

NORTH CUMBRIA & NORTH EAST CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PEER NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Support offer and Resources; North Cumbria and North East (NCNE).

Building on Schools and Parents Accelerator Site Schools project and the Children and Young People Peer Network

Upcoming Webinars & Workshops

Support for Parent Carer Forums and Parents, via a series of webinars, and workshops which have been co-produced with PCF, Contact, and health professionals.

Sleep

Webinar 5th August 18:45
Workshop 12th August 18:45

Resilience/Wellbeing

Webinar 26th August
Workshop 2nd September

Money Matters

Webinar 9th September
Workshop 16th September

Links to the recorded webinars which have already taken place:

The Realities of Home Schooling Webinar Recording
https://youtu.be/AAm04Wgqr_c

Returning to School; support and strategies for managing behaviour and worry Webinar Recording
<https://youtu.be/vM8RAj96XLc>

Positive Behaviour webinar
https://youtu.be/EFiRDU0hS_Q

Sensory Ideas for Home Webinar Recording
<https://youtu.be/IC0LumVDkt4>



This offer will also extend to:

Access to 1-1 specialist advice via Contact for Parent Carers.

Information and signposting along with Ongoing support to schools involved in the accelerator project from Parent Carer Forums

Support webinars, Q&A sessions, top tips for schools, and resources which have been developed with professionals from health and education colleagues

This rolling programme will be delivered for both Schools, and Parents across North Cumbria and North East

All webinars and workshops will be bookable by using eventbrite, these links will be sent out prior to the events.



Anxiety

Anxiety and worry are a normal part of being a person, but for children with additional needs they can be very lonely feelings. It is often difficult for children to understand why they are feeling different, what to do about it, and understanding that other people feel the same things too.

There are some things we can do to help:

Signs of Anxiety:

- Increased worrying.
- Asking for reassurance a lot or asking repetitive questions.
- Increased repetitive language, saying the same things over and over.
- Increased self-soothing behaviours or movements (e.g. flapping and rocking)
- Avoiding or appearing disinterested in activities they normally enjoy.
- Being more irritable/argumentative, hitting out or throwing things to communicate distress or feel more in control. We might feel we are walking on 'eggshells' more than usual.
 - Engaging in self-injurious behaviour.
 - Becoming tearful or overwhelmed.
- Physical symptoms (e.g. feeling shaky, restlessness or reporting headaches)
 - Changes in sleeping or eating habits.
- Wanting to do things that they did when they were younger, such as mouthing clothes or getting out old toys.

Additional links

Contact has good info about COVID: <https://contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/covid-19/>

Also the Council for Disabled Children and providing regular updated info: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/covid-19-support-and-guidance>

Beyond Words book: <https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk/downloads-shop/beating-the-virus>

Contact Helpline
Contact helpline advisers are ready to help with any concerns or worries you might have about your family during the current pandemic and beyond. Talk directly to one of our parent advisers through their Live Chat service and Freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555 - or you can email us if you prefer.

Below are some links to resources in relation to parent and carers wellbeing.

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<https://learningdisabilitymatters.co.uk/covid-19/>

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240003927>



Feelings

Label the feeling.

If you see a child becoming anxious or you think that they might be, label that feeling. Choose a word that works in your house/setting and make sure you use it consistently; swapping between anxiety/ worry/ wobble/ nervous/ stressed can make children uncertain if you are talking about the same thing.

For children who are early communicators we might be just saying a single word and prompting them to something that helps them to calm, for older or more advanced communicators we might be able to be curious, asking if they are worried and what they might be worried about. Perhaps you can start a list or start to prompt towards coping strategies.

Work together to help understand why and when it might be helpful for you and your child to know which aspects of the current situation may be increasing their anxiety, helping them understand that;

- There is normally a 'trigger', which makes you to feel anxious.
- Anxiety triggers can be different for different people. They can be in our environment or they can be certain thoughts or feelings.
- Some triggers are more common for people with Autism or/and Learning Disabilities, but everyone is different
- Everyone needs help sometimes



Coping Strategies

There are lots of different things that can be used to help manage and reduce anxiety. Finding which coping strategies suit your child, and using the strategies before your child becomes too anxious will be most helpful.

Coping with uncertainty:

- Let your child know that you will update them with any changes
- Encourage your child to communicate their worries (through play, drawing or by talking to them).

Keeping up to date

Try not to be afraid about discussing coronavirus at home or school, not talking about things can make it harder to understand. Talk to children in a way that is at the right level for them and try to avoid too many details that may make them overwhelmed.

To help reduce your child's anxiety, it may be helpful to try and answer any questions they have, there are lots of resources that can help with this.

Talking about upcoming changes in a planned way can help everyone to understand what is expected before it becomes a 'change' which we all have to manage.



Coping with disruption to routine and change:

- Use a visual calendar to create new routines with your child (with time for relaxing).
- Structure your child's day with regular times for mealtime and bedtime.
- Create a visual list including pictures of fun or relaxing activities your child can do in the current circumstances, including alternative activities for those not possible during lockdown.

Coping strategies to help manage anxiety:

- Calming sensory activities (e.g. making slime, going to a quiet or dark place)
- Creative activities (e.g. writing poems, colouring, drawing, arts and crafts)
- Listening to music, reading a book, watching TV or playing games
- Ring/text/videocall someone (e.g. friends) for a chat
- Set aside some 'worry time' (e.g. creating a set time to allow worrying can help your child feel like they have more control over their worries)
- Balance out your child's thinking by helping them to identify the positive things that are happening
- Physical activities or exercise (e.g. running, walking, cycling, dancing)
- Encourage breaks from technology (e.g. the whole family at once) and from the news.



Resources to use with people with learning disabilities through the coronavirus restrictions – Learning Disability Professional Senate

<https://www.salfordcvs.co.uk/system/files/LD%20Senate%20Coronavirus%20resources%20for%20use%20with%20people%20with%20learning%20disabi...pdf>

Advice about the coronavirus – Easy Read Online

<https://www.easy-read-online.co.uk/media/53192/advice-on-the-coronavirus-v1.pdf>

Talking to kids about the coronavirus – Child Mind Institute

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

Over the last nineteen weeks we have all experienced a period of unprecedented change and uncertainty as we adjust to a new way of living. As we navigate our way through it's important to stop and reflect on all the changes we have made, some of which may seem small, others may feel much more significant. Some of the changes may have had a positive impact such as a renewed passion for a hobby. Others have been more difficult to manage and have caused worry and frustration - whatever the change has been whether it has been big or small, take time to acknowledge the changes and remember that you made it through them. As we begin to think about the future, many will undoubtedly be thinking of the return to school in September, and how this might impact on our children and young people and ourselves. Feelings of anxiety and anticipation will begin to creep in. It is important to remind ourselves that just as each child and young person is different, so is each family and school and that one thing that is right for one young person may not be for another. As we begin to move forward each person's path may be different and that's ok. There is no right or wrong way we just need to get it right for our children and young people and that might look different for each and every young person.



WE ALL NEED
DIFFERENT
THINGS TO
THRIVE

Self Care

Feeling anxious and stressed in this exceptional situation is normal, but there are lots of things we can do to help promote positive wellbeing and manage the stress and anxiety we are feeling. There are some simple steps we can take to look after our wellbeing.

News

Limit the time you spend watching news or on social media stay informed by using trusted sites as there is a lot of information that is inaccurate.

Take a break

Make sure you allow yourself a break, this might be going into a different room, getting a cup of tea – allow yourself regular breaks and take a few minutes out.

Eat a balanced diet and keep hydrated

Make sure that you eat a balanced diet of healthy and nutritious food and ensure that you keep hydrated it is often easy to put ourselves at the bottom of the list as we try to balance our daily lives

Keep Talking

Good relationships are important we all need support, make sure that you have people around who you can talk to whether that be family, friends or professionals.

Stay Active

The benefits of exercise on our physical and mental health and can help manage stress levels.

Prioritise sleep

It is essential to get sleep to replenish your energy levels.

Make time for things you enjoy

This will provide a welcome distraction and maybe reignite a passion for something you once loved or maybe you might develop a passion for something new.



For self-care to be effective it needs to be practical to your life. Some examples of self-care include mindfulness or doing something meaningful for you. Take time to think about what you can do to look after yourself, is there something that you can do that provides you with some space and time to relax? such as a walk, a nice soak in the bath, some time to sit and watch TV, a virtual chat to a friend - whatever it is that helps you relax try to find some time in your week to do at least one activity for yourself. As we move forward remember you're doing a great job!

