

## **Anxiety in children/young adults with ASC**

Anxiety is a feeling of worry or fear. Although it's not part of the formal diagnosis process, a high number of people with Autism will suffer with anxiety. Children/young adults with a diagnosis of Autism can experience anxiety more intensely than children that don't have Autism.

Anxiety will be heightened due some of the following:

- Difficult social situations
- Unfamiliar or unexpected social situations (parties, unfamiliar place)
- Sensory environment (incl crowds, sounds, lighting etc)
- Being misunderstood by neuro-typical people
- Changes to their routine
- Transition (new school, new school year, moving house)
- Difficulties with identifying & regulating their emotions
- Trying to understand other people and what they are thinking
- Expectations of others
- Demands & pressures of others/situations
- Specific fears (e.g heights, needles etc)
- Uncertainty about situations or new situations (exams, meeting new people)
- Separation anxiety

### **Tips to help with anxiety**

- Keep a diary to find the triggers
- Manage energy levels - balance stressful situations with things your child enjoys
- Meditation, mindfulness & other relaxing techniques
- Manage & monitor the environment (lighting, sound etc)
- Use stress toys or other self soothing strategies
- Visual aids to help with the day (timetables, prompts, reminders)
- Create a sensory toolbox of favourite items (play dough, putty, bubbles, reflective materials, glitter, aromatherapy oils, favourite foods, favourite playlist etc)
- Seek advice from support groups
- Seek professional help