

# I'M A PARENT, GET ME OUT OF HERE!

THE WEEKLY SCHOOL CLOSURE NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

## The Corona Virus: managing the uncertainty

Megan Williams – Autism Advisory Teacher Service

When the government announced that the current lockdown would continue for at least another 3 weeks, I wasn't really surprised but did find my emotions doing a bit of a tail spin. These are very tough times for so many families and coping with the uncertainty is particularly difficult. As I'm sure you're all too aware, uncertainty is a major cause of anxiety for autistic people. So looking at our current reaction to not knowing when the lockdown will end, may just help us support our children better.

### Do you try to.....

- avoid uncertain situations completely to try to create certainty? (I don't like watching the TV news for that reason, preferring to read it online)
- prepare as much as possible for an upcoming situation (anybody admit to stockpiling a bit?!) However, this can mean we focus more on the situation and increase our worries.
- gather as much information as you can about Covid 19 hoping that it will reduce the uncertainty?

Physical sensations: that general feeling of uneasiness, thoughts such as "I won't be able to cope" and behaviours such as making excuses to put things off are all completely normal responses. In times of uncertainty, our brain tends to over react and so it helps to try and rationalise our thoughts.

Experts suggest trying to focus on something positive, remembering that not everything is uncertain and being kind to yourself. Ask yourself what advice you would give to a friend during these uncertain times and then try and act on that.

The wisdom of the Serenity Prayer comes to mind here. It asks for the wisdom and ability to gracefully accept "what is," (what cannot be changed) and for the willingness to change what is within our ability.

"GOD, GRANT ME  
THE SERENITY TO  
accept THE THINGS  
I CANNOT CHANGE,  
THE courage  
TO CHANGE THE THINGS  
I CAN, AND THE  
wisdom TO KNOW  
THE DIFFERENCE."

Reinhold Niebuhr

### Try APPLE

**A**CKNOWLEDGE – Notice and acknowledge the uncertainty as it comes to mind.

**P**AUSE – Don't react as you normally do. Don't react at all. Just pause and breathe.

**P**ULL BACK – Tell yourself this is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for certainty is not helpful and not necessary. It is only a thought or feeling. Don't believe everything you think! Thoughts are not statements of fact. What's the bigger picture? Are you all safe?

**L**ET GO – let go of the thought or feeling about needing certainty. It will pass. You don't have to respond to it. You might imagine it floating away in a bubble, balloon or cloud.

**E**XPLORE – Explore the present moment, because right now, at this present moment all is well. Notice your breathing, and the ground beneath you. Look around and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you smell. Right now. Then, shift your focus of attention to something else – on what you need to do, on what you were doing before you noticed the worry, or do something else – mindfully, with your attention.

### Some suggested relaxation techniques:

- Listen to some Music or an audio book
- Cook or even cleaning can help sometimes
- Read a book or magazine
- Do something creative or physically active
- Have a bath
- Watch a favourite TV show or message a friend

# Appsolutely Connected

Rob Emery – Autism Advisory Teacher Service

Over the past few weeks we have had less face to face contact with our families. There are a number of apps out there that enable face to face contact at a distance via video calling. Here we will provide a quick guide to some of the most popular ones.

## FaceTime

Facetime can only be used between Apple devices which can be its limiting factor. However, if your family all have apple devices this provides an easy to use, reliable video call.

## Facebook Messenger

For those that use Facebook their messenger app has a videocall function. This can be used on lots of devices but only for those with a facebook account.

## Whatsapp

Whatsapp is a messenger app which also has a video call function. Although it's owned by Facebook you don't need a facebook account to use Whatsapp.



## Zoom

Zoom is used by lots of big companies for their conference calls. It provides reliable video calling for large groups so if you have a large family this might be the best way to get them together in the lockdown.

## Skype

Skype has been around for a while. It can be used on PC, Mac or any smart device which makes it more readily available.

## Houseparty

Houseparty has become more popular since the lockdown. It is a little different in that you can 'pop in' on your contacts whilst they are using the app making it a bit more spontaneous. There are also a range of games/quizzes built into the app.

These are just some of the available Apps. If you need help using any of these, [AgeUK](#) have step by step guides to video calling. In the end it doesn't matter how you do it as long as you stay connected.

## Parent Top Tips

In this section we want to share your tips and advice. Have you got a great activity? Found a brilliant resource? We'd like to hear about it! Please share your top tips at:

[SENandInclusion@Peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:SENandInclusion@Peterborough.gov.uk)

"My children are really struggling inside and my daughter thinks you can catch it in the air so won't go outside. They are hiding away on the Xbox to retain some familiarity. I decided to try to step up and give them some outdoor family fun so I created the tiniest carnival in town!...They both loved it!...People who don't have a garden could do this in their living room."

Kelsta Lou



Check out our other weekly newsletters:

**Cosy Crew** – A newsletter for Primary Aged Children with Autism.

**Lockdown Lift Up** – A newsletter for teenagers and young people with Autism.

Available from our [Local Offer Page](#) each week.

## Boredom Bashers

### Resource:

Earth Day was this week and there are lots of resources at [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org). Take action for a digital Earth Day!



### Activity:

Free Audiobooks for Teens (13+). Audiosync provide free audiobooks designed to get teens into listening to books.

There are a range of books to choose from: [www.audiobooksync.com/](http://www.audiobooksync.com/)



### Something for me:

If you fancy something a little different the Royal Opera House are streaming some of their Ballet and Opera Performances on YouTube and Facebook.

[www.roh.org.uk/streaming](http://www.roh.org.uk/streaming)

