



# CHILDHOOD NEURODIVERSITY

## MANAGING BIG FEELINGS

Psychology in Schools Team

NSFT

# Previous Recordings in this Series

**Childhood neurodiversity what you need to know as a parent/carers**

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: What You Need to Know as a Parent/Carer](#)

**Childhood neurodiversity: supporting social relationships**

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**Childhood neurodiversity: supporting your child's education**

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**Childhood neurodiversity: supporting your child with anxiety**

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting your child with anxiety](#)

**Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting Sleep Difficulties**

Watch here: [Childhood neurodiversity: Understanding and supporting sleep difficulties workshop](#)

**Childhood Neurodiversity: Parental Carer Stress**

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodivergence: Managing Parental/Carer Stress](#)

# Previous Recordings in this Series

## **Childhood neurodiversity: Supporting planning organising and remembering**

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting, Planning, Organising and Remembering](#)

## **Childhood neurodiversity: Understanding and Supporting Sensory Needs**

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: Understanding and Supporting Sensory Needs - YouTube](#)

## **Childhood neurodiversity: Understanding eating difficulties:**

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: Understanding and supporting eating difficulties](#)

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

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Slido will be used as our main interaction tool. We will not be able to use the Q&A function or answer raised hands.

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Slido is anonymous, but other users will be able to see what you have written. When answering questions please **do not** include personal or sensitive information such as names or anything that can identify you or your child.

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By using Slido, you are consenting to your anonymised responses being used in possible service evaluation, research projects, publications and/or promotional material.

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Our workshops are recorded and uploaded to YouTube, please be aware that anything shared on Slido may be included in a publicly accessible recording.

# slido



**Join at [slido.com](https://slido.com)  
#31962958**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the joining instructions on this slide.

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**How old is your child(ren)?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



# What stage are you at?



**What presentation are you interested in today?**



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**How would you rate your current knowledge of big feelings in neurodivergent children?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

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**How would you rate your current confidence managing big feelings in your neurodivergent child?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



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## Looking after yourself

- Emotional topics being covered today, including self-harm and suicide
- Do what you need to look after yourself
- Recording and resources will be shared with everyone who signed up for the workshop



# Workshop Overview

- WHAT is the prevalence of anxiety, low mood, self-harm and suicidality in neurodivergent children?
- WHY might neurodivergent children need more support with their big feelings?
- HOW can you and others help your child manage their big feelings?



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**What big feelings have you noticed in your child?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

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**How do your child's big feelings affect them, you and your family?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

# Mental health in neurodivergent children and teenagers

Increased risk of mental health problems

Increased risk of anxiety

Increased risk of low mood



## Increased risk of self-harm and suicide

- Rates of self-harm, suicidal thinking and attempts are sadly higher for neurodivergent children
- For some families, helping managing risk of self-harm is an important part of supporting their neurodivergent child with their emotions

# What protects against poor mental health and wellbeing?

- Special interests
- Having a sense of shared connection
- Self-acceptance
- Neuroaffirmative approaches and language are key





## Why might neurodivergent children need more support with their big feelings?

- Emotional literacy
- Emotion dysregulation
- Environment and experiences
- Brain differences in neurodivergent children



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**How do you think your child's neurodivergence impacts on their emotions?**

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# Emotional Literacy

- Understanding what emotion they are feeling
- Communicating to others how they are feeling
- Recognising other people's feelings





## WHAT WE MIGHT SEE

Nauseous

Self-harm

Breaking things

Eating problems

Appears fine  
(masking)

Crying

Struggling to  
attend school

Violence

Irritable

Withdrawn

Confused

Shame

**Sadness**

Low self-esteem

Sense of difference

In pain

Hunger

Friendship fall out

Seeking safety

Uncertainty

Needing to feel loved

Hopelessness

Academic problems

Tired

Bored

**Anger**

Lonely

Bullying

Feeling left out

Sensory overload

Overwhelmed

Needing attention

Jealousy

Embarrassed

**Fear**

Trauma memories

## WHAT MIGHT BE GOING ON FOR A CHILD

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**What might trigger your child's big feelings?**

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# The Brain House

## Upstairs brain

- The control tower

## Downstairs brain

- The alarm system

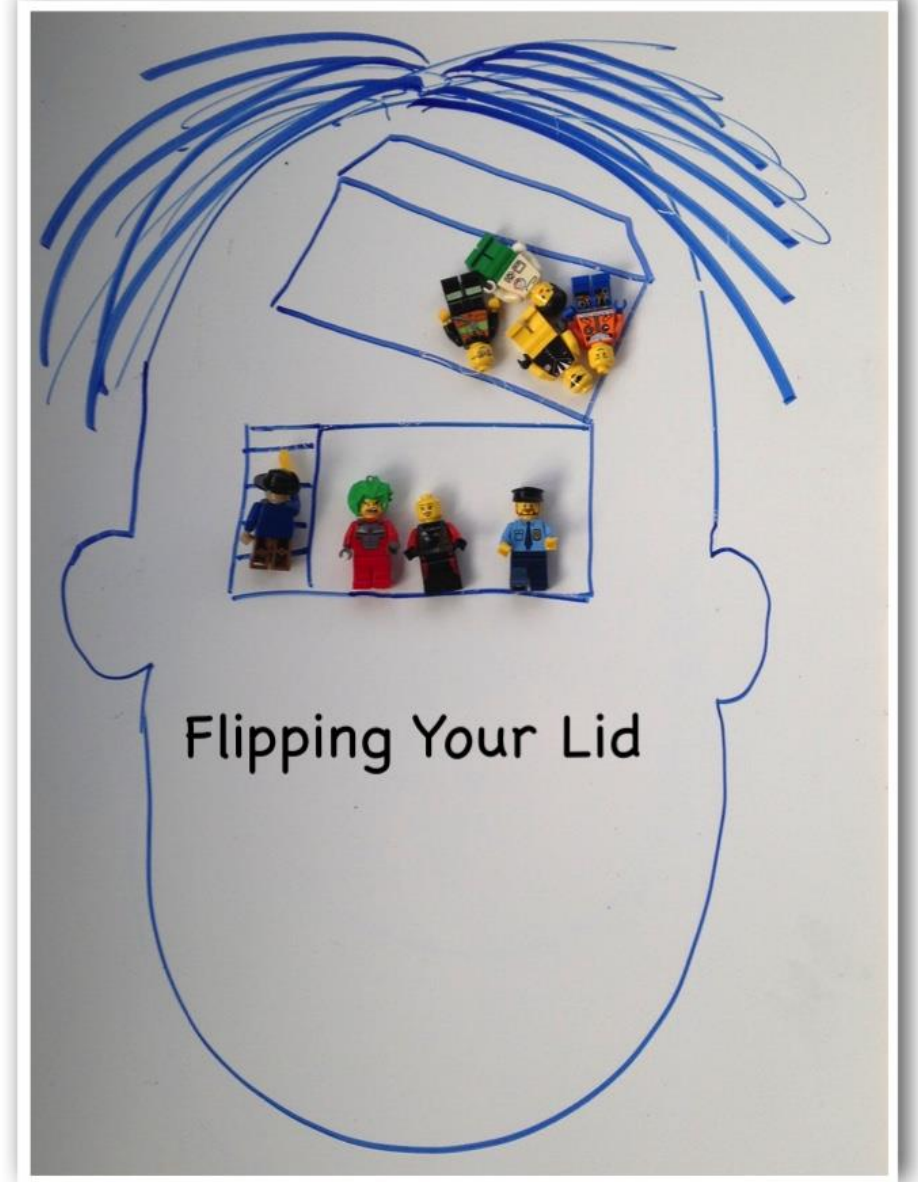


*Illustrated by Dr Hazel Harrison*



# Flipping The Lid

- This is what happens when people get overwhelmed by big feelings
- We lose access to the upstairs part of our brain
- When this happens children no longer have access to the part of their brain that helps them to make good decisions



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**What do you notice when your child flips their lid?**

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# Brain house in neurodivergent children

Processing sensory  
information



Impulsivity/mind  
wondering



Emotion regulation



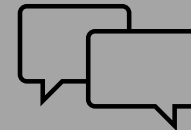
Recognising,  
differentiating &  
expressing emotions



More frequent  
negative experiences



Understanding other's  
points of view





## Neurodivergent Experiences

- School problems e.g. learning differences, sensory overwhelm, getting in trouble, masking – trying to fit into ‘neurotypical box’ expected at school
- Social difficulties e.g. lonely, friendship problems, bullying, being taken advantage of by peers



# Gender differences

- Evidence suggests that girls are more likely to struggle with emotional distress.
- This may be due to both Autism and ADHD being under-diagnosed in girls.
- Neurodivergent girls may feel more pressure to mask their distress which further internalizes their distress.
- This negatively impacts their mental health and the way they can manage big emotions.



# How can you and others help your child manage their big feelings

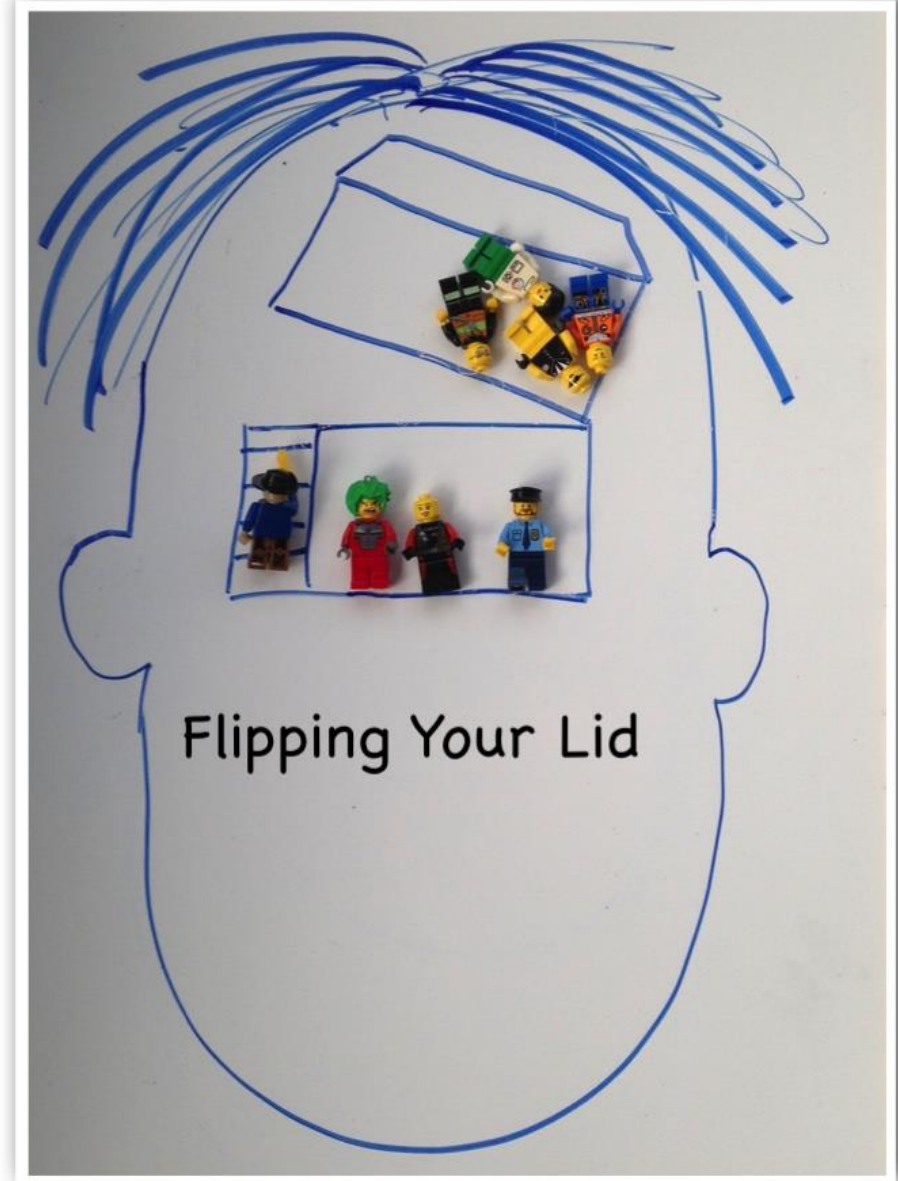
- Connection before correction
- Building emotional literacy
- Addressing triggers
- Calming and relaxation
- General family wellbeing





# Connection before Correction

- When children are overwhelmed by big feelings, they will not be able to hear us until the thinking part of the brain is back online
- We can help with this by prioritizing connection over correction
- Coming alongside your child to help them regulate, becoming calm before deciding what to do next



# Connecting with neurodivergent children

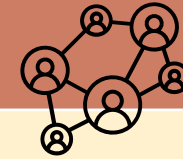
Connecting at the right time



Give alternate ways of communicating



Connection may look different for neurodivergent children



Be mindful of sensory differences



Incorporate special interests



Doing something they enjoy alongside them





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**What makes it difficult to do this?**

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**What helps your child when they have flipped their lid?**

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# Building emotional literacy

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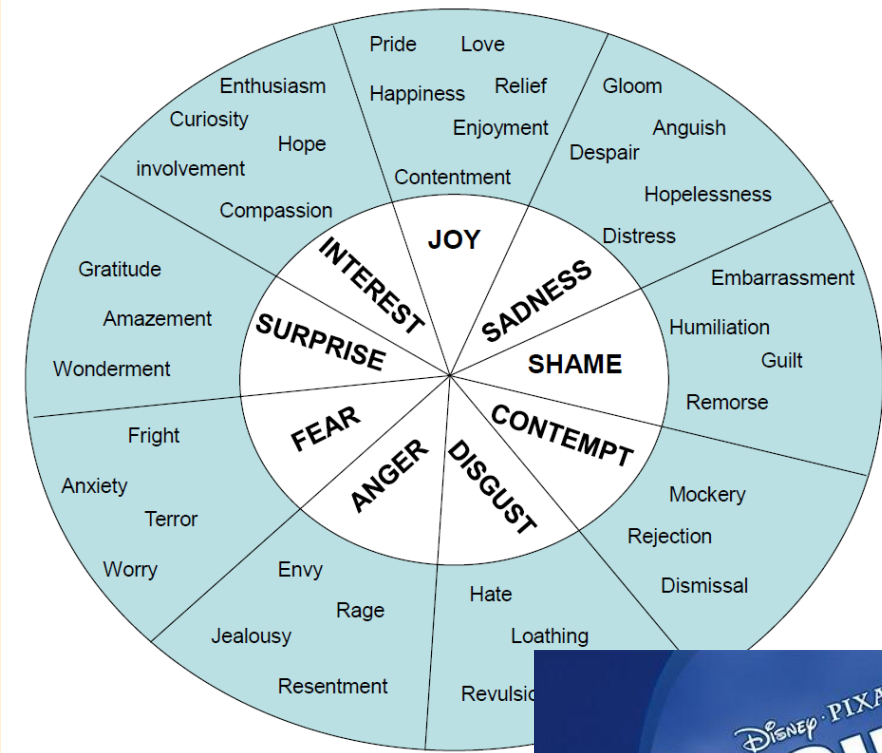


**How do you help your child identify  
and communicate their emotions?**

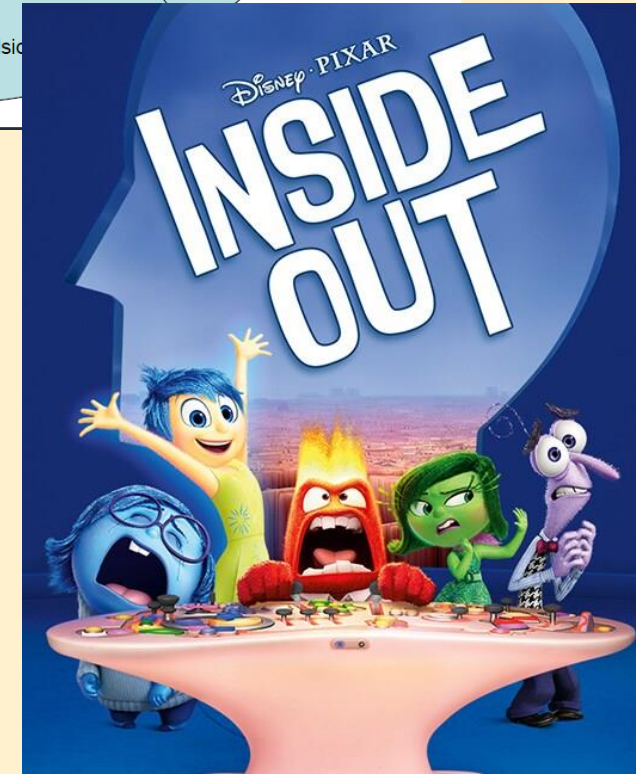
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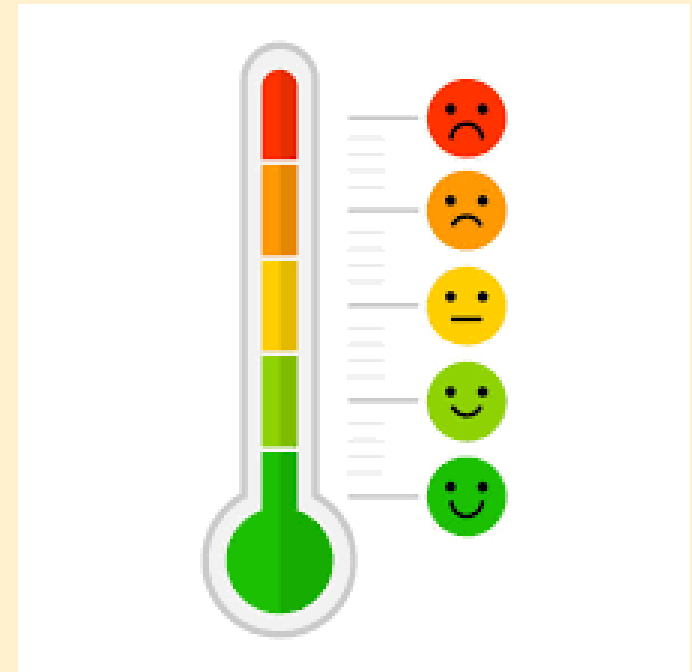
# Identifying emotions



Sesame Street: Name That Emotion with Murray!



# Communicating emotions





# Addressing triggers

- Work out together what the triggers are
- Reducing sensory distress
- May need to support your child in navigating their friendships
- Increasing social support – clubs based on hobbies, neurodivergent communities, school mentoring/pastoral support
- The importance of neuroaffirmative environments



# Working together with schools

- Masking at school may mean emotional problems are less obvious
- Sharing your understanding and strategies
- Discuss with school reasonable adaptations – remember needs-based not diagnosis based!
- SENDIASS can help





# Calming and Regulation

- Breathing techniques
- Grounding techniques - bringing into present moment
- Sensory regulation



# Positive self-talk

- Celebrating their successes and strengths
- Encouraging and modelling positive self-talk
- Being your child's champion!







## Importance of your own wellbeing

- If you are feeling dysregulated, it's very difficult to support a young person to regulate themselves
- Filling up our own resource bucket first
- Emotional contagion

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**How do you fill up your own resource bucket?**

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# General family wellbeing

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SLEEP



HEALTHY DIET



EXERCISE



SOCIAL  
CONNECTION



‘Listen to your child. Help them manage their reactions. Throw lots of love at the whole thing.’

‘Embrace who your child is , let them be them, support and find ways to enable them to have the same outcome as everyone else’

# HOLDING HOPE

‘Listen to your child . Stop and take time to hear them. Evaluate what is their normal.’

‘Always validate there feelings.’

‘It's hard to understand how your child is feeling but try to keep calm & don't take it personally. Your child loves you & trusts you the most’

‘Keep being curious, become the detective and stay resilient. Be your child’s Ambassador, give them a voice. Everyday is a learning day. Talk to Others and ask for support’



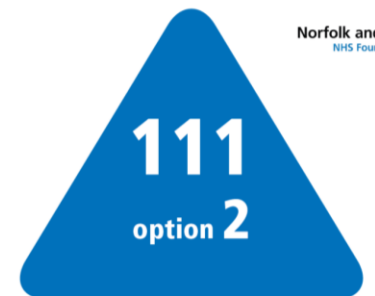
# Mental health support for your young person

- **School:** tutor, pastoral support, head of year, SENCO
- **Suffolk School Nursing** - [School Nursing Service - Suffolk County Council](#)
- **Emotional Wellbeing Hub:** Information, advice, and support for anyone concerned about the emotional wellbeing and mental health of a child or young person.  
<http://www.emotionalwellbeinggateway.org.uk/>
- **NSFT Wellbeing services:** you can self-refer to Wellbeing 16 years +  
[www.wellbeingnands.co.uk](http://www.wellbeingnands.co.uk)
- [Recovery College | Norfolk and Suffolk NHS](#)
- **GP**
- YoungMinds mental health charity for children and young people [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- Apps: Headspace, Calm, Combined Mind, Sleepio, Clear Fear (anxiety), Move Mood
- The Source information and advice for young people in Suffolk [www.thesource.me.uk](http://www.thesource.me.uk)
- Kooth free online counselling for ages 11-25 in Suffolk [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

# Key resources if you are worried about your young person

- **Young Minds parent helpline** 0808 802 5544 (9am -4.30pm M-F) and webchat service: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-helpline-and-webchat/>
- **111, option 2 crisis support**
- **Alumina** free online self-harm support group for 11–19-year-olds [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)
- **Calm Harm** an award-winning app developed to help teens manage the urge to self-harm
- **Papyrus – Prevention of Young Suicide:** [Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide](http://Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide) ([papyrus-uk.org](http://papyrus-uk.org))
- **Psychology in Schools Parent/carer Workshop:**  
**Understanding Self Harm in Children/Adolescents**  
[Understanding Self-Harm in Children/Adolescents](http://Understanding Self-Harm in Children/Adolescents) ([youtube.com](http://youtube.com))

If you need  
urgent mental  
health help,  
call 111 and  
choose option 2



**NHS**  
Norfolk and Suffolk  
NHS Foundation Trust

Mental health crisis support 24/7 for people of all ages in Norfolk and Suffolk

# Key sources of support and resources in Suffolk for parents/carers

- **Suffolk Local Offer**

<https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/>

- **Suffolk Family Carers support:**

[Neurodevelopmental Differences Project | Suffolk Family Carers](#)

- **Parenting courses and more:**

[The Parent Hub - Suffolk County Council](#)

**Action for children:** [Support when you feel like you can't cope as a parent](#)

- **Parent/carers networks:**

[PACT | Parents And Carers Together | Suffolk Suffolk Parent Carer Forum \(suffolkpcf.co.uk\)](#)

- **The Source Engagement Hub:**

<https://thesource.me.uk/engagement-hub/>

- **Behaviour safe at home – Suffolk SEND Local Offer:**

[Behaviour safe at Home - Suffolk SEND Local Offer](#)

Two-day course, £10 per person. Look at the link for dates



# RECOMMENDED BY PARENTS FOR PARENTS ON THE ADHD/ASD PATHWAY



Norfolk and Suffolk  
NHS Foundation Trust

## THE CURLY HAIR PROJECT



Uses animated films, stories and comic strips to support young people on the ASD spectrum.

[The Girl With The Curly Hair - Autism Training, Animations, Books](#)

## PARENT WORKSHOPS

Workshop programme designed by the Psychology in Schools Team to support parents

Sign up here -



## ACTIVITIES UNLIMITED

Short breaks open to young people with SEND needs in Suffolk

<https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/short-breaks-and-leisure-activities/activities-unlimited>



## SENDIASS

A free support service which offers information and resources for supporting special educational needs and disability.

<https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/>

## NEURODIVERGENT ABILITIES GROUP (IPSWICH)

<https://www.neurodivergentabilities.org/>

Bespoke support tailored to help young people thrive in a neurotypical world.

Offers 1-1 face to face support in Ipswich. Also offers remote sessions and independent living support.



## SCHOOL SUPPORT



Find key staff members to understand and support your child. Roles who may be most helpful include SENCO, pastoral lead, teaching assistant, form tutor, head of year, mentor, thrive leader, school nurse, nurture group leader. They can consider reasonable adjustments.

ELSA:

Your school may offer ELSA intervention. A 6 session intervention supporting young people to develop their emotional literacy skills.  
<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/>

## FAMILY ACTION (SUFFOLK)

<https://www.family-action.org.uk/>

Offer self help resources, local services and a free helpline called 'FamilyLine' which can be used to help through



## BEANS

Offers support for families journey with neurodiversity. Support for parents/carers, young people (11-25), siblings. Support includes drop ins, groups and activities.

<https://accessct.org/beans/>

# Support in Suffolk continued

## SENDIASS

Parent workshops on SEND including:

- What is a special educational need (SEN)?
- SEN support in schools
- EHC Needs Assessment
- Preparing for school transitions

Recorded previous workshops on YouTube

Parent & carer information sessions - Suffolk SENDIASS

Suffolk Sendiass - YouTubeFS

# Childhood Neurodivergence Parent/carer workshop series



[Neurodiversity online parent/carer workshops - Suffolk SEND Local Offer](#)

# Psychology In Schools: Free Live Workshops And Video Recordings

Upcoming LIVE Parent/Carer workshops on mental health  
[www.nsft.uk/workshops](http://www.nsft.uk/workshops) Eventbrite



Recorded previous mental health workshops on a range of topics:

- School Avoidance, Tics and Tourette's, Self-harm, Managing Behaviour, Social Media, OCD, Exam stress and more!

[www.nsft.nhs.uk/parent-workshops](http://www.nsft.nhs.uk/parent-workshops)

Childhood Neurodiversity Workshops:

Access recorded workshops here:  
[Parent workshops | Norfolk and Suffolk NHS](#)

Topics include:

- Childhood Neurodiversity: What You Need to Know as a Parent or Carer
- How the Brain Develops
- Supporting Social Relationships
- Supporting Language and Communication

And More!

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How **would** you rate your knowledge of big feelings in neurodivergent children?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

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**How would you rate your confidence  
managing big feelings in your  
neurodivergent child?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

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**I have found this workshop helpful**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.





**Two key things I will take away from this workshop are...**



**One thing that I would improve about this workshop is...**

## Feedback Survey

Childhood Neurodiversity:  
Managing Big Feelings LIVE



<https://forms.office.com/e/YPCTLYgVwE>