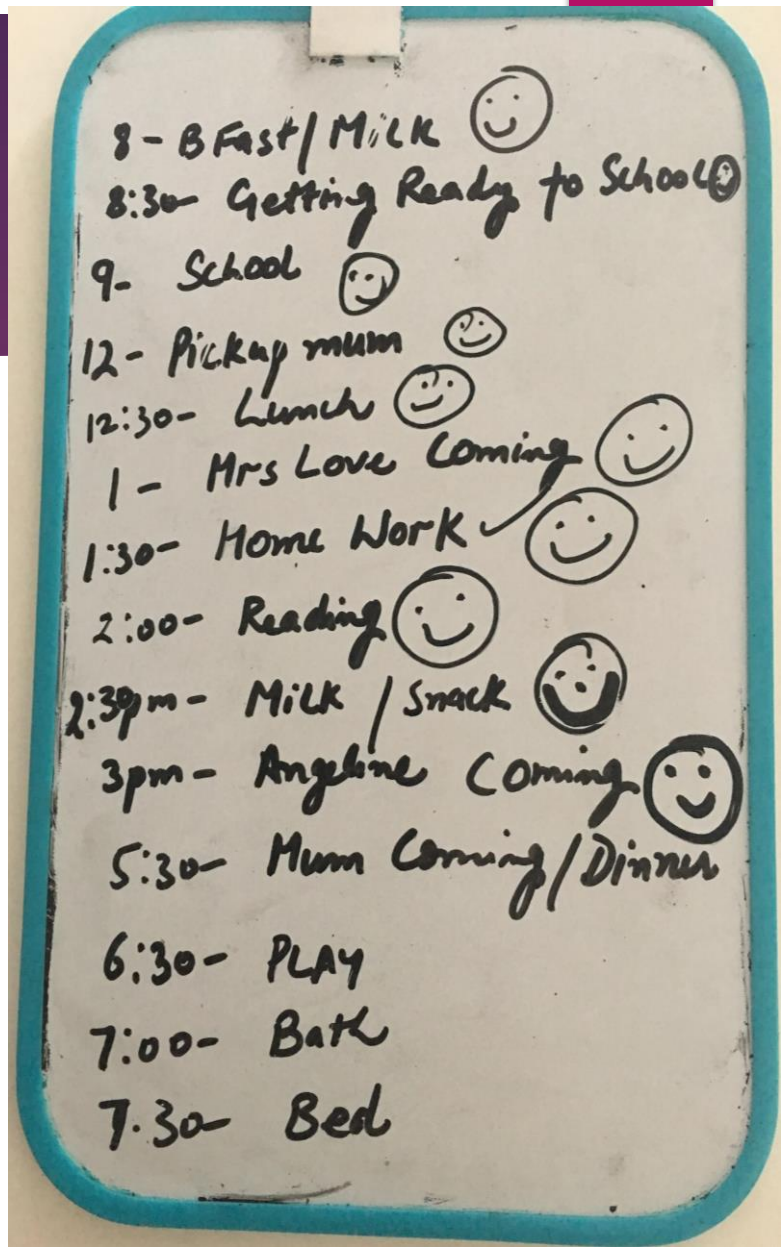
My Calendar
October
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday
School
Home
No School
Halloween


8 - BFast/Milk
8:30 - Getting Ready to School
9 - School
12 - Pickup mum
12:30 - Lunch
1 - Mrs Love Coming
1:30 - Home Work
2:00 - Reading
2:30pm - Milk / Snack
3pm - Angeline Coming
5:30 - Mum Coming/Dinner
6:30 - PLAY
7:00 - Bath
7.30 - Bed

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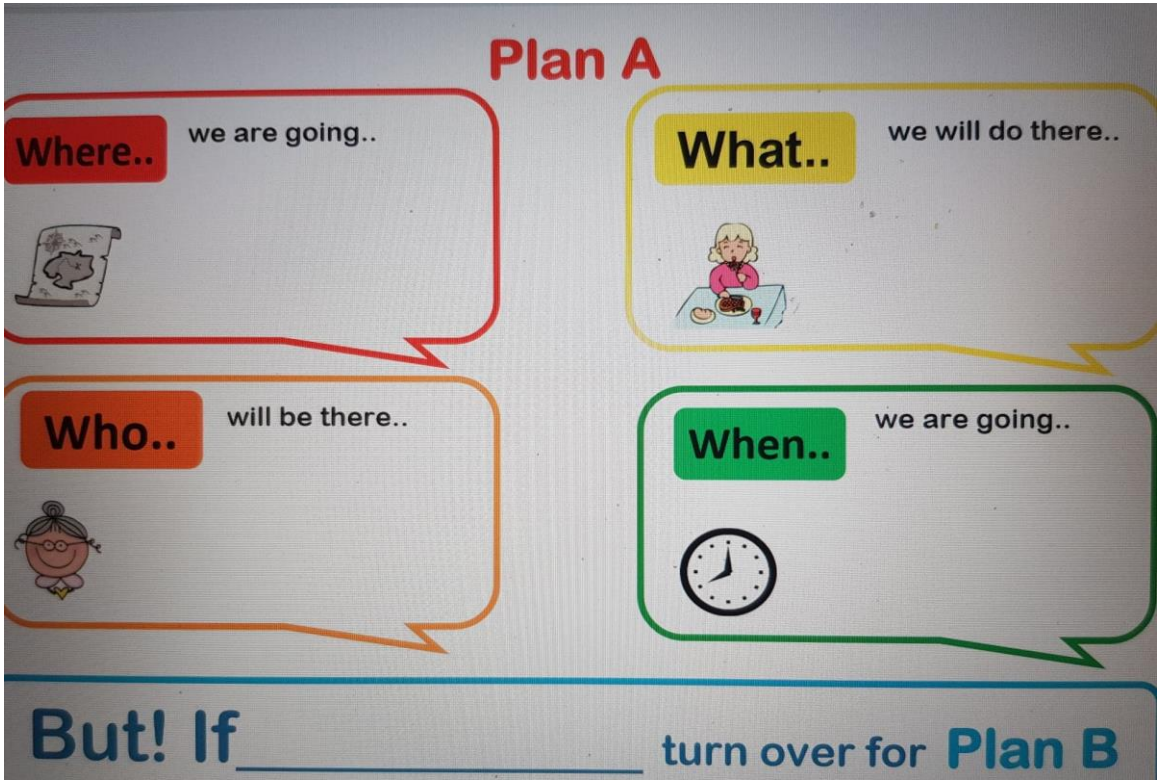

http://www.hacw.nhs.uk/our-services/speech-language-therapy/childrens/resources/

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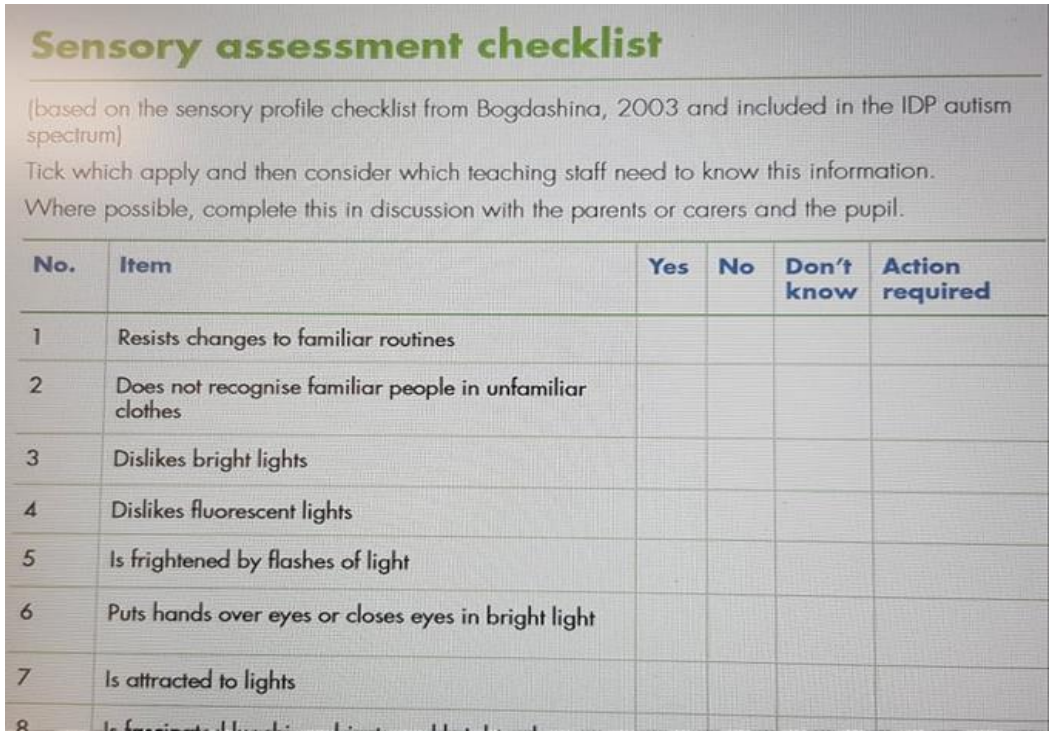
3. Consider sensory differences?

1. Take into account sensory differences. Sensory profile?
http://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/37.2-Sensory-assessment-checklist.pdf



Sensory assessment checklist

(based on the sensory profile checklist from Bogdashina, 2003 and included in the IDP autism spectrum)

Tick which apply and then consider which teaching staff need to know this information.

Where possible, complete this in discussion with the parents or carers and the pupil.

No.	Item	Yes	No	Don't know	Action required
1	Resists changes to familiar routines				
2	Does not recognise familiar people in unfamiliar clothes				
3	Dislikes bright lights				
4	Dislikes fluorescent lights				
5	Is frightened by flashes of light				
6	Puts hands over eyes or closes eyes in bright light				
7	Is attracted to lights				
8	Is fascinated by shiny objects and light reflections				

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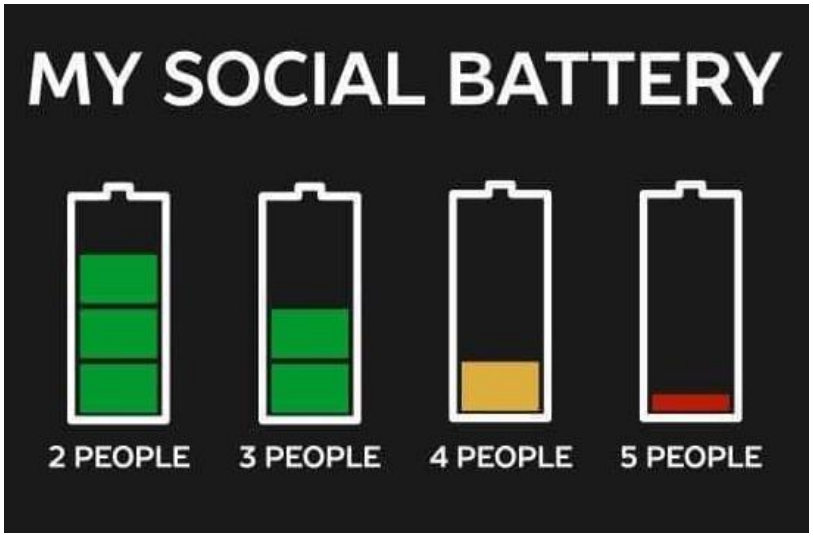
4. Regular breaks …

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JytswMbcd_U&t=2s



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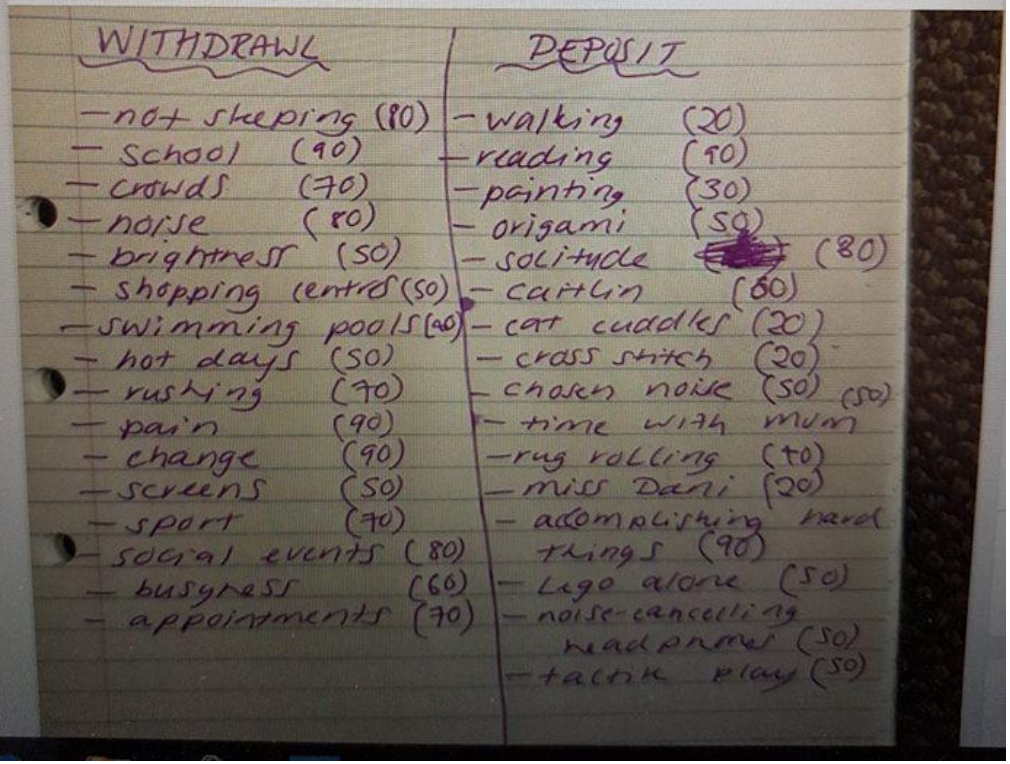
Last week I attended a conference about autism spoken by Tony Attwood and learned so much. One thing that I thought was a revelation in teaching children (and adults!) self-regulation skills was the concept of a Energy Bank Account. The idea being; learning to be aware of where energy withdrawals and deposits come from. So today Sno and I sat down together and did her list of things that sap her energy and things that revitalise her. Then we gave them all a numerical value. Now; the gist is - when a withdrawal is made, or numerous withdrawals made - deposits HAVE to be made too to top up the bank account otherwise it runs into negative and then that's when meltdowns occur. Hopefully this will help Sno be more mindful of her triggers and the things she needs to take responsibility for when it comes to recovering and avoiding melt down. #autism #asd #girlscanbeautistictoo #autismspectrum #selfregulation #selfempowerment #tonyattwood #energybankaccount #selfcare



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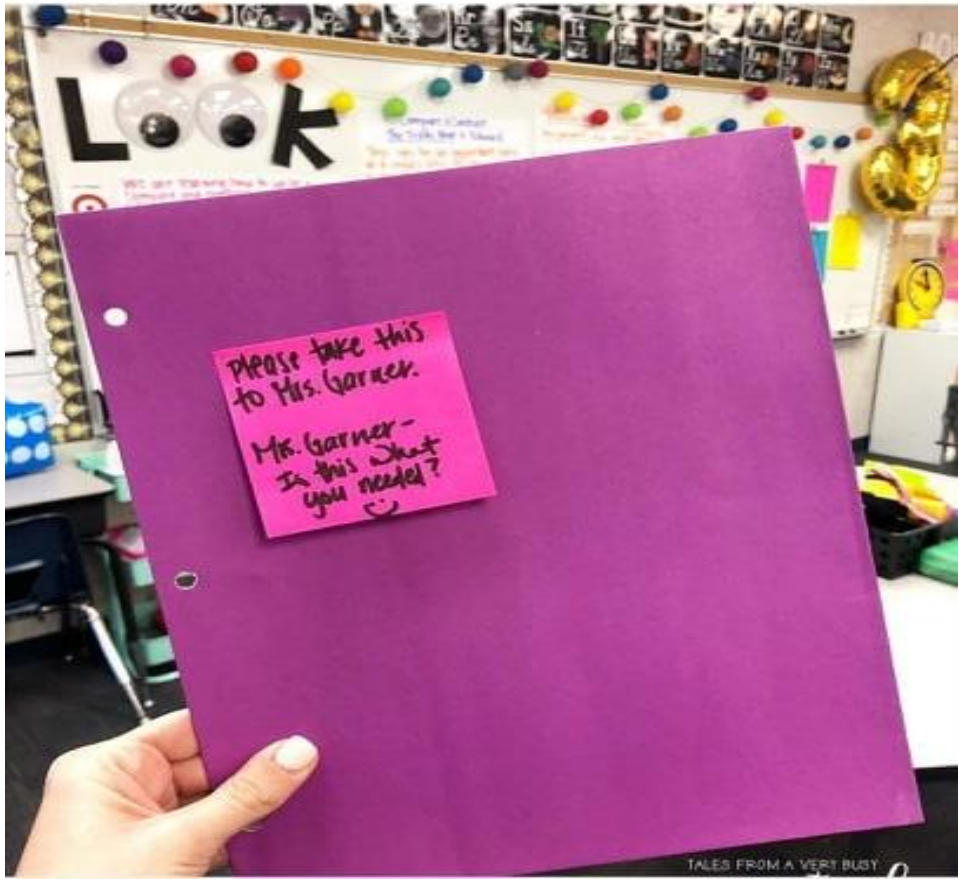
🚨 ALERT! 🚨 Time for an effective classroom management strategy! 🙌🏻 I got this idea from my cousin (an amazing high school English teacher) and her team. If you have a student who just needs a break (a time to just walk around and reset) then you can give them the purple folder. 💜 You can ask them to take it to another teacher. That teacher w... See More



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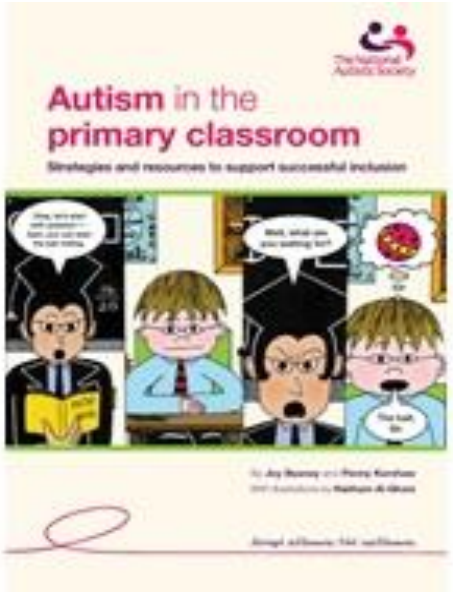
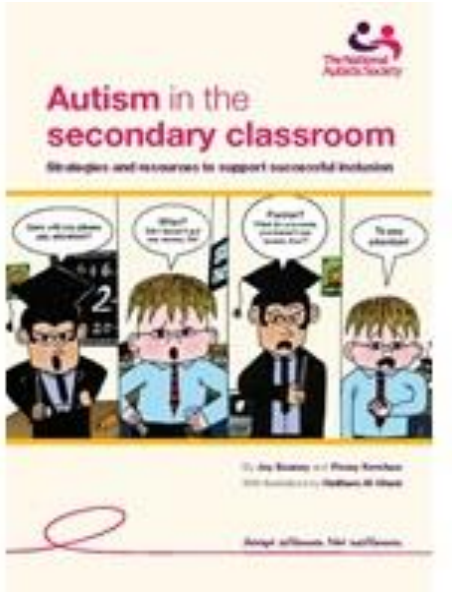
5. Teach emotional understanding …

https://www.emotionworks.org.uk/

6. Ensure curriculum differentiated





http://www.autism.org.uk/products/core-nas-publications/autism-in-the-primary-classroom.aspx

http://www.autism.org.uk/products/core-nas-publications/autism-in-the-secondary-classroom.aspx

http://www.autism.org.uk/products/core-nas-publications/helping-young-children-with-autism-to-learn.aspx

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7. Support during unstructured times

Breaks, playtime, lunchtime, wet play, assembly, trips, Hallowe'en, Christmas, Hallowe'en, Health Week …

http://www.autism.org.uk/products/core-nas-publications/classroom-and-playground.aspx

http://www.autism.org.uk/about/in-education/difficulties-at-lunch-and-break-times.aspx

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8. Physical activity …

Get them moving!

- Endorphins – feel good chemicals
- Endorphins increase with activity -> more positive feelings
- Increase a little -> benefits. Walking to and from school, carrying washing basket, pushing shopping trolley, helping move snow …
- Team games can be a challenge
- Doesn't have to be sports …

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From NAS EarlyBird Health Minds programme

Everyday activities	Traditional sports
Gardening	Swimming
Walking the dog	Jogging
Playing on the Wii	Tennis
Washing the car	Trampolining
Hoovering	Athletics
Running errands	Team sports such as rugby, football and netball

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9. Diet

As the saying goes ‘you are what you eat’

- Restricted diet? -> How’s? Small differences
- Some parents – involve child in planning, shopping, cooking …
- Dietician/Occupational Therapist

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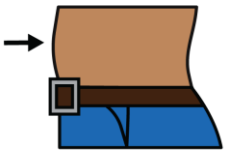
10. Relaxation, meditation, mindfulness, yoga …

Jill Trevena
Practical Mindset

Belly breathing



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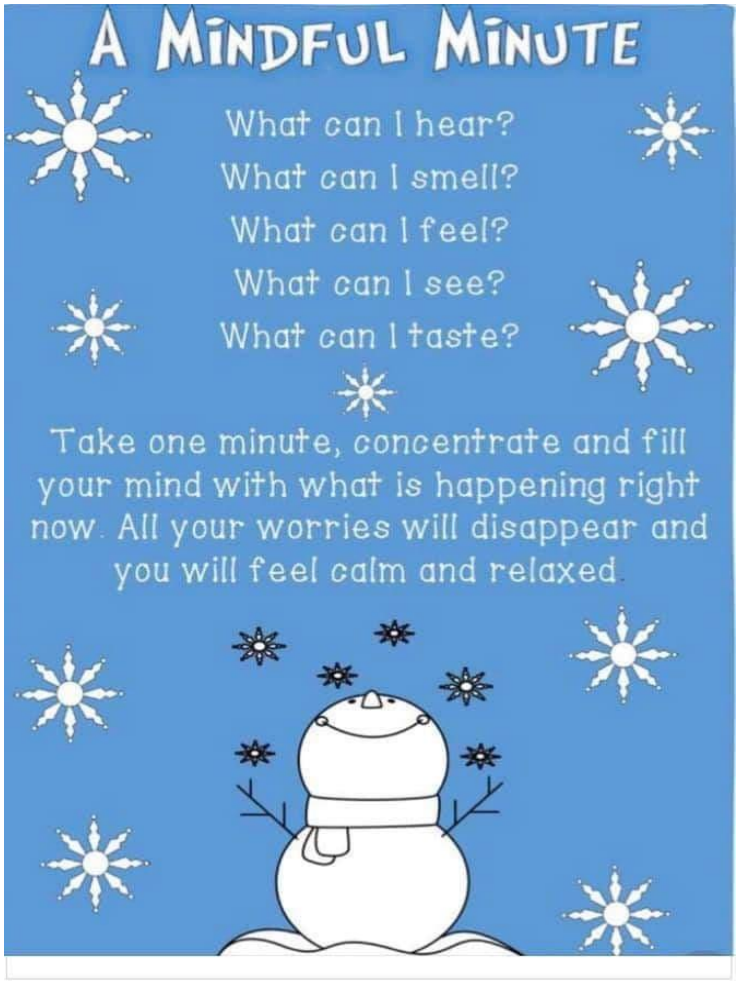
A MINDFUL MINUTE
What can I hear?
What can I smell?
What can I feel?
What can I see?
What can I taste?
Take one minute, concentrate and fill your mind with what is happening right now. All your worries will disappear and you will feel calm and relaxed.

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11. Special interest …

as a ‘thought blocker’

- During quiet times
- Energiser
- Reduce anxiety
- Pleasing
- BUT … use in moderation
- How can they ‘shine?’

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12. Be with a safe person, animals, nature …

This Is Why Children Are 800% Worse When Their Mothers Are Around

Because YOU, mama, are their safe place. YOU are the place they can come to with all of their problems. If you can't make something better... well, then who else can?

YOU, dear mama, are a garbage disposal of unpleasant feelings and emotions.

If a child's been holding it together all day, in an unpleasant situation, the second they see you, they know it's time they can finally let go.

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Maturity …

'I tolerate and accept it. I don't let it control me'. Chris Bonnello – an autistic adult

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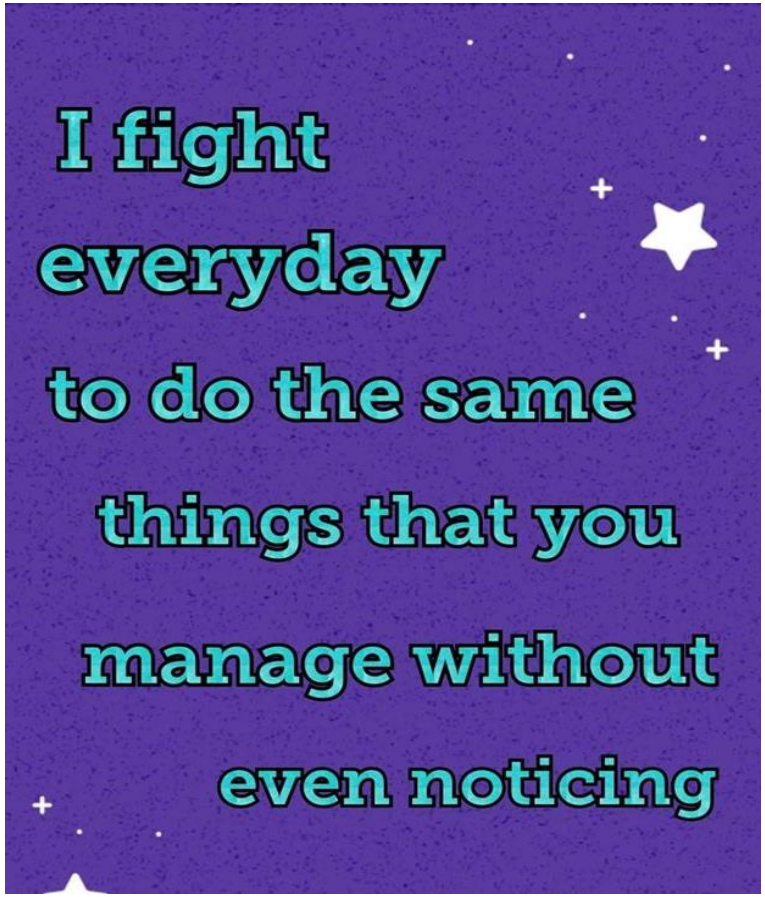
I fight
everyday
to do the same
things that you
manage without
even noticing

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A positive slant on autism …

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LC0JytWaQZM

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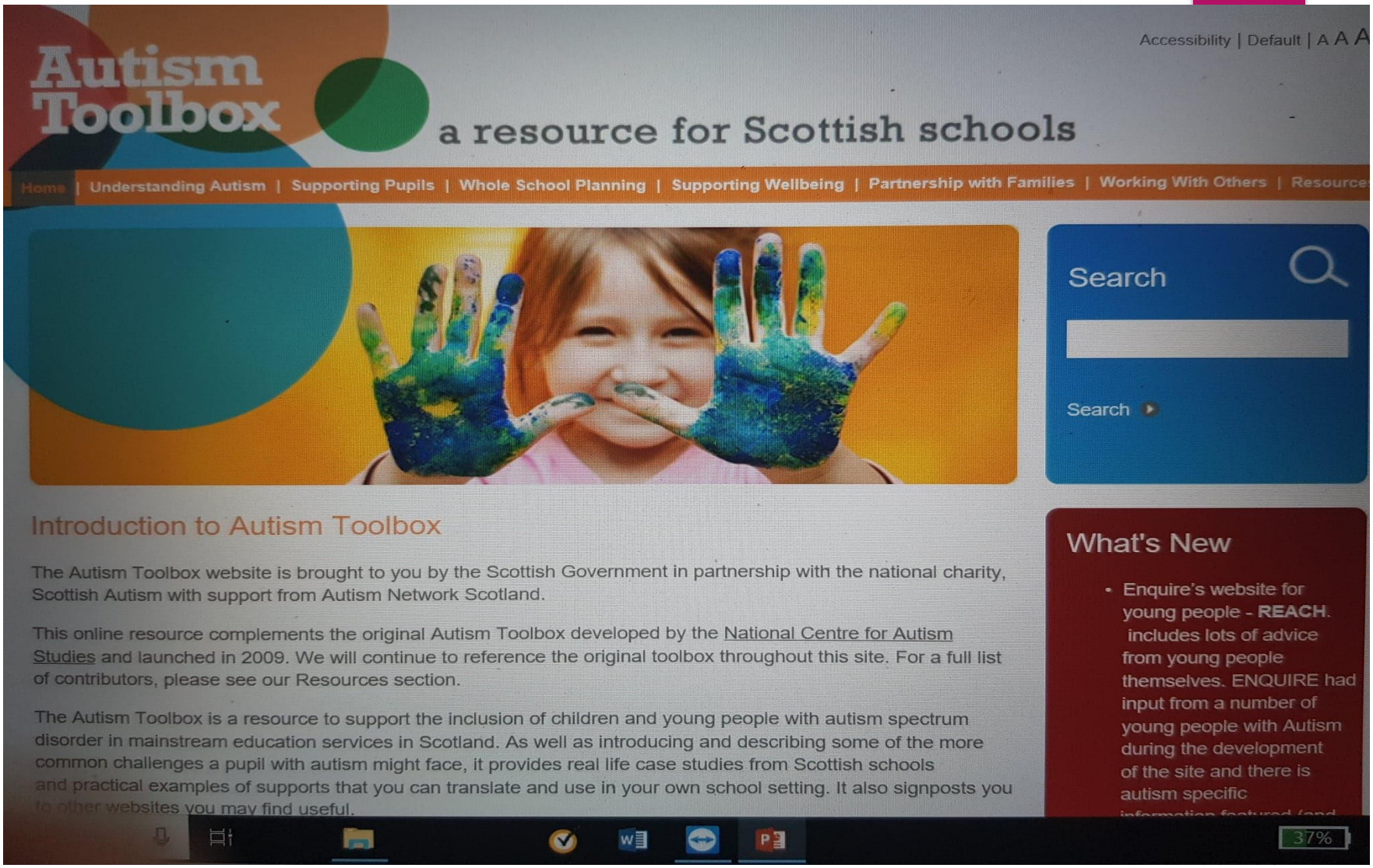

http://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk/

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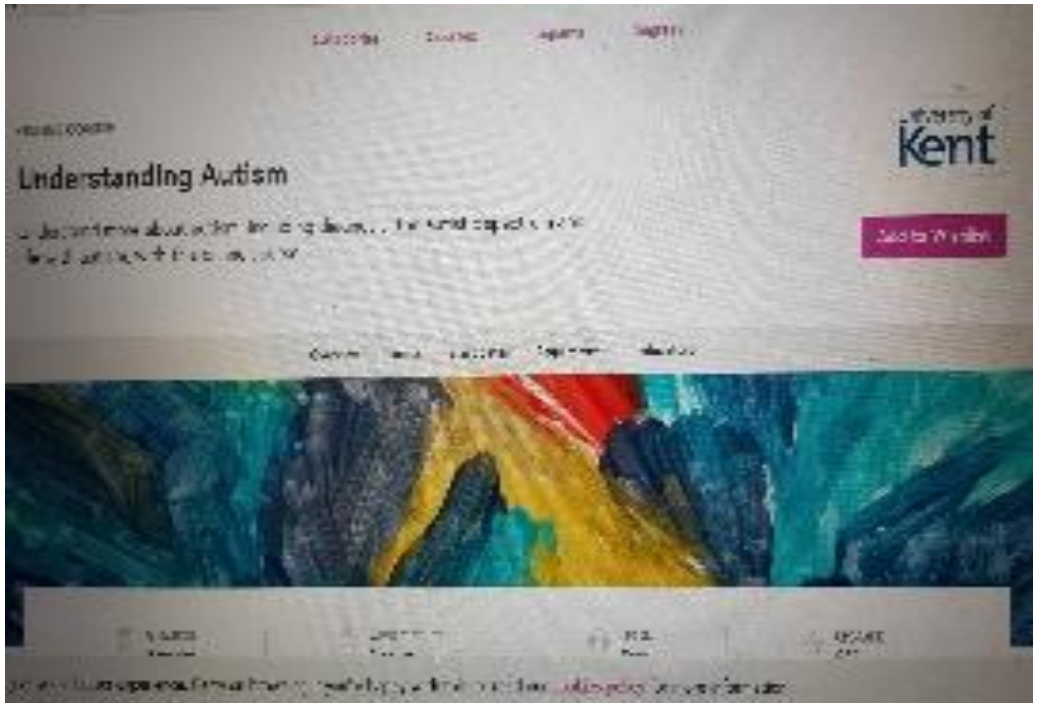
FREE from the University of Kent



https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/autism

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NAS EarlyBird
Scottish Autism Right Click

https://www.autism.org.uk/earlybird

https://www.scottishautism.org/services-support/support-families/online-

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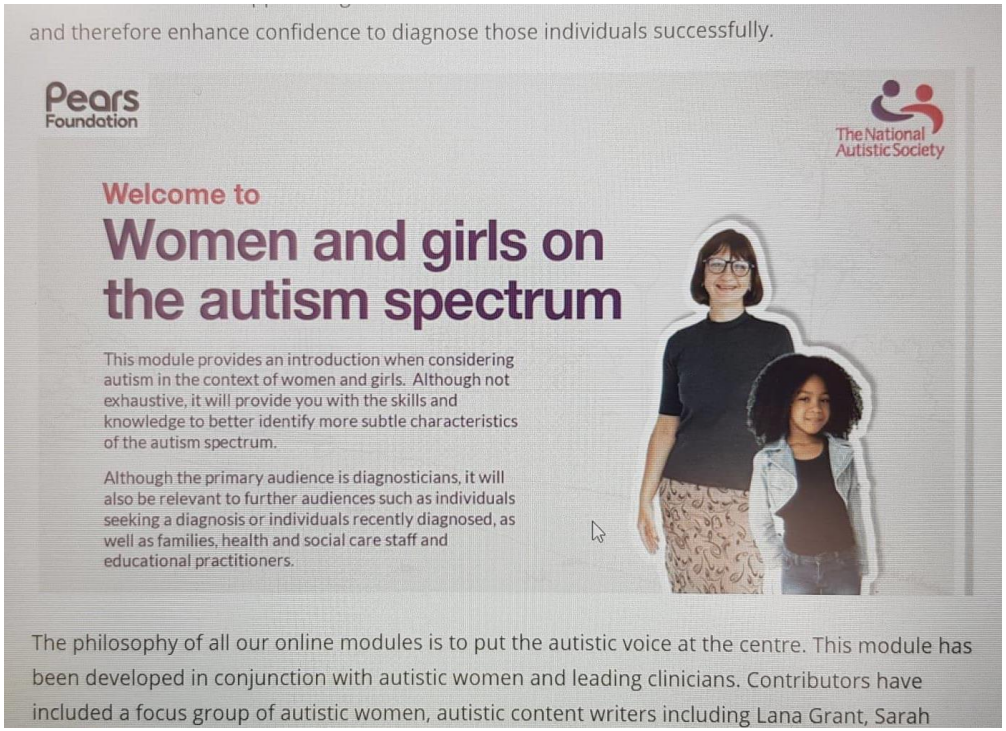
Women and Girls



https://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/training-consultancy/online/women-and-girls.aspx

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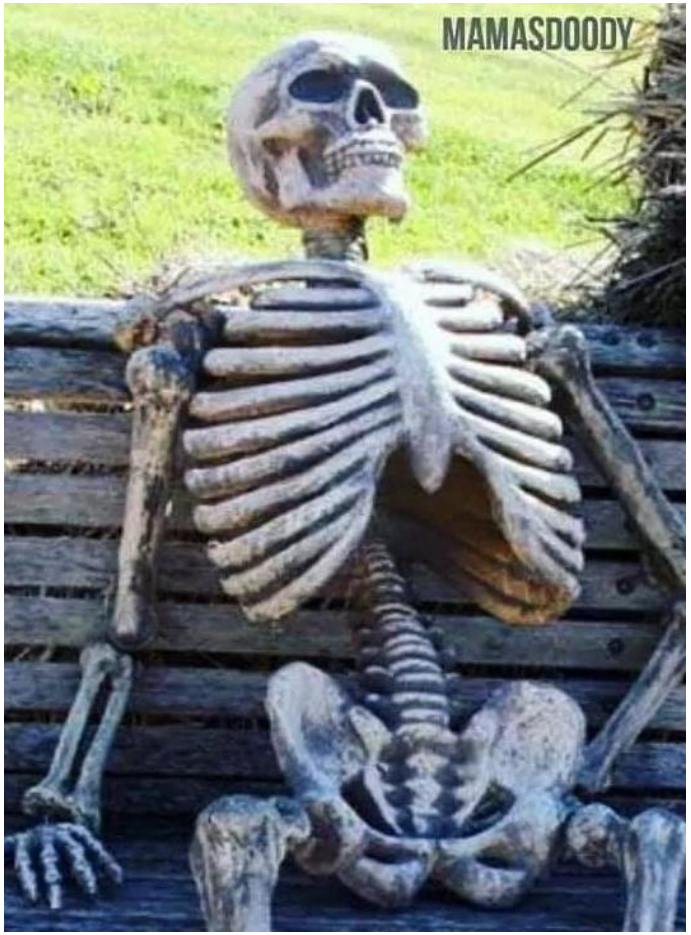
A parent I know waiting for this parenting thing to get easier …



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Thank you for listening …