

# Fife Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway

Newsletter (Autumn 2022)



Welcome to the second of our quarterly Newsletters for families who are on our neurodevelopmental assessment pathway. This on-line newsletter contains useful information, links and updates from the team which may be useful while you are waiting for the assessment process to begin. You can still access the first newsletter here: [insert link](#)

## New Resources (Social Media):

For those of you who are right up there with your social media, you will know there are a huge number of sites about all neurodivergent conditions and particularly about autism.

It's hard for us to know where to start looking for useful links and information. To make any suggestions is tricky because what is useful to one person, isn't to the next. But we thought that we could share some links that have been recommended to us by others.

If you have any other recommendations please let us know. (email other suggestions to [info@theautismnetwork.co.uk](mailto:info@theautismnetwork.co.uk))

Starting this time with **Instagram** check these sites:

Theexpertally	autism_sketches
adhd_couple	undercoverautie
neurodiverseuk	neurodivergent_lou
neurodivergent_insights	theautisticlife

## Siblings of autistic children

We are looking at developing a short term 'understanding autism' programme (probably 3 weekly sessions) for the siblings of children who have received an autism diagnosis.

To understand what might be useful to include in the programme we are holding an on-line drop in chat on Monday 35<sup>th</sup> November from 3.00 to 5.00pm

Log in to our Teams session: [insert link](#)

Siblings can also share their views about this via email to [info@theautismnetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@theautismnetwork.org.uk)

We would really welcome to hear from siblings about what they want to know, their own anxieties and thoughts.

## Autism and friends

Friendships are really complicated to get right. I often heard my Mum saying 'I wish he had a real friend'. So I tried hard to get a friend. But I think that was her wish not mine.

When I was young, being with friends was about doing things together, things we all liked such as video games, playing Lego or watching TV. Then it became more about socialising and just spending time together 'hanging out'. I don't get that... what's the point of just hanging around when you could be doing something at the same time. Such a waste. Conversations also became harder to understand.

And then there is 'small talk' .. what is that? Why is there a need to fill silence? I don't know how to talk about things I don't know about.

Gradually I learnt how not to make so many mistakes but it's never natural and I worried about being found out as a fake. Pretending is exhausting.

So now I have social times for friends that I do certain things with . But I protect my alone time and when I do meet them I have the energy I need.

I'm still not sure that I really know what a friend is but I am mostly content with my level of social contact.

(adapted from a conversation with an autistic adult)



NHS Fife has commissioned Healios to provide online autism assessments to children and young people in the Fife area.

Healios is a leading digital provider of mental health and neurodevelopmental services for children and young people aged seven to 25 years. Healios works in partnership with NHS services throughout the UK to provide care remotely. So far, Healios has delivered more than 135,000 online sessions.

As an online-only service, Healios uses its own clinical platform to connect children and young people with compassionate clinicians. During these sessions, children, young people and their families or supporters can chat with their clinician over video. They can also manage appointments, view session notes and use engaging interactive tools

NHS Fife will give you the option to use Healios' services if we feel your child could benefit from Healios' approach. Once you're happy, we'll refer you to Healios for an [assessment](#). If your child requires further care after your Healios sessions, you'll be seen by the usual team within NHS Fife. To learn more visit [healios.org.uk](https://healios.org.uk).

## **Mindfulness**

**Worries about the past and what the future may hold can lead to... Feeling overwhelmed, frustration, uncertainty, difficulty concentrating.... and missing what is going on in the moment!**

Mindful techniques can help us bring our focus back to what you are doing in the moment, and help stop us feeling overwhelmed. One easy grounding technique is NOTICING;

- 5 things you can see
- 4 you can hear
- 3 you can touch
- 2 you can smell and
- 1 you can feel

Here is an accessible video clip from Surrey and Borders Partnership and NHS Trust that explains mindfulness and the 'five things' exercise :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5lxpsO7jig>

## **Local supports update.**

For up to date information on the Fife Autism One Stop Shop including drop-in sessions, groups, as well as the Flourish project.

<https://www.scottishautism.org/services-support/family-support/fife-one-stop-shop> .

Email: [fifeoss@scottishautism.org](mailto:fifeoss@scottishautism.org) Tel: 01592 645350.

Fife Advocacy Forum provides links to the services that provide advocacy in Fife:

<https://fifeadvocacyforum.org.uk>

## **Helpline for parents of children on the Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway**

The Autism Network has been commissioned by Fife HSCP to support families who are on the Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway.

Details about The Autism Network and the team can be found on their website :

<https://theautismnetwork.co.uk>

Although they don't have details about the waiting list for the assessment, they may be able to provide information that would be useful for you or signpost to another source of help. Sometimes it's just good to talk to someone who has the time to listen and to share your concerns and challenges.

To contact the Helpline call: 07706 012967. The helpline is not manned at any specific times but if you leave a message they will get back to you. You can also email them at

[info@theautismnetwork.co.uk](mailto:info@theautismnetwork.co.uk) and in your message let them know you are contacting the Fife Helpline.