

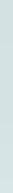
ANXIETY AND HIGH FUNCTIONING AUTISM

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Bristol City Council - Bristol autism team

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THE BASICS

Autism spectrum = AS = Anxiety and Stress

Biggest is social anxiety but lots of others including OCD, phobias, and paranoia

Why more anxiety?

- more negative life experiences
- social expectations too high?
- not understanding what's going on
- thinking style is quite binary - one or zero
- sensory, people and words overload

THE BASICS

We need to explain what anxiety is

Talking about anxiety makes you anxious

Getting better is harder than getting worse; it takes time and effort

“Fears beyond our wildest imagination” ... but does it show?

Think sensory – think anxiety

Environment is biggest factor in success

School is massive stressor; make reasonable adjustments

TOP TIPS

What they want out of life may differ from your plans and dreams for them

Key message is “Be yourself so long as it is safe, legal and makes you happy”

Locate your child’s safe support circle (as well as parent/s)

TOP TIPS

Keep communication open so they come to you with questions and worries

If you have not told them they won't know

Communicate clearly, calmly, slowly, and precisely

Use visual methods to make information understandable – written words, pictures, timetables, calendars, Social Stories (internet search this). Pen and paper can be one of the most useful tools you can use with your child

TOP TIPS

Small steps and gentle encouragement - it often takes time for your child to progress in managing their lives, including anxiety

Teach your child life skills – eg cooking, brushing teeth, online safety, your body is your own, budgets, buses, ‘what is friendly’ behaviour, good mental health

Talk about autism in a positive way

TOP TIPS

Use interests to build confidence and self esteem

Meet other people on the spectrum

Give them a reason to leave the home ('what's in it for them?')

TOP TIPS

Point out their achievements and use praise they can accept

Another key message “Be kind to yourself” - explain that you can think positively to balance out negative thoughts

Notice good stuff - notebook

What relaxes them? (encourage self care, including time away from people)

Help others to support effectively eg teachers, dentist, after school club, football coach, other parents, siblings

Book your place on the Managing anxiety courses email autismfamilycourses@bristol.gov.uk



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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