STEP 2

ALLIED HEALTH

Behaviour Support

Resources for Families

Version 1.1 - 2nd October 2025

Hi there!

These resources focus on responding to “challenging behaviours” and don’t offer personalised strategies. The list isn’t exhaustive (but might feel a bit overwhelming)! So take a look, pick out what you think will work for your child/children and your family, and feel free to share it with others who might find it helpful.

Remember – in the midst of any relational challenge, you can always repair. Ruptures can be reduced but they will still happen from time to time (or quite often!). The most important thing is that your children know that no matter how stressful or bad things get during a day, at the end of the day, they are the most important people in the world to you. Keep up the great work you’re doing.

Quick note: This resource document adopts identity-first, neurodiversity-affirming language. We recognise that language is complex and evolving and that some ND and disabled folk may prefer person-centred language.

Another quick note: These resources are included here because they have been helpful to some people in tough situations. However, including them doesn't necessarily mean we completely agree with everything the authors produce or all the content produced by each author or group/organisation (even if we generally agree with most stuff). Since everyone is unique, you'll need to decide what to use and what to leave out.

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Parent and Carer Support & Wellbeing

Autism Central - Wellbeing webinars for parents and carers

[Wellbeing resources for parents and carers | Autism Central]



Autism Central have launched a new series of six webinars on looking after yourself as a parent or carer of an autistic person.

Learn about the impact of self-critical thinking, and what we can do to be more compassionate with ourselves.

Each episode is **about 20 minutes long** and **features a conversation** with Dr Naomi Fisher and Eliza Fricker **on a different wellbeing topic** with **entertaining and relatable illustrations** and **practical exercises** to follow.

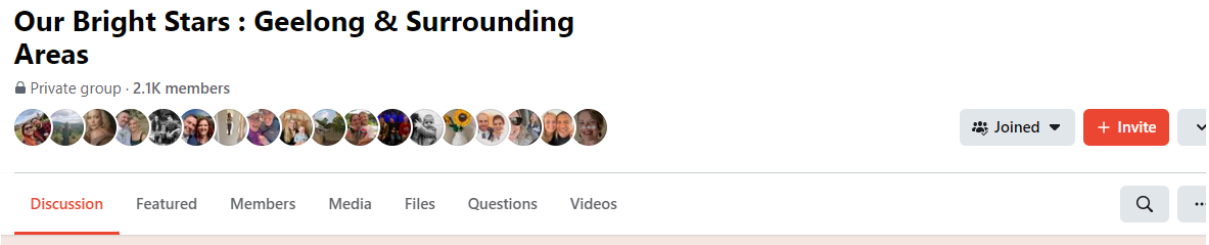
To watch the full episodes you **need to be logged in** to the website (**registration** is **free**). Once you are signed in you can view the full episodes with the links below.

The Episodes:

1. **Am I doing this all wrong?:** The impact of self-critical thinking on parents and what we can do to be more compassionate with ourselves.
2. **Dealing with other people:** How to deal with other people and feelings of blame and shame that many parents can experience.
3. **Looking after yourself:** How to look after yourself as a parent or carer when it's difficult to find time to do so.
4. **Not what I signed up for:** The gap of expectations versus reality in relation to parenting, and how we can let go of unhelpful expectations.
5. **Why do I feel so drained:** How we can focus on increasing the number of things in our lives which recharge our emotional batteries.
6. **I can't relax:** Dealing with feeling constantly on edge as a parent and some practical suggestions for a reset.

Facebook Page: Our Bright Stars (Geelong) Parent Support Group

https://www.facebook.com/groups/180075958813988



- Lots of good support on here and typically from parents of disabled children.
- Options to post anonymously to seek advice, recommendations, support and just read posts about things

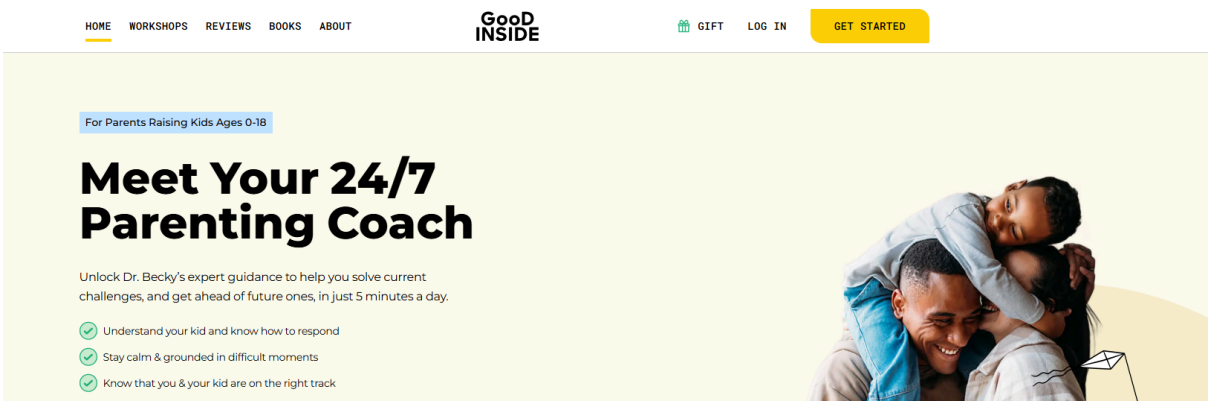
H.A.L.T. Self Care Tips

When advocating for your child, it's important to ensure your own needs are met!



Good Inside - Parent Support and Resource Platform

https://www.goodinside.com/



Good Inside is a platform dedicated to providing parents with resources and support to raise sturdy, confident, and resilient children.

Founded by clinical psychologist and #1 New York Times bestselling author Dr. Becky, the platform offers a variety of tools to assist parents in their journey.

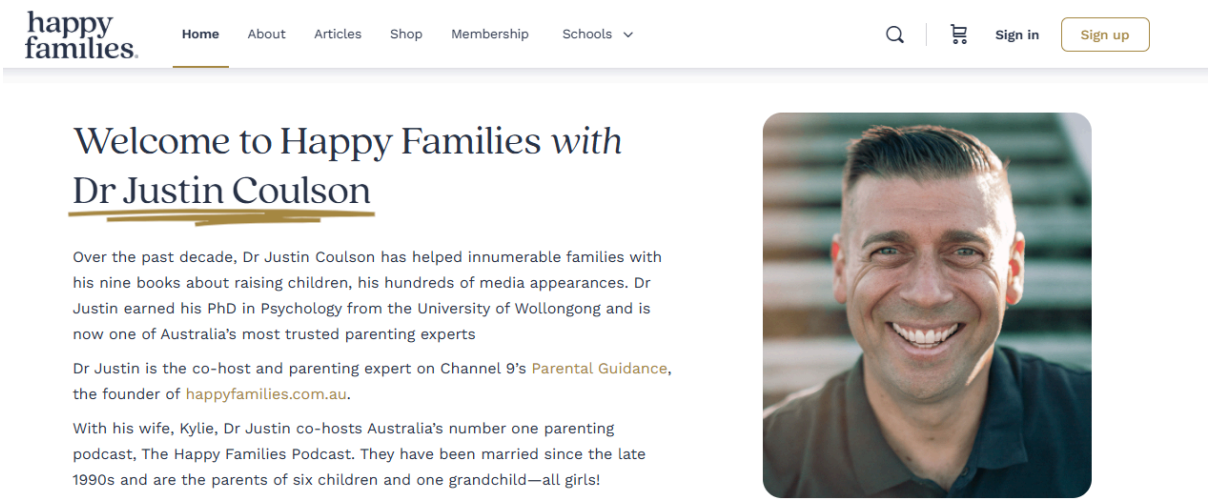
Key Resources Available:

- **Parenting Resources Library:** A comprehensive collection of workshops and guides covering topics such as managing meltdowns, improving listening skills, and handling power struggles.
- **Workshops:** Interactive sessions designed to enhance parenting skills, including setting boundaries, managing parental stress, and addressing challenging behaviours.
- **Guides:** Practical guides on specific topics like building frustration tolerance and avoiding entitlement, providing step-by-step strategies for parents.
- **Book:** "Good Inside" by Dr. Becky offers insights and practical advice for raising emotionally healthy kids, serving as a supportive resource for overwhelmed parents.

Additionally, Good Inside offers a membership that provides access to exclusive content, including bite-sized videos, downloadable scripts, and members-only events. This membership aims to integrate the Good Inside approach seamlessly into everyday parenting.

Overall, Good Inside serves as a valuable resource for parents seeking guidance and support in raising resilient and emotionally healthy children.

Happy Families



Happy Families is a platform dedicated to supporting parents in raising resilient and connected families. Founded by Dr Justin Coulson, one of Australia's leading parenting experts, the platform offers a variety of resources to assist parents on their journey. Key offerings include:

- **Parenting Articles:** A comprehensive collection of articles covering topics such as managing meltdowns, improving listening skills, and handling power struggles.
- **Workshops and Webinars:** Interactive sessions designed to enhance parenting skills, including setting boundaries, managing parental stress, and addressing challenging behaviours.
- **Membership:** Access to exclusive content, including bite-sized videos, downloadable scripts, and members-only events, aiming to integrate effective parenting approaches seamlessly into everyday life.
- **Podcast:** Co-hosted by Dr Justin and his wife, Kylie, the Happy Families Podcast provides practical tips and a common-sense approach to parenting, sharing their experiences of managing a busy household.

Dr Justin Coulson is also the co-host and parenting expert on Channel 9's *Parental Guidance* and the author of nine books about raising children. He earned his PhD in Psychology from the University of Wollongong and is a highly sought-after international speaker. Together with his wife, Kylie, they have six daughters and one grandchild.

Overall, Happy Families serves as a valuable resource for parents seeking guidance and support in raising resilient and emotionally healthy children.

For more information, visit: https://happyfamilies.com.au/

Behaviour Understanding and Support

The N.E.S.T. Approach to Meltdowns & Spectrum Gaming

https://www.spectrumgaming.net/about-us

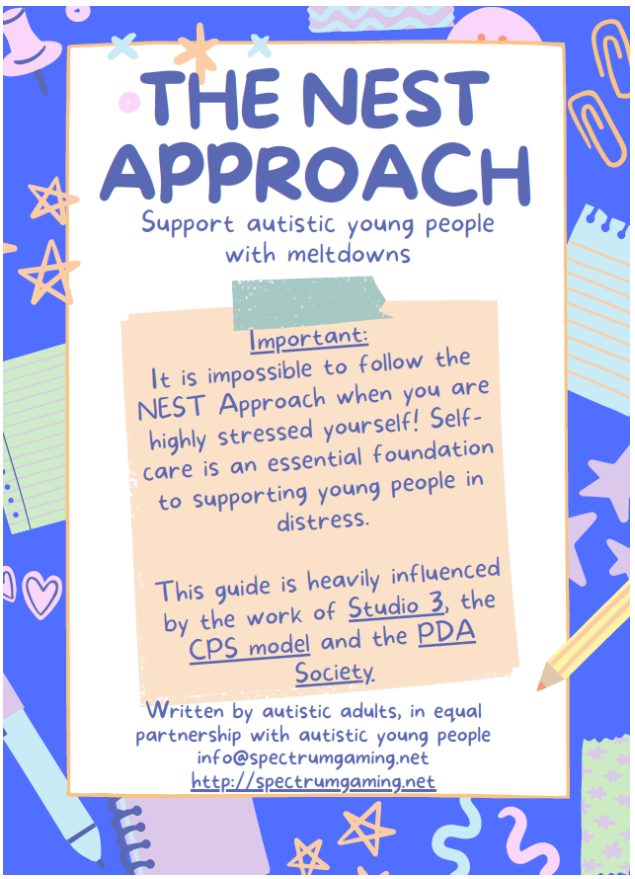
- Spectrum Gaming is based in the UK but has helpful resources and services available on their website. One particularly helpful approach is 'the N.E.S.T. Approach to Meltdowns https://www.spectrumgaming.net/the-nest-approach
- Psst... they have some broader advice here: https://www.spectrumgaming.net/parent-info-how-we-support-young-people
- The 4-step NEST Approach when supporting someone through a Meltdown is about facilitating the following actions:

Nurture

Empathise

Sharing Context

Teamwork



Collaborative and Proactive Solutions by Dr Ross Greene

Short Video Series > https://livesinthebalance.org/walking-tour/

Concerning behaviours are just a signal of unsolved problems.

“Kids do well if they can".

The CPS Approach challenges the belief that ‘if people do not meet expectations or do well, it's because they won’t’. Instead, it says that ‘people do well if they can’.

If they don’t, it’s not because they won’t, but because they can’t.

It also challenges the idea that adults and professionals should be the ones who sit around and determine the nature of the problem and who impose the solution (unilateral problem identification and solving) and instead invites the person into a collaborative model "Plan B" (the person is centrally involved in expressing the unsolved problem and developing the solution to that problem).

The videos and resources in this link (https://livesinthebalance.org/walking-tour/) are divided into a few categories:

STEP 1: CHANGE YOUR LENSES

- Solving Problems Rather Than Modifying Behaviour - 4:38mins
- Solving Problems Collaboratively Rather Than Unilaterally - 2:02mins
- Let’s Get You Out of the Heat of the Moment - 8:33mins
- Kids Do Well if They Can - 12:35mins

STEP 2: IDENTIFY LAGGING SKILLS AND UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

- Resources and Tools

STEP 3: SOLVE PROBLEMS COLLABORATIVELY AND PROACTIVELY

- Instructional video: The Three Plans and the Three Steps of Plan B - 7:36mins

Then, 4x Video Examples of real clinical situations and applications (including as a group in a school classroom!)

Autism Level UP! Strategies for Autistic People (PDF)

The **"LEVEL UP Strategies for Autistic People" guide** by Laurent & Fede (2020) suggests a new way to look at behaviours in autistic people that are often seen as problems.

It explains why common methods used in education and behaviour management, like taking away privileges or forcing someone to behave in a certain way, don't work well. These methods don't address the real reasons behind the behaviour and can lead to more issues or make people feel like they have to pretend to be someone they're not.

Here are the main points from the guide:

1. **Understanding Behaviours**: Behaviours that are usually called problems, like not listening, being aggressive, or not paying attention, are seen in a different light. The guide suggests these behaviours are ways autistic people express their needs or react to situations that don't suit them well.

2. **Problems with Old Methods**: It says that the usual ways of trying to manage these behaviours don't truly help because they only focus on how people act on the outside. They can make things worse or make the autistic person hide their true self to fit in.

3. **New Ways to Help**: The guide recommends methods that respect what autistic people experience. This includes making changes to their surroundings (like having quiet places available), adapting activities to their needs (like changing how things are scheduled to help with sleep or eating), and using tools or strategies that help them communicate better or handle sensory issues.

4. **Personalised Support**: The most important idea is to provide support that looks at everything about the person, including their physical health, how they handle sensory information, their movements, how they think and communicate, and how they socialise. It suggests practical changes like adjusting the environment to be more comfortable, using tools to help with daily activities, and making sure activities are interesting and engaging for the individual.

In summary, the "LEVEL UP Strategies" guide encourages a change from seeing certain behaviours as bad, to understanding them as signs of what the autistic person needs or finds difficult. It calls for support that is tailored to each person, respecting their unique experiences, and promoting their well-being.

Practical Tools and Flyers

Resource: The Digital Wellbeing Checklist – Dr Kirsty Goodwin

https://drkristygoodwin.com/digital-wellbeing-checklist/

"Realistic, research-based solutions to help kids, teens and adults develop healthy digital habits.

Whether you love technology or loathe digital devices, your kids and teens will inherit a digital future. So 'digital amputation' isn't a solution. Your child or teen needs to develop healthy and helpful digital habits so that they're not a slave to the screen. As modern parents we need to help foster our kids' digital wellbeing and that's exactly what this Digital Wellbeing Checklist will do.
Inside, you'll find 20 research-based and realistic strategies to ensure that your child's or teen's digital habits are healthy and not harmful... so you can finally ditch your guilt, grief, and guesswork as you raise a 'screenager'"

– Dr Kristy Goodwin



Note: For Neurodivergent folk, screentime can be really important. Check out NeuroWild for some accessible content on this.





CPS One-Pager "Reframe The Behaviour"



Flyer: Chase the Why of the Behaviour

NOT PAYING ATTENTION? / NOT WORKING? / NOT FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS?



CHASE

THE WHY

OF THE BEHAVIOR

Greg Santucci, Occupational Therapist

"THE WHY" could be:



- I'm focused on something else
- I didn't sleep well
- I'm overwhelmed
- I was late to school
- There's stress at home

OR

- It's too loud in here
- I'm hungry
- My shirt is itchy
- I have to use the bathroom
- The classroom is just too much right now



OR



- I'm bored
- You're not teaching the way I learn
- I don't understand
- I'm embarrassed to ask for help
- I don't know how to get started

THERE ARE MANY MORE "WHYS"

- The outside behavior is a signal that there's a problem on the inside.
- Don't react to the outside behavior. Find out WHY the behavior is occurring.

The WHY is never simply "attention seeking" or "avoiding". KEEP CHASING!

Before you React, Reflect



What are they having a hard time with?

NOTICE THE DIFFICULTY, NOT THE BEHAVIOR.

I noticed your having a hard time getting started on your homework, or

I noticed you're having a hard time letting your brother play with that toy, what's going on?





Their behavior isn't **"bad"**

It's telling you there's an unmet need or a problem to solve.

Ask yourself:
What do they need from me right now?
What do I need to get regulated and help?

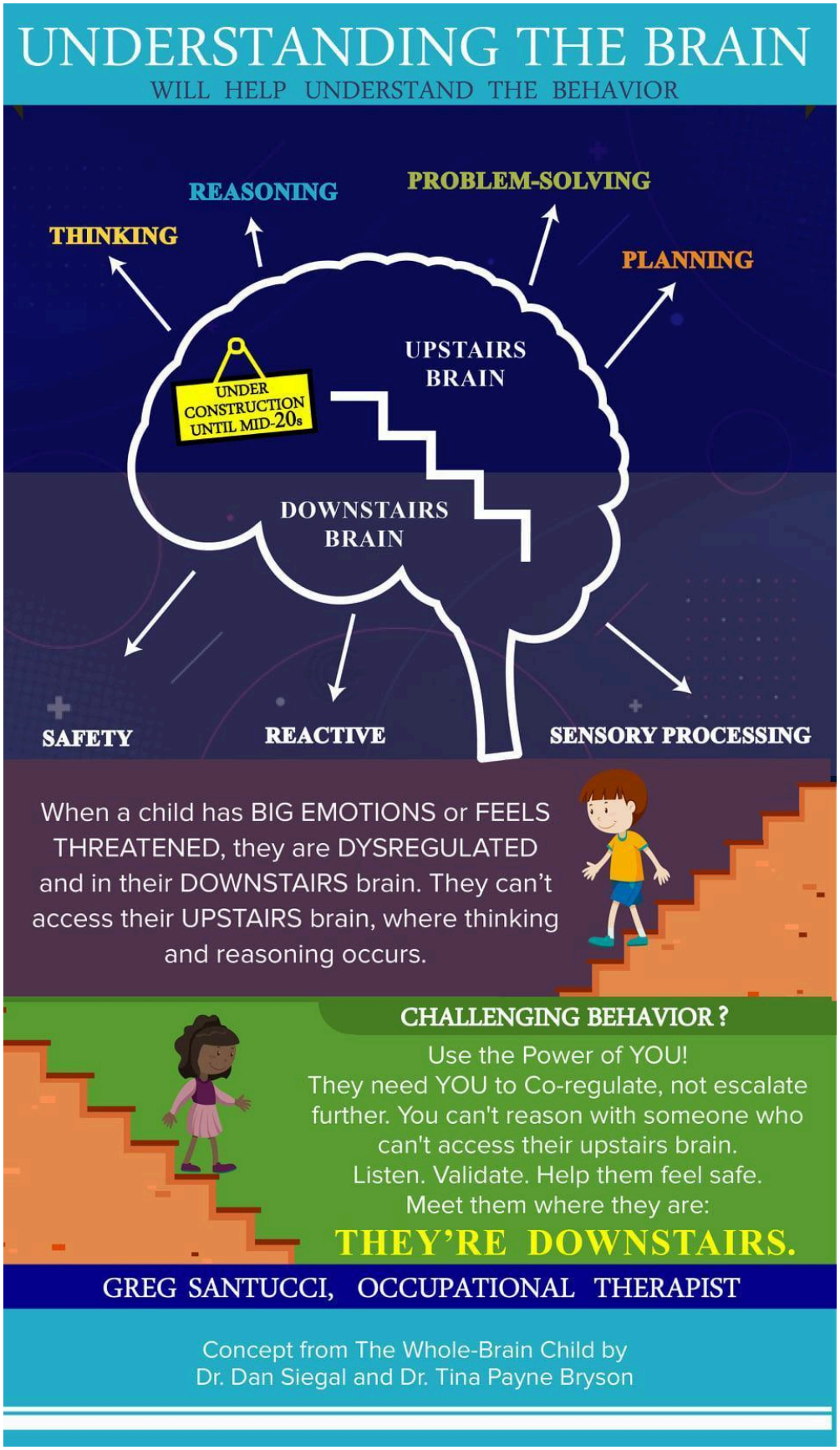
***Reacting** to a behavior we don't like usually doesn't work out well for ANYONE*

***Reflecting** on what the child's behavior is really telling us can change the trajectory of the situation and work out well for EVERYONE*

The Model of Child Engagement



Understanding the Brain, Understand the Behaviour



HALTS – Identify Basic Needs! Flyer

HALTS!

We all have basic needs. When we are "off", it's important to do a quick 'HALTS' audit before jumping to more complex conclusions. If you, or the person you are supporting, are presenting either a little – or VERY – agitated, run through these possible underlying reasons first.

H



Hungry?

Hunger can make anyone irritable and unfocused. Offering a nutritious snack or meal can make a big difference. Keep favourite, easy-to-eat foods within reach for those moments when hunger strikes unexpectedly, helping to quickly stabilise mood and concentration.

A



Angry or Anxious?

Feelings of anger or anxiety often signal deeper unmet needs or stress. By staying calm and providing a supportive presence, you can help soothe these intense emotions. Engage in simple calming exercises to help both of you find a moment of peace amidst the turmoil.

L



Lonely?

Loneliness can deeply affect a person's mental health, creating a sense of isolation. Counter this by facilitating brief, meaningful interactions with friends or family, or by simply sharing time together. Even a short conversation or a shared activity can provide a significant emotional lift.

T



Tired?

Fatigue affects everyone's ability to function. Encouraging a period of rest or a short nap, in a quiet and comfortable environment, can be incredibly restorative. Making sure the individual has the opportunity to relax and recharge is key to overcoming tiredness.

S



Stressed, Sad, Sensory, Sick?

Stress, sadness, sensory overload, or sickness each uniquely impact well-being. Offer comfort, grace, compassion and understanding. Adjust the environment to reduce unwanted stimuli or introduce preferred sensations. Gentle care and attention to comfort, alongside professional medical advice when necessary, are essential.

Emotion Coaching Flyer

Emotion coaching was developed by Dr. John Gottman, a well-known psychologist who studied how parents interact with their children. In the 1990s, Gottman's research found that parents who help their children understand and manage their feelings in a supportive way have a positive impact on their kids' emotional well-being and behaviour. He called this approach "emotion coaching."

The main idea behind emotion coaching is for parents to notice their children's emotions, show them they understand, help them name what they're feeling, and guide them in figuring out how to deal with these emotions positively. This approach helps children learn to handle their feelings better, improves their relationships with others, and can even help them do better in school.

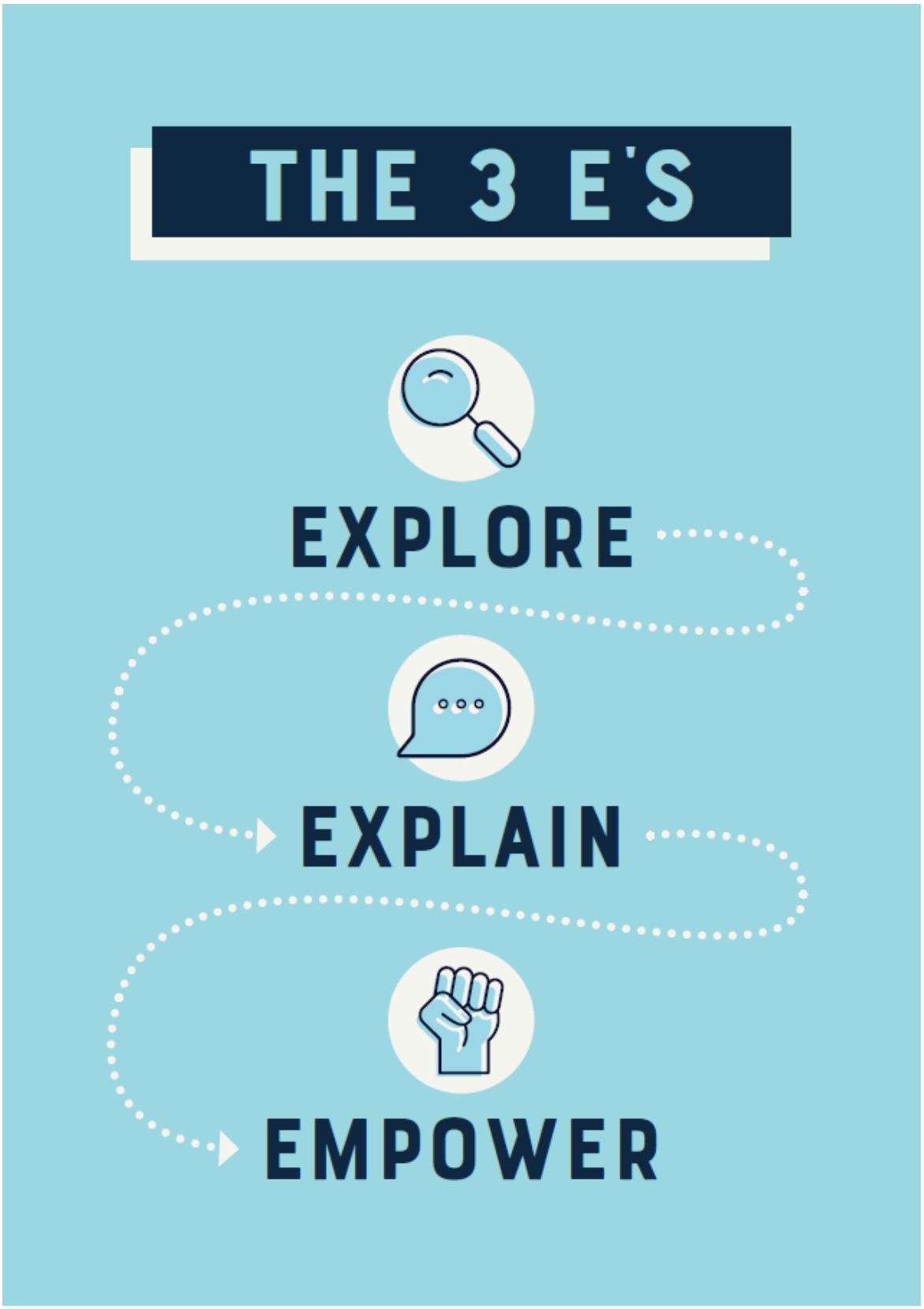
Gottman talked about this in his book "Raising An Emotionally Intelligent Child," where he gives advice on how parents can use emotion coaching in their daily lives with their children. Essentially, it's about being there for your child, understanding their emotions, and teaching them how to navigate those feelings in a healthy way.



The Three E's of Effective Discipline

Developed by Dr. Justin Coulson, The Three E's provides three simple steps to solving problems and resolving issues with your child.

Note: As usual, it can be helpful with adults, peers, and others too!



THE 3 E'S OF EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

EXPLORE the issue with your child. If they're giving you opposition, find out why. If they are worried about getting in trouble, explore that with them. It's all about empathy and perspective.

EXPLAIN to your child what you expect. The more clearly you explain, and the more input you receive, the more chance that you will get understanding and cooperation from your kids.

EMPOWER your child. This is where we say, 'OK, I get where you're coming from, and you know what I expect. Where do we go from here?' Help them think of options for combating the problem.

Justin Coulson's happy families.

happyfamilies.com.au

PDA One-Pager

Keys to Care

Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) profile of autism

- ✓ The PDA profile turns care on its head and lack of understanding causes distress
- ✓ See the person, explore their interests and engage positively
- ✓ Approach PDA as you might caring for a panda – create the environment which will enable individuals to thrive
- ✓ Indirect ways of wording requests, or even silence, helps with completing tasks
- ✓ Sanctions and consequences (incl. rewards) do not work and make things worse
- ✓ Enable some control and choice, allow for negotiation
- ✓ Processing can take longer than expected: take and allow time
- ✓ Fairness and trust are central, if things change, be clear & honest about why
- ✓ Collaboration, flexibility, variety and humour all work well

AVOIDANCE

Avoidance isn't a choice. PDA means I can't help not complying with your requests/instructions or even my own wishes. Everyday tasks can be a real struggle for me. Not feeling in control creates extreme anxiety, though it may not look like it (I may ignore or distract you or seem angry). If pushed it can trigger a sudden freeze, flight, fight response.

- ✓ Think of PDA as 'permanent demand anxiety'
- ✓ Make requests and communication indirect
- ✓ Doing things together helps
- ✓ Monitor important areas to avoid health problems (e.g. dehydration)

MOOD & DISTRESSED BEHAVIOURS

PDA can lead me to feel excited & energetic or lethargic & low and these changes can occur in quick succession.
Distressed behaviours (meltdowns, shutdowns, taking flight, physical/verbal aggression or self-injury) can occur quickly when my capacity to cope has been exceeded and I feel overwhelmed – I may not always know the trigger or be able to communicate whilst in crisis or remember what I've done/said. I may feel guilty later.

- ✓ Expect mood fluctuations
- ✓ Constantly monitor tolerance for demand & match demands accordingly
- ✓ Treat distressed behaviours as *panic attacks*
- ✓ Keep voice calm & body language submissive
- ✓ Support me through distressed behaviours (I may not be able to process language or tolerate touch at this time)
- ✓ Move on quickly after distressed behaviours (provide reassurance and recovery time)

ROUTINES & PLANNING

Some level of routine is helpful, but within it I need some flexibility and a sense of control.
Any changes to my environment or ways of working need forewarning - some negotiation of the details can help acceptance.

- ✓ Accept that some things can't be done
- ✓ Provide choices over how things are done
- ✓ Always think ahead: be proactive and head off problems before they occur
- ✓ Be flexible with time and approach

SENSORY DIFFICULTIES

I may have some sensory processing difficulties – sensitivity to light, touch, textures, smells, foods - and sensory integration difficulties around movement, balance or understanding my body's messages. These can lead to me feeling very unregulated if not addressed daily.

- ✓ Be aware of how my sensory difficulties may impact my behaviour
- ✓ Assess my sensory needs if this hasn't already been done
- ✓ Find ways for my sensory diet to be implemented in a PDA friendly way

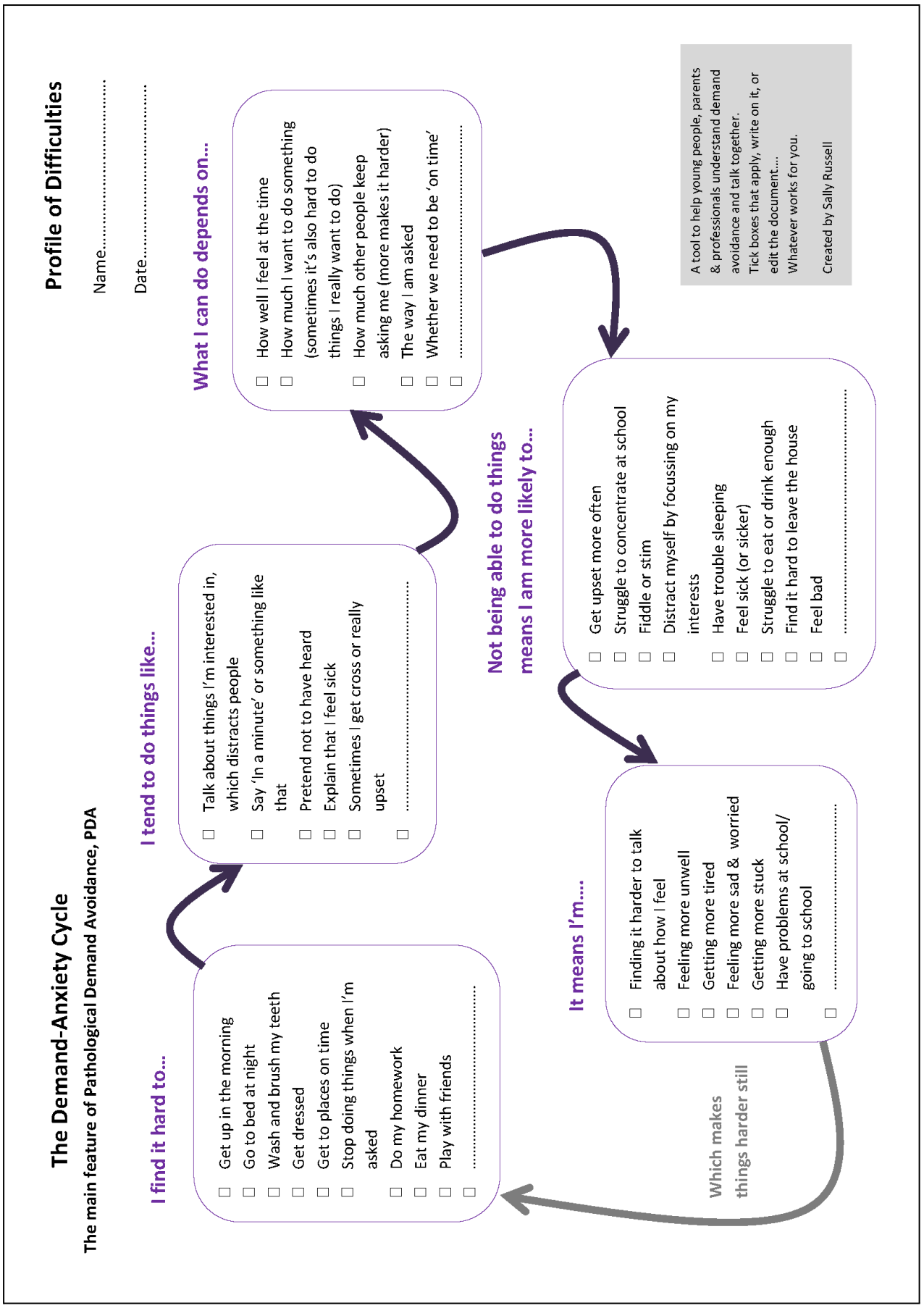
ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

If you engage with me in my special interests, I will begin to like and trust you and there will be more chance of success. If I can trust you to keep me safe we may be able to do more activities.

- ✓ Ask what I like to do, and genuinely engage with me
- ✓ Research in detail what's available - make a short list we can discuss
- ✓ Give me some, but not lots, of notice before any trips or activities
- ✓ The trip/activity will become a demand, so be flexible. Try again another day if it doesn't work out

For further information and resources please visit www.pdasociety.org.uk

Demand-Anxiety Cycle Worksheet



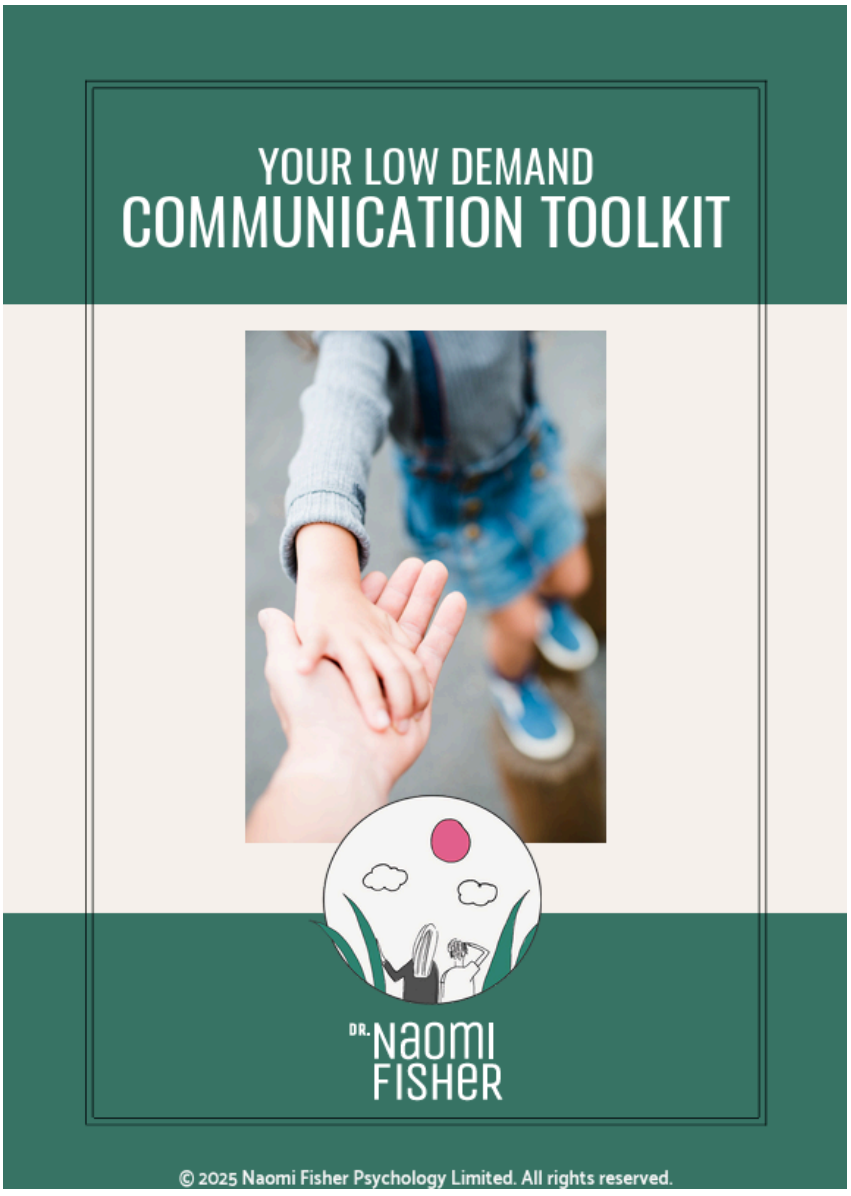
Low Demand Communication Toolkit - Dr Naomi Fisher

Some children say NO a lot. It doesn't matter what you suggest, you just get another NO. They even say NO to things that they enjoy, like trips to the park or ice cream. The reason this happens is because some children are highly sensitive to pressure.

Sign up to get Naomi's free, evidenced based toolkit and learn about what you can do differently to help your child get beyond the NO.

The document cannot be shared, but individuals can sign up for their own copy for free

https://naomifisher.co.uk/low-demand-toolkit-signup/



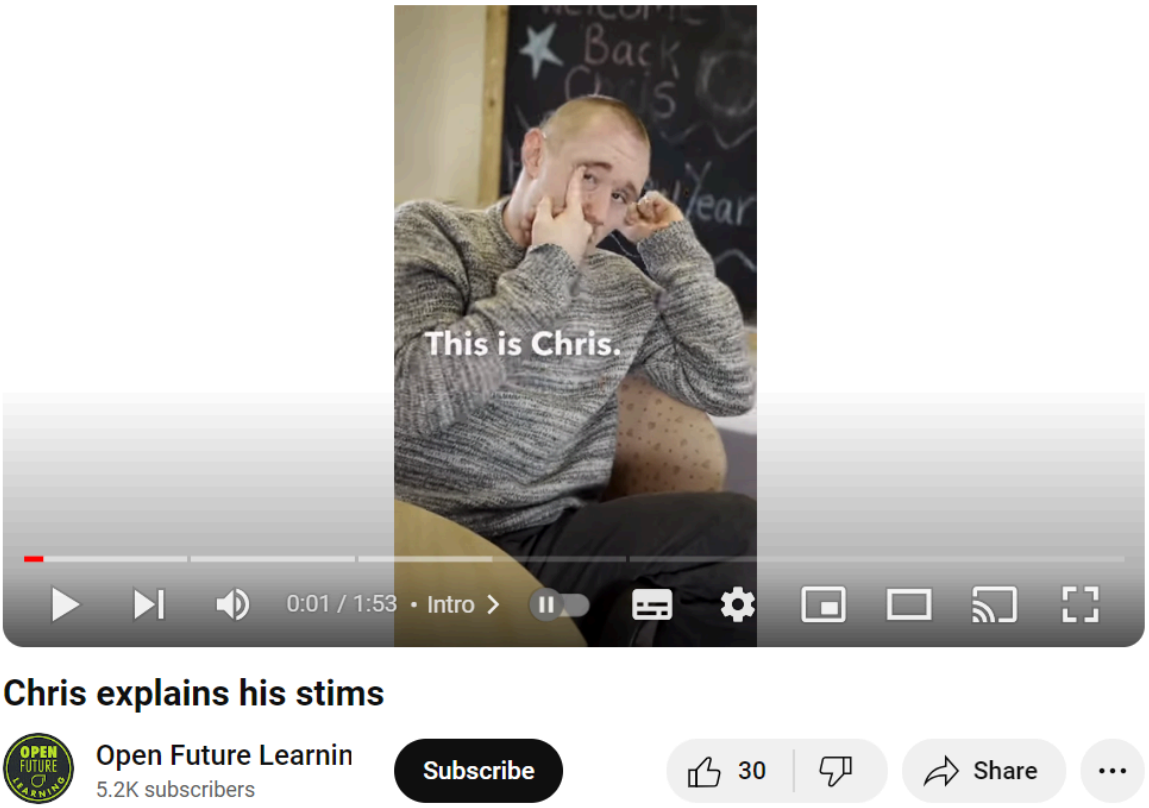
Videos

Chris Explains His Stims

YouTube Video by Open Future Learning

Video Link:
[Chris explains his stims]

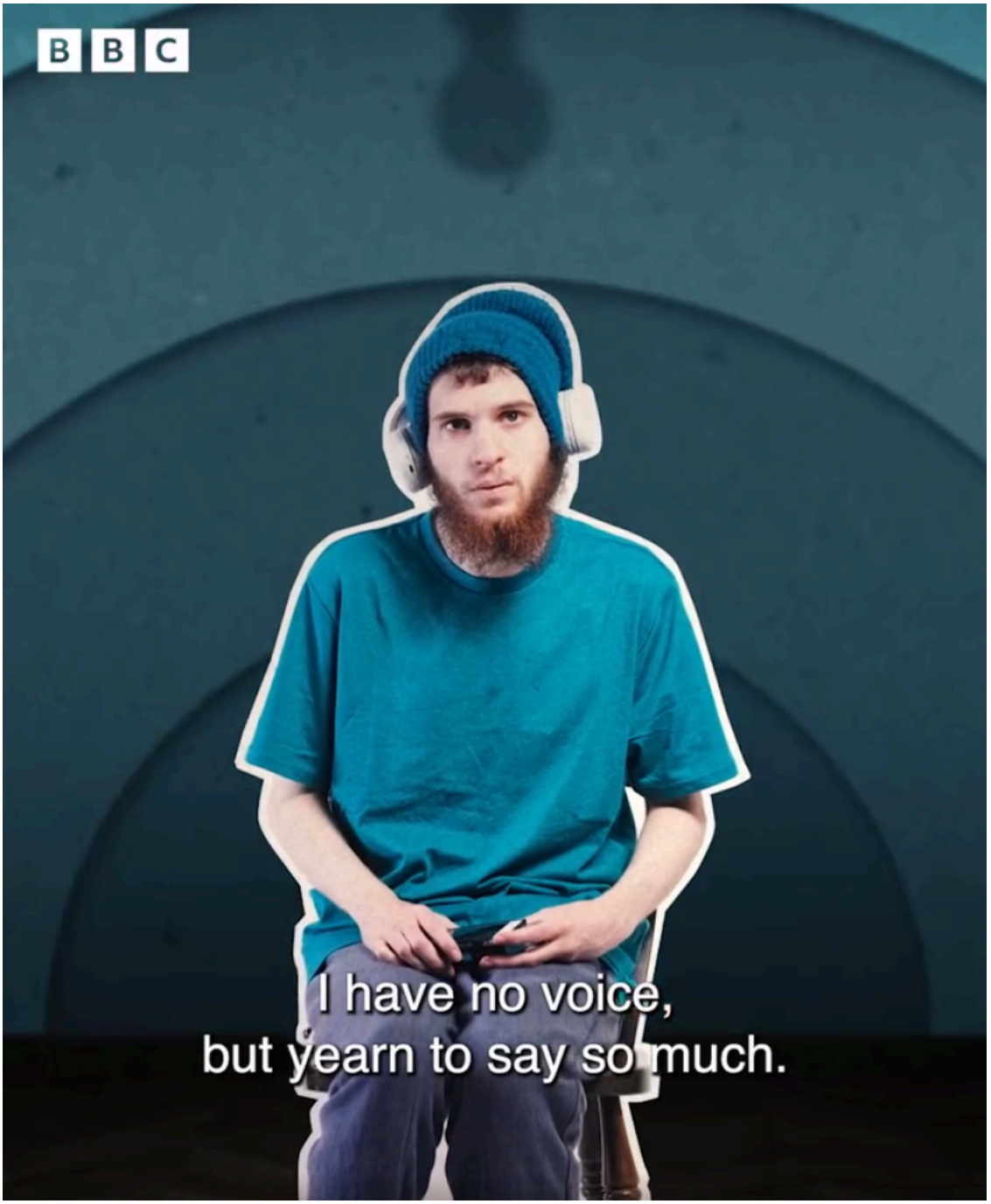
A YouTube video in which Chris explains what stimming is and why he stims (about 1minute 30 seconds)



“I have no voice, but so much to say” - BBC Ideas

Video link:
https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=733926048194764

“Murray is autistic - he's also non-speaking. He made and starred in this short film, in order to share what he's really feeling”.



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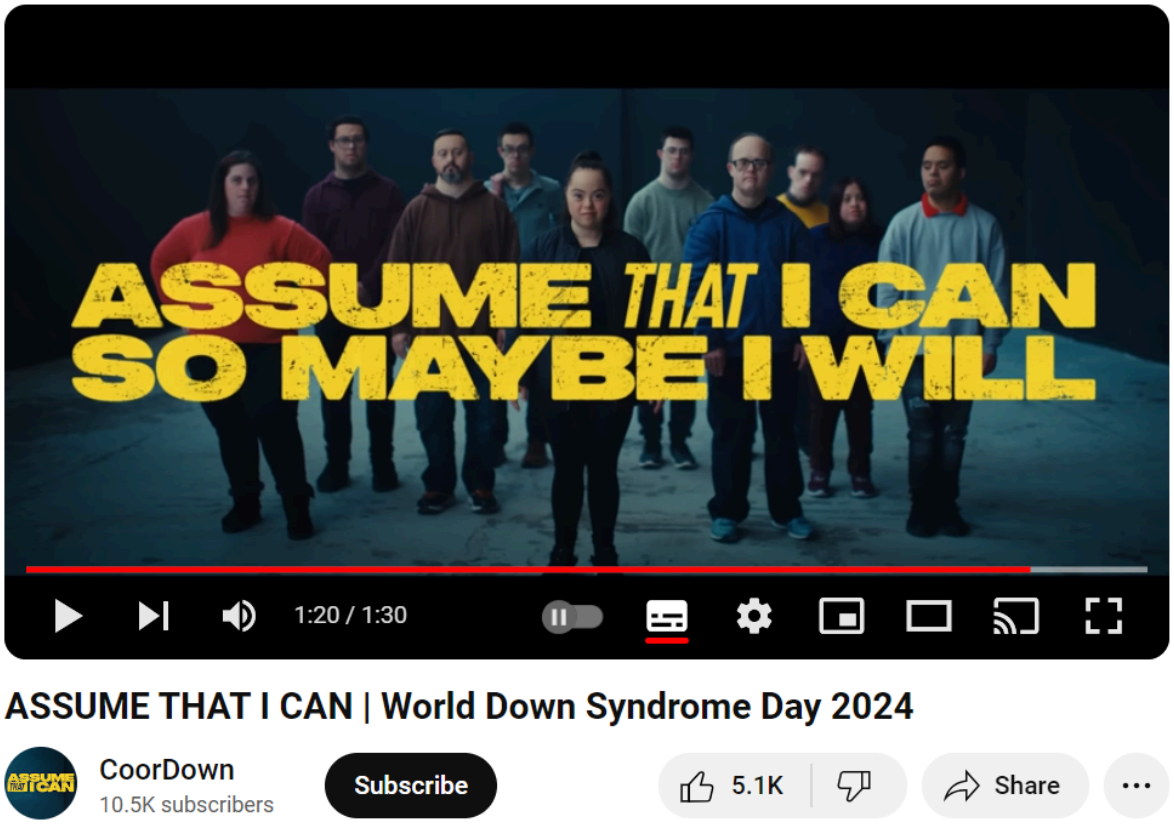
Assume That I CAN – World Down Syndrome Day 2024

Video link:
[ASSUME THAT I CAN | World Down Syndrome Day 2024]

"Our negative assumptions about people with Down syndrome can lead us to treat them in such a way that these assumptions become reality. In sociology, this is called a 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. Why not reverse our perspectives? If we have positive assumptions about people with Down syndrome, we'll give them more opportunities in their schools, workplaces, relationships and activities. And maybe these positive assumptions will become reality".



Support Services

Infant and Child Mental Health and Wellbeing Service (ICMHWS)

https://mhdas.barwonhealth.org.au/service/infant-child-mental-health-wellbeing/



From the website:

1300 094 187

The Infant and Child Mental Health and Wellbeing Service (ICMHWS) (formerly CAMHS) is a specialist family-focused service that provides assessment and treatment for infants, children and adolescents (0-15 years) with complex mental health problems.

ICMHWS comprises a team of professionals including child psychiatrists, occupational therapists, social workers, psychologists, and psychiatric nurses.

ICMHWS provides assessment and treatment for a range of concerns that include for example:

- Severe anxiety and depression
- Self harm
- Difficulty in relating to others
- Suicide attempts or thoughts
- Other symptoms related to emotional problems
- Stress
- CAMHS provides an assessment service for Autism

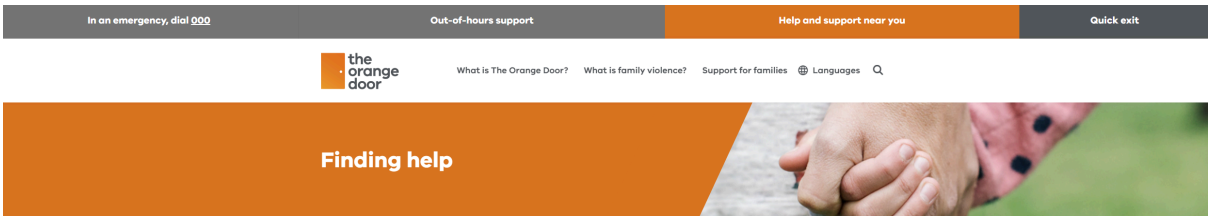
ICMHWS also provides a service to infants and their parents when there are concerns such as persistent crying, sleep disturbance, feeding difficulties, gaze avoidance, parental concern about infant development, tantrums, aggression and failure to thrive. ICMHWS also provides secondary consultation where appropriate.

Referral guidelines
At first contact, an ICMHWS intake worker will discuss concerns and arrange an appointment with a ICMHWS staff member, or assist the referrer to find the best possible service for the young person.

Barwon Health offers 24/7 help, information or referral via our Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs Services triage.

The Orange Door

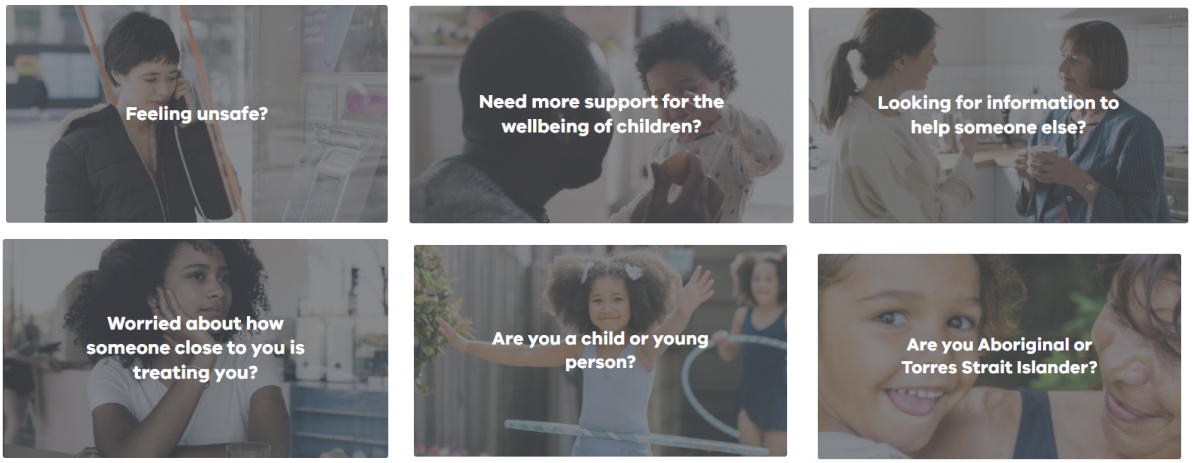
https://www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/



The Orange Door is a **gateway** to immediate and comprehensive support for individuals and families facing challenges within their homes or relationships, especially concerning safety, parenting, and personal well-being. Acting as an essential access point to an array of individual, family and community services, The Orange Door listens, provides direct assistance, and connects people to further resources including parenting support, youth and family services, counselling, accommodation, and legal aid, all without requiring a referral.

They can help when:

- **you need help with parenting**, or you are **worried about the wellbeing or development of a child or young person**.
- someone close to you is making **you feel afraid or unsafe** such as your partner, ex-partner, family member or carer.
- you are a child or young person who doesn't feel safe or cared for.
- you are **at risk of using abusive or controlling behaviour** or **you need help with these behaviours** at home or in a relationship.
- you are **worried about the safety of someone** you know.
- you have **experienced family violence**, including controlling behaviour like someone monitoring where you go, who you visit or how you spend money.

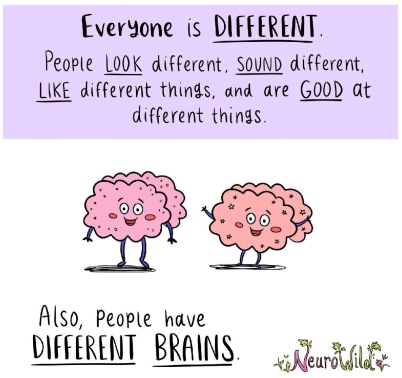


Web Resources

Neurodiversity Information by NeuroWild

Emma Hammond from NeuroWild runs an Instagram Page featuring an array a wonderfully accessible, clear, and engaging content about neurodiversity and neurodiversity-affirming support: https://www.instagram.com/neurowild_/?hl=en

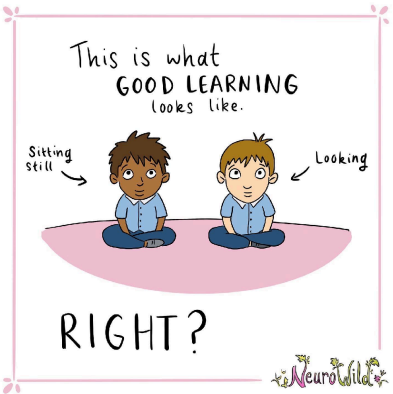
You can also purchase Emma Hammond's (NeuroWild) Neurodiversity Resources from her Teachers Pay Teachers account: https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Neurodiversity-Bundle-the-LOT-8777309

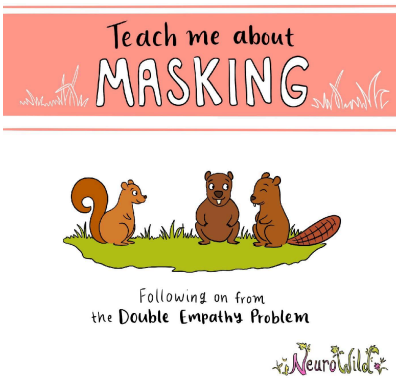


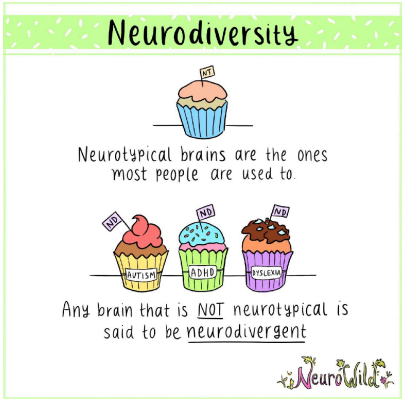


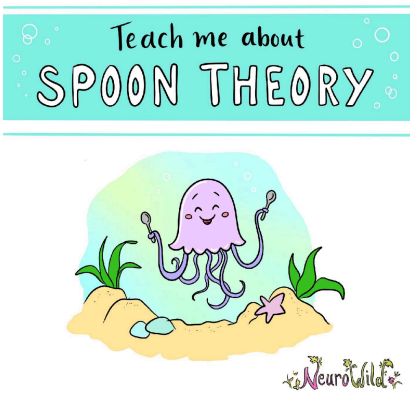










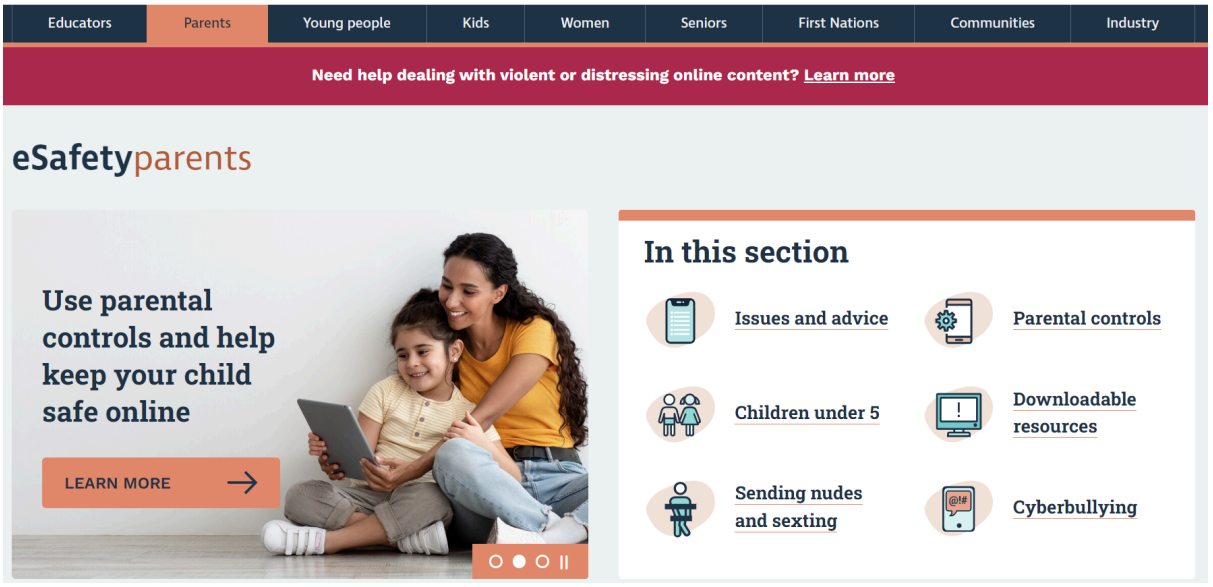




eSafety Commissioner

https://www.esafety.gov.au/

The eSafety Commissioner's website has tonnes of information, resources and services available to support all types of people, including professionals, parents, children and young people, seniors, carers and more with safe online behaviour.



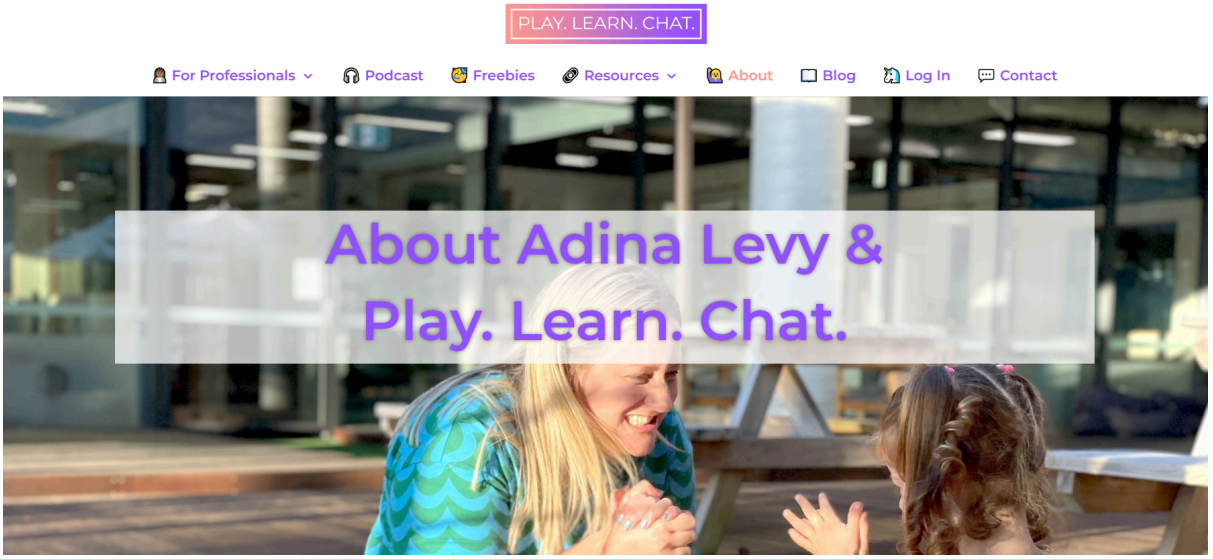
Play. Learn. Chat.

https://playlearnchat.com/about/

Play. Learn. Chat., founded by Adina Levy, a neurodivergent speech therapist, focuses on transforming support for neurodivergent children through neurodiversity affirming practice education.

It offers resources, webinars, and workshops for professionals aiming to understand and support autistic and neurodivergent children in affirming ways. Adina Levy's approach celebrates individual strengths and passions, integrating therapy into daily life and play to enhance communication and interaction skills.

For more detailed information on their offerings and philosophy, you can visit their website at [About Adina Levy, Neurodivergent Speech Therapist - Play. Learn. Chat.]



PDA Society

https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/

This website contains information about PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance), an overwhelming need to avoid or resist demands.

Welcome to PDA Society

Information, training and support for PDA people, parents & carers, and professionals.

The PDA Society is the only specialist PDA charity in the UK. We are a small team, and all of us have a personal connection with PDA.

Our goal is to try and make life better for PDA people and their families – we believe that happy, autonomous lives are possible. Our strong commitment to research underpins every step we take towards improving understanding, support and outcomes for PDA people in the future.

A PDA profile of autism means that individuals ***share autistic characteristics ...***

- *currently defined as "persistent difficulties with social communication and social interaction" and "restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour, activities or interests" present since early childhood to the extent that these "limit and impair everyday functioning" (according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Fifth Edition (DSM-5))*
- *often including a different sensory experience in relation to sight, smell, taste, touch, hearing, vestibular, proprioception and interoception.*

... and ***in addition****:*

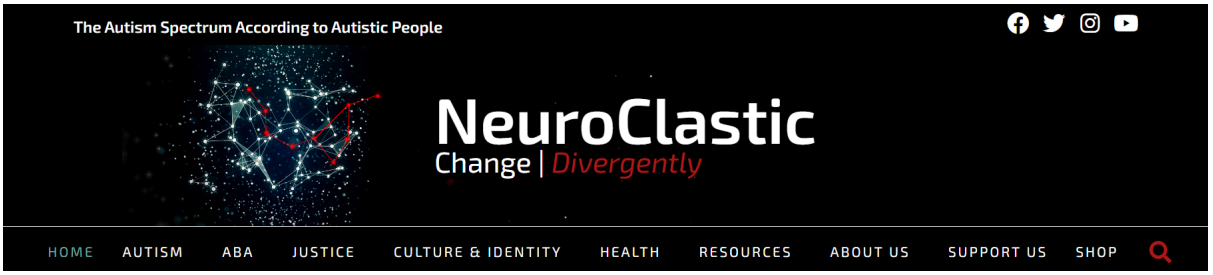
- *have a need for control which is often anxiety related*
- *are driven to avoid everyday demands and expectations (including things that they want to do or enjoy) to an extreme extent*
- *tend to use approaches that are 'social in nature' in order to avoid demands*
- *present with many of the 'key features' of PDA rather than just one or two*
- *tend not to respond to conventional parenting, teaching or support approaches*

https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/life-with-pda-menu/family-life-intro/helpful-approaches-children/

Neuroclastic

https://neuroclastic.com/

Neuroclastic is a platform focused on autism and neurodivergence from an insider perspective. It often features articles, resources, and insights by autistic individuals and professionals knowledgeable about autism. The site aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of autism, advocating for neurodiversity, and offering support and information for autistic people, their families, and allies.



Autism Level UP!

https://www.autismlevelup.com/

About Autism Level UP!:

“A partnership of two developmental psychologists, one neurodivergent (Dr. JÂcqûelyn Fede) and the other neurotypical (Dr. Amy Laurent).

Our philosophy is that through education, accessible resources, practical strategies and a commitment to consistently incorporating the experiences and perspectives of autistic people, we can support the leveling up of society when it comes to autism and neurodiversity.

Of course, our primary goal is to support autistic individuals, but the more we are able to spread real awareness and support others in moving from awareness to acceptance, acceptance to appreciation, appreciation to empowerment and from empowerment to advocacy, the more positive change we will see at those large institutional and societal levels that can greatly benefit the autistic community.

So we do aim first and foremost to empower autistic individuals to navigate their world, but we also aim to make the world a more autism-friendly environment and the universe more accommodating to the neurodiverse - after all, it is a partnership and change should not rest solely on the shoulders of the autistic community.”



Siblings Australia – Support and Resources for Siblings

https://siblingsaustralia.org.au/

Siblings Australia is a unique national organisation promoting better support for siblings of children and adults with disability.

We recognise that siblings are often overlooked, which can lead to feelings of isolation. If this is not addressed, children (and later, adults) become vulnerable to a range of emotional and mental health problems. However, if siblings are acknowledged and connected to support, the sibling and in turn their family are likely to experience better outcomes.

Here at Siblings Australia, the work we do falls into five broad categories:

- *Providing direct support to siblings.*
- *Offering education and support, empowering parents to support their children.*
- *Working with service providers within the health, education, and disability sectors to assist them in providing more informed support to siblings.*
- *Undertaking advocacy for greater recognition of siblings in government policy and the community.*
- *Promoting and carrying out research on issues relating to siblings and their families.*

Siblings Australia also provides some specific services and resources, including:

- **SibWorks**: Learn how to support siblings aged 8-12 connect with peers and building positive coping skills, as an accredited facilitator our tailor-made peer support programme

- **SibWise:** Build your understanding of the sibling experience, and how to best support the siblings in your life or work, with our SibWise online learning program.

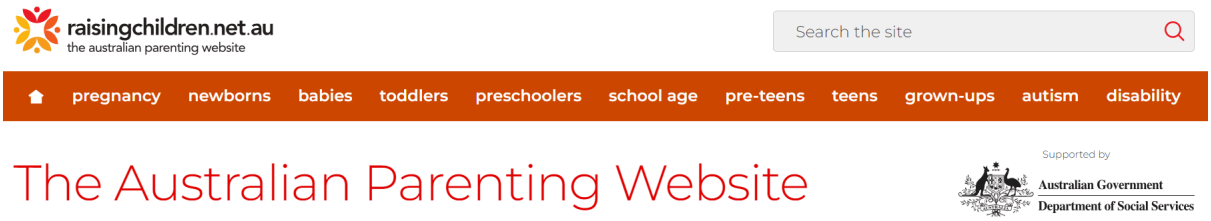
- **SibPLan**: Find out more about our new tools and resources for siblings who are future planning with their brother or sister with disability.

- **SibAware**™: SibAware™ is a national accreditation program designed to make it easier for siblings to identify and connect with organisations that understand their unique circumstances. It also enables organisations to improve their awareness and provision of support to siblings of all ages who may otherwise go unrecognised.

- **SibSupport:** SibSupport is available to child, adolescent or adult siblings and also extends to facilitate family counselling. Sessions are facilitated by Siblings Australia staffer, Rachel Bailey, a registered counsellor with the Australian Counselling Association (ACA). A booking link is available on the website.

Raising Children Network

https://raisingchildren.net.au/



The Raising Children Network website offers comprehensive resources for parents and carers, covering various stages from pregnancy to teenage years, including sections on autism and disability. It provides evidence-based information on child health, development, and behaviour, supported by the Parenting Research Centre and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute with The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health. The site aims to support and guide families in raising healthy, well-adjusted children.

For more details, you can visit their website here.

Recommended Reading

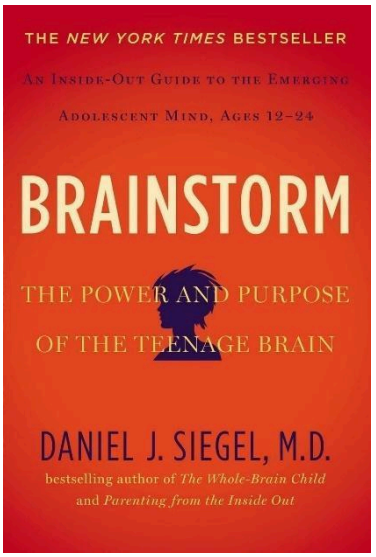
Book: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain – Dr. Dan Siegel

The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain – YouTube Video Dan Siegel (2014) HD – YouTube
1 hour 26 minutes

YouTube Clip about the core message: *The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain – YouTube Video Dan Siegel (2014) HD* - **1hour 26 minutes**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_r_FmiJkD6s

About the Author: Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., is an internationally acclaimed author, award-winning educator, and child psychiatrist. He is currently a clinical professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine where he also serves as a co-investigator at the Center for Culture, Brain, and Development and co-director of the Mindful Awareness Research Center.

About Brainstorm (the Book): Between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, the brain changes in important, and oftentimes maddening, ways. It's no wonder that many parents approach their child's adolescence with fear and trepidation. According to renowned neuropsychiatrist Daniel Siegel, however, if parents and teens can work together to form a deeper understanding of the brain science behind all the tumult, they will be able to turn conflict into connection and form a deeper understanding of one another.
https://www.amazon.com.au/Brainstorm-Power-Purpose-Teenage-Brain/dp/1585422935X



Book: The Whole-Brain Child

BOOK: The Whole-Brain: Child 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind, Survive Everyday Parenting Struggles, and Help Your Family Thrive; by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.
https://drdansiegel.com/book/the-whole-brain-child/

- Really recommend this book for understanding brain development and how to take this into account when trying to work out what to do when challenging behaviours happen

- We have a PDF called 'Whole Brain Strategies' which explains the strategies in a bit more detail if you feel like having a read. Just ask us for the 'Whole Brain Strategies' PDF 😊

- The strategies below are dot points of the 'mantras' from the book. We really like mantras because they are easy to 'recite' in moments of high stress!

STRATEGIES FROM THE BOOK

- Instead of **Command and Demand**, try **Connect and Redirect**
- Instead of **Dismiss and Deny**, try **Name it to Tame it**
- Instead of **Enraging the Downstairs Brain**, try **Engage the Upstairs Brain**
- Instead of **Just Giving the Answer**, try **Exercise the Upstairs Brain**
- Instead of **Command and Demand**, try **Move it or Lose it**
- Instead of **Fast-forward and Forget**, try **Rewind and Remember**
- Instead of **How was your Day**, try **Remember to Remember**
- Instead of **Dismiss and Deny**, try **Teaching that Feelings Come and Go**
- Instead of **Dismiss and Deny**, try **Connection through Conflict**

FAQs

Our team often field general questions about managing incidents or challenging situations.

This FAQ section in our Resource for Families is a continuous work in progress, with questions added as we answer them.

Q: “Physical and verbal aggression - how do you deal with this?!”

Question:

Wondering if anyone has any advice... my ASD child will often become physically and verbally aggressive towards family members. How do you deal with this?! Consequences?! I have always removed child or myself from the unsafe situation and then spoken to other child about appropriate behaviour. But it continues to happen. It’s affecting our whole household. Thanks in advance

- *Anon*

Answer:

Hey Anon, good on you for sharing. The struggle is real!

Something that can help is shifting focus from what is happening to why it might be happening. You’ve already got a great instinct by stepping back and de-escalating in the moment. That safety-first approach is so important. And the relational repair afterwards is also so important.

Some things that might be worth exploring:

- Sensory... are there certain environments, sounds, lights, or textures that seem to trigger or overwhelm your child?
- Communication difficulties... could your child be struggling to express a need or frustration in another way?
- Changes or unpredictability... even small transitions (like stopping a favourite activity) can feel huge to a neurodivergent child.
- Unmet needs... things like hunger, fatigue, or needing connection can show up in behaviour before kids are aware of them themselves. Think 'HALTS' (are they: Hungry? Angry? Lonely? Tired? Stressed/Sensory(overwhelmed/underwhelmed)/Sick?)
- Stress buildup... is this happening after school, or after busy periods? Some kids ‘mask’ all day then release at home.
- Anxiety... worry or concerns about upcoming events or plans, etc.

You’ve also got an opportunity (when things are calm) to involve your child in the conversation. Something like:

> *"Hey, I noticed this happens sometimes and I wonder if you feel a bit [overwhelmed/frustrated/confused]? I want to understand what’s going on for you and what might help you feel safe."*

Even if they can't answer straight away, it shows them they're not in trouble and that you're on their team. It might take more than a few attempts here for them to feel the process is genuine if it's a new approach. More details on the CPS approach here: https://livesinthebalance.org/parents-and-families-tour/

It might also be worth chatting with an OT, psychologist or Behaviour Support Practitioner if you haven't already... they can help unpack patterns and co-create strategies that work with your child and the family.

You're doing so much right already. Be kind to yourself and keep seeking help, leaning on community is a strength, not a weakness!

- Zac

Contact Us

Our contact details are below if you have any queries about our service at all. If you have referred to our service and are still waiting for a service from us, you are also welcome to contact us if you would like an update on your place on the waitlist / expected timeframe.

Email
behavioursupport@step2alliedhealth.com

Or

Call 03 5215 5931

Table of Amendments

Date	Amendments made
28/05/2024	Original resource created
June ‘24 - September ‘25	Numerous revisions made over time including addition of new resources and categorisation of resources
02/10/2025	Version 1.1 ratified