

Ard Aoibhinn

Family Information Guide

Practical Tips and Strategies for supporting your family member during Covid-19



ardaoibhinn

Providing Services to People with Special Needs
and Intellectual Disability

The family information pack has been developed by the Positive Behaviour Support team in Ard Aoibhinn. Over the next few weeks and/or possibly months it will be a particularly difficult and anxious time for our service users and their families whilst services and amenities are closed and/or reduced. The normal routines and structure have been disrupted as we are asked to self-isolate and physically distance ourselves from friends and/or family. This family information guide aims to support the families of our service users during this difficult time by providing some tips, strategies and resources to help make the upcoming days and weeks more manageable.

The behaviour support team is made up of Laura Edwards and Rachel Mason and we will be available to speak and/or guide you about utilising this family information guide should you have any questions or wish to discuss further.

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A. Structure and Routines

Now that social distancing and self-quarantine have been established, many of our service users will be at home or out of routine for some time to come without a concrete end date. Establishing a routine can help create predictability and reduce the associated anxiety. Routines should be established by taking into account the communication system relevant to the service user; for example the use of visual supports. Below, please find some useful strategies and resources to help our service users manage the increased time at home.

1. Keep the routine the same as much as possible.

Setting a wake-up time; a time for lunch; screen time and bedtime and maintaining this similar schedule from day to day. Creating a visual schedule with times and durations for each activity and following it throughout the day can provide the service user with familiarity during unfamiliar times. See below for examples and resources on creating your own visual schedule.

*****Note- Parent/Guardian it is important that you build downtime for you and your son/daughter so you do not become overwhelmed either*****

Establishing a handwashing routine

- <https://abavisualized.com/?fbclid=IwAR19QgMOP1b-500t0r-W9ssiEqZ-oGcN9wWpeWqrJTqgLrbA3dHGasBZkW4>
- Hand washing tips for people with sensory difficulties <https://www.sensoryintegration.org.uk/news/8821506>
- Baby shark handwashing song (pre-school) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L89nN03pBzI>

Teaching Personal Hygiene- Protecting your family member during the Covid-19 outbreak

- <https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR3yynpi3ECpEeYwBmiKcp5vNyYlyB2aXAOUhTk8mA6oBl5GDQTjWC3IfXY>
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Qz9Tky647nvQvUq7P554B2l qpHH01inOISTyI0qbbw/edit?fbclid=IwAR1iAMAX5JRn1U5cHe5NFldSKqqN4ppC3IMVVe9C76XObKSdHyD0e4uBRVs>

2. Keep things green i.e. Keep things positive

It's very easy for you the family member to feel overwhelmed by playing many different roles at present. Use this time to do favoured activities together and keep things fun and positive rather than focusing on all work activities.

3. Managing anxiety

If you the family member are feeling anxious about the change in routine and thoughts you are feeling about the current pandemic; taking deep breaths, yoga, meditation and taking walks/exercise and incorporating these into your day will help you manage your anxiety. Limiting exposure to news and social media sites for yourself and your family member is advisable to best support positive mental health.

The PBS Team recommend the following activities to incorporate into your home schedule; **sensory; life skills; academics** (if applicable i.e. school age); **movement and leisure activities**.

Examples of **sensory activities** include; taking a bubble bath; dance; painting; smelling activities; sensory bins; play doh

Examples of **life skills include**; laundry; folding; cooking; baking; washing the car; sweeping

Examples of **academics include**; letters; numbers; worksheets; learning games on ipad/computer

Examples of **movement activities** include; walk; run; wall push ups; walk the dog; stairs; hallway bowling

Examples of **leisure activities** include; drawing; reading books; youtube; listening to music; card games; ipad/computer

Please find home schedule resources and visuals below to tailor for your family member.

****Note- Home schedules do not need to be fancy or laminated or printed to work, simply writing down the daily schedule with your family member can suffice or drawing the plan on a piece of paper with symbols****

Examples of Visual Supports



Daily Schedules:

https://www.scribd.com/document/451792561/Daily-Schedule#download&from_embed

<https://abavisualized.com/?fbclid=IwAR19QgMOP1b-500t0r-W9ssiEqZ-oGcN9wWpeWqrJTqgLrbA3dHGasBZkW4>

<https://l.ead.me/bbTE3n>

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qt5azfzmg6jo0d3/AABM7979NpcTDnBiSz3Mz8FFa/schedules%20and%20visuals?dl=0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1o0A-XCZlqloBeBnxOm8rjwjHJO-i4EXw1QHOSerIXdg/edit>

[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-hEBo4CeIQN8/Xm_meR5-vjl/AAAAAAAAAMMI/vXpbGkfoKz4j-](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-hEBo4CeIQN8/Xm_meR5-vjl/AAAAAAAAAMMI/vXpbGkfoKz4j-OA3qq4rSZUQXd251IVFwCK4BGAYYCw/s1600/home%2Blearning.jpg)

[OA3qq4rSZUQXd251IVFwCK4BGAYYCw/s1600/home%2Blearning.jpg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-hEBo4CeIQN8/Xm_meR5-vjl/AAAAAAAAAMMI/vXpbGkfoKz4j-OA3qq4rSZUQXd251IVFwCK4BGAYYCw/s1600/home%2Blearning.jpg) (Created using a free trial of: <https://widgitonline.com>). **Editable**

<http://www.do2learn.com/picturecards/printcards/>.

Weekly Planner:

https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Theme-Activity-Lesson-Plan-Template-PDF-with-editable-Fields-5266202?fbclid=IwAR2DQcvivBp3Hx-7WxTZ9VLhmB5mR5ANzyL_YZ8mjF6H5BDSUD2Yob12JRU

Transitions:

Some of our service users may have difficulty switching from one task to another. Having warnings and reminders when one activity is ending and another is beginning, especially if the activity is a favoured or a preferred activity.

To ease transition difficulties try to:

- Ensure that the service user always knows what will be coming up next (e.g. watch TV then shower) - *See attached First/Then board resource*
- Provide notice of five, three, and one-minute reminders that the activity is going to end and they will move on to the next activity. Use timers if it helps.

This way they are prepared for what is coming up next, and the reminders can help ease the transition.

First/Then Board:

Use as a visual support for transitions.

Use to show a reward or activity that may motivate your family member to engage in a less preferred activity.

Use with individuals who ask for reinforcers or preferred activities (items) often.

For example; putting a picture of the doctor in the First section (non-preferred) and a picture of a preferred activity or reward second.

Resource

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/FREEBIE-Autism-Visual-First-Then-Board-2605423>

B. Social Stories

In these times of change for our service users including the disruption of normal routines and closures of schools, pre-schools, day services and other amenities, the use of social stories or social narratives can become very helpful in aiding comprehension of current surrounding events. In other words, social stories use words and images to explain specific events. Ensure all information shared with your family member are from government and HSE sources only. Please find below useful social stories and visuals surrounding Covid-19 or the coronavirus.

Coronavirus – Staying Safe



**People are talking about the coronavirus
because it is a new type of flu**



Just like with all other colds or flu, it is important to be healthy.



Children and adults are very good at fighting the flu

**Just like all colds or flu's it can be harder for
older people to stay healthy from flu**



I can stay healthy by

Frequently washing hands with soap



When preparing food



After sneezing or blowing my nose



Before eating



After using the bathroom

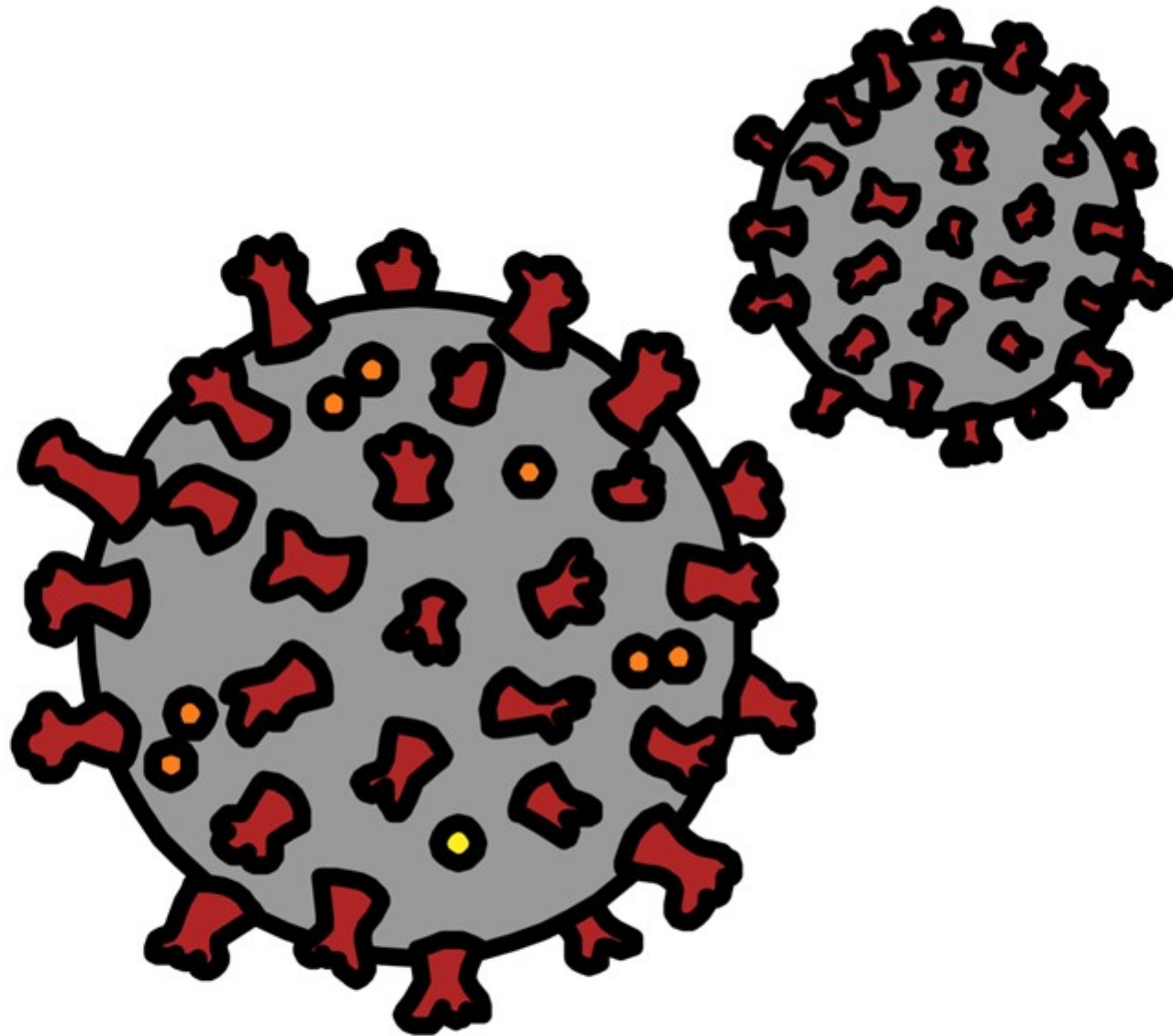


if hands are dirty

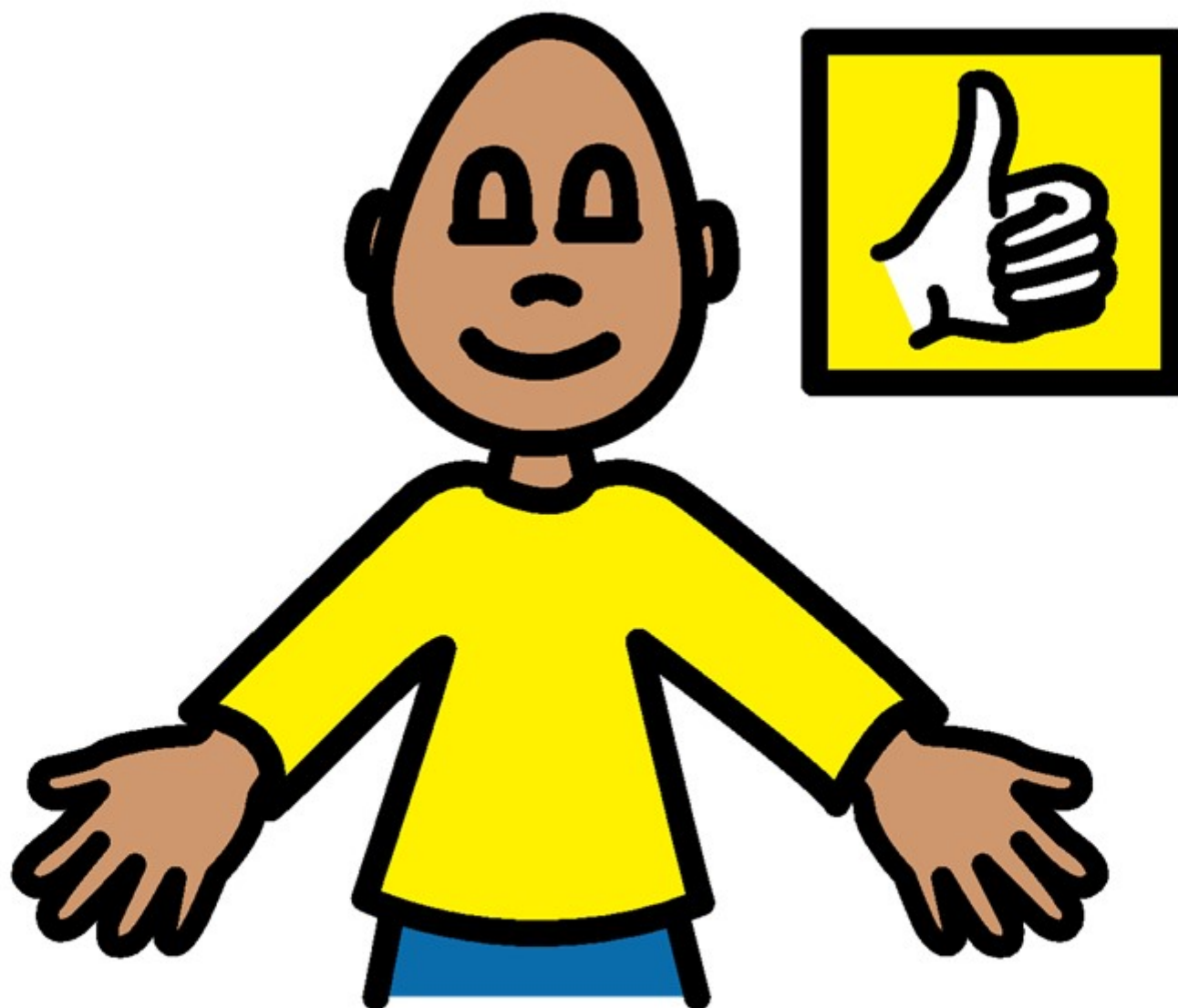
My Physical Distancing Story



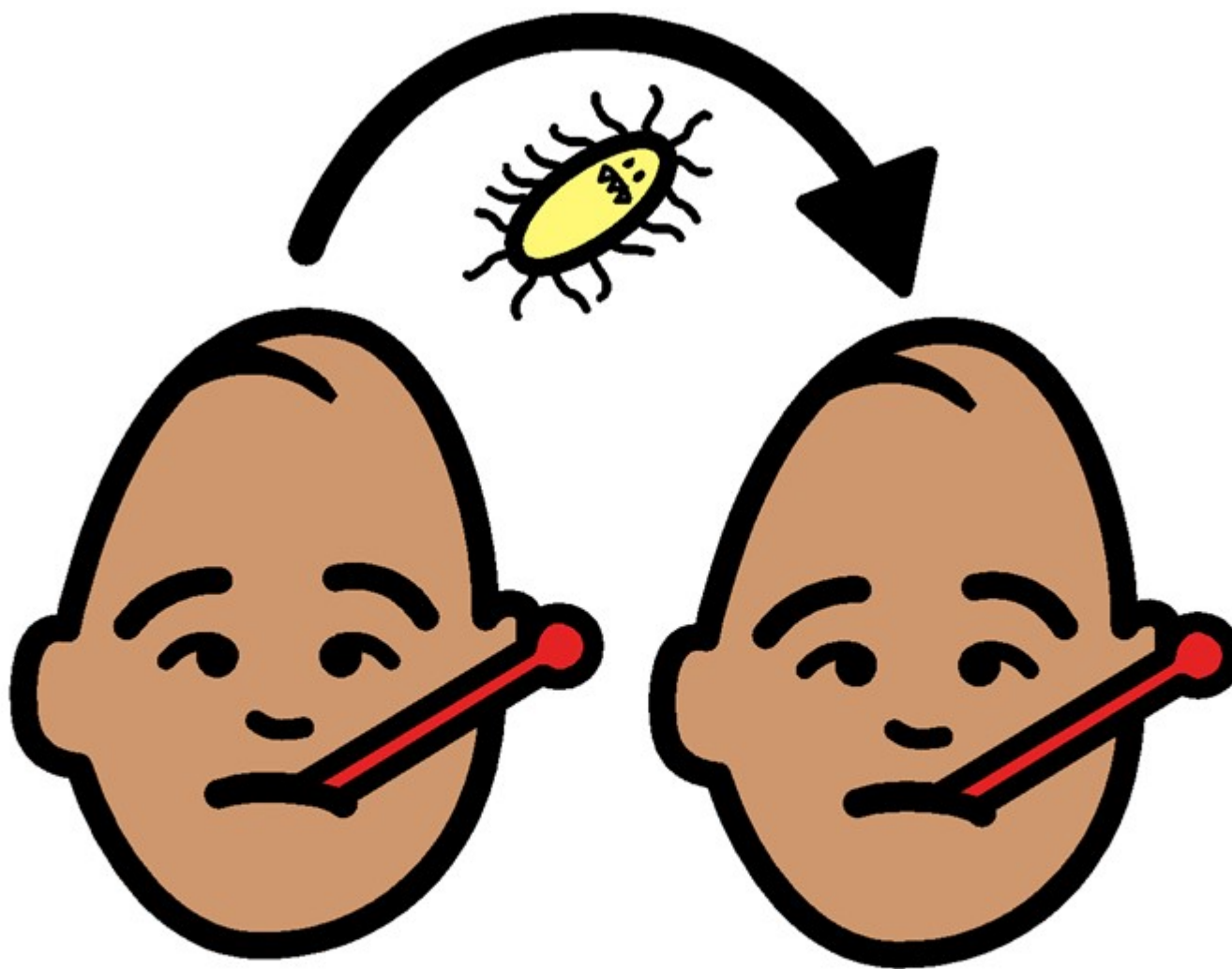
The Picture Communication symbols © 1981-2020 by Tobii Dynavox. All rights reserved worldwide. Used with permission. Boardmaker® is a trademark of Tobii Dynavox.



**A lot of people are talking about something called
Coronavirus.**



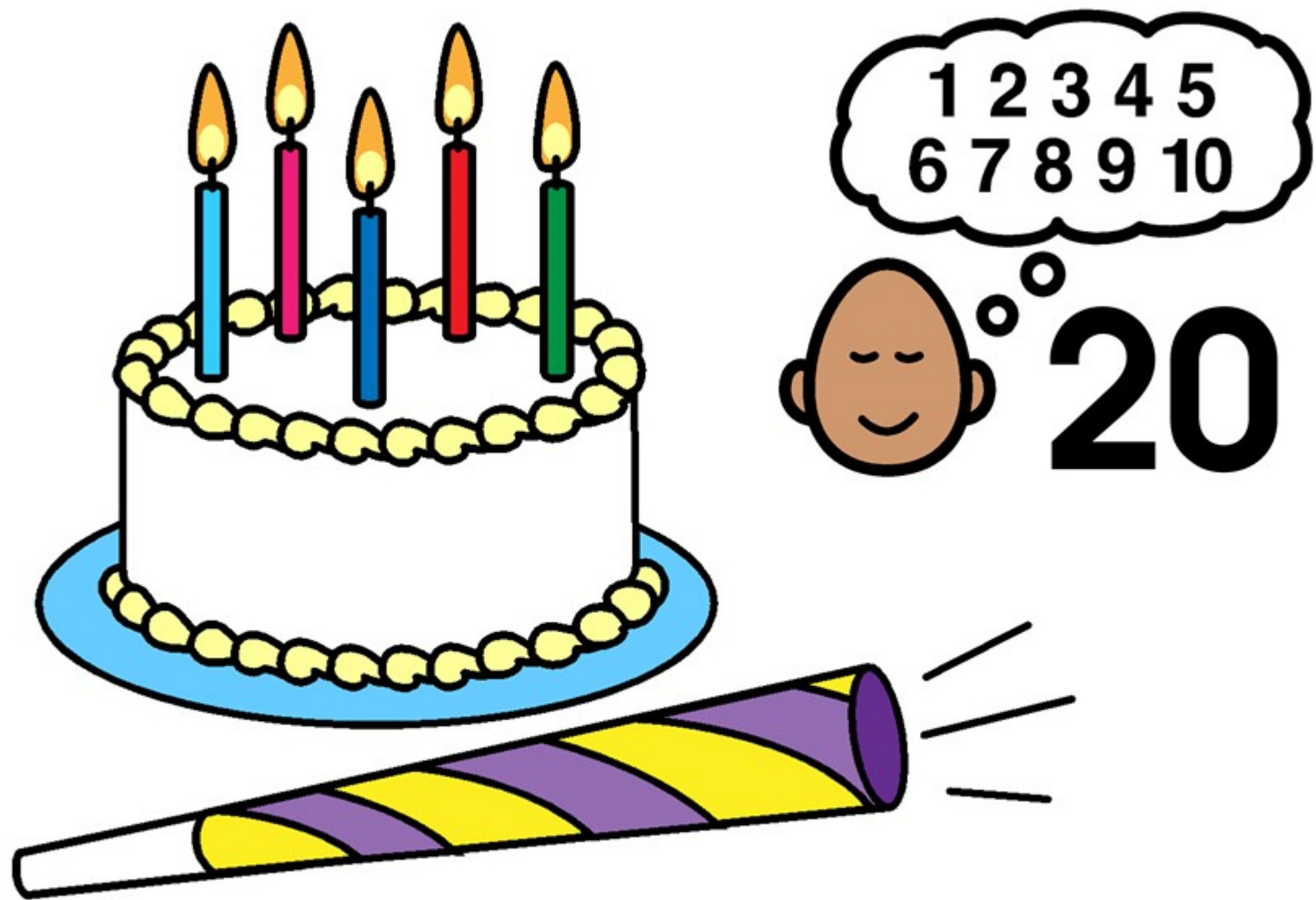
Everyone is working hard to feel safe and be healthy.



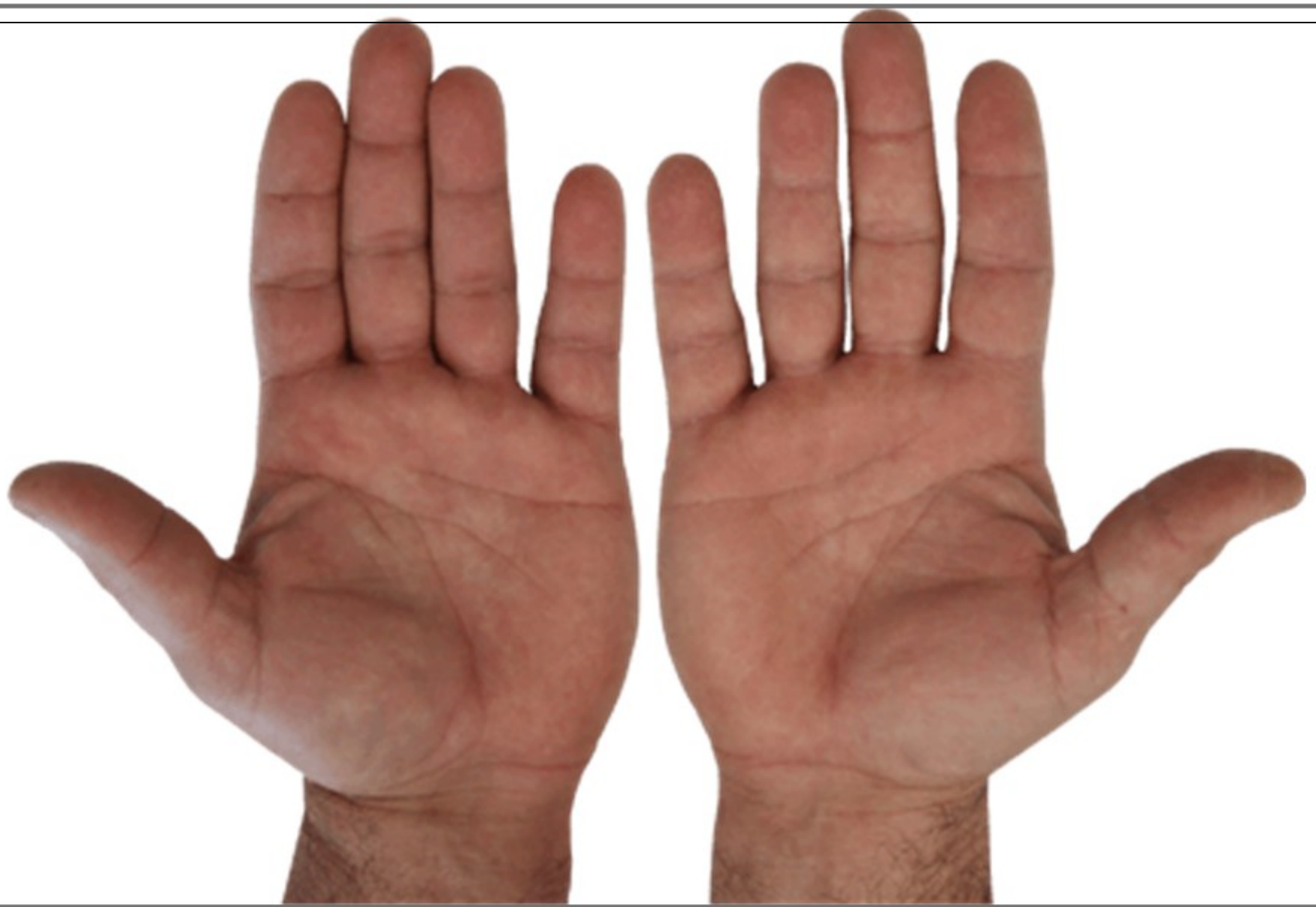
The Coronavirus germs spread VERY easily.



I need to wash my hands A LOT so that I can stay healthy.



**When I wash my hands, I can sing "Happy Birthday," or
count to 20!**



This will make sure my hands are clean and I stay healthy.



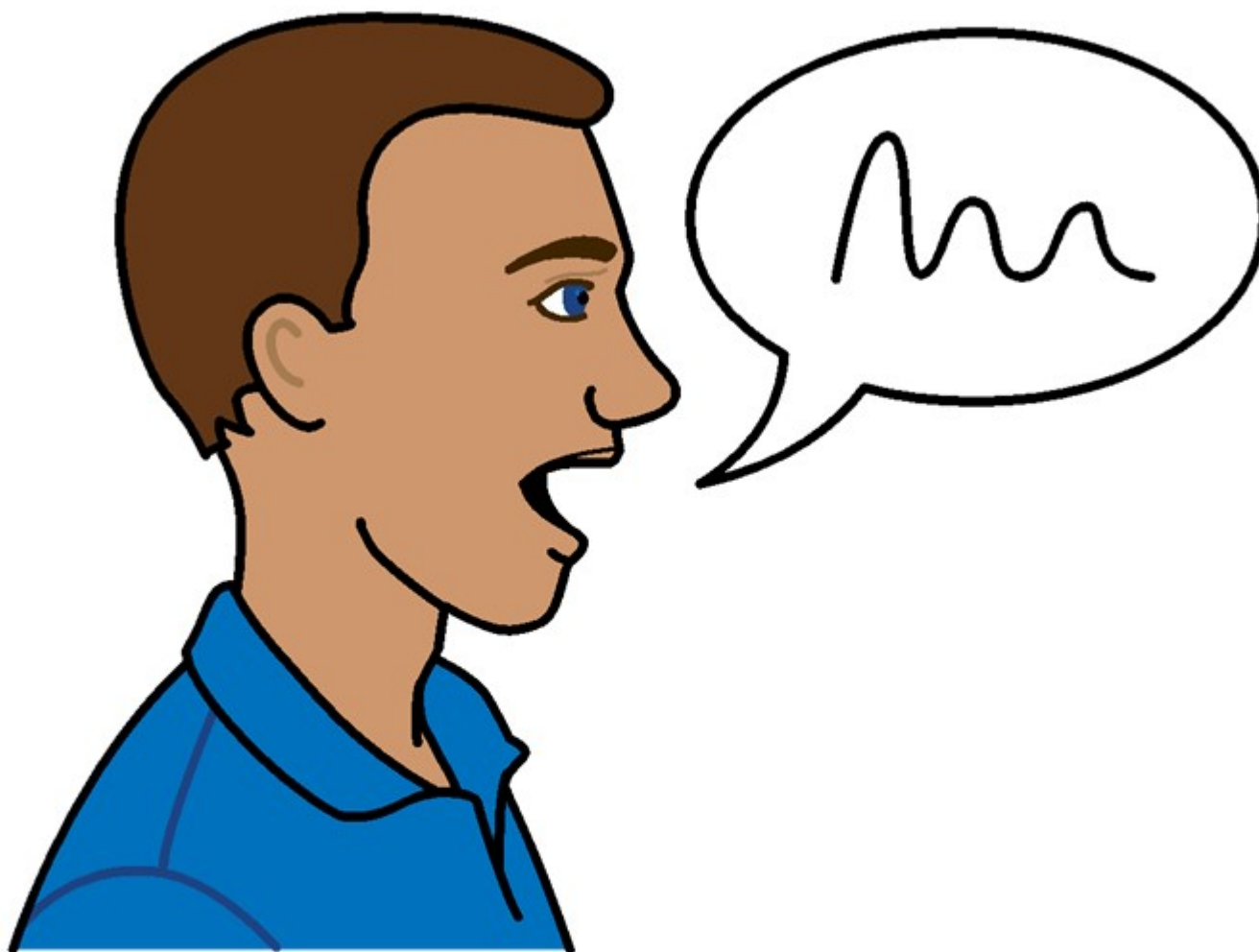
Another thing that I can do to stay healthy and safe is called physical distancing. This means I cannot be close to other people.



Physical distancing means that crowded places in Wexford, like shops, the swimming pool, cinemas and restaurants are all closed.



Physical distancing might make me feel worried or sad.



If I feel this way, I can always talk to someone that will help make me feel better.



Physical Distancing will help keep everyone healthy, happy and safe!

Today we will not touch



This is because we want to stay safe and healthy.



Great listening





Using Masks and Accepting Healthcare Support

- If one of our service users was to become ill, or was in contact with somebody who is diagnosed with Covid-19 they will need to do things they are not used to.
- Not all of our service user's will fully understand why they must follow instructions and therefore might refuse

Motivation is our friend!!

Visuals are also our friend!!

- So use visuals and a really motivating reinforcer (preferred item/activity) to help your service user to follow the instruction or rule.
 - o NOTE: this may mean reducing their access to the item/activity for a while before they will need to follow your instruction. E.g. IPAD might need to be put away for a couple of hours before the healthcare visitor arrives. Or you might decide to keep a certain food item to use whenever you need to go into their room to support them. These are unusual times so do not judge or feel guilt for providing more of an item/activity than you would normally prefer.
- Use some of the visuals we made (or make your own) to help explain things like
 - o First wear your mask – Then you can have the IPAD
 - o First let the Dr swab your throat – Then you can have the treat you like

First	Then	First	Then
			

NOTE: As a general rule ensure you have access to a few motivating items/activities, which you can keep and give as needed, to ensure you have a way to support your family member in doing something they have to do, but may not be comfortable doing.

C. Families looking after themselves too

Self-care is key to calming ourselves so we have the resources and ability to care and support others within our family. Whilst incorporating structure into your family member's routine is it also important for you to implement structure, routine, and consistency to your own life. For self-care to be truly effective it needs to be sustainable and practical for your lifestyle!

Suggestions to self-care:

MINDFULNESS

The three main principles of mindfulness are:

- Being in the present moment i.e. focus on the right here, right now and not the future or past!
- Noticing and increasing our awareness of what is going on
- Placing no judgment on our experience, i.e. no labelling of things we notice as good nor bad, right or wrong, they just are!

There are lots of Mindfulness apps that you can access; we have some apps listed below. Mindfulness practice does not have to take long, you can do it anywhere at any time for however long (even 30 seconds!)

1. Headspace
2. Aura
3. Insight Timer

Mindfulness for younger children

1. <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>
2. www.youtube.com/user/gonoodle/games/featured

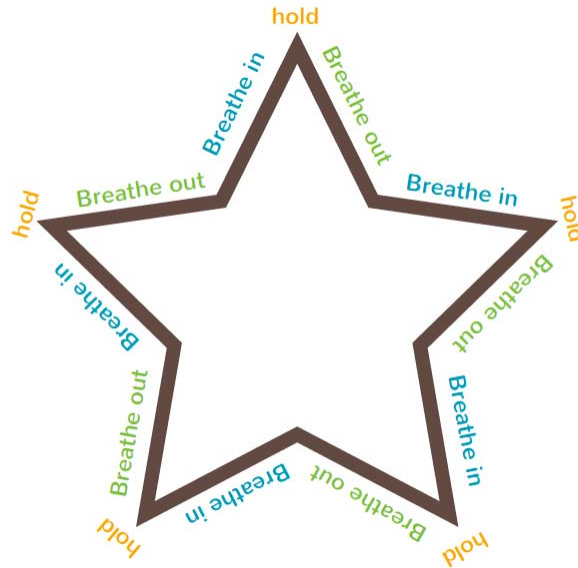
Coping Strategies for Kids / Emotional Health:

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/100-Free-Coping-Strategies-2955800>

<https://www.thepathway2success.com/free-social-emotional-learning-resources/>

BREATHE

We hear it all the time! But it's true, slowing down your breathing can really help ground you and slow things down. Try imagining blowing up a balloon in your stomach and slowly releasing it. Below is a visual which may be useful for both you and your family member to practice deep breathing.



- Start at any “Breathe In” side on the star.
- Trace your finger over the breathe in side of the point
- Hold your breath when your finger gets to the tip of the point
- Breathe out as you trace your finger over the other side of the point.
- Keep going until you reach where you started.
- When you trace the whole star, you will have completed 5 deep breaths

Doing something meaningful for you!

Think of an activity you particularly enjoy. It really can be anything or something that you value. For example, if you enjoy going out for a with your friends, you may value the connection with others. Although you may not be able to go out with a friend right now you could you be creative about how you could still live your life by this value in a different way. For example, Skype or Facetime your friend in a designated area of the house. Think of other creative ways to maintain these important connections.



D. Ideas and Activities for Indoor/Outdoor Activities

Many of these activities involve sensory play and using your senses. This stimulates the senses by engaging one or more of the senses touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing.

Sensory bins/bags: This simply involves filling various containers with dried beans, lentils or rice and allowing the service user to scoop, stir and transfer them between pots etc. You could try making a beach or desert out of rice. The same concept can be used using zip-lock freezer bags. For example you could try filling them with shaving foam, or jelly etc.

Coloured rice: By simply mixing dried rice with food colouring you can create brightly coloured rice grains that you can use for sensory play. Simple mix approximately a cup of dried rice with a teaspoon of food colouring by placing both in a screw-top container and shaking until the rice is adequately covered and then setting aside to dry on paper towels. Once the rice is dried engage with it by passing it between containers or playing with it with their hands.

Bottle-tops and bubbles: Simply fill a large tub/container with water and washing up liquid to create a container of bubbles. You can then hide bottle-tops and ask the service user to find them. See if they can do it by colour, (i.e. pick out all the red bottle tops). The service user could also try using different utensils to make more bubbles such as a whisk.

Some ideas suggested in this handout have been sourced from 'Learning For Kids – List of Sensory Play Activities' <http://www.learning4kids.net/list-of-sensory-play-ideas/>. This page also includes activities for adolescents and older adults too.

Books

World Book Online have also made their books and audiobooks free for access at home.

<https://worldbook.kitaboo.com/reader/worldbook/index.html?usertoken=Mjk5MzQ6MTpJUjA5MjAxNjoyOmNsaWVudDE2OTc6MTY5NzoyMjE2Mig4OjE6MTU4NDM4MDEzMzA2Mjp1cw==>

E. Physical Activity and Movement

Maintaining exercise and physical activity while indoors can present a challenge for both you and your family member. If you have an outside space and/or suitable garden utilise the outdoors as much as possible during the day. Young children with a learning disability or ASD can rely on physical movement to regulate and this can be the same for adults also. Physical activity is also important for maintaining emotional well-being. The greater the anxiety and stress the more important the physical activity and movement activities are.

Activities to Try

- Creating an obstacle course in the back garden
- Jumping jacks
- Catching a throwing a ball
- Playing bowls/bowling indoors or outdoors
- Musical statues
- Upper body movement- aerobics in chair
- Yoga
- Youtube videos

Seated exercises (mobility issues) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6Nr-VaFcqM>

Exercise programmes (non-mobility issues)

- Joe Wicks PE classes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6r99N3kXME>
- Harry Potter yoga <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=R-BS87NTV5I&vl=en>
- Family cardio workout <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5if4cjO5nxo>

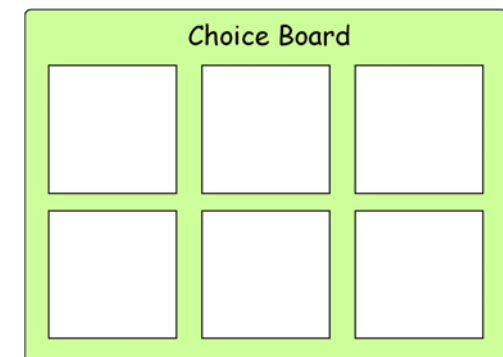
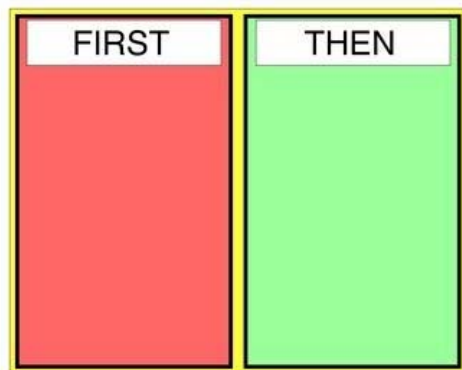
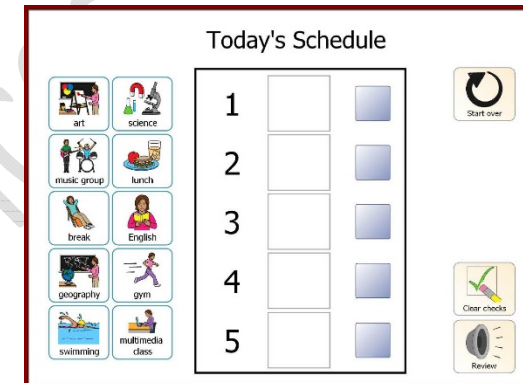
F. Managing Challenging Behaviour in the Home

Proactive Interventions

The aim of using proactive strategies is to reduce the number of triggers that your family member may experience so that they are more likely to remain at baseline and thus making behavioural incidents less likely to occur. Most of the above strategies listed above such as choice boards; visual schedules; visual countdowns; First/Then Boards; social stories; mindfulness and self-regulation skills are all examples of proactive interventions for you to use daily and thus help your family member remain at baseline. See below images



Proactive Interventions



Reactive Interventions

Sometimes our family member moves to outburst phase very quickly, if this happens the following strategies can be useful;

1. If possible, redirect your family member to another item/activity and/or to redirect to a quieter area of the house. A designated calm spot can be useful here to allow some time to self-regulate. Try to reduce stressors by removing distracting stimuli from the environment and providing a calming activity or object can be helpful.
2. If it is not possible or your family member refuses to transition to another area, then remove the audience. This means other family members and/or pets leave the area where the challenging behaviour is occurring.
3. Move any possible items that they be thrown or damaged from the immediate area to ensure the safety of yourself and the individual. If the individual is self-harming i.e. banging head off ground, then place a cushion underneath while keeping your verbal talk limited and do not provide eye contact.
4. Try to remain calm as their behaviour is likely to trigger emotions in you
5. Try not to talk to your family member when they are in the outburst phase (verbal information is too difficult to process when you are in a distressed state and can sometimes serve to heighten or fuel the behaviour more). Removing eye contact and maintaining proximity is also advisable as it can help the individual to recover quicker.
6. When there is a sustained period of baseline behaviour i.e. calm, then you can provide more words. Tell them using visual cues what you are doing next and engage with them in this activity to move on.
7. Talking about the behaviour too close after the event can often times refuel the behavioural incident. Keep your words positive after a behavioural incident rather than using negative statements, for example “Let’s go and relax in”, rather than “Stop and Don’t do that”.

G. Helpful Resources

Worksheets:

<https://www.twinkl.ie/resources/roi-resources> . Twinkl are offering free resources for three months in Ireland

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qt5azfzmg6jo0d3/AABlfSA5O0Y74DzdpF0NW8MLa?dl=0&fbclid=IwAR3KDvQ_sHi8L-vdSFF3N_ST-IWtLtCbeyrr0f8xRYpfbQ2ai6txGaXpstl

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/17ijlwkvvknDu7qxHr0mWP0IMxpn1Z40/view>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-4ND3-b-82MmNp9WrSgvMv5BgGEkfnCF/view>

Online Learning:

<http://bitsboard.com/?fbclid=IwAR0J-RVVhPuWWG1F9vMh31aNpjbv6inpkPcsQ9MjcVWkuOHlgMkp-S6Kwc>

http://campdiscoveryforautism.com/?fbclid=IwAR3NBzgpK_lbEle751vIU3nGjhj5b5LnvaYwdX6D8RnCsuSGQmmEuMSENoU

<https://jr.brainpop.com>

Beginner Learners:

https://go.autismag.org/11-autism-teaching-strategies?fbclid=IwAR3TqcXPk4Godd0rIBbICk9mEO-xikNst3Jhmra5O8nvacfqV5YLa4Rrh4Y&r_done=1

<https://www.autismlittlelearners.com/2020/03/at-home-speech-therapy.html>

<https://www.kids-pages.com/flashcards.htm> (Flash cards)

<http://communicationandbehaviorsolutions.com/category/material-share-monday/?fbclid=IwAR0RrT2m6a001bKFTwbJ2wqvj4o9kLDiDw9CecExkjFCvcegUzFF7gvp-Rw>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18j2BTmUAlChJvwHQBz3lwCNtReumTQqV/view?usp=sharing>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OTCN-ICDgwM4tvl_KOPTe9fwQ8jNo_Rt/view

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_IzeWXAgrHJ1CD03rtVw8nQ7M1y8F4Xf/view

Self-Regulation:

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Self-Regulation-For-Little-Learners-5140866>

<https://www.amazon.com/Managing-Family-Meltdown-Arousal-Approach/dp/1849050090>

Virtual Tours:

<https://hyperallergic.com/547919/2500-virtual-museum-tours-google-arts-culture/>

www.acropolisvirtualtour.gr/

<https://www.nasa.gov/glennvirtualtours>

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/visiting/virtual-tours>

<https://artsandculture.google.com>

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SvldgTx9djKO6SjyvPDsoGlkgE3iExmi3qh2KRRku_w/preview?fbclid=IwAR3xf5NBBx7zpUjhbhtwGvcJoFv4V-caWWdjNdJMepT9X9CdNZfVeiFPU

Self-Monitoring Charts / Token Boards / Rewards:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZZQ2lkK0MyIXB8x4jGgmSGtHnElqc7yUTBi - UVQQk0/edit?fbclid=IwAR3S3LUOyk8GEV0yLbDrM9jrLymF1SVNhAEMyhP_o1ogHcGx9iQagziCIYQ

Social Skills:

<https://www.modelmekids.com>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/WonderGroveKids>

Giant List of Ideas to Keep Kids Busy:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1o6kEgCKLn3cylm2hehhhSTIk7yRTd0C3zx49JS4wwCl/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR13vZPb0WcjrXzX7x5FuvZw_bKzdG0meHZ5nj6eoOS5vHP4IalrD5rKQ

<https://indyschild.com/70-things-to-do-with-kids-now-that-were-all-stuck-at-home/?fbclid=IwAR0poFon6dp2-C4YoBMAREVsBIY3pHpXQNWKBH5zk2qu8ZUMcghiFEMvg1c>

Sensory:

www.thinkingtoys.ie