



Understanding Behaviours in Children and Young People

Bexley CAMHS

March 2020

Improving lives



How you understand your child

- Warm up

Take five minutes to jot down

- Your child's diagnosis (if ok to) and / or needs
- One of the main things **you** are struggling with
- One thing **your child** is struggling with
- One positive about how **you** are helping them
- One positive thing about **your young person**

Back to that later ...

Understanding behaviour

- What do we mean by ‘behaviour’?
- Behaviour in conditions - ASD, ADHD and LD
- Recognising types of behaviour
 - Why are they challenging ?
 - What is their function ?
- Understand your child’s condition and needs
 - ADHD ASD LD
 - Comorbidities
- Understanding behaviour
 - Three brains
 - Strategies and techniques
 - Other resources
- Questions and answers
 - Chat and feedback

Understanding behaviour



Behaviour in conditions - ASD, ADHD, LD

- Aggression - verbal or physical or damage
- Withdrawal or absconding
- Sexualised behaviour
- Self-injurious behaviour
- Refusing to co-operate
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Repetitive questioning / over controlling
- Spitting / scratching
- Smearing / urinating
- Over /under eating
- Stealing food / stealing other things
- Not sleeping / selective mutism

Recognising why behaviour is challenging

- Danger to themselves or to others
- Worrying
- Upsetting
- Irritating or annoying
- Embarrassing
- Disappointing
- Disgusting
- Boring and repetitive
- Exhausting physically and mentally
- Impact on expectations and view of self e.g. I **should** deal with this better; They **should** behave; I **should** be able to manage; I **should** know what to do

Function of challenging behaviour

- The majority of difficult behaviours happen for the following reasons:
 - An unmet primary need
 - Developmental needs ie LD
 - Fear and panic (aversion / avoidance)
 - Shame, anger, low self esteem
 - Control (PDA, compulsions and rituals)
 - Trust issues (blind / none)
 - High levels of anxiety *
 - Dysregulation of emotions
 - Sensory seeking or avoidance

A behaviour can serve **different** functions at **different** times

* more on that later

Function of challenging behaviour

The majority of difficult behaviours happen for the following reasons:

- To gain an object goal or item
- To gain or maintain social interaction
- As a form of communication
- For sensory stimulation
- To avoid a stressful unwanted situation



It's important to learn as much as you can about your child's condition.
With that in mind let's revisit: ADHD, ASD and LD in relation to behaviour.

Understanding ADHD

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder affecting both children and adults. It is described as a “persistent” or on-going pattern of inattention and /or hyperactivity-impulsivity that gets in the way of daily life or typical development.

There are three presentations of ADHD:

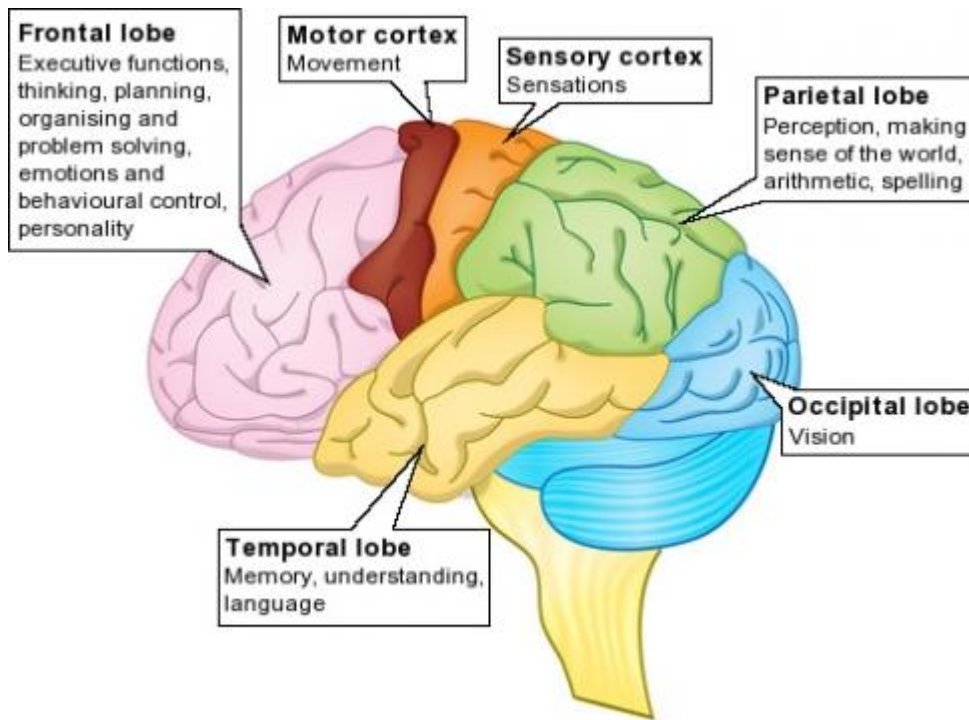
Inattentive

Hyperactive-impulsive

Combined inattentive & hyperactive-impulsive

(DSM V)





Cortex: Is involved in memory, attention, thought and language
Thickens as you grow in the teenage years

ADHD: Cortical thickening is slower in the **frontal** and **temporal** areas

It affects behaviour regulation and memory

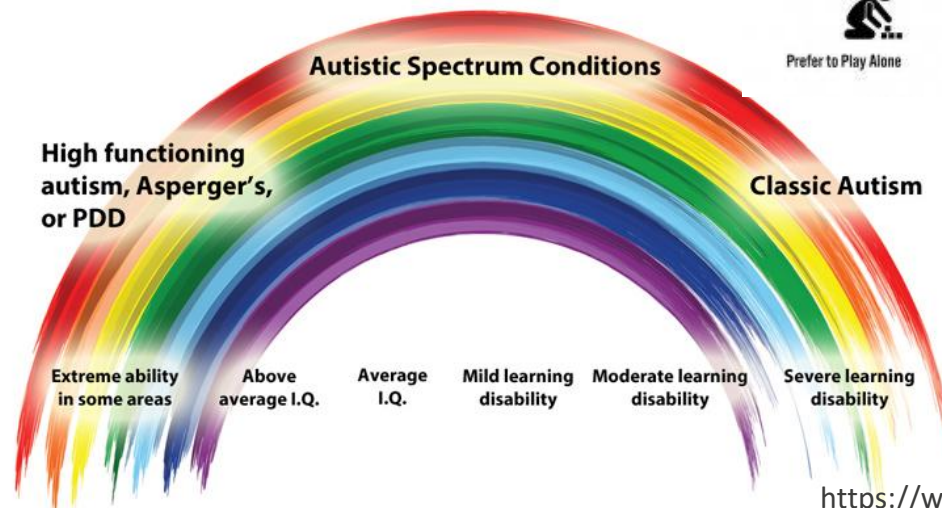
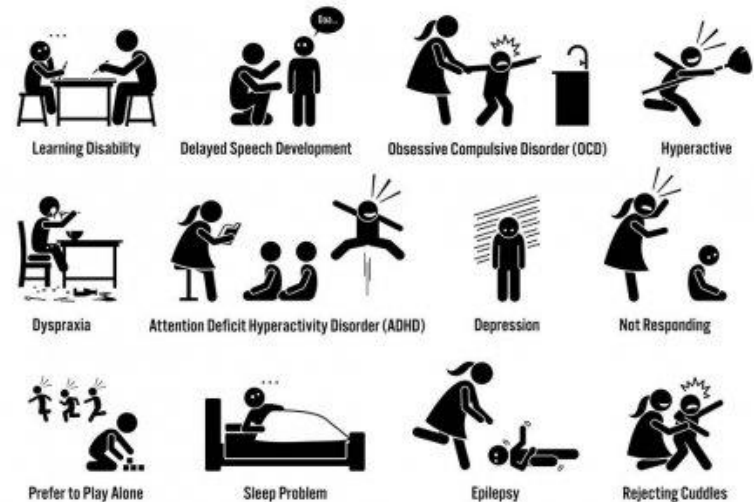
The neurotransmitters **Dopamine** and **Noradrenaline** are the main chemical messengers, however communication within the brain is impaired

Inattention:	Impulsivity:	Hyperactivity:
Makes careless mistakes	Talks excessively	Fidgets/squirms in seat
Struggles to sustain attention in tasks/play	Blurts out answers	Gets up from seat or leaves classroom inappropriately
Doesn't listen when spoken to	Difficulty waiting turn	Runs or climbs excessively
Not following through instructions, or not finishing work/tasks	Interrupts or intrudes on others	Struggles with quiet play
Difficulty organising tasks/activities		"on the go" as if "driven by a motor"
avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (e.g., schoolwork or homework)		
Often loses things		
Often distracted by what's going on around them		
Forgetful in daily activities		

Understanding ASD

Autism: Persistent difficulties with social communication and social interaction and restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviours, activities or interests since early childhood, to the extent that these 'limit and impair everyday functioning'.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)



Your ASD child's behaviours

Different behaviours at 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).

Challenging behaviour

Some autistic people can display challenging behaviour. It includes what would normally be considered physically aggressive behaviour, but can also include other behaviours if they have a negative impact on the person or their family.

<https://www.autism.org.uk/behaviour/>

Autism Spectrum Disorder



LEVEL 1

High Functioning Autism

Requiring support; Difficulty initiating social interactions; Inflexibility of behavior; Difficulty switching activities; Problems with organization.



LEVEL 2

Autism

Requiring substantial support; Marked deficits with social interactions; Inflexibility of behavior; Difficulty or distress coping with change; Repetitive behaviors.



LEVEL 3

Severe Autism

Requiring very substantial support; Severe deficits with social interactions & communication; Inflexibility of behavior; Extreme difficulty or distress coping with change; Repetitive behaviors interfere with functioning.

ASD comorbidities and behaviours

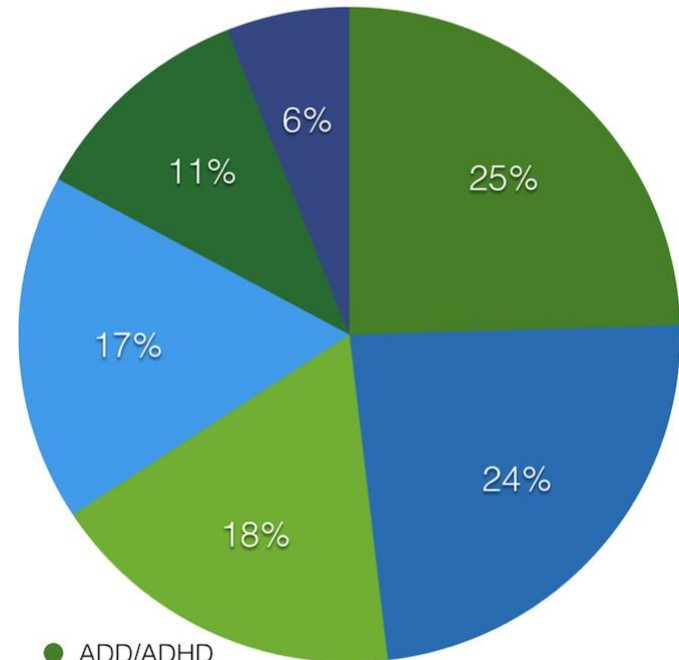


<https://youtu.be/Ezv85LMFx2E>

Amazing Things Happen

Study of Comorbid Conditions for Adults & Adolescents with Autism

research based on study published in *JAMA Pediatrics* August 2014 Volume 168, Number 8



- ADD/ADHD
- Anxiety Disorders
- Intellectual Disability
- Behavioral Disorders
- Depression
- Seizure Disorders

mensahmedical.com



Learning disabilities LD

- **What is challenging behaviour?**
- 'Challenging behaviour' sounds like a broad term, and it is.
- Challenging behaviour describes behaviour that is challenging to parents, carers, teachers and other professionals.

- **Challenging behaviour and LD**
- Challenging behaviour is not a learning disability, but people with LD are more likely to show challenging behaviours.
- This can be due to people having difficulty communicating.
- Challenging behaviour can be a sign that something is wrong like pain or discomfort that your child cannot express to you.
- Challenging behaviour can also be a sign of wider problems, including mental health.



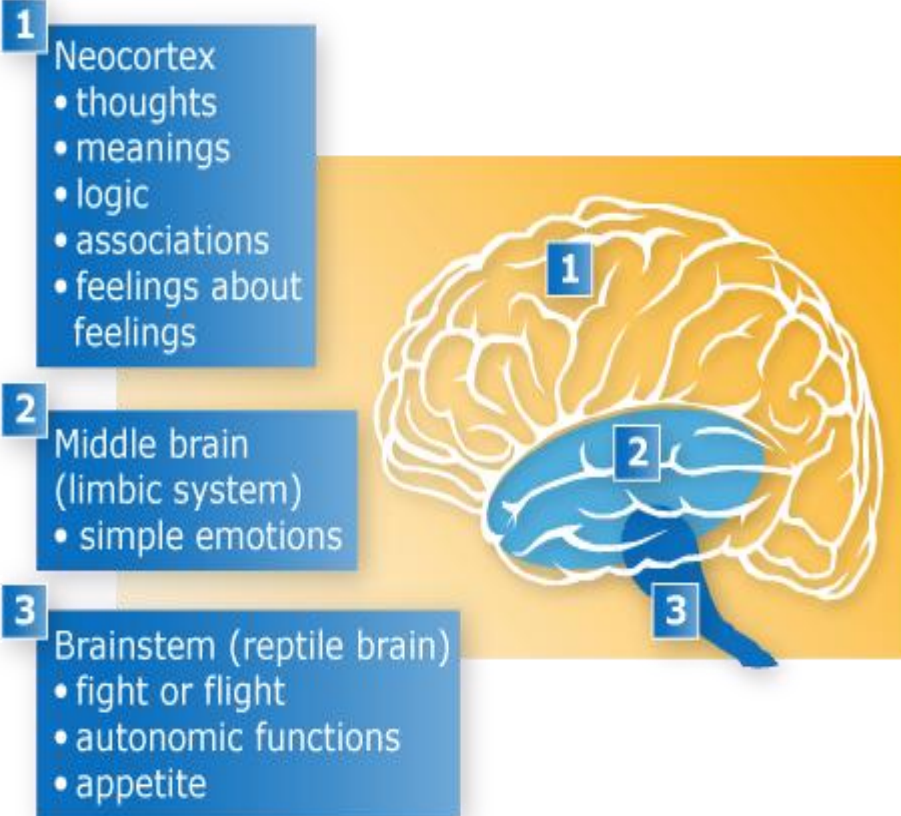
Monday to Friday

0808 808 1111

Learning Disability Helpline

The driving force behind behaviour

The three brains



Executive brain



Mammalian brain



Lizard brain

The driving force behind behaviour

The 'control tower' executive brain



CREDIT: [HTTP://COGX.INFO](http://COGX.INFO) (DR.BROWN)



The driving force behind behaviour

The limbic system – linking the two other brains

- Feelings and reacting to emotions, motivations and memory (filtered)
- **Amygdala** - where memories are stored, the heart of our emotional responses and reactions at a basic level (fight, flight or freeze)
- Hippocampus - for long term memory and retrieval
- Hypothalamus - the body's thermostat regulating breathing, BP, temperature, hunger / thirst, sleep / waking



Fight, flight and freeze

The lizard brain

- The 'brainstem'
- Involved with basic responses
Fight **Flight** or **Freeze**

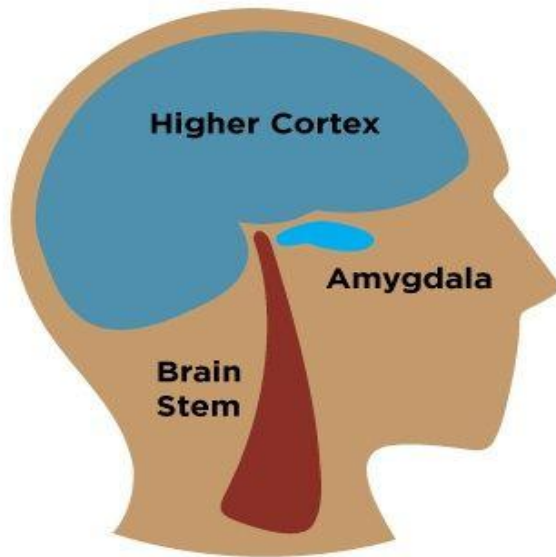


Everyone feels anxious from time to time. In fact, feeling anxious can be our brain's way of protecting us. But what happens when inexplicable anxiety becomes uncontrollable and takes over your life?

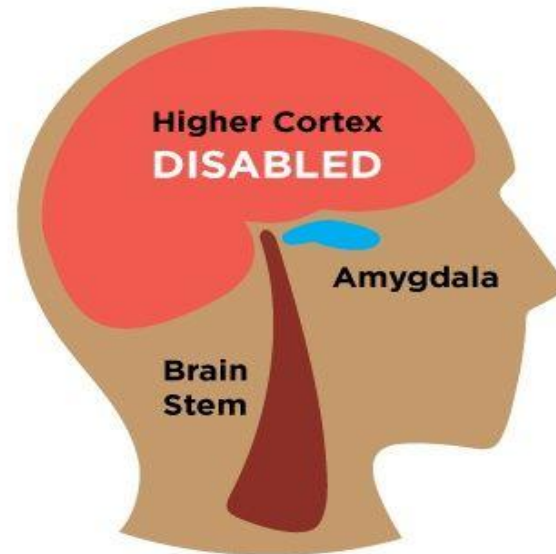
The Fight Flight Freeze response: is our body's automatic and primitive, innate response that prepares the body to "fight" or "flee" from our perceived attack, harm or threat to our survival. Sometimes, though we perceive threat or harm when in reality, things are totally fine.

<https://lnkd.in/dCrGWY5>

Fight, Flight or freeze



LOW Emotion
(Calm, Relaxed)



HIGH Emotion
(Anger, Fear, Excitement, Love,
Hate, Disgust, Frustration)

Challenging behaviours in school

- How does this translate into what's happening at school ?
- How different is it at home compared to school ?
- How do school understand the differences ?
- What can you do to help your child's anxiety ?

WHAT 'FIGHT, FLIGHT OR FREEZE' LOOKS LIKE IN THE CLASSROOM

FIGHT

- Acting out
- Behaving aggressively
- Acting silly
- Exhibiting defiance
- Being hyperactive
- Arguing
- Screaming/yelling



FLIGHT

- Withdrawing
- Becoming disengaged
- Fleeing the classroom
- Skipping class
- Day dreaming
- Sleeping
- Avoiding others





FREEZE

- Exhibiting numbness
- Refusing to answer
- Feeling unable to move or act
- Refusing to get needs met
- Giving a blank look
- Sense of stiffness
- Feeling numb





How to help your child with anxiety



The worry monster

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD IS FEELING ANXIOUS



Talk to your child about anxiety, explain what is happening to their body and why it happens, this will help them in the future.



It can help to talk to your child about finding a safe place in their mind, somewhere that they feel relaxed and happy.



Name their worst case scenarios and think through together how to sort out the situation if it happens.



Get your child to breathe deeply and slowly, in through their nose for 3 counts and out through their mouth for 3 counts.



Help them to recognise anxious feelings so they can tell when they are becoming anxious and can ask for help.



Make a 'worry box'. Your child can write each worry down and post it in the box out of sight.



Help them maintain a healthy lifestyle with regular exercise to reduce the levels of stress hormones.



Give them a cuddle or hold their hand if they will let you - human touch can be reassuring.



Distract them by focusing on something else and put their mind at ease.



Encourage your child that it will be okay, and the anxiety will pass.



Work on positive-thinking and relaxation techniques together.



Establish a weekly routine 'family feedback' time slot.



Encourage your child to notice what makes them anxious and discuss it.



Try not to become anxious yourself or overprotective.

Working out what's going on

Setting

Trigger

Action

Response

What happens exactly? Rate the problem out of 10.

When does it happen? When does it not happen?

Who does it happen with? Who doesn't it happen with?

How often does it occur? What makes it less frequent?

How long does it go on for? What can reduce it?

Some strategies DOs

- Stay **calm**
- Help in the heat of the moment by **naming** the emotion. E.g. “I can see you are really angry right now”, “You look furious”
- **Validate** their emotion – I think you feel..., that’s ok/understandable and I want to try to help you
- **Listen** without judgement – do you really understand how your child feels and why? Even if you don’t agree!
- Give **simple** choices to help redirect the behaviour
- Give a cool-down period, calm-down activity, or encourage participating in a physical activity - *it’s okay not to talk (especially in detail) and is usually better to let the situation cool down before trying to make sense of it/reason a different response*

Some strategies DON'Ts

- Don't expect them to hear / respond to you *immediately*
- Don't *order* them to feel differently
- Try not to *retaliate* or *escalate* the situation
- Don't *force* a child to apologise when they don't feel sorry (approach after cooling off and later **support them to understand** the impact of their behaviour)
- *Avoid* labelling e.g. 'bad' or 'good' or 'naughty'

More Strategies - ASD, ADHD and LD

- **Use visuals** to support understanding e.g. visual timetables coloured cards, emotion faces, scales, now and next
- Be more concrete, use **clearer** language
- Check **understanding** of language (your child may not get metaphors)
- May need to **use their special interests** as a way in
- May need to **be more directive** e.g. if... then ...
- Emotional awareness training and or **social skills** support
- Social stories (Carol Gray) <https://thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk/>
- Comic strip stories (Alex Kelly)

Change and engagement can take a long time - please don't give up!

Sensory Strategies



ear defenders



noise cancellation head phones (block out specific frequencies)



spinning office chair for movement



swing- linear movement can be calming

Sit-n-move cushion



cushions for relaxing



gas bar stool for movement



listening to music to chill out

Sensory Strategies

For students with autism



mini trampoline



gym ball for vestibular input and balance



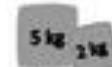
heavy backpack

lifting heavy objects gives deep pressure input (proprioception)



hoodies can reduce auditory & visual input

extra tip- try putting weights in the pocket



weighted vest for deep pressure

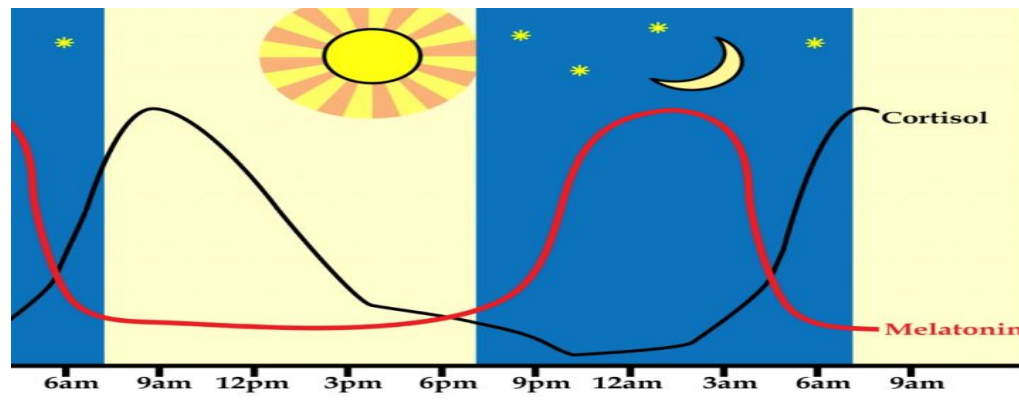


rocking chair for calming linear movement

The impact of not enough sleep

Not getting enough sleep can affect:

- Our mood
- The foods we eat
- How we respond to things
- Our learning
- Our health



Melatonin:

Is the hormone that tells our brain it is time to go to sleep

Cortisol: Is the hormone that tells our brain to wake up and be alert. It is also known as a stress hormone.

These two hormones cycle throughout the day / night. Increased cortisol (stress/worry) can impact on sleep onset.

So how can we help with sleep?

- **What can help?**
Having a set, predictable routine, with wind-down time
- Agreed timetables or expectations - good sleep hygiene
- Relaxing activities: colouring, drawing, listening to relaxing music, mindfulness, breathing exercises, yoga
- Try things like lavender oil, weighted blankets, sensory lighting




- **Working out a new bedtime routine**
 - What time do you have to leave?
 - How long does it take you to get ready?
 - How many hours sleep does your body *actually* need?
 - Add **1 hour** wind-down time
 - Bedtime

Positive Behaviour Support

PBS Example



Antecedent Behaviour Consequence

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

Overview of strategies

- Try to be aware when a child is likely to be emotionally upset, or is getting angry, anxious or low
- Use a feeling thermometer, or traffic light system, to avoid a build up or over-reactions to their emotions
- Notice when your child is doing well/what has been asked and **PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE, IF APPROPRIATE** (some children find praise very challenging and it can have the opposite effect!)
- Encourage the child to take 'time-out' to calm down
- Develop their self-esteem - give age appropriate responsibilities
- Good communication between adults - role modelling is important!!
- Set clear expectations i.e. what it is, and how; I expect you to speak to teachers calmly and politely
- Try de-escalation techniques
- Try reward charts

Positive Behaviour Support ABC

- Often when an incident has happened, it is easy to react to the outburst.
Think **ABC**
 - A- Antecedent: What happened before?
 - B- Behaviour: What did the child do?
 - C- Consequence: What happened after?

Breaking an incident down, can help to identify the trigger, and learn break the pattern. Often children with ASD hold on to events that happened earlier in the day, with an outburst several hours later.

Often children with ADHD can be more reactive and immediate in situations.

Helping your child to break down their feelings and causes, can help them with identifying and regulating where their emotions come from and why.

Become a detective

- It is key to understand what is driving your child's behaviour.
- Don't just deal with the behaviour, try to find and understand the triggers.



Recommendations and resources



- Support for parents
- Post diagnostic workshops
- Bexley Local Offer
- Advice
- Events

bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk

BEXLEY VOICE

NORMANDY CHILDRENS CENTRE
FAIRFORD AVENUE, BARNEHURST
KENT DA7 6QP

Helpline

07512 409 936 (Thursday)

Local resources



Membership and Contact Details

Membership is free!



The National
Autistic Society


Contact Details

Please contact: Juliet Roblett

Telephone : 07826 950 496



ADHD & ME
Parents supporting



HeadScape


Get started ▶

I just want to look around

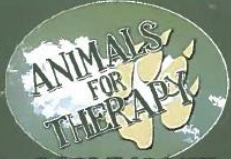
Youth Action Diversity Trust presents
Behavioural Support Service
- Anger Management -



Youth Action Diversity Trust



ANIMALS
FOR
THERAPY



Call 0845 604 4921

Includes:

- Companionship Services
- Respite Care
- Self-Esteem - Anxiety - Depression
- Special Needs - Disabilities
- ASD - ADHD
- Alzheimers - Dementia
- Self-Harm - Anger
- Eating Disorders

Animals, Nature & Horticulture

Activities & Therapy

Local support networks

- **Bexley SNAP**

Normandy Children's Centre
Fairford Avenue
Barnehurst
DA7 6QP

Telephone: 01322 334192

Email: admin@bexleysnap.org.uk

- **Bexley has an Autism Hour interactive map:** www.autism.org.uk and you can find more information about permanent quiet hours via Bexley Local offers.
- **Beavers swimming club for people with learning difficulties**– Fridays 6-7:30pm Crook Log - 0203 393 8305
- **Cinema screenings** – aimed at autism <https://www.dimensions-uk.org/get-involved/campaigns/autism-friendly-cinema-screenings/>
- **Morrison's** - Quiet hour takes place every Saturday from 9 to 10am. Dimmed lights , no music, avoid tannoy, check beeps and other electricals turned down, poster is placed out side to inform customers of quiet hour.
- **Sainsburys:** Monday morning, Wednesday afternoon and Saturday Morning.
- **Entertainer, COOP and Marks and Spencers** stores have some quiet slots
- **INTU shopping centres** – Reportedly all staff are trained in supporting those on the spectrum
- **Chewigem.co.uk** (sensory chewing materials)
- **Bexley Enterprise College** (a range of free family courses to support school learning) 0203 045 5176

When dealing with behaviour

- Don't panic ! (try not to)
 - Understand and identify patterns
 - Keep a record / diary and look out for triggers
 - Give yourself marks out of ten for how you manage (it will vary)
 - Good day, bad day, somewhere in between?
 - You **know** your child and know when something is wrong
 - Consider PBS and other helpful strategies (NVR)
 - Know **when** to get help and **where** *
- * Bexley Voice and others local services can support you

Final thought

- Take 5 minutes to think about the things you wrote down earlier
- Share your jottings with someone next to you (if you're ok to)

Is there **one thing** you've picked up today you think may be useful?

Do you think you understand **what is driving** their behaviour ? (or yours)

Comments or questions ?

Please use what you have learnt if you can

Please help us improve by leaving feedback

Please think what you'd like to see in future workshops

Useful links

Other places for information

- The Girl with the Curly Hair Alys Rowe (clips)

Limpsfield Grange <https://limpsfieldgrange.co.uk/autism/links/> (for PDA)

-

Cerebra on Behaviour <https://cerebra.org.uk/download/factsheet-managing-challenging-behaviour/>
(also has links for sleep, 'mythbusters' and advice on DLA)

The Little Black Duck www.thelittleblackduck.com.au

- <https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/>

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/caring-for-children-and-young-people/how-to-deal-with-challenging-behaviour-in-children/>

-



Thank you for
participating

Improving lives

Dr Alexandra Oxley
Bexley CAMHS LD ND