



Introducing children to Autism

Who am I?

It's important to remember that we're all different! Let's have a look at the things that make you ... you!

Things I'm good at:	Things I find tricky:
	

Sometimes, we're able to group together the things that we're good at, and things we struggle with. Naming these groups can help us to better understand how we feel.

If you are autistic, some of the things you have written in the table might be related to autism.

Have a read of the fact sheet to find out more!

Autism fact sheet

What is autism?

Autism means people's brains work in a slightly different way to non-autistic (neurotypical) people's.

Autistic people may struggle with:

- Talking to others
- Dealing with change
- Following strict plans
- Feeling overwhelmed by lots of light and noise
- Becoming super focused on one task or hobby
- Anxiety
- Meltdowns

Autistic people may be really good at:

- Telling the truth
- Attention to detail
- Working on tasks for long periods of time
- Following rules
- Organisation
- Creativity
- Mathematical and technical abilities

There are lots of things that can help to make life with autism a little bit easier. These can include:

- Breathing exercises
- Daily plans
- Affirmations
- Sensory toys

Autism is on a spectrum. This means that autism affects people in different ways.

There are around 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK.

What is neurodiversity?

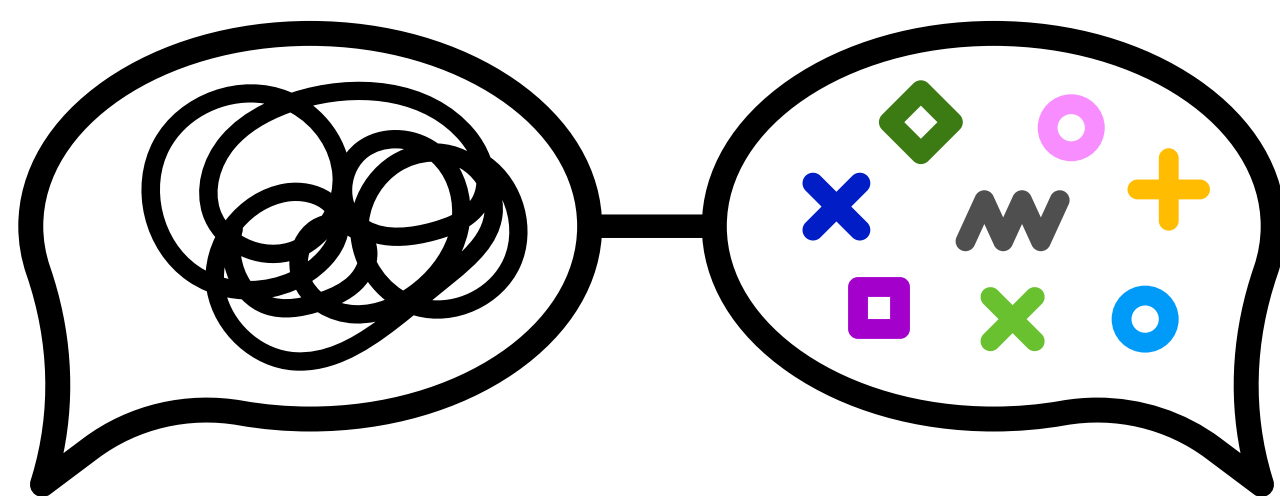
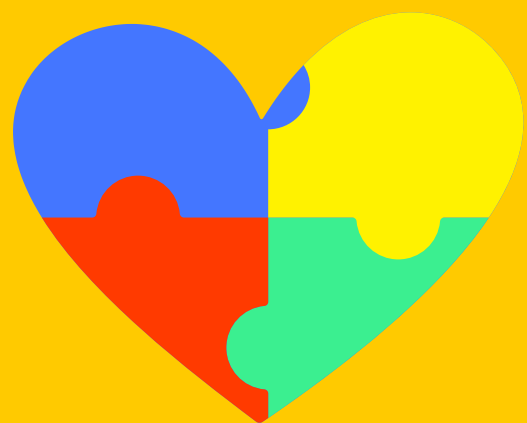
Neurodiversity is about recognising that everyone's brains work differently. This means that we all have our own way of thinking, and experience things differently.

This means that other people may struggle to do things that you find easy, and that you may struggle with things that other people find easy.

Some of these different ways of thinking have been given names.

For example:

- ADHD
- Autism
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Tourette's



Have a think about the things that you find easy and hard, and how other people may find these things!

What can you do to help?

- Don't tease or make fun of anyone who is different to you, or who is finding something difficult
- Instead, be kind, understanding and encouraging
- If you see someone who you think might be struggling, ask them if there's anything you can do to help

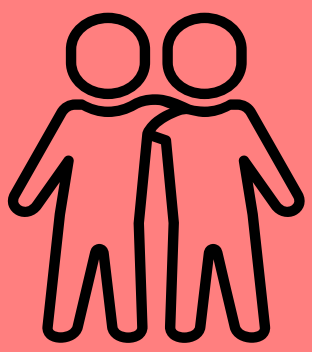


Daily resources

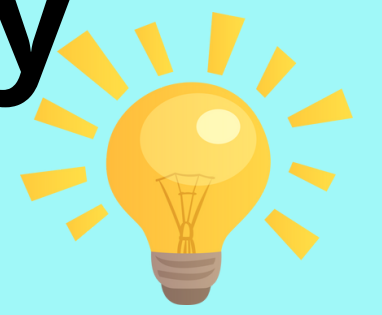
Affirmation cards

Use these cards everyday, or when you're feeling low to remind yourself how great you are!

I am a good
friend



I learn more
everyday



I am kind



I am loved



I am proud of
myself




I can achieve
great things





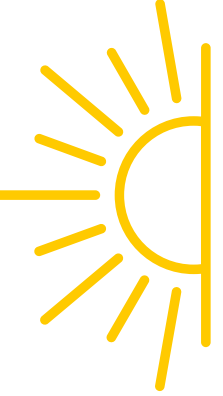
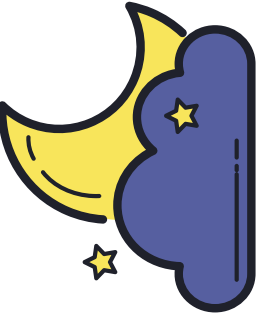
Daily plan

Sometimes it can be useful to see what we're going to do today, so that we know what to expect!

Use the example below to add your own plans for today onto the template!

 Time	Activity
Morning  7am 7:15am 7:30am 8am	Wake up Get dressed Eat breakfast Go to school in the car
Afternoon  3:15pm 3:30pm 4pm	Get picked up from school Go home and eat a snack Play with toys
Evening  5pm 6pm 7pm	Eat dinner Bath time Bed time

Daily plan

 Time	Activity
Morning 	
Afternoon 	
Evening 	

Emotion cards

Sometimes it can be hard for us to say how we're feeling, or to put a name to the emotions that we're feeling.

Try and point to one, or more than one of the faces below to help the grown ups around you to know how you feel.



Happy



Excited



Silly



OK



Worried



Poorly



Scared



Overwhelmed



Tired

Resources to regulate emotions

The breathing star

When we feel overwhelmed, breathing slowly can help us calm down.

Try following the arrows on the breathing star with your finger, breathing in and out deeply and slowly.



Imaginative breathing

When we feel overwhelmed, breathing techniques can help us to calm down.

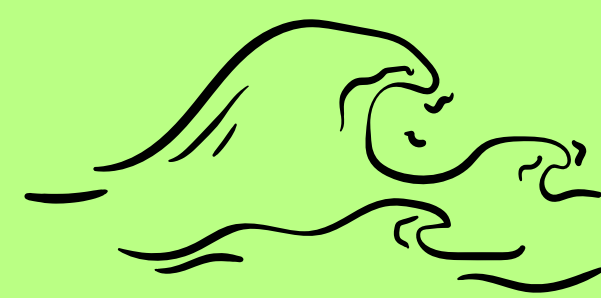
Try using your imagination to do some of the techniques below.

Birthday cake



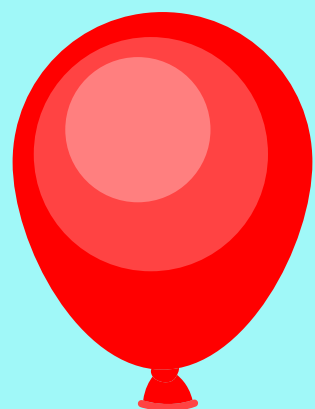
Take a deep breath in, and breathe out like you're blowing out a candle on a birthday cake

Ocean



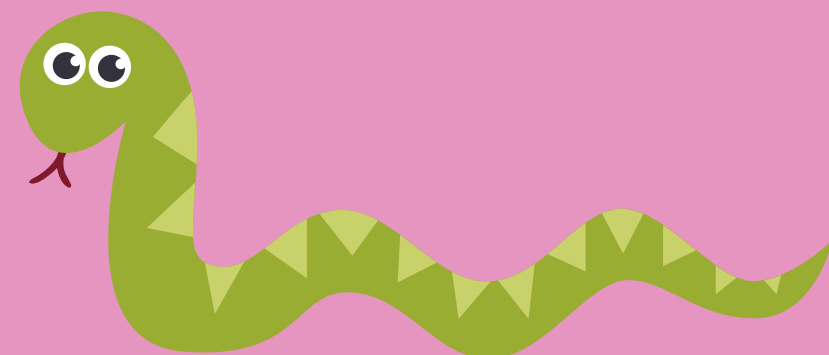
Take a deep breath in and imagine a wave rolling in, breathe out and imagine the wave rolling out to sea

Balloon



Pretend your belly is a balloon. Breathe in and make the balloon bigger, then breathe out and make the balloon shrink.

Snake



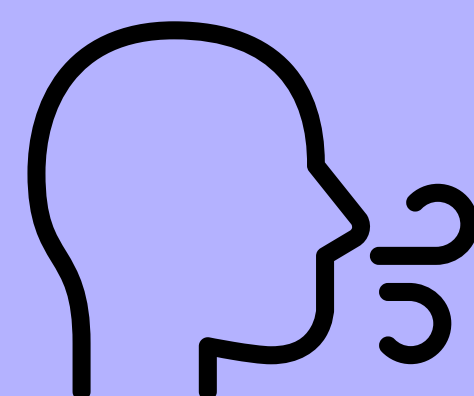
Breathe in, pause briefly, then breathe out slowly while you make a hissing sound like a snake for as long as you can.

Rainbow



Arms start at the side of your body; lift your arms up as you breathe in and down as you breathe out, making the shape of a rainbow.

5-5-10



Count to 5 as you breathe in, hold your breath for 5, and then count to 10 as you breathe out.

The 5-4-3-2-1 activity

When we feel overwhelmed, grounding ourselves can help to calm us down.

Try listing the things you can sense around either verbally, or by writing them on the sheet below.

5 things I can see 	
4 things I can feel 	
3 things I can hear 	
2 things I can smell 	
1 things I can taste 	

Making a 'calm down' spot

When we feel overwhelmed, having a spot that we can go to can help us to calm down and feel safe.

Ask a grown-up to help you make a calm down spot!

Step 1:

Find a spot and make it cozy! You could add pillows, blankets, or even a cover like a bedsheet!



Step 2:

Add all of your favourite things! This can include sensory toys, or things that calm you down

Step 3:

Use your calm down spot! When you feel overwhelmed or stressed, go into your calm down spot to relax and regulate your emotions.



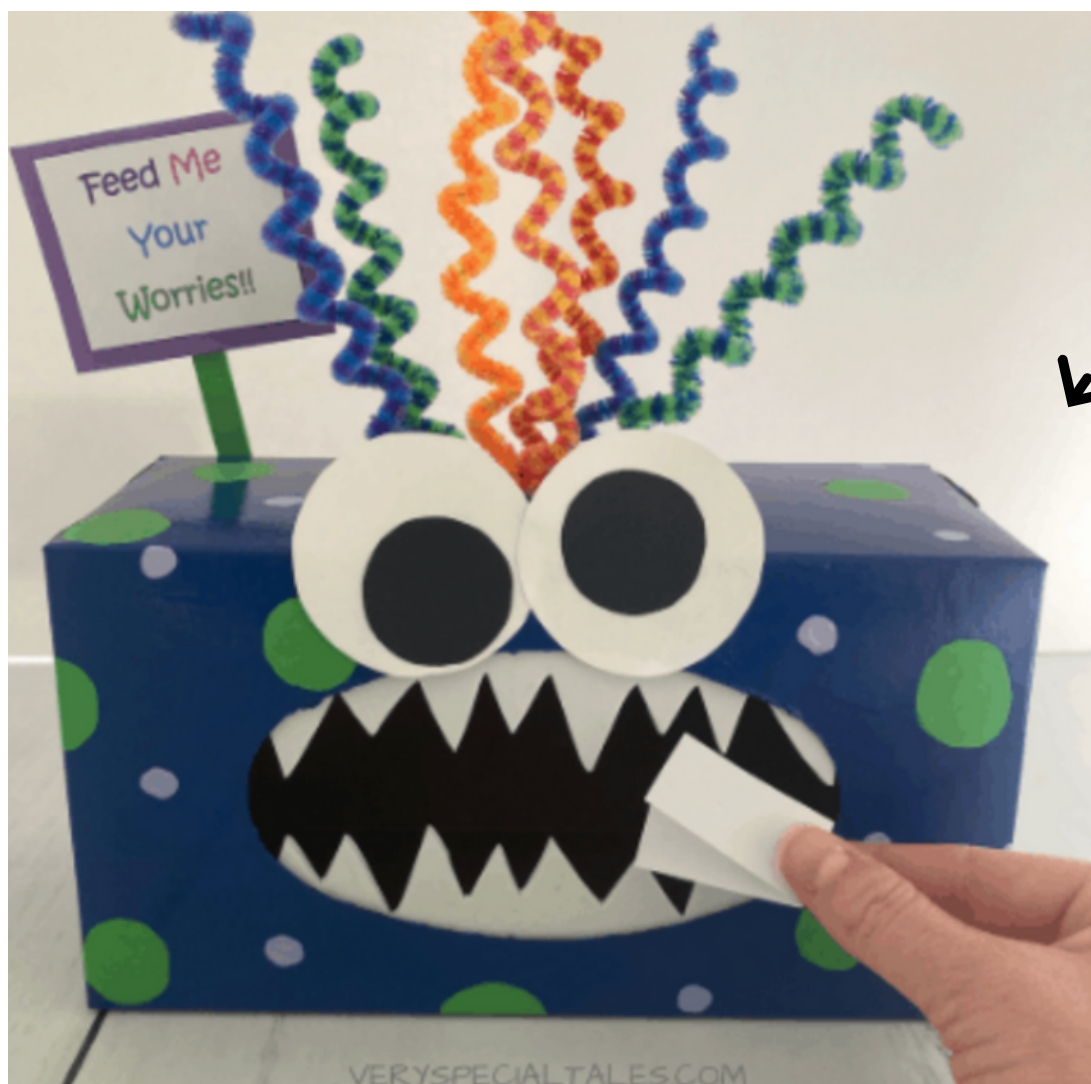
Making a worry box

Everyone gets worried sometimes, however anxiety is more common in autistic people.

It can help to write down the things that worry us to release them from our minds. Try writing down the things that are worrying you and locking them in your worry box!

Step 1:

Collect the things you need to make your worry box! You will need a container with a lid, and things to decorate it with!



Step 2:

Get creative and decorate your box! One idea is to decorate your box as a 'worry monster' that eats your worries!

Step 3:

Use your worry box! When you are feeling overwhelmed or anxious, write your worries on some paper and lock them away into your box!

