



# Behaviour Management

Information, Guidance and Strategies

(Written with the help of Louise Somner – Behaviour Advisor & Specialist Teacher)



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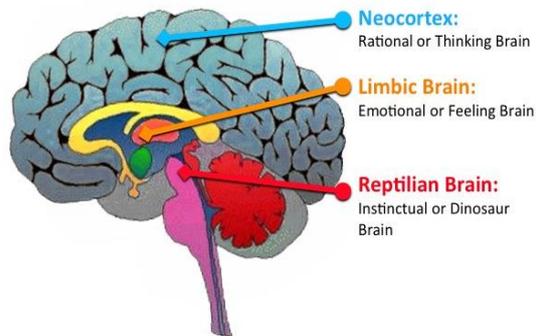
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**Foundation Thoughts – things to remember when dealing with Behaviour – just to name a few 😊**

1. Making mistakes is OK, regardless of training/qualifications people still make mistakes, don't be ashamed when it goes wrong – you haven't failed
2. Every day is a new day, strategies that initially work may not work long term – you need to be able to flex
3. You need to be able to manage both being flexible but being consistent – adapt and be dynamic - Consistency needs to be across adults – everyone needs to say the same message
4. Avoid hanging onto labels – it might be that a strategy linked to another condition might work for your child/young person
5. There is no behaviour Guru, the best thing to do is talk to people, be honest and not judge, making sure to avoid blaming any particular person
6. Try not to both burn hot...our kids push our buttons (it's a neurological response) but we need to breathe through it
7. Avoid in-depth conversations of behaviour when child/young person is in meltdown
8. Try not to waste your breath trying to argue with a logical mind
9. Avoid overreacting to minor behaviours or making the behaviour worse. It is important to avoid trying to change too many behaviours at once
10. Avoid interpreting ordinary behaviours through a negative lens, look out for good behaviours, praise more and punish less

## Chapter 1: The Neuroscience behind behaviour

Behaviour is a neurological response to situations.



There are three areas of the brain –

1. Neocortex (rational/thinking brain)
2. Limbic (emotional/feeling brain)
3. Reptilian (instinctual/dinosaur brain)

**Neocortex** – Frontal lobes of brain, the ‘newest’ part of the brain = about 85% of total brain mass, its functions and capabilities include:

- Problem-solving
- Reasoning and reflection
- Self-awareness
- Kindness, empathy and concern
- Creativity and imagination

**Limbic** – Also known as mammalian and emotional brain – has the same chemical systems and structure of other mammals – it triggers strong emotions that need to be managed well by rational brain. This part of brain activates:

- Rage and fear and separation distress
- Caring, nurturing and social bonding
- Playfulness and explorative urge
- Lust in adults

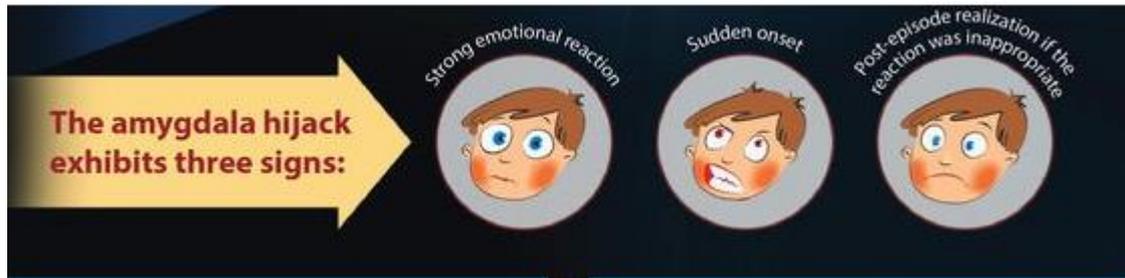
**Reptilian** – This is the deepest, most ancient part of brain – we share this with all other vertebrates. It activates instinctive behaviour linked to survival and controls essential bodily functions required for sustaining life, including:

- Fight or flight
- Hunger and digestion/elimination
- Breathing and circulation and temperature
- Movement, posture and balance
- Territorial instincts



## What is an Amygdala Hijack?

The Amygdala Hijack is why children and young people with spectrum conditions cannot register that they have done a particular behaviour.



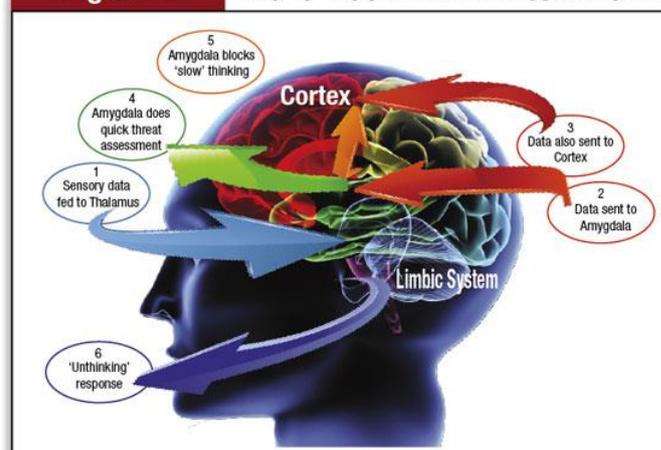
Sometimes your emotions hijack your brain, whether it be because your day has been terrible, you are not feeling well, or something triggers off an emotion that you didn't remember even existed... for whatever reason, your thinking-brain (neocortex) does not have enough time to kick in and your emotional brain (amygdala) just takes over. **This... is an amygdala hijacking.**

Amygdala hijackings are when we are so emotional that we behave in an irrational way, which (most but not all of us) appreciate is irrational once we are able to 'think clearly' again. In other words, we come to regret our actions once our thinking-brain has taken over again.

When the emotional centre of your brain - your amygdala - is hijacked, you are literally not able to think straight. Your thinking-brain is side-stepped and you're running on pure emotions (linked to the old limbic 'fight or flight' brain) with not a logical thought in sight...

Studies have found that you're in this state of amygdala hijacking for an average of 18 minutes. For this time you are highly illogical, emotional, and basically in 'fight mode'. You *are not able* to think reasonably for these 18 minutes. When this passes, you still have the 'fight or flight' hormones (e.g. cortisol) racing through your body for another 3-4 hours, during which time you'll still be rather defensive, sensitive and prone to emotional reactions.

**Figure 1** Step-by-step process of an amygdala hijack



## Chapter 2: Understanding Behaviour

### Linking ASD with the increase in behavioural difficulties

**Dysregulation** = Abnormality or impairment in the regulation of a metabolic, physiological, or psychological process.

#### What factors cause children and young people with ASD to exhibit 'behavioural dysregulation'?

- The features or 'symptoms' of ASD are a major risk factor for behavioural differences and difficulties (i.e. dysregulation), but they are not the sole reason or cause.
- Environmental factors, both physical and 'abstract', are also central to the development and continuation of all kinds of behaviour.
- Over the past 25 years of research and practice we have come to understand...Behaviour dysregulation is not a function of "choice – making"
- Patterns of behaviour are learned, not inherent.
- Dysregulated behaviour, like all behaviour, is 'communicative'
- Dysregulated behaviours are usually supported by the environment.

#### Why do some children and young people behave in "particularly difficult" ways?

Many characteristics of ASD predispose children and young people to behave in unusual or inappropriate ways. So, they are already vulnerable.... and there may also be: a history of inadvertent, sustained negative adult-child interactions and/or inconsistent, ad hoc, reactive management of behaviour and/or 'coercive cycles' of behaviour 'management'

#### There are three common questions around behaviour

How do we stop him / her doing a particular behaviour?

Or

Are they just being naughty? Is this behaviour deliberate? Can they control it?

Or

Is this disobedience or is the ASD stopping them from doing something?

**Behaviour serves a purpose i.e. the behaviour has a function that needs to be understood**

<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Inattentive	I don't understand
Self-Stimulatory	I need to chill out
Disruptive	Help me, look at me
Selfish	I can't relate to....
Rude/arrogant	I don't know the right way to talk to this person
Non-compliant	I can't do this, I always make mistakes
Meltdown-prone	I am angry, I want...
Self-injurious	I wish I wasn't so stupid
Aggressive	Just leave me alone
Abconding/truancy prone	It's all too much

Reasons for Behaviour taken from Autism Discussion -

<https://www.facebook.com/autismdiscussionpage/posts/1510483125697849>

**Antecedent Conditions:** Check any of the following that present (or trigger) the behavior:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> wants something                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't understand expectations    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> told cannot have something                        | <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't know how to respond        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> something is taken away                           | <input type="checkbox"/> transitions                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> not receiving attention                           | <input type="checkbox"/> pain/discomfort                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> staff/parent withdraws attention                  | <input type="checkbox"/> something scares him/her           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> when attention is turn to others                  | <input type="checkbox"/> noisy, active settings             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> behavior stops soon after attention or            | <input type="checkbox"/> peers are pestering him/her        |
| desired item is obtained   | <input type="checkbox"/> others are disruptive              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> requested to do something                         | <input type="checkbox"/> experiencing pain/discomfort       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> frustrated with difficult task                    | <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty communicating need/want |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pressured into unwanted events                    | <input type="checkbox"/> happy/excited with upcoming event  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> someone tries to control or lead his/her activity | <input type="checkbox"/> before, during, or after an outing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> asked to stop doing something                     | <input type="checkbox"/> during group activities            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> novel/new situations                              | <input type="checkbox"/> riding in car                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unexpected change                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> prior to or during menses          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> when left alone or during downtime                |   |

**(From Autism: Understanding Behaviour by Caroline Hattersley – NAS book)**

- Behaviour is communication
- Behaviour doesn't always have an identified trigger
- We react depending on how we feel and our perceptions
- We all have different ideas on what is 'acceptable' behaviour

*Behaviour is one of the ways in which we communicate; it tells other people how we are feeling and what we want. Sometimes, our behaviour might be more challenging than at other times. It is not always easy to determine why people are behaving in certain ways, or what the triggers are. Different types of behaviour are triggered by different external or internal factors. We all have different wants and needs, and are likely to be more tolerant at some times than at others. Our reactions also depend on how we are feeling at the time. The way we react to triggers in our environment also depends on our previous experiences and perceptions of the world, as well as how we each define 'acceptable' behaviour*

- Behaviour can be a coping mechanism – a way of dealing with situations that are unpredictable or stressful
- A way to manage sensory issues
- A learned behaviour that achieves a certain outcome
- A pleasurable activity

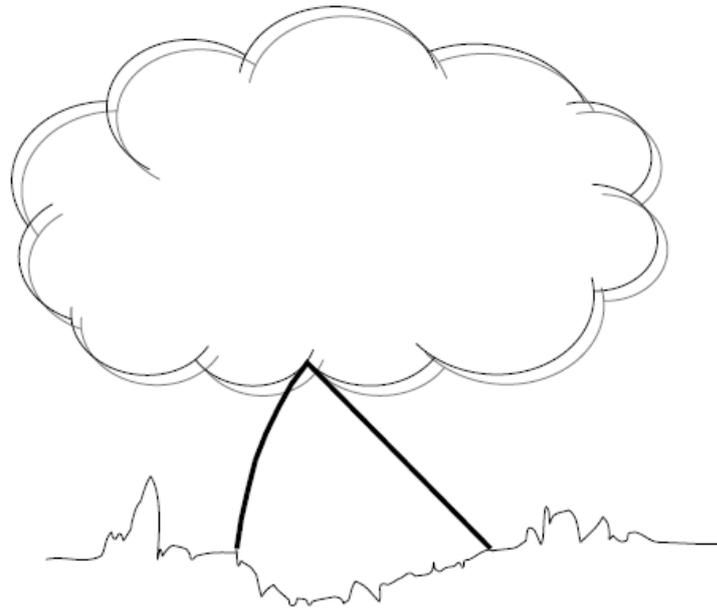
Your child or young person may use behaviour in one or all of these ways

## Roots and Fruits

Behaviours

Feelings

Experiences



Spend a few moments listing on the tree all the behaviour your child/young person exhibits with before moving forward. Work back from the behaviour to identify the feelings your child/young person feels and then work out what the triggers were

## **There are 4 specific functions of challenging behaviour such as**

Social Attention

Escape/Avoidance

Tangible

Sensory

### **Challenging Behaviour – Autism: Understanding Behaviour by Caroline Hattersley – NAS book**

*Not all behaviour can be deemed as challenging. For behaviour to be challenging it depends upon the severity of the behaviour and its impact on a person's quality of life – as well as the lives of those around them*

*Challenging behaviour often develops as a coping mechanism. Clements and Zarkowska describe how behaviours are skills learnt by a person to achieve certain outcomes*

*For example:*

*If a person finds it hard to communicate effectively with others, they may develop certain forms of behaviour as a way to cope with this and provide a means of 'communicating'. Or, it may serve as a way to avoid situations that the person finds stressful*

*Suggested causes of Challenging behaviour*

- *Anxiety*
- *Discomfort*
- *Change*
- *Escape or avoidance*
- *Denial of wishes*
- *Transition*
- *Mood or physical state*
- *Sensory processing difficulties*
- *Social and communication difficulties*

*Anxiety is a co-occurring condition alongside autism and ADHD.*

- *Anxiety is a result of feeling out of control*
- *It can occur when decisions are made that the autistic brain cannot process*
- *It can occur when the autistic brain is unable to do a task compared with peers*

*Discomfort – feeling uncomfortable and not being able to manage this feeling can lead to an increase in behaviour. The inability to identify that a situation makes us uncomfortable leads to having no other option than to display this feeling through action i.e. behaviour.*

*Change/transition – the inability to manage changes/transitions in a child/young person's life can have a significant impact on behaviour. It is likely that they will use increases in behaviour to assist with processing the change. You will often see increase overtime with the eye of the storm occurring at the point in which reality sinks in and the autistic brain/ADHD brain is actually living in the moment in which the change/transition is occurring.*

*Seeing into the future with regards to changes/transitions causes a build-up of behaviour however the main challenging behaviour does not occur when the idea is almost fictional as not 'lived experience' yet.*

*This is because most of those on the spectrum react in the here and now*

*Escape or avoidance – behaviour can be used to achieve both of these. Often a child or young person will claim their bored when in actual fact they are struggling with the work or simply do not have the ability to independently carry out tasks without adult direction. Many children and young people will show neurotypically "inappropriate" behaviour in large social environments such as shops, parties, crowds etc*

## **An example of different functions of challenging behaviour**

### **If the person is trying to get your attention**

- Teach the person how they get your attention/the attention of others in a more appropriate way. This could be teaching them a sign, a vocalisation or to gently tap your hand/arm
- Make sure you notice when the person is trying to get your attention appropriately and respond as soon as you can. This will help reinforce the behaviour you want
- If the person goes to hit you, use a phrase such as 'gently' or 'hands down' – teach the person what this means
- Interact with the person regularly, giving them plenty of opportunity to get positive attention
- Where possible ignore the hitting

### **If the person hits others to Escape/Avoid something or someone**

- Give the person an effective way to stop something they don't like; to remove them from a situation or person they don't like. This could be a sign/word or photo card to say "finish" or "home"
- Teach them to make choices and a way to say "yes" and "no"
- Introduce them to a situation/activity gradually to help them become used to it
- Use humour as a way to distract the person
- Notice when they are displaying 'early warning signs' that they may becoming unhappy or anxious
- Change the way you ask them to do something

### **When the person hits others to get something tangible**

- Teach the person how to communicate what they want
- Give them what they've asked for as soon as they've asked appropriately. Give lots of praise. Make sure they have regular access to what they need
- Teach them how to get something for themselves where possible

### **Where a person hits to get their sensory needs met**

- Look at doing a sensory assessment – (ASD Helping Hands charges £15 for a screening tool)

- Be creative! Find alternatives to hit, making the art of hitting safe i.e. playing drums, cushions etc
- Try out different objects to see which they prefer, then use these to create new activities
- Use preferred items to help you engage with the person
- Make sure the person can get their sensory needs met but in a way that will not isolate them further or leave them engaging in self-stimulatory activities that are very important to them

## Understanding how emotional regulation difficulties affect behaviour

Sue Larkey has developed a fantastic resource for dealing with behaviour regulation - [http://suelarkey.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Behaviour\\_Regulation.pdf](http://suelarkey.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Behaviour_Regulation.pdf) her focus on emotional regulation is what is key.

“All behaviour serves a purpose and can occur for many reasons – sensory, social, communication, anxiety, anger, tantrums, etc.”

She talks about the need to approach things equally from the perspective of adults managing the child’s behaviour successfully and that of the child’s own abilities to manage their own behaviours.

She explains Emotional Regulation below:-

“The emotional world on the spectrum can be very scary! Emotions are often, either turned off or coming on like a freight train! The emotions often come on without warning and are difficult to label and connect to a cause, which leaves the person unable to control them. You cannot control that which you cannot define, label, and understand. (Excerpt from The Autism Discussion Page, pg 285). **We need to give the child skills and strategies to regulate their emotions.**”

“Teaching children about emotions and strategies to regulate emotions makes a huge difference to behaviour. Teaching children to manage their emotions empowers them to identify why the problem is occurring and what strategies they can put in place to address the problem”

## **Emotional Regulation and behaviour in those with ASD etc**

Taken from - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3830422/>

### **Emotion Regulation (ER) Concepts**

Imagine that you are driving to work and someone cuts you off. Your heart rate rapidly increases and you experience a wave of intense irritation, yet you manage to blare on your horn, simultaneously hit your brakes, and remain focused on safely driving. You have just engaged in effective emotion regulation (ER), which broadly encompasses the processes related to modifying your emotions to fit the context or meet one's goals

Emotion *regulation* differs from the *experience* of emotion itself, in that ER involves an attempt to modify the intensity or temporal features of an emotion [e.g. after the initial startle when you are cut off, you quickly experience anger when you see the driver texting (emotion); but, you attempt to keep the anger from escalating so that you can remain focused on safely driving (ER)]. ER processes can occur at the unconscious level (without realizing you are doing so, you maintain a level of fear that will keep you alert but not unable to act) and at a conscious level (e.g. telling yourself you are okay after the incident is over). Further, ER can be response-focused as in this example, or antecedent-focused (prior to the emotion).

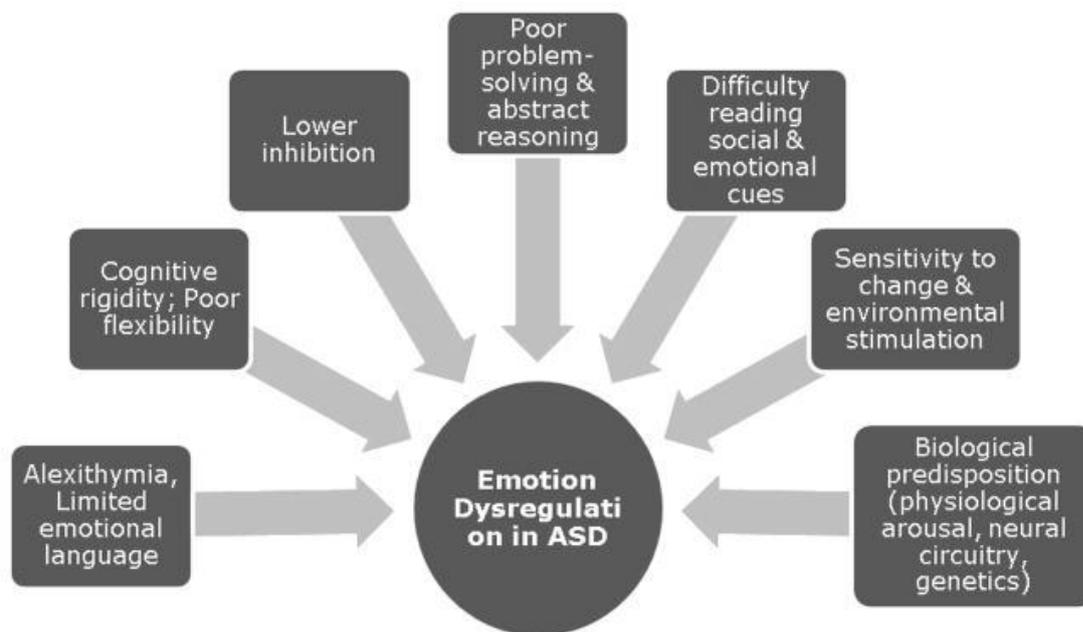
### **Role of Emotion Regulation (ER) in ASD**

Although much less studied in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) than in other psychiatric disorders, disrupted ER is likely to be a significant factor in producing aberrant behaviour in ASD as well.

One likely manifestation of ER failure in ASD is serious behavioural disturbance. Tantrums, uncontrolled outbursts, aggression, and self-injury are often interpreted as defiant or deliberate. While this interpretation is likely accurate in some circumstances, it is more often the case that these inappropriate behavioural reactions stem from ineffective management of emotional states in response to stress or overstimulation.

### **ASD-Related Factors that Impede Effective Emotion Regulation**

Many characteristics of ASD may interfere with effective ER (see [Figure 1](#)).



Even among cognitively higher-functioning individuals with ASD, there are deficits in the processing and integration of complex information. Children with ASD may focus on the wrong information or misinterpret others' intentions due to failures in perspective-taking and lack of appreciation of others' perceptions and experiences (e.g., theory of mind deficits), which could increase frustration.

Difficulty accurately perceiving others' social and emotional cues may also interfere with the timing and implementation of effortful ER strategies.

Impulsivity and impaired inhibition, which are present in as many as 50% of children with ASD, could similarly interfere with ER. Specifically, even if the child knows what he should do when upset (e.g., take deep breaths), inability to inhibit the more potent and automatic response (e.g., hitting and yelling) could result in ineffective ER.

If a child with ASD does stop to think about the situation before reacting, the tendency to be rigid and engage black-and-white thinking may still preclude a flexible and adaptive ER response.

Finally, children with ASD may be predisposed to problems with emotional control given differences in arousal and underlying neural circuitry. Children with ASD are known to have unusual reactions to sensory information and are often sensitive to change. These differences in responses to the environment may increase reactivity and lability.

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/school-home.aspx> which outlines

### **Understanding why behaviour can be different between school and home**

It's quite common for autistic children who do not appear to have any behavioural difficulties at school to behave differently at home. Tony Attwood refers to this as the Jekyll and Hyde character (Attwood, 1998).

Just because the difficult behaviour occurs at home, does not necessarily mean the trigger (or the cause) lies there. The child may find school very stressful, but keep their emotions locked up until they get home. Most children on the autism spectrum do not display the body language and facial expressions you would expect to see when a child is feeling a certain way. Asking them how they feel may not get the correct response, as some children can find spoken [communication](#) very difficult and struggle to explain their emotions to someone. Teachers need to be aware that children who may appear to be coping at school can in fact experience [high stress levels](#).

### **Stress scales**

Some children on the autism spectrum find carrying [visual stress scales](#) helpful for overcoming these communication obstacles. These scales can be either in the format of a scale from 1-5, a thermometer, or a traffic light system. The idea is that when the child indicates to someone that they are at a '4' or 'amber' (before they reach a '5' or 'red'), they need to be helped in some way to calm their emotions again. Scales also turn emotions - abstract concepts that require imagination to understand fully - into concrete examples of numbers or colours, which are easier to understand. Children who find it difficult to use a scale can use a help card instead. This could be a red card, or have the word 'help' or a meaningful symbol on it, which they can carry around. When they begin to feel extremely anxious or angry, they can show it to a member of staff or family. This is particularly helpful if a usually very verbal young person loses their ability to use speech when they are highly stressed.

Some children may need to be redirected to a different activity, have a quick run outside, or retreat to a quiet space in order to calm down.

Schools can be concerned that by giving a child a card to leave the room, they will hand it over to opt out of situations they do not want to be in, disrupting their education. Strict boundaries need to be given to a child using a card or stress scale, including clear instructions about where they can go, and for how long (using a timer). However, effective use of the card could ultimately reduce the amount of disruption to the child's education and help them stay more calm and focused on learning.

### **Releasing stress after the school day**

If your child appears to release their stress straight after school, it might be beneficial to set aside a period of time for them to calm down. You could do this by reducing the amount of social interaction your child has straight after school and providing an activity which they find relaxing.

If your child is relatively physical in their frustration, ie kicking or hitting, providing a trampoline, punch bag or letting them run around the garden may help relieve the stress. Other children like to relax by watching television or listening to music. Some find lights especially soothing, such as a bubble tube or spinning light.

“I have always liked lights and have loads in my room. I have a lava lamp, a disco ball, a UFO lamp. They are just hypnotic and soothing and such a wonderful escape from reality.”  
Luke Jackson, 2002, p69

## **Routine**

For some children, the timetable of the school day provides enough structure and routine to help contain any anxiety and stress. Children on the autism spectrum have a strong preference for [routine](#) and this is automatically incorporated into the school environment. Your child may benefit from having a [visual timetable](#) for home as well, as it will make the environment more predictable. A timetable can either be constructed showing the whole day's activities, half the day, or simply the activities that are now and next.

## Chapter 3: Understanding how our parenting affects behaviour

### Button Pusher Exercise

Make a list of the misbehaviours that push your buttons.

What misbehaviours get you angry and upset?

Next, outline a plan to deal with each button pusher

For example::

**Button pusher:** your two children argue

**Plan:**

Stay calm – do not get angry or yell

If I get angry, go and sit in my room

Cool off before I say anything

Let it out slowly

Do not save my anger until it erupts

'I feel angry when you argue like that'

Spotlight the positive – focus on cooperation

Look at times when they agree

### Understanding emotional flooding

**When the parent gets upset and the adrenaline is flowing the rational brain shuts down. It is impossible to think clearly when we are angry**

Let's say your teenager backed into a parked car or your toddler spilled red juice on your new white carpeting – your first response, most likely, is ANGER!

If you were to examine yourself in that moment, you would most likely find that your muscles are tense, your blood pressure has increased, and your breathing is shallow.

These physical reactions are beneficial at times – if you observed your child wandering into oncoming traffic, for example, you would have the strength and burst of energy to stop him or her from being injured.

However, when it comes to arguing, these physical reactions actually hinder productivity and communication.

The above symptoms describe “**emotional flooding**,” a state in which your brain has decided you are in danger and needs to be ready to fight or run away. It is your brain's way of protecting you from harm.

- When engaging in a discussion with your kids, be aware of your own emotional flooding, but also watch for signs that your child may be experiencing flooding. You may notice that your child's face gets red, he begins posturing as if to punch something, or she starts yelling “leave me alone!” **It is best to end the conversation at the first sign of emotional flooding.**
- Many people hesitate to end the discussion at this point because they want to have the last word, they want to make sure the other person understands their point of

view, or they do not want to appear that they have “lost” or given in to the other person’s demands.

- Unfortunately, when a brain becomes emotionally flooded, it engages the most basic, primal part of the brain – the amygdala. The part of the brain that processes information and thinks rationally is temporarily out of service. A discussion that occurs while one is emotionally flooded is bound to end up badly. In some instances, people may leave the discussion without feeling heard; in other circumstances, people may respond with physical aggression, damaging objects or even hurting other people!
- When you notice emotional flooding – either your own or your child’s – **take a break from the conversation.** You may want to say, “I need to calm down; I’ll be back in 10 minutes.” Or you may notice your child needs a break, so you could say, “Let’s talk about this later when we can both talk calmly.” Taking a break from the conversation may seem to draw it out longer, but, in reality, a discussion between two calm people will take less time than engaging in a debate while emotionally flooded.
- **Wait until each person is calm before engaging in the discussion again.** Remember, just because your brain believed you were in danger does not mean it was true. Our brains are not always accurate in their analysis of a situation. Next time you are having a conflict and feel your muscles tighten or your breathing start to change, take a deep breath. Breathing can help the brain remain focused on listening and processing what is being said and help you stay calm during the conversation

### **Know your own parenting style and adapt to your child’s temperament**

The best parenting style is one which is ‘Authoritative’ – commonly known as firm but fair, or firm but loving. This parenting style is one where parents give clear expectations for their children’s behaviour. They monitor their children’s behaviour to make sure that they follow through on rules and expectations. They “try to catch their children being good” and reinforce good behaviour, rather than focussing on the bad.

There needs to be a fine balance between warm and friendly and demanding and firm.

Pitfalls occur when parents either:

- Make few if any rules
- Rules are not consistently enforced
- Not being tied down to routines
- Not setting clear boundaries/expectations

Or...

- Setting overly strict rules
- Setting strict standards of conduct
- Being heavily critical for not meeting those standards
- Telling children what to do
- Providing no choice/options

## **Children's Temperaments to be aware of and adapt to**

Adapted from *how to behave so your children will too* by Sal Severe

4 types of temperaments

- Easy-going
- Shy
- Energetic
- Persistent

An Easy-going child will

- Usually listen the first or second time
- Generally is cooperative
- Often supportive to other siblings
- Not excessively ambitious or competitive
- Needs can be overlooked/overshadowed
- Popular with most adults

A shy child

- Can be considered 'clingy'
- Often quiet and happy to play alone
- Needs reassurance, time and gentle encouragement
- Parents to need to encourage outgoing behaviour positively
- Parents often worry too much about shy children

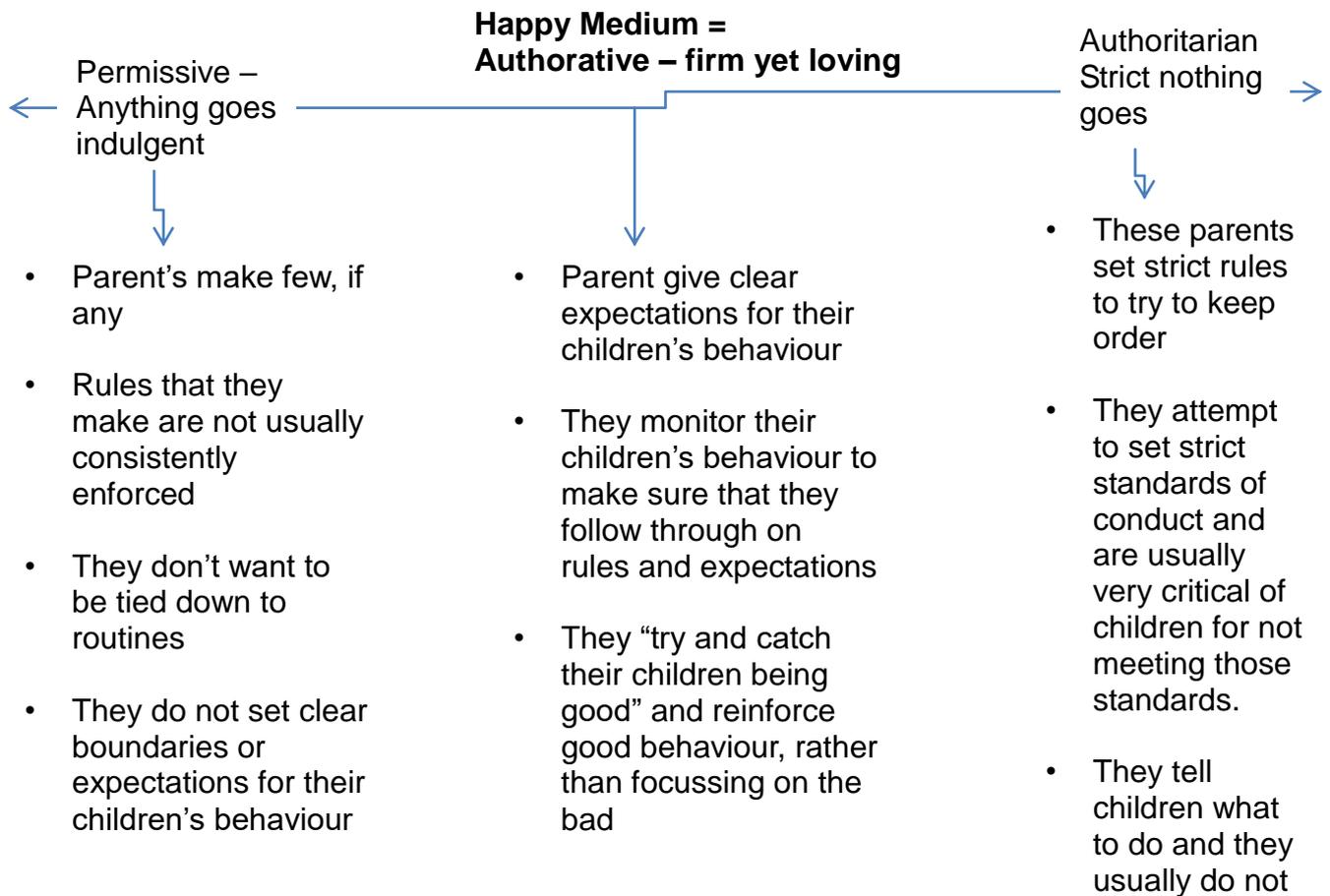
An Energetic child

- Filled with energy
- Easily frustrated
- Runs around the house – constantly on the go
- Parents often feel exhausted
- Being very active is not misbehaviour

A Persistent child

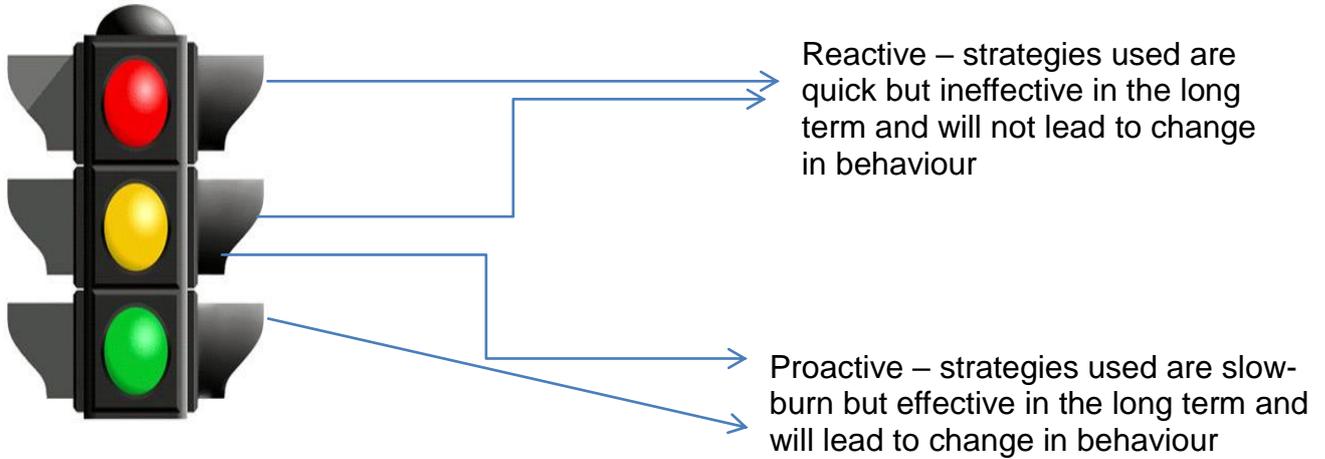
- Bright, verbal and stubborn
- Likes to argue their point
- They always know better than you
- Strong-willed
- Does not usually like surprises or changes
- Needs time warnings to help manage behaviour
- Demands attention positively or negatively
- Can be irritating to adults

## Parenting Styles for Consequences – key Firm yet Loving!



## Chapter 4: Understanding the Stages of Behaviour and Meltdowns

### Stages of behaviour – the ‘traffic light’ system



**Green** – typical behaviour

**Amber** – problems are about to occur

**Red** – occurrence of the behaviour itself

After the behaviour care must be taken to ensure that the person returns to the green phase. This format enables carers to more easily identify when they could intervene to prevent behaviour escalating into an episode of challenging behaviour.

## Stages of a meltdown – using the ‘traffic light’ system

**Amber** = Build up – rumbling stage – the beginnings of a meltdown/build-up of arousal Levels

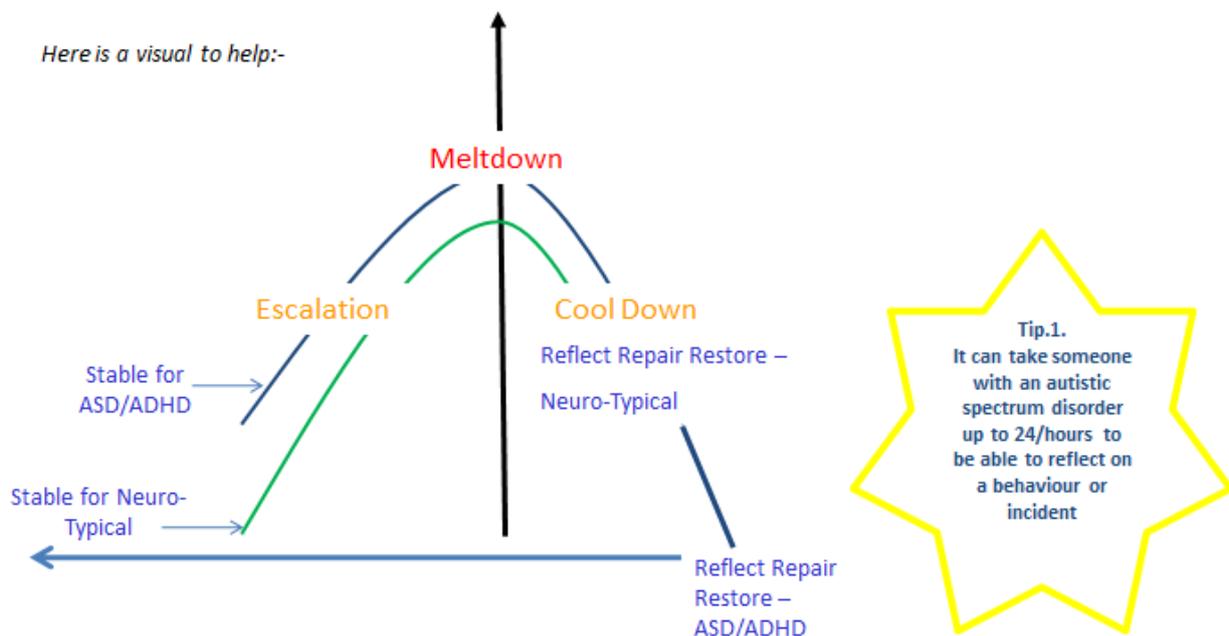
**Red** = Meltdown – rage stage

**Green** = Recovery – restorative work can begin

## The process for and after a meltdown

*You will understand that a child/young person with an autistic spectrum disorder is more likely to have a meltdown throughout the course of the day. This is because that young person/child with an autistic spectrum disorder starts the day at a different stable point than ourselves and this is closer to the point of meltdown than neuro-typicals,*

Here is a visual to help:-



**When it looks like your child/young person goes from 0-60 without any identified trigger it is likely because your child/young person starts their day at a heightened amber level, i.e. higher arousal level. It therefore takes less time for them to reach their rage/meltdown levels**

Three Stages of a Meltdown – Sue Larkey <http://suelarkey.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Meltdowns.pdf>

### 1. Build Up

It may look like:

- Walking in a different pattern.
- Body posture (head down, head on desk, tense).
- Become much more literal.
- Change in voice tone.
- Increase in wringing of hands/hypersensitivity to touch/picking at skin.
- Become slower to respond or increase in vagueness.
- Other students may become highly distractible.
- Become more controlling, asking more questions and more rigid.
- More stock standard answers (I don't know, I forgot, I'm tired).

### 2. Survival Mode

In survival mode they will use skills to try and keep a meltdown from beginning.

Their coping mechanism is coming into play. It may look like:

- More controlling of their environment.
- Seek sensory input: repetitive actions, flip back on chairs, pacing, jumping on trampoline.
- Sleepy, stay completely still and become rigid.
- Unaware of others.
- Run away, climb, escape, hide (under table, outside, etc).

### 3. Meltdown/Shutdown

In a meltdown the student is in panic mode and has no control and cognitive function.

The child or young person may not be able to respond and will use stock standard actions to make people move away and leave them alone (swearing, pushing, and hitting).

A behaviour management programme will usually be ineffective as the student has reached meltdown.

**The student will need to finish the meltdown before adults can take any action.**

## Understanding why a build-up occurs

The build-up occurs due to a number of different reasons

- ✚ Things not making sense – needing more information
- ✚ Not feeling in control
- ✚ Plans changing without warning
- ✚ Being asked to do things that are too difficult
- ✚ Being asked to do things that seem pointless
- ✚ Being asked to do things too many times
- ✚ Not being listened to
- ✚ Promises being broken
- ✚ Entering new social situations
- ✚ Too many people around them
- ✚ Too much sensory stimulation
- ✚ Trying to process too many words
- ✚ Having to wait
- ✚ Not getting what they want
- ✚ Having to stop doing something they enjoy
- ✚ Losing arguments or games
- ✚ Making mistakes
- ✚ Being criticised
- ✚ Getting teased or bullied
- ✚ Being left out
- ✚ Feeling vulnerable
- ✚ Speaking about a topic that upsets them
- ✚ Situation related to their phobias or fears

Can of Cola analogy – also linked to the build-up stage occurring during school times but the behaviours being shown at home –

The can of cola analogy

*Imagine your child or young person is a can of cola,*

*For every incident that causes stress, anger, or anxiety imagine yourself shaking the can of cola*

*The cola is probably extremely fizzy once you've shaken the can ten or twenty times*

*Despite being shaken many times, the can looks just the same from the outside as it did before*

*This is identical to those children and young people who can 'conform' they do not show their difficulties even under great stress, they wait, and when in an environment they feel safe, they explode – normally at home*

## **Signs of the build up**

- ✚ Pacing up and down
- ✚ Fiddling
- ✚ An increase in obsessive behaviour
- ✚ Appearing irritated
- ✚ Rocking in their chair
- ✚ Stimming (repetitive, self-calming behaviour such as rocking or hand flapping)
- ✚ Talking to themselves
- ✚ Going white in the face
- ✚ Going red in the face
- ✚ Biting their nails
- ✚ Becoming childish or giggly
- ✚ Getting hot feet or ears
- ✚ Making noises like an animal or growling
- ✚ Clenching jaw or fists
- ✚ Being very still
- ✚ Not feeling well
- ✚ Losing balance and co-ordination
- ✚ Having fixed eyes or being wide-eyed
- ✚ Being more or less chatty
- ✚ Being argumentative
- ✚ Showing more or less eye contact or staring
- ✚ Frowning a lot
- ✚ Having flared nostrils
- ✚ Looking down more
- ✚ Having tears in their eyes
- ✚ Having dilated pupils
- ✚ Making negative comments about themselves
- ✚ Chewing inside of mouth
- ✚ An increase in grimacing or other particular facial expressions or tics

## Chapter 5: Understanding the different types of strategies

### **The difference between Proactive and Reactive Strategies**

An example of taking a REACTIVE approach is when a teacher responds to a child who simply 'won't do' the task. The teacher will not have pre-empted the behaviour, the child has a reaction to unrecognised triggers and the teacher is left trying to put strategies into place once the 'horse has bolted' as it were. In this situation all of the energy is focussed on reacting to the behaviour and repairing the situation.

An example of taking a PROACTIVE approach is when a teacher responds to a child who can't do by putting in strategies to prevent behaviours by recognising potential situations. The teacher uses all their effort to identify triggers, produce plans, and use strategies which in turn reduce the likelihood of behaviour escalating.

Proactive strategies produce long term changes to behaviour however, they are slow-burn

Proactive strategies are intended to make sure the person has got what they need and want on a day to day basis and also includes ways to teach the person appropriate communication and life skills

Reactive strategies are quick but not long lasting

Reactive strategies are designed to keep the person and those around them safe from harm. They provide a way to react quickly in a situation where the person is distressed or anxious and more likely to display challenging behaviour

Good behaviour plans has more proactive strategies than reactive ones. This helps to ensure that the focus is not just on challenging behaviour but provides ways to support the person to have a good life, enabling the person to learn better, more effective ways of getting what they need.

**Low Arousal Approach to Behaviour** - Written by Ian Bell a Specialist Independent Speech and Language Therapist

Taken from <https://ianpbell.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/article-24.pdf>

The Low Arousal Approach is commonly used with people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC). It is part of the SPELL framework promoted by the National Autistic Society.

The Low Arousal Approach

- provides environments in which sensory clutter is reduced as much as possible
- facilitates effective communication is; it is likely that schedules will be used; the Minimal Speech Approach may also be employed
- offers opportunity to relax and relieve tension • ensures that interactions are calm
- is non-confrontational
- reduces events, situations and experiences that trigger anxiety, stress, over-stimulation
- avoids the escalation of arousal levels and so reduces the risk of people going into crisis
- has strategies for managing crises when they do occur.

### **Reducing clutter**

Many autistic people have sensory difficulties and needs. Reducing sensory information in the environment is often essential. It contributes to the management of arousal levels, enabling autistic people to remain calm, relaxed and free to engage in educational and leisure activities and to interact with other people. Providing an environment in which clutter is reduced should, therefore, be a core element of the Low Arousal Approach.

A reduced clutter environment is one in which sensory stimulation is kept to a minimum. Thus, for example:

- Walls are kept free of art work, posters and notices
- décor is simple and unfussy and colour schemes take account of people's preferences • strip lights, other bright lights and glare are avoided
- smells are reduced by using fragrance-free cleaning products, soap and so on, with people refraining from using perfumes and after-shave
- curtains and blinds are prevented from blowing in the breeze
- noise is kept to a minimum by taking care over the use of computers and laptops (because they hum) and such items as heaters, air-conditioning equipment and radiators
- spoken language is reduced (perhaps by using the Minimal Speech Approach)
- people avoid raising their voices
- people move around in a calm way and avoid rushing and bumping into, or brushing against others

- groups of people are avoided completely, or kept very small.

Although it is impossible (and undesirable) to eliminate all sensory stimuli, it is important for those who adopt the Low Arousal Approach to become very aware of them. This enables people to predict, and so avoid, situations which the autistic person is likely to find difficult. For example, it is important to monitor many features, including

- noise levels
- the number of people in the room
- smells • the temperature
- how tired, hungry and thirsty the autistic person is
- anything that indicates the autistic person may need the toilet, be in pain or uncomfortable.

An autistic person in education can be provided with his or her own work station. In fact, work stations can be useful in non-educational situations too; for example, they can support autistic people to engage more readily in leisure activities. It may be necessary to provide a work station in each room the autistic person uses. It may be helpful to position the work station close to the room's exit door, so the person can readily leave the room if the situation becomes too arousing. The work station should be positioned against the wall, so that the learner faces the wall when working at the table. The wall in front of the person should be free of visual distractions such as art work, posters and notices.

### **Effective communication**

It is essential that strategies are adopted to communicate effectively with every autistic person. However, many autistic people find it difficult to understand spoken language, and benefit from some kind of visual support, such as pictures, symbols or printed words. It is often appropriate to reduce the amount of spoken language; the Minimal Speech Approach is useful in this regard. Schedules are very supportive for many autistic people. As autistic people vary so markedly, it is not possible to provide details here of how best to support any particular person's communication.

### **Opportunities to relax and relieve tension**

Everyone needs to be provided with activities he or she finds motivating, enjoyable and relaxing, and this is, perhaps, particularly important for autistic people. Autistic people can become over-aroused as a result of being required to participate in activities they do not understand, do not find motivating or find aversive. Not all such activities should be avoided; for example, it is not wise to avoid cleaning one's teeth. A non-motivating or aversive activity can be followed by one the person finds motivating and pleasurable, as a way to relax and relieve tension. In fact, such activities can be provided at frequent intervals throughout the day, in order to minimise the risk that the autistic person will become very anxious, highly stressed, or over-stimulated and so go into crisis.

## **Interactions that are calm**

All interactions with an autistic person should take account of his / her interactive style. They should be calm in nature unless the person clearly indicates he / she wants to interact in a boisterous manner. Even on these occasions, it is important to be sensitive and to proceed with caution, as the person may quickly become over-aroused during an enjoyable activity, especially a lively one.

It is also important to respond to the person in such a way that you support him / her to remain calm. This means responding sensitively and as quickly as possible. The response should take account of the person's mood, stress and anxiety levels, physical well-being, and the levels of stimulation in the environment.

An autistic person can quickly become over-aroused if a request for an activity or item is turned down. At times, when the autistic person is calm and relaxed, it may be appropriate to withhold from him / her something he or she has requested. But even at these times, it is advisable to avoid saying No, as this may cause stress. An alternative strategy that is often effective is to say Later. For example, if the person requests a favourite activity (perhaps photocopying) during an educational activity, it is possible to say Work now. Photocopying later. If the person needs visual supports, these should also be used.

## **Being non-confrontational**

It is particularly important to be non-confrontational at all times with autistic people. When an autistic person's arousal level begins to rise, it is very easy for others to inadvertently become confrontational. This can occur as a consequence of presenting demands on the autistic person which, in the circumstances, are unreasonable. For example, if he / she is becoming very anxious or stressed and behaves in a way that is regarded as inappropriate, requiring him or her to apologise is, in effect, confrontational – it is a demand that may not be understood even when calm, and it is one which is likely to further raise the person's level of anxiety or stress.

Being non-confrontational also requires people to avoid confronting an autistic person with situations he / she cannot handle.

## **Reducing triggers**

It is important to reduce – if possible, to eliminate – all those events, situations and experiences that trigger anxiety, stress and overstimulation. This can be achieved by employing all the elements of the Low Arousal Approach.

## **Avoiding the escalation of arousal levels**

Every effort should be made to avoid autistic people's levels of anxiety, stress or sensory stimulation escalating out of control. It is important to constantly monitor each person and the environment. If it becomes clear that a person's level of anxiety, stress or sensory stimulation is escalating, measures need to be taken urgently to eliminate the causes of the escalation. In some situations, the most appropriate approach is for the person to access a quiet, relaxing environment in which there is very little sensory stimulation. This may be a separate room, but it could be a part of the room clearly marked with some kind of partition; some autistic people find a large box or tent useful.

## **Managing crises**

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to prevent a situation from escalating out of control; the person then goes into crisis. In the Low Arousal Approach it is essential to have strategies for managing crises: people need to know how to respond. Because a person who is in crisis loses communication skills, it is particularly important that other people understand how to communicate effectively with him / her. Should an autistic person go into crisis, he or she will need time to calm down. The amount of time he / she needs on any one occasion depends on a variety of factors, particularly the severity and duration of the crisis. In order to calm down, some people benefit from a quiet, relaxing environment in which there is very little sensory stimulation (see the last paragraph of the previous section). Others benefit from being in the open air. However, a person in crisis may not be able to go to his / her usual calming environment or to go outside; if this is the case, it may be necessary to take other people away from the person in crisis, to refrain from communicating with him / her and to reduce sensory stimulation as much as possible.

## Proactive Strategies

### **Green strategies**

The aim is to try and support the person to stay in this phase as much as possible. It is important to think about what it is that helps the person to feel calm and relaxed, such as:

- Environment
- Communication and body language
- Preferred activity or object or person
- Predictable routine and structure
- Feeling well and happy
- Interaction styles – how do you talk to the person

Put boundaries in place to teach the person what is and isn't acceptable in different situations.

The green phase is a good time to teach new skills, develop effective ways of communicating and use rewards and incentives to reinforce the behaviour that you want

### **Amber strategies**

Behaviours are often described as being spontaneous i.e. 0-60, however assessment may reveal that the person shows some reliable signals that all is not well prior to engaging in the behaviour

These signals may be subtle but will often include observable signs such as increased pacing, changes in vocalizations, facial expressions or body language.

At this stage the person may be starting to feel anxious or distressed and there is a chance he/she may challenge you in some way.

Things that can help

- Take away the trigger
- Not responding to, or 'ignoring' the behaviour
- Humour
- Redirecting/distracting
- Asking what is wrong

- ✚ Prepare and forewarn of changes – keep language short and simple, give take up time
- ✚ Break tasks down into smaller chunks, reward each part
- ✚ Catch them being good
- ✚ When....then strategy
- ✚ Expectation and clarity – clearly state what you want, clearly state what will happen  
Use phrases like “this is what is going to happen”
- ✚ Think about the order in which you say things. E.g. If you say ‘we’re going to go out to play but first I want you too...’ you may find some children, particularly those struggle with the classroom environment, will be halfway out the door before you can finish your sentence.
- ✚ TAKE YOUR TIME – Think about what you are going to say, don’t make any knee jerk statements in response to negative behaviours. Slow things down – this will not only help you to think of right response but shows young people that you are taking what happened seriously.
- ✚ Re-framing – work on positives e.g. after a fall-out between 2 pupils...’it’s good that you’re thinking about your relationship with Saskia, let’s see what we can do to improve it’
- ✚ Take away ‘I’ and think about ‘we’ e.g. ‘how can we put this right?’
- ✚ Use ‘thank you’ rather than please after given direction e.g. ‘pick up that paper, thanks’. It is non-pleading and makes an assumption from the outset that task will be done.
- ✚ Avoid the objects or situations that are likely to set off the problem
- ✚ Try and establish what might be happening and explore it - Ask yourself what would help
- ✚ Interrupt and re-direct – break the chain of behaviour after recognising early warning signs, Redirecting the person to something they like doing (Telling the person to do something else of to ‘stop’) (might be worth including a hand signal)
- ✚ Getting closer/moving further away from the person
- ✚ Saying or doing something to make the person laugh/use a light touch
- ✚ Reminding the person to use their relaxation strategy
- ✚ Use social stories/comic strip stories to explain situations
- ✚ Use of timers
- ✚ When using rewards the importance is around time/days out/high five – does not have to be monetary

### **Manage your own emotions**

- Control your breathing
- Control your responses – try and avoid knee-jerk actions

### **Use Visuals/Mixture of Verbal and Non-Verbal**

- Try to communicate calmly and clearly – think about our tones of voice
- Use fewer words, use a combination of non-verbal and verbal with possible inclusion of visual cues
- Use 2-stepped instructions
- Use signs/gestures/visuals
- Think about your body language – get down to their level, tackle things side on, use slower movements, relax your posture, stay at a safe distance

### **Using Mapping tools such as A, B, C charts**

- Investigate/monitor anxiety and try to reduce it

### **Avoid Debating:**

Parents says “no you can’t have that biscuit before tea time”

Child says “well.....”

This is NEGOTIATING AND YOUR CHILD IS IN CONTROL NOT YOU

### **Limit choices – using 2 simple choices**

- Do you want orange or lemon to drink
- Make sure your choices are realistic
- You must ensure the outcome remains the desired

### **Disempower the behaviour**

- You can stay outside until you are ready
- Redirect the child/young person using distraction

## **Avoid the negative...use positive talk and avoid negotiating**

Negative Phrases focus on the negative behaviour – Makes sense

Examples of negative phrases are:-

When we use a negative command coupled with an action e.g. don't run or don't throw

When we suggest blame e.g. don't be so stupid/silly etc

When we fail to give specific instructions e.g. "be good for me"

Negative commands can be as simple as "don't talk to me like that"

Suggesting blame can be as simple as saying "calm down"

It is important when trying to manage challenging behaviour that we recognise when what we say might not help the situation.

## **So how do we change our negative phrasing into positive phrasing?**

Positive phrasing is about changing the make-up of a phrase so that we approach those on the autistic spectrum using language they can process easily.

Really good positive language that can be used:-

### Using their name and 'please'

Kind/Safe words please John

Kind/Safe hands please Mary

### Using 'we'

We need to finish the work –Deep breaths and count to ten

We will talk about this later

### Being clear

Sensible and safe behaviour

There will be a consequence

### Using appropriate strategies

First .... and then ....

Now....Next....and then

## **Positive Phrasing Examples**

Brayden Kind Words Thanks

Brayden Safe Words Thanks

Brayden Kind Hands Thanks

Brayden Safe Hands Thanks

Brayden we need to finish this.....then we will

Deep breaths and count to ten

Sensible and safe behaviour

First.....and then.....

## **Use Affirmation Scripts**

- It is important for us to be able to identify with the child/young person how they are feeling. It is vital that we put a name to it as they are often unable to express such emotive responses. It is important to identify the difference between frustration/angry/anxious
- Make sure the child/young person has your attention – use their name directly
- Importance to use plain language (not patronising)

Tell the child/young person you can see they are \_\_\_\_\_

Ask what the problem is/what happened?

Check that you understand why they are \_\_\_\_\_

Offer to help

## **Method**

- Use the child's name
- Acknowledge their right to their feelings
- Tell them why you are there
- Offer Help
- Offer a 'get out' using positive phrasing

## **Example:**

- (Childs Name)— Brayden
- Brayden I can see something is wrong
- Brayden I am here to help
- Talk and I will Listen
- Come with me and .....

## Dealing with consequences

When talking about it use phrases such as:-

“That thing you did.... (Insert specific details)” was (Insert unkind, unsafe, dangerous, unhelpful)

A consequence must be a LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Reflective

Repair

Restore

SHOW ME THAT YOUR SORRY BY .....

Don't ask why they did they do that?

Use these:

Step one – ask what happened?

Step two – Thinking and teaching

Step three – what can we do next time?

DO NOT USE WORDS SUCH AS GOOD GIRL OR GOOD BOY THOSE ON THE AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CANNOT HANDLE COMPLIMENTS

## Scenario Planning

Exercise:

Identify a trigger and then provide a little story to help manage that such as:

When things are tricky for you and you do \_\_\_\_\_

When you get \_\_\_\_\_ ask

Use no more than 5 **short sentences**

**Set of Rules to manage a situation**

**An explanation/directive**

**Small Cues**

## **Proactive Parenting Strategies**

Taken from Pete Brown – Family Therapist, Greenwich CAHMS December 2014 : Ten tips to help parents and carers positively manage Children with ADHD (adapted for all spectrum conditions)

### **‘Catch your child being good’**

- Use positive parenting strategies including specific praise for good behaviour
- The secret weapon to getting better behaviour is praise not punishment

‘Praise is one of the most effective ways of helping children, and one of the most neglected. Given clearly and often, praise is your secret weapon against the worst aspects of ‘spectrum’ behaviour

### **Correct your child without squashing their spirit**

#### **Remember the aims of correction or punishment is to teach better decision-making**

1. Small punishments tend to work better than big punishments
2. You don’t always need to punish. Sometimes a warning is enough. Pick your battles wisely and screen out minor but irritating behaviours.
3. Use ‘counting’ see 1 2 3 magic training or a kitchen timer
4. You don’t want family life to become a battleground. Therefore beware of constant criticising. Remember praise is your secret weapon
5. When you give negative feedback, focus on the behaviour, not the child’s inherent qualities.

### **‘You are not a bad parent’ educate yourself about your child/young person’s condition**

### **Communicate with the school about your child/young person's condition**

- Don't take it personally – there is a medical reason for much of the child's behaviour
- A reason is not an excuse – the condition is the reason for unacceptable behaviour but not an excuse for it. With your help, children can learn to control their behaviour better
- Keep in contact – all adults need to be on the same page and share the same approach for consistency
- 'Spectrum' children have difficulty with planning activities and doing them in the right order. It is helpful to give an overview of what you want them to achieve. They need practice in planning and sequencing activities
- Beware of changes to routine and changes of activity. Explain in advance what's going to happen if it's different to what they expect
- Improve their self-esteem by praising them in public for good behaviour and reprimanding them quietly, one-to-one

### **Try to manage stress and be a good role model**

Beware of the 'technology trap' – children on the spectrum can focus on intense computer games, but become far more moody and oppositional if they spend long periods on these games. Parents must be the ones to set and enforce boundaries and limits – especially with children who have already become used to video-game overuse.

## Effective Strategy Planning

Utilising the skills used by psychologists developing positive behaviour support plans – challenging behaviour foundations [www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk)

*Positive Behaviour Support is an approach that is used to support behaviour change in a child or adult with a learning disability.*

### Step 1: Challenging Behaviour

The first thing to think about is the behaviour(s) that you want to address. It is helpful to record four things about the challenging behaviour:

- Appearance – what the behaviour looks like
- Rate – how often it occurs
- Severity – how severe the behaviour is
- Duration – how long it lasts

### Step 2: Functions of the challenging behaviour

The reasons for behaviour fall under one of the following categories

- Social attention
- Escape/avoidance
- Tangible
- Sensory

### Step 3: identify types of challenging behaviour

- Physically aggressive behaviour
- Self-injurious behaviour
- Verbal abuse including shouting and swearing
- Sounds that other people find distressing

## Example of a Behaviour Support Plan to help with car journeys

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>My Difficult Situation</u></b></p> <p>Car Journeys, especially when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have to stop at a red light</li> <li>- We get stuck in traffic</li> <li>- We take an unfamiliar route</li> <li>- I misunderstand where we are going</li> <li>- I don't know where we're going</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Behaviours I Might Display</u></b></p> <p><b>Early Warning Signs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tense mouth</li> <li>- Face looks tense</li> <li>- I will ignore you if you try to talk to me</li> <li>- I will start to rock back and forward</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div> <p><b>If the early warning signs are noticed I may:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rock back and forward violently</li> <li>- Try to get out of my seat</li> <li>- Bang my head against the window</li> <li>- Try to pull the drivers hair, pull at their clothes, or anything else I can reach</li> <li>- Try to kick the driver</li> <li>- Scream and shout at the top of my voice</li> <li>- Throw anything that is within my reach in the car</li> </ul>
<p><b>What you can do to avoid this difficult situation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sure I know exactly where we are going and remind throughout the journey</li> <li>- Give me a picture/symbol card of where we are going so I can hold on to this to remind myself throughout the journey</li> <li>- Slowly talk me through what will happen on the route... "first we will go past the cinema..."</li> <li>- Take familiar routes whenever possible</li> <li>- If we have to go on a unfamiliar road, warn me beforehand</li> <li>- Provide a running commentary of the journey e.g. if we're coming up to a red light, say "red for stop", or if we're approaching a queue of traffic say "we're going to stop behind this car"</li> <li>- If something happens to alter the route talk me through this too</li> <li>- Play my favourite music to distract me</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What can you do if I display challenging behaviour</b></p> <p><b>When I am showing early warning signs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remind me where we are going</li> <li>- Make sure I have hold of my picture card to remind me where we're going</li> <li>- Play my favourite music to try and distract me</li> <li>- Tell me about the fun things we are going to do when we get to our destination</li> </ul> <p><b>If the situation has escalated:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talk in a calm voice</li> <li>- Don't use too many words</li> <li>- If you can work out where I think we are going (that is distressing me), tell me where we are really going</li> <li>- If I am trying to pull your hair/pull at your clothes, say "sit on your hands"</li> <li>- If I am banging my head on the window or getting very distressed, find a safe place to stop, help me out of the car</li> <li>- Do not continue the journey until I can sit calmly</li> </ul> <p><b>Afterwards:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue the journey, calmly talking me through what is happening</li> </ul>

### Example of a Green, Amber and Red Strategy

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Support strategies</b></p> <p>The things that we can do or say to keep Gabriel in the green for as much time as possible</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Behaviour</b></p> <p>What Gabriel does, says and looks like that gives us clues that he is calm and relaxed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Give Gabriel regular positive feedback and encouragement</li> <li>- Always try to use positive language even when he is doing something you would rather he didn't e.g. oh that is mummy's precious book, let's find your book</li> <li>- Use simple, clear language Make sure that Gabriel has the opportunity to do something outside of the house at least once a day</li> <li>- Support Gabriel to access what he wants using his PECS system or with his tablet</li> <li>- Make sure that at least once an hour you spend some one to one time with Gabriel e.g. reading a book, a massage</li> <li>- Make sure that Gabriel has his chewy tube to carry around</li> <li>- Make sure that if you have to ask him for his chewy tube for a certain period of time e.g. meal time/bath that you tell him clearly when he will get it back e.g. dinner and then chewy tube</li> <li>- Regularly practise using the PECS system with Gabriel</li> <li>- Give Gabriel plenty of opportunity to walk independently and make sure if out for a walk as a family/group you go somewhere where he is going to have this opportunity</li> <li>- Give Gabriel plenty of time to process what you have said to him before asking again</li> <li>- Make sure that Gabriel has all his medication so that he does not become constipated</li> <li>- Give plenty of opportunity to listen to music</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gabriel will smile and laugh</li> <li>- He will happily make eye contact and will communicate with you and respond positively</li> <li>- He will initiate contact and want to join in with what others are doing.</li> <li>- He will bounce up and down on his knees</li> <li>- His body language will be relaxed</li> <li>- He may move around quite fast whilst making an eeeeeeeeeeeee kind of sound</li> <li>- He may dance</li> <li>- He will bang his object on the floor</li> <li>- He will blow raspberries on himself and others</li> <li>- He will do roly poly's!</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Support strategies</b></p> <p>The things that we can do or say to stop the situation from escalating further and return Gabriel to the proactive phase as soon as possible.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Behaviour</b></p> <p>What Gabriel does, says and looks like that gives us clues that he is becoming anxious or aroused.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask Gabriel if he would like help with whatever it is he is struggling with or trying to access</li> <li>- Offer to scratch his back</li> <li>- Ask him to blow a raspberry on your hand/arm</li> <li>- Support him to access what he wants with his PECS system or through MAKATON</li> <li>- Try to distract Gabriel by offering an activity e.g. listening to music, playing drums or reading a book</li> <li>- Initiate some rough and tumble play with Gabriel</li> <li>- Place Gabriel in an upside down position or swing him around whilst supporting him under his arms with his head against your chest</li> <li>- Ask him if he wants a bath</li> <li>- Ask him if he wants to go to his room and play his drums</li> <li>- Cuddle up with the cuddle blanket</li> <li>- Watch live music videos on the iPad</li> <li>- Sing songs with Gabriel or make funny noises e.g. animal noises</li> <li>- Distract Gabriel with some different toys or read a book with him</li> <li>- Tickle him</li> <li>- Bouncing on the trampoline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gabriel will shout</li> <li>- He will clench his fists and vocalise in a high pitched voice.</li> <li>- He will usually adopt a W sitting position at these times</li> <li>- He will come and seek you out if you are not in the same room</li> <li>- He may become tearful and want to sit on your lap</li> <li>- He will shake the stair gate</li> <li>- He will cast things</li> <li>- He will be unwilling to engage in positive communication</li> <li>- He will appear distracted and will be unable to concentrate or make eye contact</li> <li>- He will lay his head on the side of the sofa</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Support strategies</b></p> <p>The things that we can do or say to quickly manage the situation and to prevent unnecessary distress, injury and destruction.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Behaviour</b></p> <p>What Gabriel does, says and looks like when he is challenging.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stay calm and reassure Gabriel that you are going to help him.</li> <li>- Make sure only one person talks at a time.</li> <li>- If Gabriel is seeking to comfort himself by banging his head encourage him to cuddle his teddy bear instead.</li> <li>- Distract Gabriel with a favoured object.</li> <li>- If he is seeking sensory feedback encourage him to bang his hands or feet instead.</li> <li>- If he is pulling hair or pinching etc say to him 'kind hands' and support him to stroke hair or arms etc.</li> <li>- Say 'LOOK' in a really excited voice and then distract him with a chosen object.</li> <li>- Don't make reference to the behaviour but stop him doing it. For example if he is hitting himself take his hand and say 'high 5'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gabriel will rock against furniture or the door etc.</li> <li>- Gabriel will vocalise in a way which sounds like a high pitched growl or a very loud shout.</li> <li>- He may be crying.</li> <li>- He will cast objects.</li> <li>- He will bang his head on the floor or against the furniture.</li> <li>- He may come up to you and bang his head on you e.g. on your knee.</li> <li>- His body language will be very tense.</li> <li>- He will usually be sitting bolt upright.</li> <li>- He may hit himself on the head with a closed fist.</li> <li>- He may pull hair, pinch or slap bare skin.</li> <li>- Gabriel may become very clingy and will want continual contact.</li> </ul>

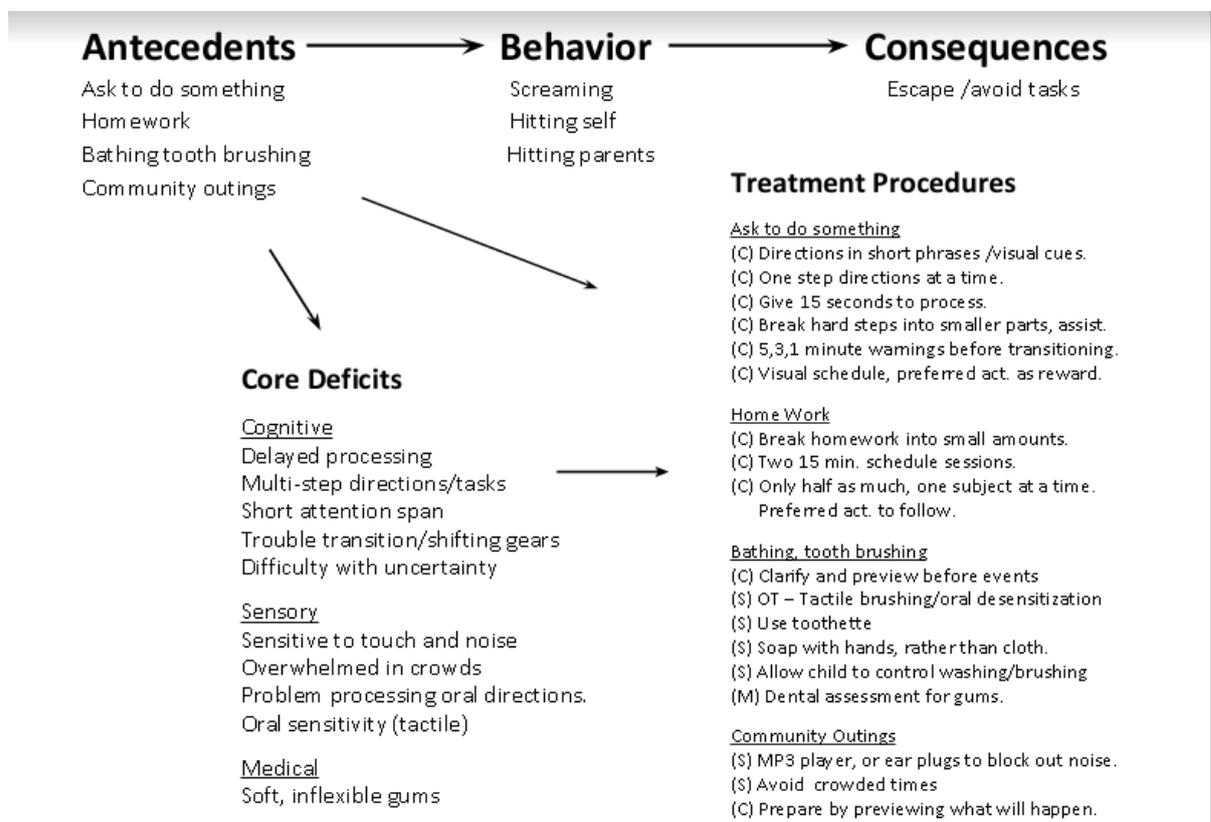
## A,B,C Behaviour Charts – used to record behavioural concerns (mapping exercise)

### Antecedent is most important

- ❑ A stands for antecedents – that is what happens immediately before the behavioural outburst and can include any triggers, signs of distress or environmental information
- ❑ B refers to the behaviour – this is a description of what actually happened during the outburst or what the behaviour ‘looked’ like
- ❑ C refers to the consequences of the behaviour or what happened immediately after the behaviour and can include information about other people’s responses to the behaviour and the eventual outcome for the person.

### ABC Functional Behavioral Assessment Form

Time	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
	What comes before the behavior  Where was it? Who was there? What was happening?	The specific behavior  Paint a very clear picture of what happened	What happened after the behavior?  What did I use as a consequence?  What did I say?



# Functional Assessment

## A ————— B ————— C

- Conditions that trigger the behavior
  - When: What times does the behavior occur.
  - Where: Where does it occur.
  - What: What is happening at time of behavior. What is consumer doing, demands placed on consumer?
  - Who: Who is involved (parent, staff, peers)?
- What other activity is going on in the area?
- What are the common patterns that trigger behavior?
- When (what conditions) does behavior not occur?
- What characteristics of the conditions make them triggers (micro-analysis)?
- Define behavior in observable and measurable terms
- Describe the course of behavior from start to finish.
- Does behavior occur in a chain of behavior?
- Are their precursor behaviors that signify the likelihood that the target behavior will occur?
- Describe frequency, duration and intensity of behavior.
- What is person communicating with behavior.
- What happens following the behavior?
- What does the person gain? What are the payoffs?
- What effects does the behavior have?
- How do parents/staff/peers react?
- How does the person react to how others intervene?
- What is the person gaining or escaping from?

## Core Deficits

### Sensory

- Over or under sensitivity to stimulation
- Sensory overload.
- Sensory seeking.
- Under-aroused nervous system.

### Cognitive

- Information processing problems (delayed, multi-tasking, etc).
- Rigid, inflexible thinking (shifting gears, transitions, change, etc.)
- Executive Functioning problems (attention, organization, follow through).

### Emotional

- Exaggerated emotional responses.
- Goes from 0-100 quickly
- Difficult to calm.
- Poor frustration tolerance.

### Social/Communication

- Difficulty communicating needs/wants.
- Problems understanding directions.
- Problems making friends.
- Difficulty reading thoughts, feelings, perspectives of others.
- Has to control all interaction.
- Difficulty sharing, taking turns, etc.

### Medical/Psychiatric

- Eating or sleeping problems.
- Chronic infections, congestion.
- Digestive, gastrointestinal problems.
- Constipation, loose stools. etc.
- Allergies, arthritis, migraines.
- Mood swings, over activity.
- Withdrawn, inactive, little interests.
- Rapid, pressured speech.
- Anxious, apprehensive, fearful.
- Compulsive, repetitive behavior.
- Hallucinations
- Delusional Ideations
- Preoccupied thoughts

## Reactive Strategies – Managing Meltdowns

### **Red Strategies**

More restrictive interventions such as physical restraint should be a last resort  
Physical interventions and medication that is used solely to calm people down, are generally not considered a good long-term solution

This is where challenging behaviour occurs and we need to do something quickly to achieve safe and rapid control over the situation to prevent unnecessary distress and injury

- Appear calm
- Use low arousal approaches
- Do not make prolonged eye contact
- Be aware of your own body language
- Do not make any demands of the person or keep talking to them
- Distraction and redirection

**Wait until child is ready to be receptive – no affective communication will happen until child is in a receptive state (green state)**

- Step away
- Don't dig yourself in
- Don't become heightened yourself – they can pick up if we are stressed/upset
- When they are heightened they can't hear you
- Keep it simple
- Be mindful of body language
- Be objective
- Keep verbal to the bare minimum

## Strategies from Autism Discussion

<https://www.facebook.com/autismdiscussionpage/posts/1515818661830962>

[https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss\\_2?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Bill+Nason](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_2?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Bill+Nason)

This series on discipline can be found in the green book "Autism Discussion Page on Anxiety, Behaviour, School and Parenting Strategies.

### Using Social Disapproval

- 1) Interrupt behavior.
- 2) Obtain attention (not necessarily eye contact, but face to face at eye level, within field of vision).
- 3) Firmly tell person "NO \_\_\_" or "STOP \_\_\_." Pair verbal prompt with shaking of head no, and manual sign for no (or stop).
- 4) Show obvious displeasure (animate facial expression).
- 5) Keep statement short and clear.
- 6) Redirect without counseling/negotiating. Redirect by telling the child what you want him to do. Then focus all attention on "what you want him to do."

Often for these children you need to be very animated in your response for them to pick up on the obvious displeasure. These children often read most reactions from others as "fun" attention, and do not read the displeasure in others. Also, this technique can work for children who need "firm" feedback that you mean business. However, be prepared that you may need to back this up with additional punishment (time out or loss of privilege) if the child refuses to follow your lead. If you consistently back up this approach with further consequences, the child often knows you mean business and will respond to your firm prompt

### Redirection

With "redirection" we want to quickly interrupt the negative behaviour and redirect the child to the desired replacement behaviour, calming strategy, or into a distracting activity. The focus is on heavily reinforcing the child for appropriate behaviour (being good). Then, when negative behaviour occurs, we quickly interrupt the behaviour, with minimal attention as possible, and redirect the child back to the appropriate behaviour so he can continue to be reinforced. This procedure focuses attention on what you want the child to do. In the redirection model we are trying to minimize the attention given to the negative behaviour (thus reducing the payoffs) while redirecting the child back to desired behaviour so that he can continue to receive frequent reinforcement. The basic procedures consist of:

1. Teach the desired behavior by focusing on previewing, coaching, and reinforcing the child for the desired behavior.
2. When the negative behavior does occur, quickly interrupt it, redirect the child to "what you want him to do" (desired behavior), then reinforce with praise and positive attention.
3. Say very little about the negative behavior (no scolding, counseling, negotiating, etc.). Focus instead on what you want the child to do.
4. Use guidance and coaching as needed to help redirect the child to the appropriate behavior, while ignoring the inappropriate behavior.
5. Once the child responds to the redirection, reinforce cooperation with praise and positive attention.

This sounds easy to do, but it can be very difficult. Parents are used to scolding, counseling, directing, and trying to power their way to stopping the negative behavior. It can be difficult to show little emotion while redirecting the behavior back on a positive track. Negative behavior tends to draw our attention, and takes it away from “what we want the child to do.” It can be hard learning to say very little about the negative behavior, and focusing all attention on what we want the child to do. You need to focus attention on guiding the child through the desired response. This technique takes some practice to learn to do effectively.

### **Managing body language in a meltdown**

When a child is in a meltdown it is important to remember the following:

*Escalating body language – things to watch out for*

*Inside of an outstretched arm*

*Too close*

*Toe to toe, eye to eye*

*Blocking the path*

*Aggressive gestures*

*Over bearing*

*De-escalation Body Language*

*Good distance*

*Sideways stance*

*Leaving an open door*

*Relaxed hands*

*Managing height*

*Caring C's*

*Pressure i.e. using weighted blankets*

*De-escalation Stance*

- *Outside personal space*
- *Sideways position*
- *Open hands*
- *Soft knees*
- *Feet positioned shoulder-width apart*

### **Important things to remember when managing a meltdown**

- Keep calm
- Make the environment safe
- Continue giving infrequent options out/distractions (but not too often...give take up time)
- No bombarding
- Limit Verbal information
- Use low processing activities
- Use Dynamic Risk Assessments – you know your child!

When in a meltdown two things which ultimately cause the meltdown to continue and the arousal level to remain high is over talking and being emotive.

- Too much talking can be over-stimulating, can cause an argument/negotiation to ensue
- In a meltdown the child/young person won't necessarily understand other people's emotions, they simply won't care, and they might even continue knowing it makes you upset.

### **Helpful non-verbal cues:**

- Open body language
- Aware of personal space
- Warm eye contact
- Listening with empathy – let them talk, try to let them finish what they are saying without interruption
- Use non-verbal cue-ing (as much behaviour can be addressed/nipped in the bud by a non-verbal cue). Some examples of this could be - 4 fingers pointing downwards as a 'four on the floor' reminder for sitting properly on chair, turning an imaginary dial for volume control, cross fingers for cross your legs, motion from eyes to front of classroom as a cue for 'look this way', touch or cup ear for 'listen' – these can be combined as required!

## Managing the meltdown – S.C.A.R.E.D approach

A meltdown is considered to be a period of time whereby the child or young person temporarily loses control over a situation. S.C.A.R.E.D calming technique for children and adults with Autism

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Managing-Meltdowns-S-C-R-E-D-Technique/dp/1843109085>

**S. Safe** *the initial focus should be to provide an environment that is safe and secure*

**Don't** try to restrain the individual

**Don't** leave him/her alone

**Do** remove unwanted stimulation or guide the individual to a less stimulating environment

**Do** remove social pressure from the situation

**C. Calm** *remain calm, there is no need for you to be out of control. Use concrete or literal language that is descriptive and not evaluative*

**Don't** try to "process" what has happened or is happening

**Do** talk in a strong, calm and reassuring voice

**A. Affirmation** *provide validation of affect and acknowledge that the individual is doing the best he/she can to resolve the situation*

**Don't** ask unnecessary questions or challenge responses

**Do** refer to the individual by name and acknowledge his/her fear

**R. Routine** *the individual's comfort zone is far more likely to be in his/her repetition of routines*

**Don't** attempt to interfere with harmless routines like repetitive statements or walking in figure of eights

**Do**

- Reflect his/her behaviour and perception
- Encourage his/her routine
- Provide environmental supports for his/her routines
- Offer reassurance

Only after the catastrophic reaction is over, help the individual repair the situation

**E. Empathy** *understand from the autistic individual's perspective*

**Don't** lecture about the effect his/her behaviour is having on others

**Don't** humiliate or shame

**Do** acknowledge his/her fear and show that you are there to support him/her and not to make him/her do something he/she does not understand

**D. Develop an intervention plan** *an intervention plan reduces the frequency, duration, intensity, and negative outcomes of meltdowns*

**Don't** rely on a generic strategy

**Don't** develop a strategy without thorough consultation with the individual and his/her family

**Do** work with the individual to develop concrete behavioural strategies for assisting during a meltdown

### **Safe:**

- Initial attempts should be made to diffuse the situation. Reduce the level of sensory stimulation. Remain calm. You are intervening on behalf of a terrified person who needs your help and understanding, not an aggressive, violent person
- Try to determine if the individual is injured. Many autistic people have a high threshold for pain and during a meltdown may be unaware that they have a serious injury
- Maintain a calm social presence. Never leave an individual experiencing a meltdown unattended
- Talk directly to the individual experiencing a meltdown. Provide consistent, reassuring, declarative statements. Use the person's name when addressing him/her. Let the person know that your role is to provide a safe environment

### **Calm:**

- Remain calm. Just because the autistic person has temporarily lost control of his/her behaviour is no reason for you to do so. Identify one individual to interact with the individual who is temporally distressed (i.e. one member of staff/one parent).

Use simple declarative statements that affirm that you are there to assist them to regain his/her composure.

Maintain a calm presence until the meltdown is over. Mirror the behaviour of the individual in a way that shows compassion. If the individual is sitting on the ground rocking, it is more helpful to sit next to, rather than hover over him/her

- Do not – try to “reason” with an autistic person / tell them to ‘calm down’ / ask lots of questions / ask what to do / assume an aggressive posture / use threats

### **Affirmation:**

Refer to the individual by name. Make supportive statements indicating that you understand the individual is stressed and state that your role is to stay with him/her until he/she gains composure, no matter how long it takes. Actively listen. Distressing feelings that are expressed, acknowledged and validated will diminish in intensity.

- Do not – assume if they are not speaking that he/she does not understand that he/she is being talked about / talk about autistic individuals as if they are invisible / overwhelm with many questions / draw attention to perceived “bad behaviour” / try to confront individuals / challenge their feelings in meltdowns. They are not able to interpret or put their feelings in perspective but will more likely respond with “fear, freeze or flee”

### **Routines:**

- If an individual is engaging in a routine he/she is already using a strategy to gain control over him or herself. Reinforce the use of routine to gain calmness and control. One form of routine is to use comic strips and storyboards. Try incorporating these into the routine.
- Do not – assume that a routine is an act of defiance / interrupt a routine / talk about the routine in a derogatory fashion / try to talk an individual out of a routine

## **Empathy:**

- Show empathy and compassion by reassuring individuals and letting them know that they are not alone. Acknowledge and validate their fear. Make statements that you personally know how it feels to be scared. Accept the individual non-judgementally. Individuals trying to resolve their meltdowns sometimes find comfort in hearing their own words reflected back at them. Use a clear, low voice. Mirror physical behaviour. Observe and match the person's motions and emotions in a sensitive fashion. This can create trust. Understand that behaviour has meaning and may be a sign of the need to express emotion or gain emotional control. Touch should be offered but not forced.

## **Developing a Plan**

Include strategies like addressing child/young person by name with a firm tone or re-direct their attention/ possibly even use a movement to reinforce attention gaining. Include a list of warning signs of escalation – these are known triggers/signs. Include moderate/high anxiety state means a high risk of injury and give reasons. Include reasons for moderate anxiety state. Include after de-escalation plan

- Identification – you can get useful cards which identify the child/young person as being on the Autistic Spectrum

- Concrete – the wording of the plan needs to be descriptive not evaluative/ be precise / describe what a meltdown looks like using simple terms

- Communication of plan – make sure teachers and anyone that comes into contact with your child/young person knows there is a plan for managing meltdowns

- Rehearsal of interventions – make sure the interventions being used are appropriate and that people are trained to use them

- Revising Plans – constantly update the plan to include change in interventions etc

**Identify Possible Triggers****Recognise the indicators****During the incident****After the incident****Triggers**

- Change to routine
- Medical issues such as pain or illness
- Frustration at communication difficulties
- Stressful social situations
- Sensory overload

**Possible triggers**

- Facial expressions
- Movements or gestures
- Repetitive behaviour
- Yelling or shouting

**Possible behaviour**

- Aggression towards others
- Self-injurious behaviour
- Destroying property, objects, equipment
- Meltdowns

**Possible behaviour**

- Behaviour may be becoming less intense or it may have stopped altogether
- The child/young person may still be quite agitated or upset that they have a behaviour outburst/meltdown

**Strategies to Try**

- Modify the environment in some way
- Use alternative or augmentative communication such as picture symbols
- Redirect your child/young person to relaxing neutral activities
- Remove the trigger
- If you cannot remove the trigger remove your child/young person from the environment

**Strategies to try**

- Respond calmly and clearly
- Try not to make any demands on your child/young person
- Offer rewards
- Remind your child/young person how they can manage the situation, possibly using visual cues to reinforce what you are saying
- Reinforce calm behaviours
- Redirect your child/young person to a calming neutral activity
- Remove your child/young person or other people from the environment

**Strategies to try**

- Respond calmly and clearly
- Make sure the environment is safe
- Remove other people from the environment if needs be, and observe your child/young person from a slight distance
- Get help if needed
- If your child/young person is having a meltdown it can be best to let this occur as long as they are safe, only intervene if you have to

**Strategies to try**

- Give the child/young person time to calm down
- Hold off on any discussions or demands
- Offer reassurance let them know it is all OK
- Redirect your child/young person to a calming or neutral activity
- Praise appropriate behaviour
- Reinforce calm behaviour

## Chapter 6 – Managing the Aftermath

### **Rewards and consequences:**

- Park/Mark – come back to it
- This is what's happening now
- Pop along later for a chat about it
- Use a non-stimulation room environment
- Possibly use a minute for every year since birth
- Timers start when calm and responsive
- No forcing I'm sorry
- Consequences can be doing something nice/giving someone their time/something to write/draw/requires effort
- Avoid remove a calming aid i.e. IPAD
- Avoid using a bedroom if calming space
- Give a clear message
- Don't be too punitive too soon
- Take a restorative approach
- Explain didn't make right choice – what to do to put it right
- Consequences must be immediate and make sense

### **Making consequences clear and effective!**

When implementing consequences it is important that the child understands both the consequences for the desired behavior (reinforcement) and the consequences for the unwanted behavior (punishment). Often the effectiveness is lost because the child does not understand the associations between the behavior and the consequences (contingencies) or because the consequences are not implemented immediate and consistent. If a child acts out in frustration at school so you take away computer time at home that night, does he understand the association? Even so, when he is at school and in the heat of the moment is he even thinking, "If I hit that child I will lose my computer tonight at home." If the child doesn't associate the consequence with the action, cannot use forethought to evaluate what the consequences of his actions will be, or does not have control over his behavior because of sensory overload, then the intended consequences may have little effect over his behavior.

It is so important to discuss, role play, and emphasize the associations (contingencies) between the behaviors and their consequences. There are several strategies you can use to make this association very clear and easy to understand.

1. Make a picture sequence displaying how the desired behavior leads to a positive reinforcer, which leads to a smiling face (happy child). Right under that make another picture sequence displaying the unwanted behavior, leading to mild punisher (penalty), which leads to a frown face (unhappy child). Preview and review the chart daily until the child knows it well.
2. Also, role play both the desired sequence and unwanted sequence, so the child can behaviorally associate the consequences with the behavior. Have fun, and have parents and child switch places, role playing each other, as well as themselves. This makes the contingencies very familiar and predictable, keeping the parent viewed as a supportive partner, rather than a controlling force.
3. Role play various antecedent conditions (situations that trigger the behavior) so the child can practice doing the desirable replacement behavior, and receiving the reinforcement for it. If there are multiple situations that trigger the undesirable behavior, make an index card with the problem situation described on one side, and the desirable response described on the other side. Role play one or two situations a day. If a penalty is given for the negative behavior, role play that also. As new situations arise add them to the cards.
4. Make a picture reinforcer menu of all the different items/activities the child can earn. Allow the child to pick out what he wants to work for. Having him pick out the reinforcer before he engages in the activity makes the consequence forefront in his mind, and wets the whistle for wanting to earn it. He can take the picture of the reinforcer with him to remind him of what he is working for.
5. The use of visual reinforcement charts (e.g. star chart) is a great way to visually see what the child is working for. Place a picture of the reward on the chart, preceded by the number of boxes he must fill up with stars in order to earn. This way as he earns each star he can see how close he is getting to earning the big reward. This also helps solidify the association between behaving appropriately and earning the reinforcement. If the child will earn computer time for finishing an assignment at school, then place a picture of the computer on his desk so it stays fresh in his mind what he earns when he has completed the assignment.
6. Before entering into situations that commonly trigger the negative behavior, discuss (or role play) and preview the desired behavior and the reinforcement that will follow. This is a good time to use the picture contingency sequences (good and unwanted responses) to review what to do.
7. When the undesirable behavior does occur, calmly but immediately implement the consequence. Once the situation is over, sit down and review what happened, and how the child could react better (and earn the reinforcement) next time.

When in doubt, clarify and verify that the child understands exactly what is expected of him, and what the consequences of his action are. Identify and clarify this before entering into the situation, so you are not springing something unexpected on him. When possible role play and

practice the contingencies so that they are well engrained before entering into the triggering situations. When the desired behaviors are displayed praise and reinforce heavily, and when the negative behavior occurs, calmly implement the consequences, without scolding, yelling, counseling or negotiating. Stay calm and let the contingencies teach the behavior.

## Restorative Approach

An approach to inappropriate behaviour which puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment.

### Wright 1999

#### A Restorative Approach

- Focuses on harm that has been done
- How the harm can be repaired
- Looks at experiences, feelings and behaviours and identifies needs
- Plans to ensure risk reduction for the future

It involves asking:

- What happened?
- What were people thinking and feeling at the time?
- Who has been affected and how?
- How can we put right the harm?
- What have we learnt so we are able to make a different choice next time?

#### Restorative Questions

- What would you like to happen next?
- How can we make things better for *John / you*?
- If everything was going to be alright, what would need to happen?
- How can you help to put this right?
- How can we make it OK for you to go back to class etc?
- What do you think *John* might need?

## **Chapter 7: Dealing with Anger Specifically (related to ASD)**

### **Understanding Anger**

- ❖ Anger in itself is neither a positive nor a negative emotion. It is what we do with it that makes it a force for good or bad.
- ❖ Anger can be helpful and can assist in making positive decisions; it can also be used when we channel it to say something that needs to be said. Anger can give us energy and motivate us to do something.
- ❖ Anger can be destructive and prevent us from making good choices.
- ❖ Anger can be controlled
- ❖ Anger makes it harder for us to choose calm and intelligent responses to perceived threats
- ❖ Anger can produce the fight of flight response – see Amgydala Hijak information above

### **The Amgydala Hijak can present as**

- Reduced mental ability to reason
- An increased heart rate
- Shallow and faster breathing
- Increased sweat production
- Tighter muscle tone
- Increased adrenaline ( a naturally occurring hormone and 'neurotransmitter' – a chemical that sends information from one brain cell to another)
- Narrow focus which means we may miss important information that could help us to resolve a situation

**Children and young people on the autistic spectrum experience anger for many reasons:-**

- Vulnerability and confusion
- Difficulties with communicating and interacting
- Not understanding other people
- Emotional maturity
- Not fitting in/jealousy/not being as able as peers/negative criticism
- School – the ability to conform in a school based environment and crumble at home
- Anxiety/Stress/Worn Out/Frustrated
- Bullying
- Anger about their diagnosis
- Mental Health difficulties – co-occurs with depression/anxiety
- Physical health problems – lack of expressive language/lower pain thresholds
- Difficulties with sleep, diet and toileting
- Sensory Needs – 7 senses, taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing, balance (vestibular) and body awareness (proprioception)

**Red Beast Book Activity** - Everyone knows the Red Beast well here is some activities developed by Sue Lanksey

**Before Reading the Book:**

Discuss the front cover with the child or young person.

What do you think is the Red Beast?

Why do you think it is red?

**Discussion:-**

When have you been angry?

Has your Red Beast ever woken up?

What were you doing?

What did your mind tell you to do?

Do you remember what you said or did?

What helped you to calm?

How did you feel after the Red Beast went away?

How did the person you hurt feel?

Have you ever seen the Red Beast wake up in someone you know (family, friends, neighbours) How did that make you feel?

What did you do?

What helped the person to calm?

**Suggested Activities to Help a Child with ASD (using areas mentioned in the book as characteristics of Aspergers) The author has listed many strategies in the back of the book to assist teachers and family help a child with anger.**

As the author suggests, it is important to TEACH the child positive strategies, visualisation techniques and calming activities when anger is NOT present.

- Have a piece of red silk in an easily accessible bag, enough to throw over and cover the child (about one and a quarter square metres). The child uses the silk to hide and collect him/herself. They could go to a special place or cover themselves just where they are, until they are ready to return to the group.
- Create a box of sensory toys to help distract and calm the child. Also add in this box a red feather boa, red piece of silk (mentioned above), plastic bubble wrap to pop, a head set to block out noise, an eye mask to block sensory input and hide, and a bottle of water for hydration.

- Play “Beasties” in a role play situation, demonstrating what may trigger the Red Beast and how to identify that it is waking up within. List feelings that may come up. Teach strategies such as: counting to ten or twenty before saying or doing ANYTHING and have a drink of water.

- Play calm and relaxing music in the home and classroom. Physical activity

- Distraction is a powerful tool! You have heard the phrase “Exercise clears the head!” When your senses are overloaded you need a distraction – so does a child with ASD. Go for a walk, jump on the trampoline or play at the park. Always remember “Walk don’t talk”!

### **Routines and Schedules**

- Provide repetition and consistency for the child. They need and appreciate it.

## **Tips for Preventing and Reducing Anger – adapted from Autism: understanding and managing anger by Andrew Powell**

### **Reducing confrontation**

- ❖ Use fewer requests keep things to two simple requests
- ❖ Change the way you make requests – be less directive, use ‘we’ instead of being direct, try avoid ‘no and don’t using positive phrasing
- ❖ Using lets..... then or now...then or “this is what’s going to happen”
- ❖ Ensure consistency across all adults
- ❖ stand your ground when you really have to – though remember to ‘pick your battles’
- ❖ Calm, Firm, Fair and Logical – control your reaction
- ❖ Recognise the importance of everyone having their ‘own space’ and ‘time alone’ to reflect and repair

### **Using Clear communication**

- ❖ Get your child’s attention, use their name
- ❖ Keep it simple
- ❖ Be clear and precise about what you say – be blunt and a tad abrupt - it will appear rude but being less emotive works
- ❖ Try and avoid using ‘sayings’ or ‘idioms’
- ❖ Allow time to process – often called ‘take up’ time
- ❖ use non-verbal communication tools such as visuals/signs/body language – reduce verbal communication
- ❖ Explain why you need to say no – Explanation is key as long as you ensure it is logical or at least makes sense
- ❖ Ask the right questions in the right way and at the right time – make sure they are able to respond...asking how you are when they are processing might result in silence, rudeness or frustration
- ❖ Try not to shout
- ❖ Encourage your child to have strategies to express themselves without resorting to behaviour

## **Creating structure- can be supported by visual timetables/visual aids/social stories**

- ❖ Plan your day
- ❖ Prepare for changes to routines
- ❖ Use rules and consequences but make sure consequences are immediate and relate directly to the rule broken
- ❖ Use expectations and rewards however this is one of the least successful strategies – rewards need to be time/days out/points etc **not financial**

N.B difference between reward and bribe

*Reward:*

*John, we are going into the shop and if you walk with me while we are inside and don't touch anything unless I say. I will give you X towards X fund*

*Bribe:*

*John, stop touching X and running around, if you stop I will give you X*

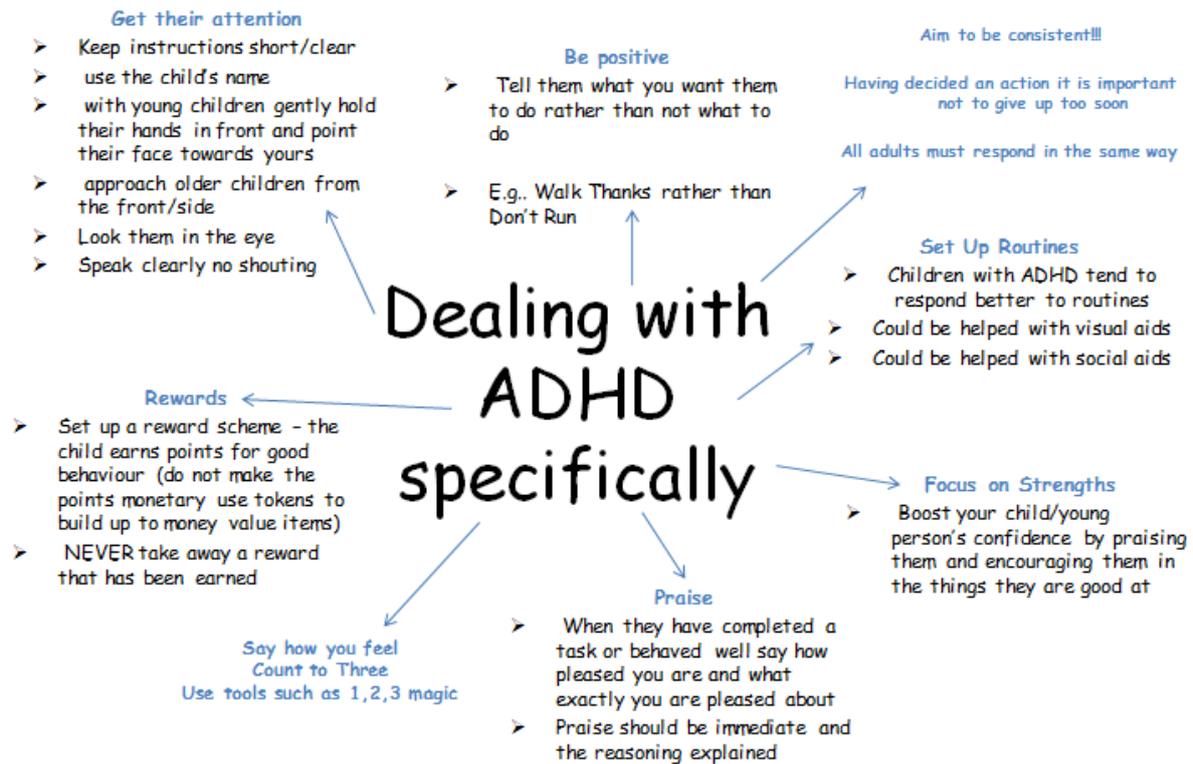
## **Consider Sensory Needs**

*So ASD Helping Hands screens children and young people for Sensory issues and arousal levels. We look at the following:*

- *Visual*
- *Touch*
- *Smell*
- *Movement*
- *Taste*

*There is also proprioception which relates to body awareness/positioning links with Dyspraxia diagnosis.*

## Chapter 8 – ADHD and Behaviour



## **Chapter 9 – Resources**

Helping ALL Children to Understand and Regulate their Own Feelings of Anger, Anxiety and Disappointment

Three wonderful picture books to teach EVERYONE about the emotions anger, anxiety and disappointment. K.I. Al-Ghani's has a wonderful series of children's picture books which help teach children about the emotions of anger, anxiety and disappointment. They are all divine books and can be read to an individual child or whole class. It can give children a chance to talk about their own feelings and express a desire to help themselves in a more positive and soothing way.

The stories make it clear that anger, anxiety and disappointment are emotions shared by everyone. However, it is the way in which we deal with these emotions that really matters to our personal well-being. The techniques suggested in this book can be taught to a whole class. At the back of each book are a range of fantastic activities and strategies for children.

### **Seven great activities to do after reading *The Red Beast*, *The Panicosaurus* and *The Disappointment Dragon***

1. Make a list of things that make children feel angry, anxious and disappointed.
2. Discuss what happens to the body when children become angry, anxious and disappointed.
3. Make a list of times when the children have experienced their own "Red Beast", "Panicosaurus", or "Disappointment Dragon".
4. Make a list of what children have done to calm themselves.
5. Discuss how to be supportive when you see other children experiencing these emotions.
6. I highly recommend making a poster and displaying for children to refer back to, that has each emotion (see below).
  1. Make an individual book which the child with ASD can refer back to that has photos of them using the strategies to manage emotions. You may also like to include success stories where they used the strategies.

Have you ever felt..... What made you feel this way (angry, anxious, disappointed)	How did you react? Did you feel in your body anywhere?	What helped to change the emotion/feeling?

Take photos of people's faces they know being angry, anxious and disappointed (great if allowed to use classmates). Add the photos to the posters to also help recognise other people's emotions.

## Beautiful Books for Teaching About Emotions

### **The Disappointment Dragon:** By K.I. Al-Ghani = DISAPPOINTMENT

The Disappointment Dragon sometimes comes to see us all and, if we let him, he can make us feel sad or angry. The fun characters in this charming, fully illustrated storybook will help children to cope with, and discuss openly, their feelings of disappointment. There are many creative suggestions on how to banish the Disappointment Dragon and an introduction for adults explaining disappointment in children and how they can help.



### **The Panicosaurus:** By K.I. Al-Ghani = ANXIETY

This fun, easy-to-read and fully illustrated storybook will inspire children who experience anxiety, and encourage them to banish their own Panicosauruses with help from Mabel's strategies. Parents and carers will like the helpful introduction, explaining anxiety in children, and the list of techniques for lessening anxiety at the end of the book.



### **The Red Beast:** By K.I. Al-Ghani = ANGER

This vibrant, fully illustrated children's storybook is written for children aged 5+, and is an accessible, fun way to talk about anger, with useful tips about how to 'tame the red beast' and guidance for parents on how anger affects children with Asperger's Syndrome.



[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Red-Beast-Controlling-Aspergers-childrens/dp/1843109433/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1505326597&sr=8-1&keywords=red+beast](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Red-Beast-Controlling-Aspergers-childrens/dp/1843109433/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1505326597&sr=8-1&keywords=red+beast)

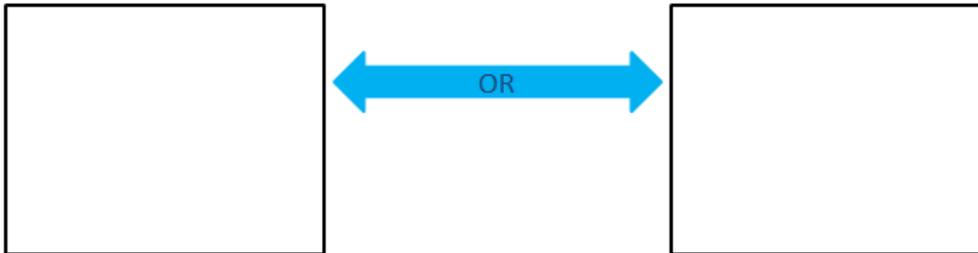
<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Disappointment-Dragon-disappointment-including-childrens/dp/1849054320>

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Panicosaurus-Managing-Children-Including-childrens/dp/1849053561/ref=pd\\_lpo\\_sbs\\_14\\_t\\_1?encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=8MJD9YVNG9NNY1EGPPFB](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Panicosaurus-Managing-Children-Including-childrens/dp/1849053561/ref=pd_lpo_sbs_14_t_1?encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=8MJD9YVNG9NNY1EGPPFB)

Appendix:

Tools

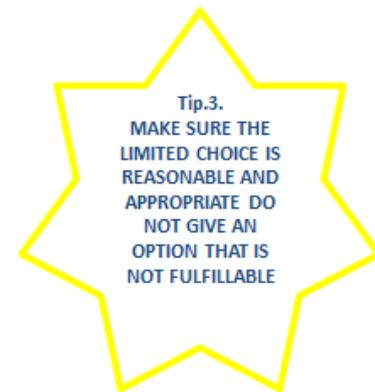
# Limited Choice



Limited Choice is all about giving your child/young person a choice between 2 outcomes. The importance here is that the 2 outcomes both give a desired result

Such as 'you can put your plate on the side or in the sink' this still gets them to clear their plate away

Another example of where limited choice works is "you can do X or you can do Y"  
i.e. 'You can sit with me or on your own'



1,2,3 Magic - <https://www.123magic.com/>

### **The thinking behind this tactic**

*Children/Young people with ADHD and ASD tend to not respond to the use of lots of words and reasons and this can lead to frustration and conflict.*

### **What to do**

**EXPLAIN TO THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON THAT WHEN THEY DO THINGS YOU DO NOT LIKE, WELL FROM NOW ON WE'RE GOING TO DO SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT. WHEN I SEE YOU DOING SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO I WILL AND EXPLAIN TO THEM THE BELOW PROCESS**

### **The process**

1. Identify one or two "stop" behaviours (things you want your child/young person to stop doing) **Forget everything else**
2. Before giving time out there are three warnings
3. Give a clear statement of the problem following by first count – i.e. X you're shouting at me, that's one
4. If it continues that's two – remember to repeat exactly what you said for first count i.e. X you're shouting at me, that's two
5. If it continues that's three you now use the consequence i.e. X you're shouting at me, that's three, X minutes in the room

**Importance here is if you reach 5 whilst they are in the room it is important not to talk to them. Don't discuss the problem. Don't demand an apology**

**YOU MUST BE IN A CALM STATE OF MIND  
PARENTS MUST WORK TOGETHER  
DON'T CAVE INTO PRESSURE  
BE CREATIVE WHEN OUT OF HOME**

*You need to explain to them that if you reach three they need time to calm down and stay quiet for the time period*

*Once they do this they can come out*

*You will not talk about what happened after this and it will be forgotten and you can all start again*

*If they kick up a fuss add more time on*

*If it is serious make the jump to number 5 immediately but always explain to them why!*

## **Incredible 5 point scale**

<https://www.5pointscale.com/>

If you want to teach a child social and interpersonal abilities and emotional self-control, this book will become your primary resource in the classroom and at home. The strategies are simple, clear, flexible, and fun, and are based on the authors' increasing practical experience. I particularly appreciated how the activities can be personalized include graphics and humour, and combine social and emotional themes. The scale is genuinely incredible. -- Tony Attwood, PhD, director, The Minds and Hearts Clinic, Brisbane, Australia, and author of *The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome*

### **Some Background Information**

We introduced *The Incredible 5-Point Scale* in 2003 as a method of teaching social understanding to students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and similar challenges. Since that time, we have learned more about why the scale works and how to use scales effectively with diverse populations.

Despite the recent emergence of some exciting new social curricula, the idea of teaching social competence is just beginning to gain attention in teacher preparation programs. What we have learned in the past nine years is that individuals on the spectrum need to be directly taught information we had previously thought of as "common knowledge." To paraphrase Daniel Goleman in *The Brain and Emotional Intelligence: New Insights* (2011), the range of what we think and do is limited to what we fail to notice ... Individuals with ASD seem to fail to notice that they are failing to notice, and this failure to notice shapes their thoughts and behaviors. A primary goal of the scale is to help them notice and functionally respond to their own and others' social behavior.

The objective of the 5-Point Scale is to teach social and emotional information in a concrete, systematic, and non-judging way. Students who have poor skills in the areas of social thinking or emotional regulation often exhibit challenging behaviors, particularly when facing difficult social situations. In the scale, teachers and parents have a simple, yet effective way to teach social rules and expectations and, along with the individual with ASD, problem-solve behavioral responses of others, troubleshoot past and future social scenarios, and create plans for self-management.

Taken from - <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Incredible-5-Point-Scale-Significantly-Improved/dp/1937473074>

## NVR Programme

### Parental Presence: Ormiston Families' Non Violent Resistance programme for parents.



Ormiston Families' Parental Presence programme is intended for parents currently experiencing challenging, disruptive or violent behaviour by their children. Parental Presence introduces the concept of Non Violent Resistance (NVR) and how it can help parents increase their presence within their family.

<https://www.ormiston.org/what-we-do/our-programmes/the-engage-programme/nvr-programme/>

#### More Information

NVR Programme »

**For further information on how the Engage Programme could be implemented in your school, please contact the Programme Manager Justin Claxton.**

T: 01473 705027

M: 07867 384671

E: [Click here to email](#)

## ASD Helping Hands – Behaviour Strategy Pack

<https://www.asdhelpinghands.org.uk/product-page/asd-helping-hands-behaviourpack>



The Team at ASD Helping Hands has developed a pack of 26 helpful cards around Behaviour.

These cards are designed to act as a memory aid to be used for example when access to support is limited due to working hours i.e. weekends and school holidays. The cards are designed to give strategies and tips for the management of challenging behaviour in all young people with or without a diagnosis of ASD, ADHD etc. They unfortunately cannot completely remove the behaviour but can assist with managing the behaviours more consistently. They are a tool box – not always will all of the strategies work but it gives you options to try something new or different and think out of the box.

### **The pack comes in a box (we are exploring additional options) and includes:-**

11 x Strategies for managing challenging behaviour

6 x Specific information cards for the following (all include possible reasons and specific strategies):

- Dealing with Smearing
- PICA
- Pinching/Kicking/Slapping
- Biting
- Spitting
- Hair Pulling

2 X on additional programmes for behaviour

- Applied Behaviour Analysis
- Art Therapy

6 X for management of Meltdowns including de-escalation/restorative approaches

## **Recommended Reading**

### **Autism: Understanding Behaviour by Caroline Hattersley**

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Autism-understanding-behaviour-Caroline-Hattersley-ebook/dp/B00MTXK39E/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1505777275&sr=8-1&keywords=understanding+behaviour+caroline](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Autism-understanding-behaviour-Caroline-Hattersley-ebook/dp/B00MTXK39E/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1505777275&sr=8-1&keywords=understanding+behaviour+caroline)

### **Autism: Understanding and managing anger by Andrew Powell**

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Autism-Understanding-Managing-Andrew-Powell/dp/190572263X/ref=sr\\_1\\_cc\\_1?s=aps&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777312&sr=1-1-catcorr&keywords=understanding+and+managing+anger+powell](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Autism-Understanding-Managing-Andrew-Powell/dp/190572263X/ref=sr_1_cc_1?s=aps&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777312&sr=1-1-catcorr&keywords=understanding+and+managing+anger+powell)

### **Managing Meltdowns, Using the S.C.A.R.E.D calming technique with children and adults with Autism by Deborah Lipsky and Will Richards**

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Managing-Meltdowns-S-C-R-D/dp/1843109085/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777331&sr=1-1&keywords=managing+meltowns](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Managing-Meltdowns-S-C-R-D/dp/1843109085/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777331&sr=1-1&keywords=managing+meltowns)

### **Behaviour Management Pocketbook**

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Behaviour-Management-Pocketbook-Peter-Hook/dp/1906610436/ref=sr\\_1\\_13?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777349&sr=1-13&keywords=and+and+behaviour](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Behaviour-Management-Pocketbook-Peter-Hook/dp/1906610436/ref=sr_1_13?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777349&sr=1-13&keywords=and+and+behaviour)

### **Autism Disorder and De-escalation strategies**

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder-escalation-Strategies/dp/1849055033/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777460&sr=1-1&keywords=autism+and+de-escalation](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder-escalation-Strategies/dp/1849055033/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777460&sr=1-1&keywords=autism+and+de-escalation)

### **I'm not Naughty I'm Autistic**

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Im-not-Naughty-Autistic-Journey/dp/184310105X/ref=sr\\_1\\_fm\\_r0\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777509&sr=1-1-fm\\_r0&keywords=i%27m+not+naughty+in+autistic](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Im-not-Naughty-Autistic-Journey/dp/184310105X/ref=sr_1_fm_r0_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777509&sr=1-1-fm_r0&keywords=i%27m+not+naughty+in+autistic)

### **Autism Discussion Page**

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Discussion-anxiety-behavior-parenting-strategies/dp/1849059950/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777550&sr=1-1&keywords=autism+discussion+pages](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Discussion-anxiety-behavior-parenting-strategies/dp/1849059950/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1505777550&sr=1-1&keywords=autism+discussion+pages)

### **Websites:**

<https://www.5pointscale.com/>

<http://www.autism.org.uk/challengingbehaviour>

<https://senmagazine.co.uk/articles/articles/senarticles/how-does-autism-affect-behaviour>

<http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/>

[https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/conditions/challenging-behaviour?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI4MzS4POv1gIVBouyCh2qsgMGEAAAYASAAEgLCGPD\\_BwE](https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/conditions/challenging-behaviour?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI4MzS4POv1gIVBouyCh2qsgMGEAAAYASAAEgLCGPD_BwE)

<http://researchautism.net/publicfiles/pdf/essential-guide-autism-challenging-behaviours.pdf>

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/understanding-autism/behaviour/behaviours-that-challenge>

<http://yvonnenewbold.com/vcb-violent-challenging-behaviour/violent-challenging-behaviour-the-basics/>

## Keep in touch

Find out more about how we can help you and your family, and how you can get involved with our work. Just fill in this form and post it back to us

2025020111 10:00:00 AM



Title	
First Name	
Surname	
Address (line 1)	
Address (line 2)	
Address (line 3)	
Town	
Postcode	
Telephone number	
Mobile number	
Email address	

ASD Helping Hands would like to keep you informed about our services, upcoming news, events and fundraising activities. We will look after your data as set out in our privacy and data protection policy.

If you prefer not to receive information by post, please tick this box

If you prefer not to receive information by telephone, please tick this box

We'd like to keep in touch by email, if you are happy with this, please write your email address in the space provided above

What is the date of birth of the person you are contacting us about?

□□ / □□ / □□

We would like to tailor our communication with you to ensure they are relevant to your interests.

What is your connection with autism?  
(Please tick all that apply)

I am autistic

I am the parent/carer of someone on the Autistic Spectrum

Someone in my family is diagnosed with autism

I know someone who's autistic

I am a professional working in the field of autism

I have another connection with autism  
Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_

I have no connection with Autism

### **Please return this form to:**

Room 219 Breckland Business Centre  
St Withburga Lane  
Dereham  
Norfolk  
NR19 1FD

“ASD Helping Hands will support all service users affected by an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) regardless of age or what stage of life they are at. We aim to offer guidance, practical advice and support whether you are personally affected or you are an associated family member, carer, friend or professional. We will actively champion the rights of all people affected by ASD’s and aim to make a positive difference to their lives while delivering a service that is accessible, reliable and trustworthy.”

The organisation is for all affected by the Autistic Spectrum, this covers a wide variety of difficulties. We believe that all families and individuals have the right to good quality information, support and guidance in order to promote empowerment to allow positive choices to be made, enabling access to the same opportunities as everybody.

Currently working across Norfolk and Suffolk

### **ASD Helping Hands**

219 Breckland Business Centre  
St Withburga Lane  
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Autism Helpline: 01362 853018  
Email: [asdhelplinghands@gmail.com](mailto:asdhelplinghands@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.asdhelplinghands.org.uk](http://www.asdhelplinghands.org.uk)

ASD Helping Hands is a voluntary organisation and relies on voluntary income to support its work, including the development of resources like this one for parents and carers

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