



CHILDHOOD NEURODIVERSITY

MANAGING PARENTAL AND CARER STRESS

Psychology in Schools Team

NSFT

February 2025

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

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

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.

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

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

Important Messages

Use of language

- Neurodivergence first
- Parent and carer

Sources of parental stress

Busy schedules as parents and carers

Being a neurodivergent parent or carer

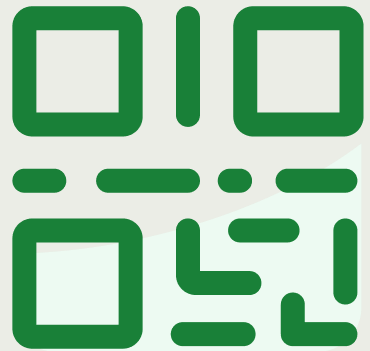




Looking after yourself

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

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**Join at slido.com
#3444010**

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How old is/are your child(ren)?

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**What is your carer role? (e.g
parent, carer, grandparent)**

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My child/Young Person is referred for...

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How would you rate your knowledge of supporting yourself with parental/carer stress?

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Overview

Defining Parental Stress

Parental Stress and
Neurodivergence

Impact of Parental Stress

Coping with Parental Stress



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How does stress as a parent/carer of a neurodivergent child affect you?

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Does experiencing parental/carer stress pose any challenges to your parenting? In what way?

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Defining Parental Stress

A distinct type of stress felt by parents when it seems the demands of parenting outweigh parents' resources for dealing with the demands



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What factors related to parenting affect your stress levels?

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Examples of Everyday Stressors

Getting my child ready for school/education

Managing multiple needs in the family (siblings)

Managing over excitement

Being asked constant questions about what's happening next

Having to think ahead

Being on the receiving end of emotional distress

Multiple contacts with professionals

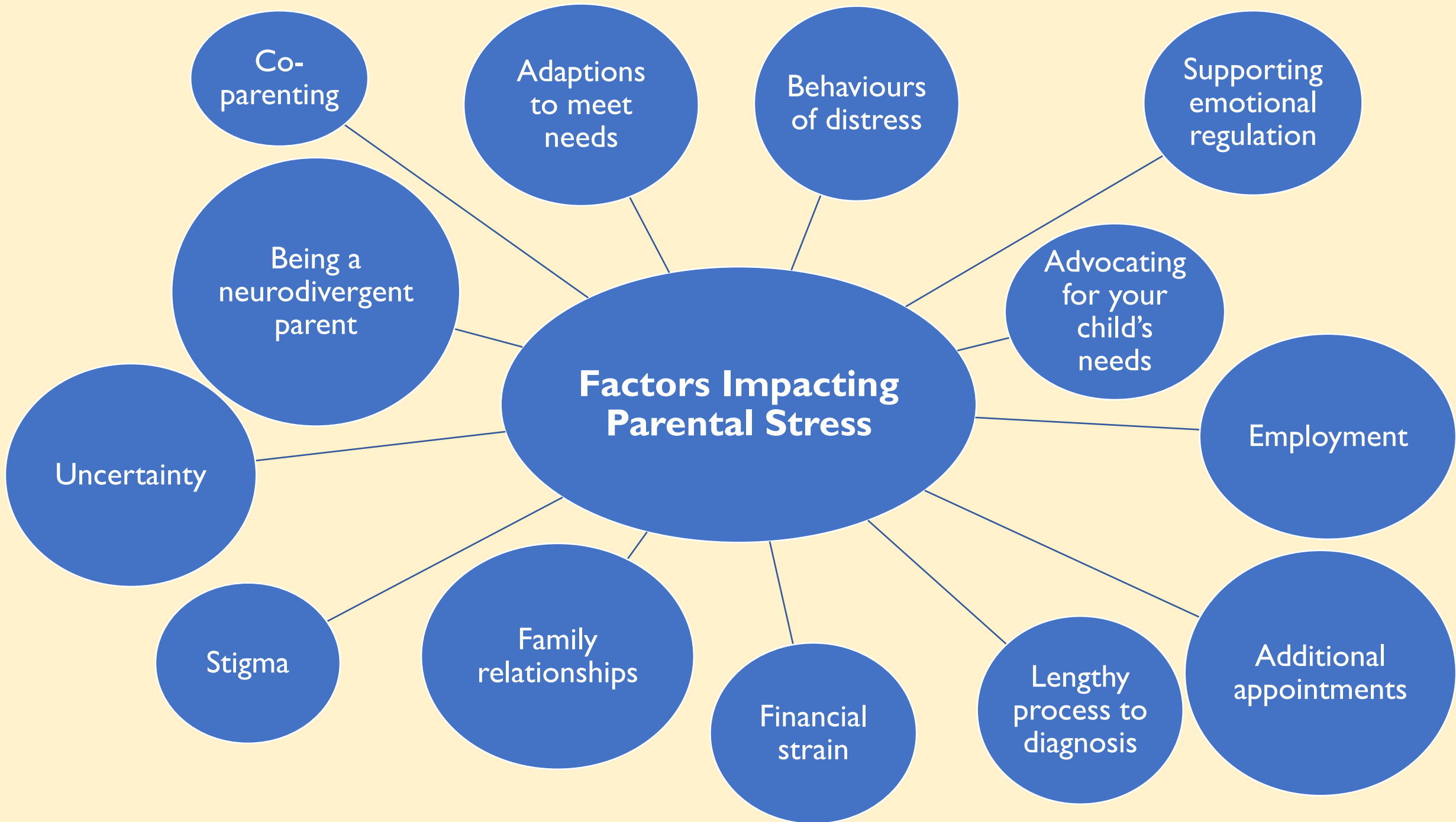
Having to provide close supervision night/day

Alert - not knowing what will happen next

Managing sensory needs

Keeping your child/young person safe

Advocating for the right educational support

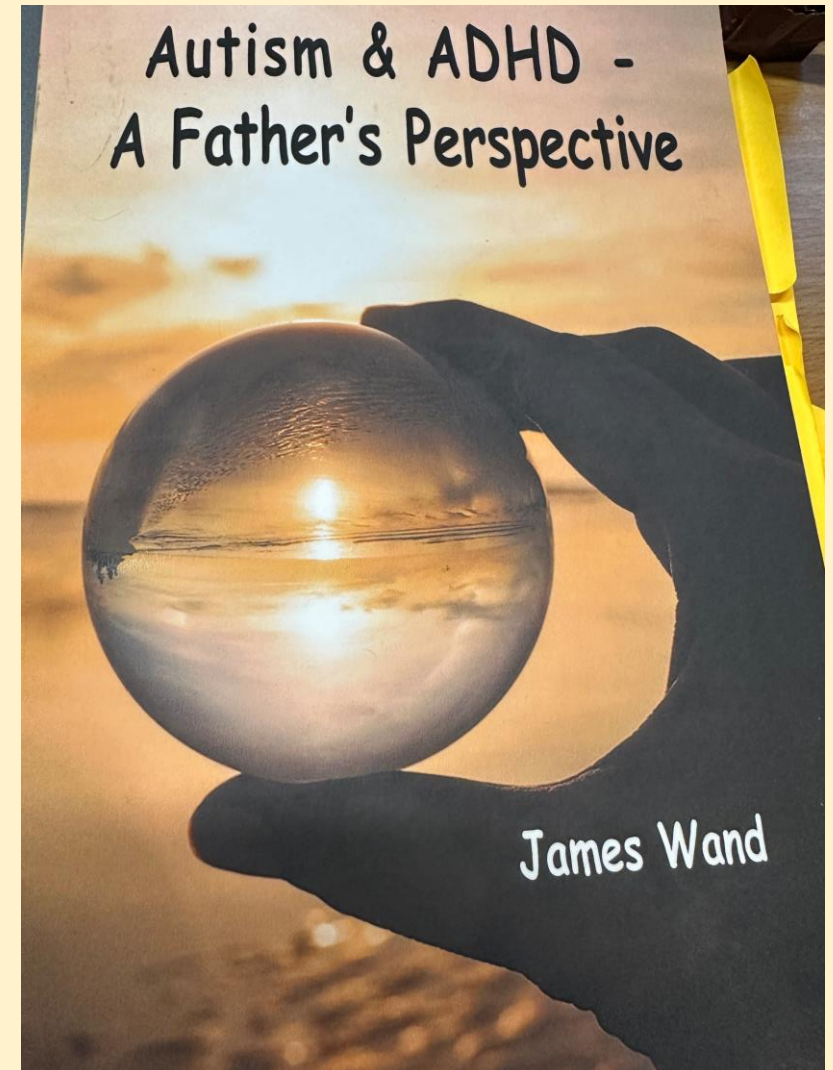


Father's Perspective

There are several books out there talking about experiences of parenting a neurodivergent child

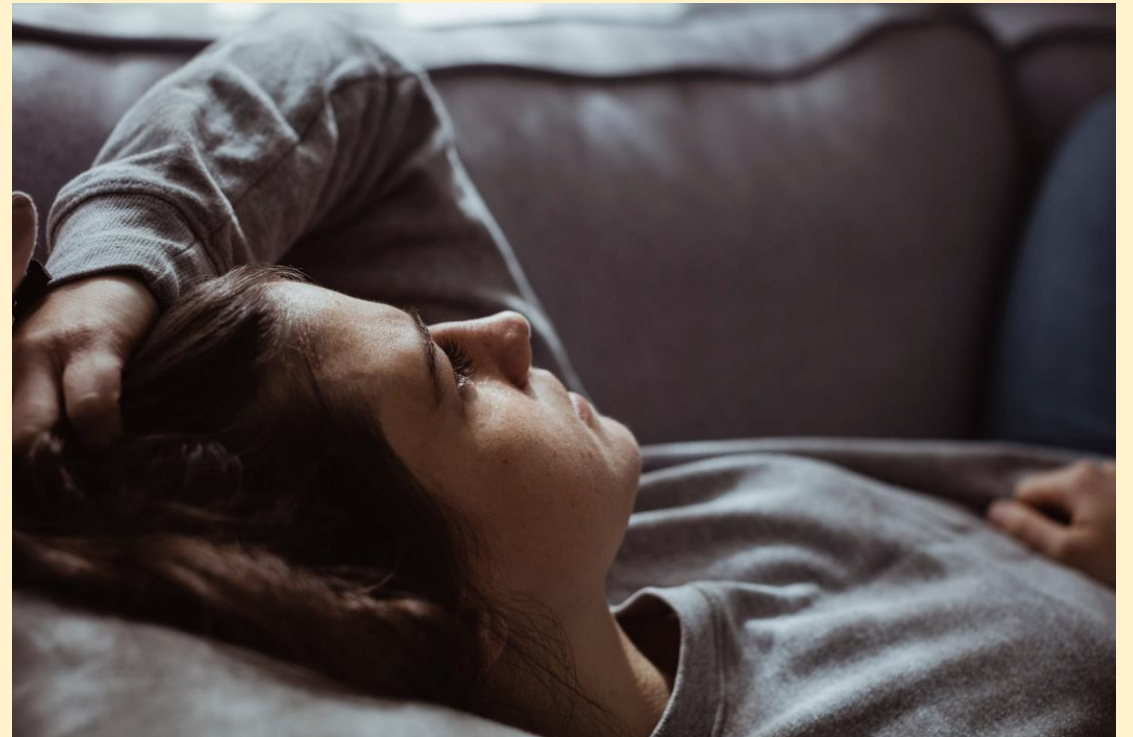
Individual journeys – some things may resonate with you and some things may not

May find these a comfort and feel less alone



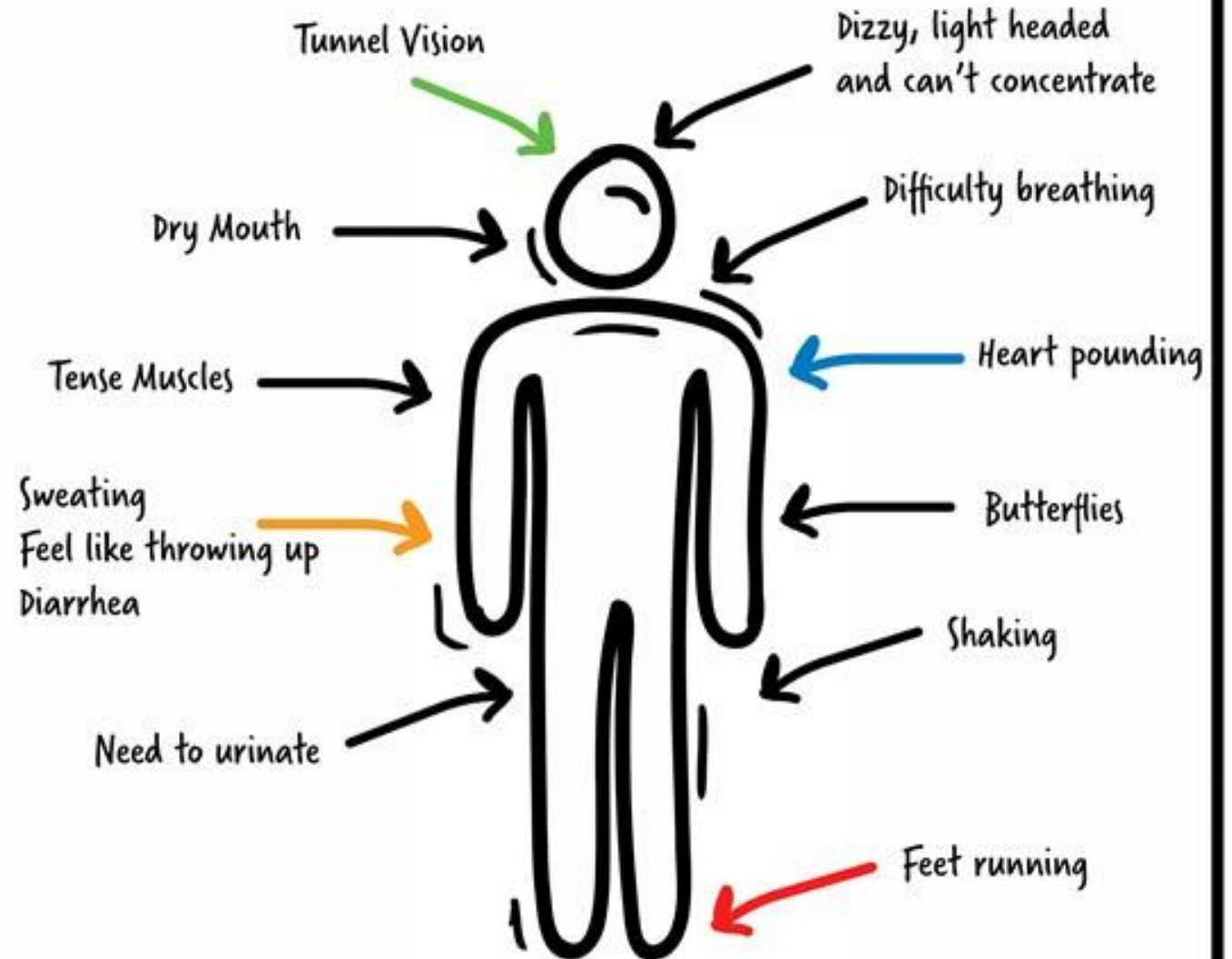
Different Types of Stress

- Acute Stress- Short term stress from immediate stressors
- Chronic Stress- When the stressor persists over an extended period
- Burnout- Chronic stress can lead to burnout



Fight/Flight/ Freeze Response

What happens during freeze, fight or flight?



Impact of Stress

Emotional Impact

Physical Impact

Behavioural Impact

Cognitive Impact

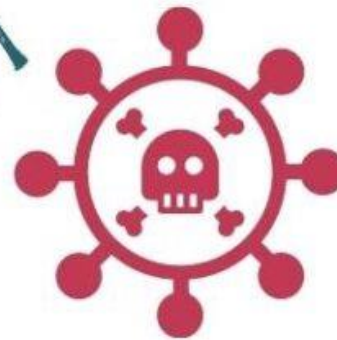
The Three Emotion Regulation Systems



DRIVE
Wanting, pursuing, achieving and
consuming



SOOTHING
Caring, safety, kindness



THREAT
Protection and safety-seeking



Experiences of Trauma



Trauma and early life stress

Link between
neurodivergence and trauma

Ripple effect

Can feel relentless

Coping with Parental Stress

Activating the
Soothe
System

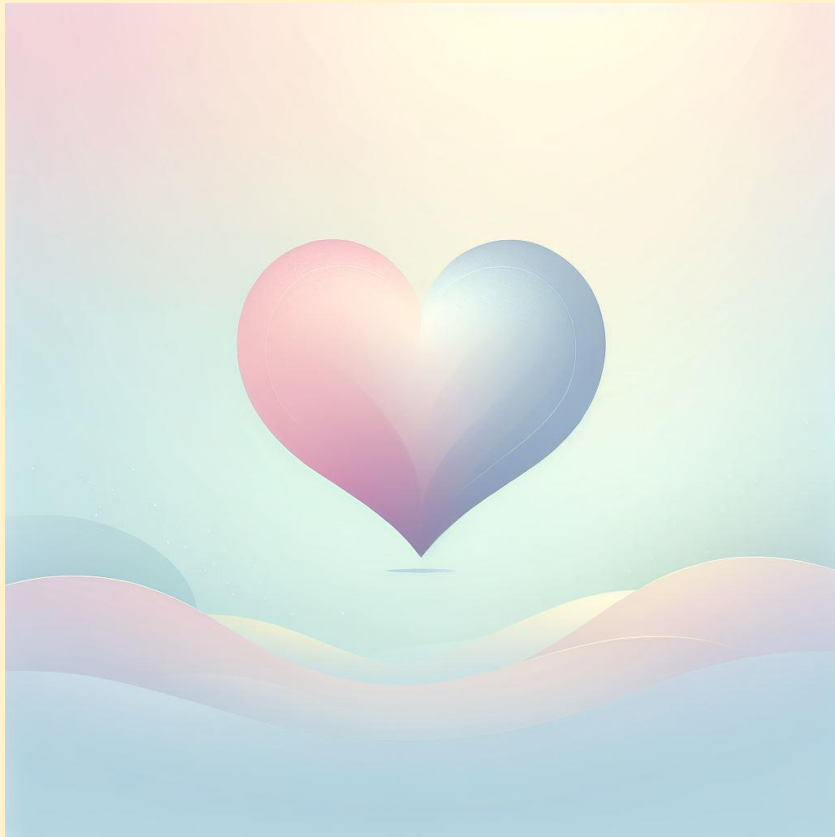
Self-
Compassion

Making
Sense

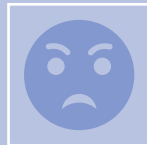
Battery
Analogy

Support
Systems

Helping Make Sense



Bringing awareness to the context of your distress



Avoiding self-blame



Our feelings signpost us to what really matters

Activating the Soothe System

- Activating the soothe system can help us to feel safe, content and calm
- The soothe system can be activated in lots of different ways
- Examples include:
 - Connection to the present
 - Meaningful social connections
 - Physical touch or movement



Soothing Breathing



Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion can help when we find ourselves being self-critical
- Two ways to practice self-compassion
 - Compassionate voice
 - Compassionate letter writing



Building our Compassionate Voice

- 1) Identify the self-critical voice
- 2) What would you say to a good friend?
- 3) What would be a kinder or more helpful way to speak to yourself and view the situation?
- 4) What is something you are proud of achieving today?
- 5) Engage in a self-soothing activity

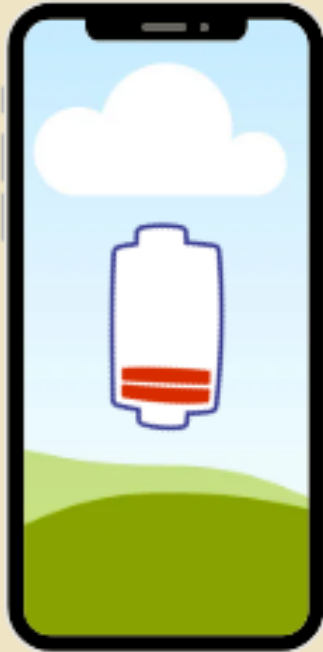


Writing a Compassionate Letter

- 1) Identify what you are finding difficult
- 2) Imagine you are writing this to a good friend
- 3) Validate your experiences
- 4) Provide another perspective to the situation
- 5) Remind yourself of your self soothing activities
- 6) Remember you can read this at any time



Battery Analogy



**What drains
your battery?**



**What helps to
recharge your
battery?**

The battery analogy is a helpful way to think about how much energy you have and what your energy is used on throughout the day

Parenting a neurodivergent child may mean certain activities use more bars of energy in your battery

Thinking about what recharges your energy battery can help to manage parental stress

‘You would not let your phone run out of battery, so do not do it to yourself’

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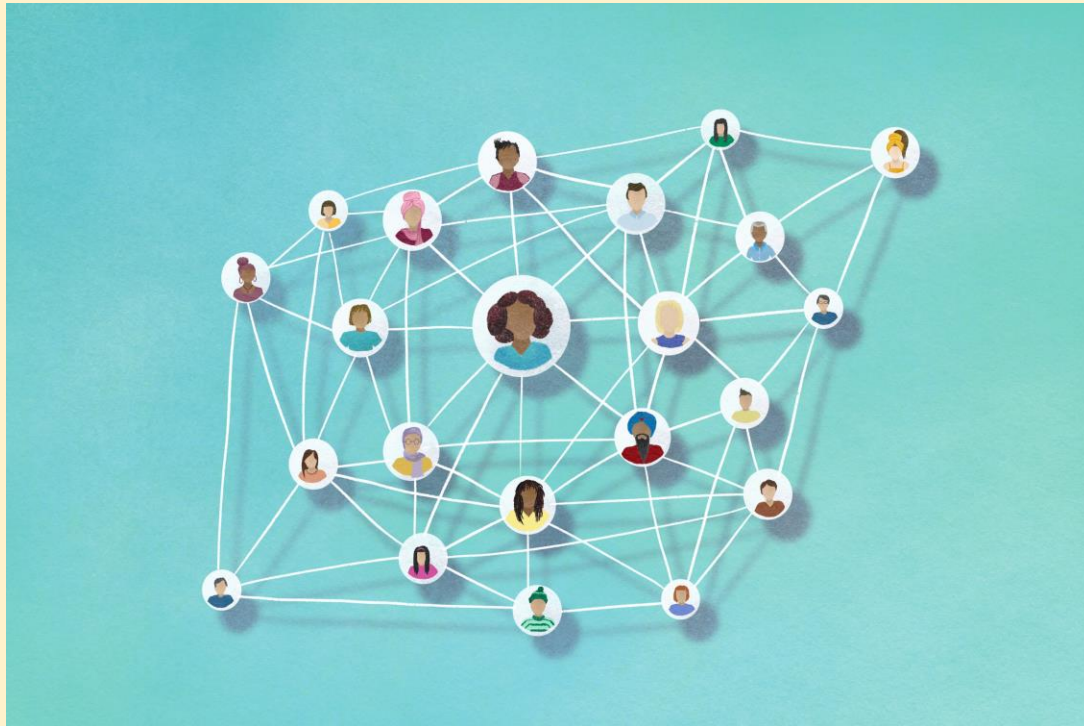
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What recharges your battery?

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Support Systems



- Building, connecting and utilising support systems
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Support groups
 - Professionals
 - Hobbies
- Importance of speaking to others about shame
- Embracing neuro-affirming spaces

Local Parent Support

- <http://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/>
- [PACT | Parents And Carers Together | Suffolk](#)
- [Suffolk Parent Carer Forum](#)
- [SUFFOLK SENDIASS https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/](https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/)
- [Suffolk Family Carers | Support for unpaid family carers](#)
- [Families Together Suffolk | Local Family Charity | Formerly Homestart Mid And West Suffolk](#)

Holding Hope

We are not alone with
bringing up
neurodivergent
children

You know your child
better than anyone
and your voice
matters

Ask for support, don't
try to do things alone

Celebrate every small
gain towards the goal

It's ok to crash, give
yourself a break



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What do you think may be helpful for supporting your own well-being?

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There is no single 'right' way to parent, and no perfect path forward, what matters is finding what works for you and your child, step by step. It's okay if some days feel harder than others. What you are doing matters

Holding Hope



Take Home Messages

- Parental stress is normal and valid
- You are not alone
- Support your soothe system
- Consider your own battery level
- Find your support networks



Psychology In Schools: Free Live Workshops And Video Recordings

Upcoming LIVE Parent/Carer workshops on mental health www.nsft.uk/workshops Eventbrite



Supporting your child with big feelings (24th March 2025 12.00)
Understanding tics in children (25th March 2025 12.00)

Recorded previous mental health workshops on a range of topics:

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

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!

To Watch Previous Recordings in this Series

Childhood neurodiversity what you need to know as a parent/carer

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

Childhood neurodiversity: supporting social relationships

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting Social Relationships](#)

Childhood neurodiversity: supporting your child's education

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting Your Child's Education](#)

How To Support Your Neurodivergent Child With Anxiety

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

What help is out there?

- **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
- [Recovery College | Norfolk and Suffolk NHS](#)
- **GP**

Recovery College



Recovery College

Open to all those interested in mental health recovery in Norfolk and Suffolk, the Recovery College provides free educational courses to equip you with the skills and strategies to move on with your recovery and/or to support others.

[Recovery College | Norfolk and Suffolk NHS](#)

Discovery college

The Discovery College offers free educational online courses and webinars on mental health topics for 16 - 25 year olds. The courses and webinars are designed so that 16 - 25 year olds can become an expert in discovering themselves and their self care alongside others their age.

[Discovery College | Norfolk and Suffolk NHS](#)



Other Resources

Apps:

Silver cloud: course to manage anxiety and depression at your own pace

Catch it: manage negative thoughts and look at problems differently

Blue ice / Calm harm: manage emotions and reduce urge to self harm

Headspace: mindful meditation

Websites:

Youngminds.org.uk Good resources. support for YP & Parentline. Guidance. 24 hr crisis support

*Living life to the full
littf.com
Free online courses on low mood, stress and resiliency*

rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health : Information about mental health and treatment. Has a section on young peoples mental health

*Moodgym
moodgym.com.au
interactive self-help to learn skills to manage symptoms of depression and anxiety*

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How would you rate your knowledge of supporting yourself with parental/carer stress?

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I have found this session helpful

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What are two things you will take away from this session?

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Name one thing that could be improved about this session?

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Feedback Survey

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=-54mgrbuRkuMMRISnQOwFEGhcw637OhMr_fWiFSIJH1UNUxHNEpDVURFMFRaMIVCVUVINFc5RzZTQS4u

Childhood Neurodiversity:
Managing Parental/Carer Stress
Feedback Survey (LIVE)

