

Fife Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway

Newsletter (Winter 2022/3)



Welcome to the third 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.

Previous copies of the newsletter are available on the resources page at <https://theautismnetwork.co.uk>

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.

Here is our second set of suggestions that have been recommended to us by others. This time we are looking at Facebook sites (email other suggestions to info@theautismnetwork.co.uk)

Facebook

Most local and national services will have their own Facebook page with details of their services. Here are a few links to other Facebook pages which might be useful to follow.

<https://www.facebook.com/relaxkidsofficial>

leading experts in children's relaxation and mindfulness

<https://www.facebook.com/AutisminScotland>

captures a range of links and useful information

<https://www.facebook.com/joysofautism2>

a colourful and positive look at autism

New groups and supports

Siblings

We are still looking at developing something for siblings of children who have received an autism diagnosis. If you have any ideas or thoughts about what this should look like, please send a message through to info@theautismnetwork.co.uk

Children and Anxiety

We are also planning the development of a post diagnosis programme/course for autistic children. We are planning to pilot the group for high school pupils early spring. It will be advertised through the NHS Fife facebook and twitter accounts and self referral through Access Therapies Fife. For more information contact info@theautismnetwork.co.uk

Sensory Systems and ASD: Interoception

You will all have heard of the five primary sensory systems – hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch, but have you heard of the three hidden sensory systems? These are three further internal systems that impact how we experience our bodies: the **Vestibular system** which involves balance and movement, **Proprioception**; the sense of body and space, and **Interoception**, the ability to detect and interpret our internal body states.

Interoception can have a big impact on autistic individuals. The interoceptive system communicates information about our body states to help us understand what we need, like hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain or needing the toilet, and how we feel. Interoceptive awareness is the ability to detect, identify and interpret this information, to help us make sense of how we feel in our body and in our minds. It can help us make sense of the physical impact emotions can have on our body. How does your body feel when you are anxious, angry or excited?

Interoception is important in how we address our physical needs, and regulate our emotions. There are different ways a person might struggle with interoception. They might have reduced awareness, and struggle to know if they need to eat, or need the toilet, or interpret their emotions. Others might have a heightened awareness of internal states and feel everything with great intensity, finding some states overwhelming. Other might have a typical amount of awareness but struggle to interpret the differences accurately – am I hungry or anxious?

Awareness is the first step in building interoceptive and emotional regulation skills.

What do you smell?

Is it the same as what I smell?

Why do we like or dislike different smells from each other?
It would be strange if we all agreed on what a good smell is.



It is thought that the sense of smell is closely linked with memory, probably more so than any of our other senses. It seems that smells are good at triggering particular memories. For example the smell of apples might remind you of a childhood picnic many years later or the smell of baking reminds you of your Granny.

The sense of smell often works very closely alongside what we see, hear or touch and most definitely with what we taste. What smells better than it tastes? (for me it's coconut). Some smells can be overpowering and make us gag and do whatever we can to avoid it. It might not always be obvious that a smell is the sensory trigger to something. We might not be able to smell something that the child can.

It can be useful to get used to talking about the regular smells we can sense and not just those that we find immediately overpowering.



Workshop Supporting Positive Behaviour and Communication

When? Tuesday 28th March 9.30-12.30

Where? Microsoft Teams

For parents of children with autism and / or a learning disability interested in learning more about :



Settings - Understanding how your child experiences and understands the world



Triggers - Consider the reasons for behaviour



Actions – What behaviour do we notice?



Response - What can we do to help?

If you wish to opt in to this one off parent workshop please:

Email our team at fife.cypld-service@nhs.scot , using the reference “**STAR Workshop**” with details including- your name, email address, telephone number, child’s name and date of birth.

If you have a query about the workshop please contact -01383 565210.

Service for Children and Young People with a Learning Disability, Psychology Department, Lynebank Hospital, Dunfermline.

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 and in your message let them know you are contacting the Fife Helpline.