

How to manage anxiety in your child

Remember that children will look to the adults around them for cue as to how they should feel, and will pick up on how adults are feeling. When children feel worried and anxious, they will need extra reassurance. Be prepared to answer the same questions many times. Even though you are probably feeling worried yourself, try to be patient, calm and reassuring.

Children without language will not ask questions but will still pick up on changes around them: not being at school or school being very different for them; parents and siblings being at home more; parents feeling anxious.

1. Try to make things as predictable as possible for them (see visual supports and social stories)
2. Think about things you could do to help yourself feel better e.g. Talk to someone about how you are feeling: a friend, family member or a helpline.
3. There is a lot of inaccurate information on social media that you should stay away from. Arm yourself with accurate information from reliable sources. The government Public Health England website and the NHS common questions websites are good to start with (see Useful Links).
4. Both you and your child will feel better if you know what you can to practically help yourself (see social stories about hand washing)
5. Try to be mindful about what news information is playing on the TV, radio etc, because although children with ASD often appear not be listening, we know that filtering background information is often for difficult for them,. Although they may be busy doing something else they are likely to be hearing what is being said but with no way of making sense of it.