

# Fife Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway

## Newsletter (Summer 2022)

Welcome to the first 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.

### New Resources:

In this section of future editions of the newsletter we will include suggestions of resources that colleagues or other families have recommended to us (they are not necessarily recommendations from the team)

If you have found any interesting articles, books or social media particularly useful please let us know and we can share these in future newsletters. (email suggestions to [info@theautismnetwork.co.uk](mailto:info@theautismnetwork.co.uk))



### Looking for information to support a child who is neuro-divergent?

Embracing Difference is a 6 session group for parents of primary aged children who are neuro-divergent. The group aims to provide parents with up to date information and strategies to support their child, to optimise their learning and reduce distress.

Sessions take place online weekly over 6 weeks and the course works best if you can ensure your attendance at all 6 sessions.

The next course starts on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August at 9.30am.

Information on how to book is available on [www.accesstherapiesfife.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.accesstherapiesfife.scot.nhs.uk)

### Team News:

As you will all know, the covid-19 pandemic disrupted many NHS services, including the AAP pathway.

We are delighted to let you know that the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership and the Scottish Government has recognised the need for more staff to help us tackle the increasing demand and long standing AAP waiting list.

The process has begun to appoint new multidisciplinary staff groups to ensure your child gets their assessment as soon as possible.

## Local supports update

Fife Autism One Stop Shop: [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>

Sometimes the language used by professionals can be confusing. There is a good jargon buster page on the Kindred Scotland website

<https://www.kindred-scotland.org/Pages/FAQs/Category/jargon-busting>

## What helps me...

Mary from Dunfermline shares some of the strategies she has used to help her 8 year old daughter sleep better.

- 1) There are no magic answers so don't look for them! Over the years I have tried everything to help Sophie get a good night's sleep. We accept now that she maybe doesn't need as much sleep as others. But the nights' she has no sleep she is tired and fractious the next day and finds it hard to settle so we needed to do something.
- 2) Sophie's sleep seems to be linked to the kind of day she has had and sometimes what is happening tomorrow if there is something she is anxious about .
- 3) Recently Sophie learnt that it's OK to be awake at night and just lie in bed (rather than wandering around the house). She has things now that she can occupy herself with for a while
- 4) We try to have a consistent night time routine for all the family, not just Sophie.
- 5) We have a list of things that we come out of our bedrooms for (toilet, emergencies or to get a drink), everything else can 'wait until the morning'. This is the same for all the family 😊
- 6) A sensory profile helped so we can avoid the sounds and smells that we know make Sophie anxious during the day.

## 'Windows of Tolerance'

We can all experience feeling overwhelmed at times, whether that's because of an unexpected change in routine or circumstance, a traumatic event, or just when all of life's smaller stressors push us over the edge.

This can happen to young people as well as adults, even if the stressors aren't as apparent or obvious to an outside eye.

The 'window of tolerance' is a concept originally developed by Dr. Dan Siegel to describe the optimal zone of "arousal" for a person to function in everyday life.

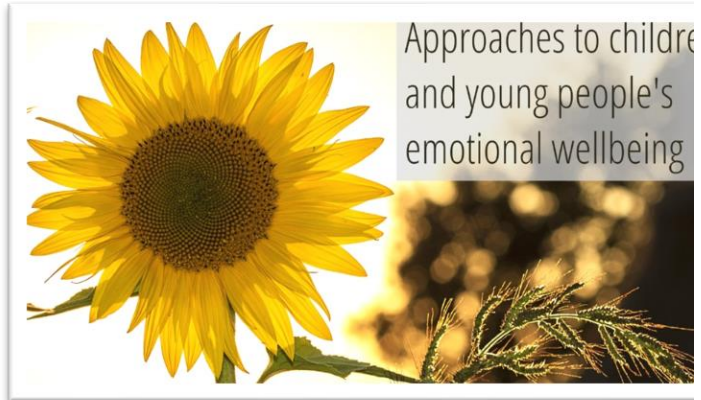
When a person is operating within this zone or window, they can effectively manage and cope with their emotions, but increased stress or trauma can push us out of this window. We then struggle to manage our emotions and can lash out/"have a meltdown", shut down, or withdraw.

Techniques such as relaxation and mindfulness can help us stay in our optimal window of tolerance, but the most important step is to know ourselves, and our own triggers. NHS Hampshire CAMHS has produced this video@ [Window of Tolerance – CAMHS \(hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk\)](https://www.windowoftolerance-camhs.nhs.uk)

Have you explored the HandsOn Scotland website?

HandsOn provides help and practical advice for supporting children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing. This website is for parents, carers and people who work with children and young people in Fife.

HandsOn was developed by Playfield Institute, a part of Fife CAMHS, along with other services including Educational Psychology and School Nursing



[www.handsonscotland.co.uk](http://www.handsonscotland.co.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 some general 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.