**Southampton Mental Health Support Team**

**Secondary Schools/Colleges Wellbeing Newsletter**

**This week’s theme - Autism (ASC) 3rd June 2020**

This week our newsletter will continue our focus on supporting those of us who are living with Neuro-diversity during the Covid-19 Pandemic by looking at Autism (ASC).

Easing of lockdown has made things a little easier but the continued uncertainty and lack of structure is particularly hard on those of us living with ASC. We are more likely to get anxious or upset about unfamiliar situations and take longer to process changes. Adjustment to the enormous and sudden changes prompted by the “lockdown” may have been slower and more difficult and unpredictable days and not knowing what’s happening making things even harder. During this time, no one knows all the answers to many of the questions that we want to ask about when things are going to be normal again. This has added to everyone’s worry and anxiety. Difficulty in expressing these worries can make us feel totally overwhelmed in our emotions and may lead to more arguments or tensions with our families.

You are not alone. We hope that the information and tips in this Newsletter will help you to manage those difficult times and offer some guidance on where to go for more support.

We love these videos of Ruth Rudd – she’s 88 years old, energetically dancing away on her granddaughter’s TikTok account (@jrudderz). What started as a joke comment has transformed into Ruth becoming one of the fastest growing online stars this year. The video of Ruth in her granddaughter’s football kit attracted more than 500,000 views in a day. Ruth says she’s just “an elderly lady making a fool of herself” wanting to lift other peoples spirits with her videos.

Click the link below for BBC news report and video:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-hereford-worcester-52776280/dancing-gran-88-goes-viral-on-tiktok>

**Good News Story**



This pandemic is an anxiety provoking time for lots of people, but young people with autism may be finding it particularly difficult for a number of reasons. Below are some of the reasons why, and how you can help and support them:-

1. Unexpected changes in routine – you can support your young person by structuring his/her day. Having a timetable posted somewhere at home, where they can see it, highlighting what they are going to be doing at any given time of the day may really benefit them. Visual tools can really help to explain what is happening. Young people with autism may also experience additional stressors where other things are different, e.g, preferred foods not being available, overcrowded supermarkets, having to visit new shops or seeing different staff. Additionally, having medical appointments on the phone instead of face to face. You can provide support by talking these things through with him/her in advance.
2. Communicate with the school – ask what has worked well for your young person in the past at school and how you might maintain continuity at home.
3. Information overload – give your young person time to process information and ensure they have a source they can revisit if needed. Don’t overwhelm them with information; just pick out the important pieces they need to know. Young people with autism can take information very literally and struggle to contextualise information or judge what is reliable – the main government and NHS website are up to date, reliable sources to direct your young person to.
4. Sensory sensitivity – with schools being closed, your young person’s sensory environment may have changed, which could cause additional stress and anxiety. Create a quiet, sensory area for him/her at home and fill it with homemade sensory activities. This doesn’t have to be a big area; a corner of a room will suffice.
5. Uncertainty about the future – young people with autism can become overwhelmed by the lack of certainty and struggle with there being no certain timescales or outcomes, thus being unable to reasonably predict the future. You can support them by recognising and talking things through with them.
6. Communication and interaction – your young person may be finding communication, especially verbal communication, particularly difficult with the extra stresses during this pandemic. Discuss their preferred method of communication, whether this be via text, or in writing, or at specific times of the day.

Ask for help and support if you need it – these are challenging unprecedented times and it is important

to be kind and gentle on yourself and your young person. Even if your young person does not use

verbal communication, he/she may still pick up on your tone of voice and your stress levels. Here is a

link for ideas about self-care activities: [www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/](http://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/)

**Parents Top Tips**

Autism Spectrum Condition is spoken about all around the world now.

There is much more awareness that it is a neuro-developmental condition

which means it affects how people perceive the world and interact with others.

Autism affects both boys and girls who share certain difficulties which affect

them in different ways. It is worth remembering all Autistic people are

individual and unique, as well as exhibiting similar types of behaviours they

can require very different support and care. What works for one person on the spectrum may not work

for another.

With the current pandemic situation life has changed for so many of us around the world. Non Autistics

have been struggling with being 'confined' to home during lockdown and not having any social

interaction with family members, friends or work colleagues. Their whole routine and world has

changed and so many of us are finding this way of living really difficult. For Autistic people living in a

world where they do not have any extra demands put on them, where they do not have to socially

interact, physically touch people or be around lots of people may suit them very well indeed, in fact some

of them this will be a relief. So perhaps non-autistic people are getting a little look into how having your

'daily lives' changed so much as well as things being forced upon you can affect you and your wellbeing.

So many of us are looking for facts to try and understand this current situation. News is available 24/7

on TV's, mobile phones, ipads, kindles etc. Autistic people tend to over research things and at the

moment it is tempting for them to search for every tiny nugget of information to bring some certainty to

their lives, however this can take over their lives causing anxiety and stress to increase. To keep

informed, choose a specific time to access news each day.

Routines have changed hugely for these children and young people. With so much changing it is not that

easy to just build a new routine straight away. Working on small things they can count on for example

watching documentaries where they can look into further afterwards will be a distraction from what is

going on with the crisis. Small things they can count on that don't change which they can go back to will

bring some certainly and comfort. Finding a distraction from the crisis of Covid-19, finding things to

count on, rely on that don't change are important for ASC young people.

Encouraging your young person to spend time researching can be a positive way to distract them from

what is going on with this pandemic. Be sure to set a time limit, putting this on their schedule as well as

snack and drink breaks to ensure they are not forgetting to do this.

Having a safe place to retreat to can be a really beneficial source of comfort, somewhere they can

recharge their energy levels. It is worth bearing in mind they can take different amounts of time to

recover. During this shutdown period they may not be able to respond verbally, it is a good idea to check

in on them.

Agreeing with your young person to use something like a thumb up or thumb down to show you how

they are feeling rather than having to answer a question will take away the pressure to respond verbally

to a request. A good tip is to agree this strategy with your young person when they are calm so they

know what to do when feeling overwhelmed and needing to retreat somewhere quiet.



**Professor Wellbrain**

Something to look out for in your young person during Covid-19 is your young person's special

interest.

The special interest of the person with Autism is often associated with pleasure. However, when

someone with Autism becomes depressed the interest can become morbid where the focus switches to

watching/reading/talking about death, obsessively watching movies about death. Parents may need

to look beyond the focus of interest and recognise a mood disorder that is being expressed in an

unconventional way and reach out for some help from your GP, 111 (if out of hours), CAMHS Clinician

(if you are currently accessing a service at CAMHS).

Remember to reduce demands and keep changes to a minimum. Giving your young person as much

notice as possible will really help alleviate some of the anxiety. Transitions, moving from one

thing/task/activity to another needs to be considered carefully. Having a visual daily/weekly schedule

is a great resource for everyone. The need to know what is happening and when it is happening is

imperative for the Autistic person. Using Now & Next cards can really help with this. There are some

examples of these on National Autistic Society listed in the website information. This information can

be found later in the newsletter in the Neurodevelopmental Resource List.

There are many websites which offer advice, guidance and support linked to Autism. Many parents will

be very familiar with **The National Autistic Society** which is a great resource. Local Autism Support

groups are not sadly running due to covid-19, however some of them are offering zoom meet ups in

the evenings. Check out your local branch for dates and times. **Autism Hampshire** has some good

resources on their website as well as a specific covid-19 resource hub. **Molehill Mountain** is an App

developed by Autistica (research charity) and Kings College London. The app is a Health & Fitness App

which is free to download. Use Molehill Mountain to explore causes and symptoms of anxiety as well

as being able to track your worries and the situations that trigger anxiety. You will get evidence-based

daily tips to understand more about anxiety. This App is easy to use, secure and engaging. Developed

with autistic people the app is based on adapted Cognitive Behaviour Therapy principles.

**The Autism Plan** has been developed by a mum called Deborah Brownson - MBE, a campaigner who

has 2 Autistic sons. Her hope has been that 'Autism Spectrum Condition will come to be seen as a

neurological difference in the way the brain is wired. That doesn't mean it's wrong or not normal.'

Alongside 2 co-founders they piloted an App in 2019 which has been downloaded many times. The

ethos is **'Changing Perceptions not People'** They offer daily, current, coivd-19 Autism support,

advice, information and much more. On the Face Book Page there are very helpful videos posted by

Autistic people, contributions from Autism related charities such as Autistica and Autism Education

Trust, with advice and support.

**Did you know** that the following people are on the Autistic Spectrum**:**

**Greta Thurnburg** a 17 year old from Sweden who became famous last year for speaking out about her

concerns for our environment and the survival of our planet. Greta speaks openly about her desire for

people around the world to come together and fight climate change.

**Chris Packham** born and went to school in Southampton. Chris is famous for his interests in wildlife

and nature. Chris is a brilliant photographer with a passionate concern for conservation and the

environment. He is a regular presenter on Spring Watch & Autumn Watch.

**Talia Grant** who is the daughter of Carrie & David Grant. Talia is an actress in the soap programme

Hollyoaks . She speaks very openly about her passion to get girls diagnosed younger, better Autism

training for professionals to spot 'girls who go under the radar' who either get diagnosed very late in

life or get missed completely.

**Professor Wellbrain continued**

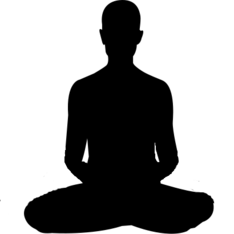
Talia is an ambassador for the National Autistic Society who has recently uploaded a podcast on the

website called 'Don't filter feelings’. Talia talks about Autism, mental health and more. The podcast is

for people who don't necessarily understand what Autism is and want to learn more about it. Here is

the link if you would like to have a listen: <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/stories/talia-grant.aspx>

**Tips for Families managing Anxiety in Autistic children and young people**

 Model calmness, you can show others there is no need to panic by acting and behaving calmly. Monitoring your own feelings will reassure autistic loved ones.

 Share balanced information. News coverage can heighten people’s fears of the worst-case scenario, but this isn’t necessarily true and can be damaging. Seek fact-based information from reliable sources and take care not to present your fears as facts.

 Share positive news. Focus on society’s many positive responses to this crisis and take time to appreciate and share how each family member positively contributes to family life during this difficult time.

 Validate feelings. Don’t dismiss or reject feelings, instead let others know it’s fine to feel anxious or angry. Helping people feeling calm and understood is very powerful and lets them process their feelings in a healthy way.

 Listen actively. Listen to family members’ feelings and fears and ask questions without judgement. Many people are worried about what will happen and knowing you are available to listen will make things easier.

 Don’t ignore anxiety. We can’t always ignore bad feelings and allowing time to deal with these emotions can prevent family members from becoming over burdened by them. If anxiety comes over in waves schedule ‘worry sessions’ where time is set aside to address anxieties.

**Professor Wellbrain continued**



With our routines impacted by Covid-19 it can be a really fun and comforting exercise to draw up new routines which work for us now.

You can use this template - 

or

follow this link <https://www.twinkl.co.uk> for a range of editable version on Twinkl (this is currently free to join) or make your own!

You can include the things you need to do and also some things that make you feel calm and happy. Think about routines that help you stay connected to important people and help you get good sleep.

**Activity of the Week**

**ASC Resources:**

Buzz network – [buzz.network@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:buzz.network@southampton.gov.uk) – Links with SEN team, MAX card for local

discounts, short breaks.

Local groups including Natterchatter Support group (Facebook page) Flutterbies (Based in

Portswood Sainsburys, details via Facebook or carersinsouthampton.co.uk

### Autism Hampshire - Information, Advice & Guidance

**For Information, Guidance or Advice about Autism or a recent diagnosis:**

* **Information, Advice & Guidance** - 1648 Parkway, Solent Business Park, Whiteley, Fareham, Hampshire, PO15 7AH
* 02380 766162
* information.advice@autismhampshire.org.uk

**Useful website links;**

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources-and-downloads/files/daily-planner-routine-editable-ambitious-about-autism.pdf>

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources-and-downloads/files/managing-additional-time-spent-in-the-home-ambitious-about-autism.pdf>

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources-and-downloads/getting-help-when-unwell.pdf>

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/visual-supports.aspx>

<https://www.autistica.org.uk/what-is-autism/coronavirus/coping-with-uncertainty>

**Recommended books;**

Tony Attwood - *The Complete Guide to Asperger’s Syndrome*

Kathy Hoopman – *All Cats have Aspergers*

Alis Rowe – *The Girl with the Curly Hair – Asperger’s and me. Asperger’s syndrome and Anxiety*

Libby Scott & Rebecca Westcott – *Can you see me?*

Bill Nasen – *The Autism Discussion Page on stress, anxiety and shutdowns & meltdowns*. Bill Nasen

has a Face Book Page called The Autism discussion page which is very popular with parents.

**Neurodevelopmental Resources List**

**ADHD Resources:**

**Books;**

**For Children**

• *The Survival Guide for Kids with ADHD* John F Taylor

• *All dogs have ADHD* Cathy Hoopman

• *Learning to slow down and pay attention* Katherine G. Nadeau and Ellen B. Dixon

**For Young People**

• *ADHD Workbook for teens: Activities to help you gain motivation and confidence*

Lara Honos Webb

**For Parents**

• *Step by Step Help for Children with ADHD : A Self Help Manual for Parents* Cathy

Laver Bradley, Margaret Thompson, et al

*• Understanding Attention Deficit Disorder* Dr Christopher Green

• *Teenagers with ADHD/ADD* : A Parents Guide Chris A Zelgler Dandy

Guidance on how to manage challenging behaviours during Covid-19-

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/pointers-on-parenting-under-pressure-pop-up>

and short film

<https://familiesunderpressure.maudsleycharity.org/>

**Direct Support;**

**ADHD;**

**New Forest Parenting Program Facebook group** – Online support and overview of the NFPP

course which offers support to parents with children with ADHD.

**Websites, Apps and Helpline (From ADHD pathway)**

A website for children, young people and their carers, providing education and tools to manage

ADHD <https://www.adders.org.uk>

CBT self help and therapy resources including worksheets and information sheets

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/freedownloads2.htm>

Wessex resources for parents and healthcare professionals

<https://what0-18.nhs.uk/health-for-young-people/mental-health-and-wellbeing/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd>

Reading Well supports you to understand and manage your health and wellbeing using helpful

reading <https://reading-well.org.uk/>

**General Resources:**

Young Minds is a national charity supporting children and young people’s mental health. Information

on different conditions as well as ideas on how to look after your mental health

<https://youngminds.org.uk/> https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/

Childline is a free and confidential service where you can talk about anything

https://www.childline.org.uk/Childline Helpline – 0800 1111

**Neurodevelopmental Resources continued**

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**Neurodevelopmental Resources List continued**

Recommended apps assessed by NHS standards

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/>

Self-care suggestions from young people

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>

Young Minds Parent Helpline

0808 802 5544

Southampton Parent Carer Forum

<https://www.sotonpcf.org.uk/>

MindEd is a free educational resource on children and young people’s mental health for all adults

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

Remember the milk app -helpful for both parents and teens who have difficulty with executive

functioning issues such as goal-setting, prioritizing, time management and/or organization.

Blue ice app –helpful strategies for managing emotions and harmful behaviours

Calm – Meditate, Sleep, Relax app contains sleep stories, skills for meditation and music to help with

relaxation.

www.themix.org.uk - If you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix for free on the phone, by email or on

their web chat. You can also use their phone counseling service, or get more information on support

services you might need. Free phone: 0808 808 4994 (1pm - 11pm daily)

The Think Ninja App is for young people aged from 11 - 17. It is able to provide mental health and

emotional wellbeing support through a variety of different approaches.

**Contact us**

If you have any questions or queries for the

Southampton MHST Team please email us at;

**SouthamptonMHST@Solent.nhs.uk**

**Useful Services and Websites for Parents and Young People**

Please see the details of the following services that may also be able to offer you and your child advice and support. Please note that during this unprecedented time services have had to change the way they work and offer support, so please contact the service directly to find out what is currently on offer.

**THE SOLENT WEST CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE (CAMHS):**

If your child is currently receiving a service from CAMHS, a duty line for advice in the event of deterioration in your child / young person’s mental health is available. Please request to speak to the duty worker on 0300 123 6661. You are also able to contact the Behaviour Helpline for advice and strategies with managing challenging behaviour on 0300 123 6661, your contact details will be taken and a Behaviour Advisor will return your call within 1 week.

Please be aware that in the current situation there may be a slight delay in responding to duty calls.

**The Public Health Nursing (PHN) Service** offers support to children, young people and their families who live in Southampton.  The team is made up of Nurses, Emotional Health and Wellbeing workers and PHN Assistants; who can offer support for a wide range of health issues such as growth concerns, support with long term conditions, sleep problems, continence issues, general anxiety and much more.  They have a confidential text messaging service called Solent Pulse where you can text any health questions and have them answered by a nurse.  They are currently offering support through telephone calls, emails, text messages and video calling to comply with social distancing rules.  If you would like to contact PHN for support please use one of the methods below:

Phone: 0300 123 6661 Solent Pulse: 07491 163278

Website: <https://what0-18.nhs.uk/solent/school-nursing>

Email: [snhs.publichealthnursingsouthampton@nhs.net](mailto:snhs.publichealthnursingsouthampton@nhs.net)

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS:**

**Southampton Multi-Agency Support Hub**: 02380 833336

(Safeguarding advice & parenting support).

**Samaritans:** Free phone 116 123

**Parentline (24 hour advice):** 0808 800 2222

**Child line:**  0800 1111

**NHS direct**: 111 – non emergency helpline

**SANE mental health help line** **(every day 16.30-22.30)** 0300 304 7000

**Young Minds help line (Mon-Fri 9.30-4pm)** 0808 802 5544

**USEFUL WEBSITES – UNDERSTANDING SYMPTOMS, ADVICE AND SELF-HELP:**

* [**https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/**](https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/) **-** This covers numerous ‘symptoms’ of developmental disorders and mental health conditions. It also has a lot of helpful advice ranging from ‘online safety’ to ‘getting children to eat greens’. Mixture of articles and short videos.
* [**www.youngminds.org.uk**](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) **–** information and advice for young people, parents and professionals, includes a telephone advice line and videos. This website covers emotional health, mental health conditions and neurodevelopmental disorders e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
* [**http://www.sane.org.uk/resources/mental\_health\_conditions/**](http://www.sane.org.uk/resources/mental_health_conditions/) **-** information and advice, includes resources and useful leaflets to manage symptoms of many mental health symptoms. It also has online forums and a telephone advice line (above).
* [**www.getselfhelp.co.uk**](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk) – this website is an invaluable resource containing free downloadable activities and videos for you to support your child to manage their emotional and mental health.
* [**http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/**](http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/) **-** Similar to ‘getselfhelp’.
* **Selected mobile phone ‘apps’** to help manage symptoms can be viewed here, although please consider age appropriateness: [**http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/mental-health-apps.aspx**](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/mental-health-apps.aspx) (Or type ‘Apps for Mental Health – NHS Choices into an internet search engine.)

**NO LIMITS ADVICE PROJECT** – <https://nolimitshelp.org.uk/> Contact Phone: 02380 224 224 – 13 The High Street, Southampton, SO17 1XN Email: [enquiries@nolimitshelp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nolimitshelp.org.uk) **Please contact the service via telephone, email or ‘drop-in’ to the advice centre.**

The No Limits service offer advice and support to young people under the age of 26 years on many issues, including: housing, employment, money management advice, social support, symptoms of mental health, counselling for emotional ill-health, sexual health guidance, drug and alcohol support, victims and perpetrators of crime, plus much more.

**SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL PARENTING ADVICE AND SUPPORT:**

[**http://sid.southampton.gov.uk/kb5/southampton/directory/results.action?familychannel=8-7-1**](http://sid.southampton.gov.uk/kb5/southampton/directory/results.action?familychannel=8-7-1) **–** Please access this website to view a range of parenting support courses in Southampton. Or go into Southampton City Council’s website and type ‘families’ into the search bar.

Please also contact the Southampton City Council MASH Team on the telephone number above for further advice around services and parenting support.

**RE:MINDS:**

A parent-led support group for families of children with autism or mental health issues.

<https://www.reminds.org.uk/> With a closed Facebook group of over 600 members -https://www.facebook.com/groups/reminds

**CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:**

The Buzz Network - a group for Southampton parents/carers of children with disabilities/special needs. It is open to children with any disability from ADHD to visual impairments, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. <http://sid.southampton.gov.uk> – type ‘Buzz Network’ into the search engine for contact details.

**CHILDREN WITH SUSPECTED AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS** <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/> - Autism Hampshire: Information, Advice, ‘Needs Assessment’ and support**.** Community Access, Southampton Office –1648 Parkway, Whiteley, PO15 7AH, Tel: 02380 766162 Email: [**communityaccess@autismhampshire.org.uk**](mailto:communityaccess@autismhampshire.org.uk)

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES:**

* [**http://www.theredlipstickfoundation.org/**](http://www.theredlipstickfoundation.org/) **-** The Red Lipstick Foundation are here to offer services to families in Hampshire who have been bereaved by suicide or immediate family members following a person’s sudden death.
* [**http://www.simonsays.org.uk/**](http://www.simonsays.org.uk/) **-** Tel: 08453 055 744 -Bereavement service for Children.
* [**http://www.cruse.org.uk/?gclid=CMmGptiMktMCFYWRGwoduC0Ejw**](http://www.cruse.org.uk/?gclid=CMmGptiMktMCFYWRGwoduC0Ejw) **-** National Bereavement Service.

**DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT SERVICES:**

* [**https://www.hamptontrust.org.uk/our-programmes/**](https://www.hamptontrust.org.uk/our-programmes/) **-** support projects for those who have perpetrated domestic abuse, and, adults and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.
* [**https://www.yellowdoor.org.uk/**](https://www.yellowdoor.org.uk/)- Telephone: 023 8063 6313 - support project for adults and young people who have experienced physical and or sexual abuse.

**Useful Services continued**