

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.

Sensory

Workshop 1st July 19:00

Behaviour

Webinar 15th July 13:30
Workshop 22nd July 13:30

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 for recorded webinars which have already taken place:

The Realities of Home Schooling Webinar Recording
https://youtu.be/AAm04Wqqr_c

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



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 over the next 3-6 months 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 prior to the events.



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.

Self Care:

Being at home with family members for a long period of time is hard at the best of times, but for some it is much harder if we consider all of the responsibilities of caring for a young person who has additional needs. As we continue to go through this difficult time it is very important to look after ourselves. Self-care is key to calming ourselves so that we can care and support others. 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 once activity for yourself. As we move forward remember you're doing a great job!

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

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

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



Adjusting Expectations

As we continue to support our children and young people it is important to consider the feelings they maybe experiencing, such as being scared or anxious. It is normal to be experiencing increased expressed emotion at this time as caregivers. At times of change we may need to consider reducing demands and expectations. This can be daunting for many care givers however we need to remember that relaxing boundaries, reducing demands being placed on children and young people or giving more access to activities or things they enjoy is ok. Once we see restrictions being removed we can begin to implement previous routines or maybe the changes will work better for your child or young person.

In times of increased anxiety or crisis one of the first things we consider is reducing demands on our children and young people. Returning to school will place many new and different demands on children and young people. We need to be mindful that many things may be the same however lots of things might be different. Children and young people can often need to engage in activities which regulate, after school it's likely that they will need to do more of these activities when they return. Normal routines such as emptying bags or putting shoes and coats away may need to be completed later and access to preferred activities more readily available. We need to consider - does an activity have to be completed right now or can we revisit it at another time when our children and young people are more able to engage.

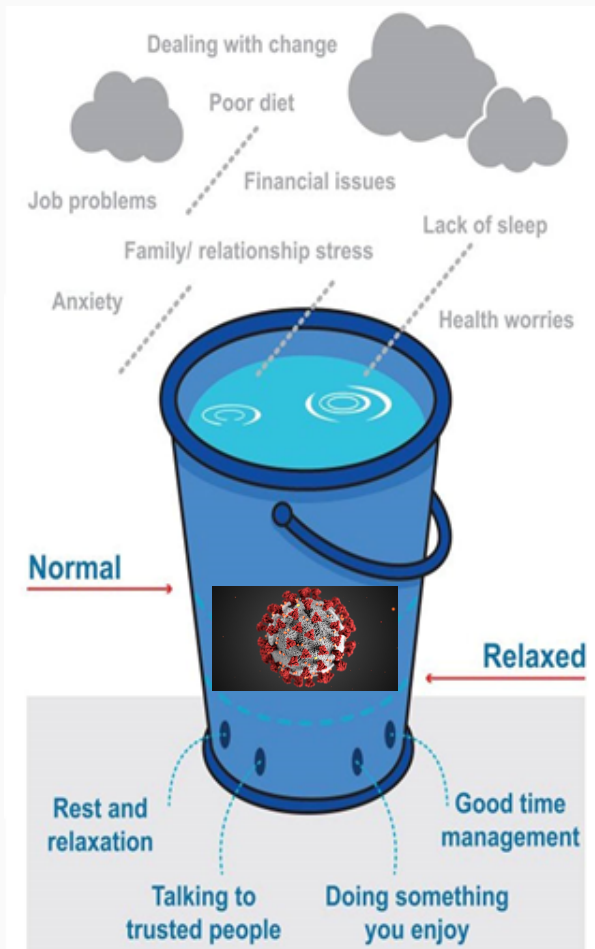
It would be useful to ensure that we can give our children and young people as much choice as possible, often they don't have a lot of control over their day however, are there parts of the day they do have control over? Let them have it and provide choices. If they are returning on reduced timetable do they have a choice of what day they attend or whether they do mornings or afternoons. For many new routines will need to be in place, try to think about what you can keep the same and how you might introduce a different routine. If a child or young person has a special interest are you able to use it to support with tasks or activities that might be more difficult. Finally do not forget to make sure that we support our children and young people with lots of praise, they are experiencing things very differently and having to adapt therefore ensure that we are using praise and point out the things that they are doing really well.

<https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/learning-disability-assets/3challengingbehavioursupportingyourlovedoneathome.pdf>

Managing Emotions

Most days managing emotions is part of everyday life, however dealing with stress, anxiety, worry and anger can seem like a really difficult task at the moment. Everyday worries can feel overwhelming not only because we naturally have more worries but because some of our natural coping strategies are not available or are different at the moment. COVID-19 has made it feel for many children (and adults) that their bucket is constantly being filled.

Using the bucket analogy can help explain these feelings and help us creatively think together how we can empty the bucket back to 'normal'. Plan how you can avoid filling the bucket by adjusting routines or emptying the bucket by planning extra calming or preferred activities.



Same but different – strategies to support returning to school

As children and young people begin to consider returning to school it is important that we think about the things that might be the same and the things that might be very different. Consider: who, what, where, when, how long. As we know things will be different when children and young people return to school, one of the most effective ways to demonstrate this is using videos, these can explain any differences within school and things that will remain the same. It would be useful to think about how you will enter the school, any measures for social distancing, have markings been placed on the ground? do we have to wash our hands on entering? what classroom are you going to be in? has it been set out differently, are children and young people being given individual equipment? where will they sit, who will be close by? where will lunch be eaten, are school lunches provided? what will break time look like? who will my teacher be? what will the daily routine be?

By doing a video that looks at the whole school day children and young people will have this as a resource to look through, parents and carers will have a very clear idea of what school will look like and be able to provide reassurance and explanations when necessary and it will support the development of other visual strategies to support the young person. Try and answer all the basic questions someone may have by remembering to cover:

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- How Long
- What will I be doing



<https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/coronavirus/updates/education-and-school/teachers-back-to-school.aspx>



SOCIAL STORIES ARE USED TO SHARE SPECIFIC INFORMATION THAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO KNOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO HOW THEY FEEL, WHAT THEY DO OR HOW THEY BEHAVE. THEY ARE DIFFERENT FROM LEAFLETS, INFORMATION SHEETS OR POSTERS; THEY ARE PERSONAL. TO WRITE THEM WE FOCUS ON UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION FROM THE YOUNG PERSON'S POINT OF VIEW AND WHAT WE CAN SUPPORT THEM TO UNDERSTAND THAT WOULD HELP THEM SEE IT DIFFERENTLY OR ADJUST TO THE NEW SITUATION. TRY AND BE POSITIVE AND PATIENT AND ALWAYS RECAP BEFORE SOMETHING HAPPENS RATHER THAN AFTER WHEN SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG.

Now might feel like a time to throw out our 'now, next' boards, our visual timetables and day planners but we all need them now more than ever, even if we didn't use them before we might need them now (think how often you are checking your diary at the moment). Whether your child uses objects of reference, symbols or the written word, start to use them to show that we are starting a new routine of returning to school. Spend time going through new routines, have the information and resources you need to support your conversation at whatever level you can have it. It might be the week before, the night before or on the morning but planning for change is always worth it.

Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust have created a bank of resources about Coronavirus including information on getting tested, social distancing and other useful resources:

<https://www.getcheckedoutleeds.nhs.uk/get-checked-out-nhs-england/>

Social Stories are used to share specific information that your child needs to know. [Click here for some Top Tips!](#)

Widgit Symbols have made some free Coronavirus resources including a back to school pack:

<https://www.widgit.com/covid19.htm>

Maintaining a sleep routine

There are many reasons why a child or young person may struggle to settle to sleep and this includes changes to routines. However trying to retain a regularly sleep routine is essential to support transition back to school.

Some things to consider in relation to the sleep may include environmental factors such as: Is the room becoming overstimulating? Has your child been spending more time in their room? Do they have more distractions available? Noise: Are there any additional noises internal or external to the home? Light: Is the room particularly light? Bedding: Is it irritating your child? Are they kicking it off and becoming cold?

Some strategies to support sleep include having a consistent bedtime routine, it is important to decide what time you think your child or young person should be asleep and work backwards as to when to start the routine. You might want to do this jointly, if your routine includes a bath or shower, allow at least half an hour after the bath or shower to allow regulation of body temperature. Include quiet time for up to an hour before bedtime, you might want to have some relaxing activities and consider spending time with your child or young person looking at the benefits of having enough sleep, finally don't forget to reward and praise your child or young person pointing out what they are doing well and giving consistent rewards to support establishing the routine.

<https://cerebra.org.uk/get-advice-support/sleep-advice-service/>



Planning for a Positive Night!

As much as it is important to plan for a positive day at school, it's also important to plan for coming home after school. Some things to think about:

- Planning and talking about having preferred activities after school.
- Do we need to plan in extra time to chill out when returning home.
- Not too many questions when coming home, think about asking one question and making four comments.
- Prepare and plan for calming activities through the night.