

Family, Interests and Exercise

Advice and Thoughts from the Autistic Community

Family

‘Don’t put pressure on yourself to be the perfect ‘Insta mum’. Seems to be a lot of people trying too hard and they will burn themselves out. Just try and take it easy.’

‘I try to get up before everyone else in my household so I get time to myself. My husband and kids being there all the time can be stressful.’

‘As for my own personal experience as a self-identifying autistic parent I have found this quite difficult to deal with especially trying to keep my autistic daughter and 15 year old son as calm and informed as possible without worrying them too much. I believe that if I try to appear calm on the outside then everyone else in the household remains calm. When I find myself getting overwhelmed with the situation I go to my room and read or more often than not I go for a nap. This helps to reset my head and something I have to do most days. Listening to music keeps me grounded as well so I often have the stereo blaring.’

‘I also try to look for the positive information that comes out the news regarding Covid-19. And I will repeat this to my kids to try and lighten the situation as much as possible. I often talk about all the people who have survived and how Scotland is less populated so we should be relatively safe as long as we stick to the guidelines.’

‘A tactic I used years ago when my son was 8 and so scared he couldn’t even speak (he’d read an article on anthrax on a newspaper I had mopping up water on the floor) was to explain that the human race had lasted this long, and through so many outbreaks of disease, etc, that we weren’t going to all be wiped out...it took over 2 hours of reiterating and researching similar facts but after that he was calm. It was so traumatic for me, I’ve never forgotten his sheer terror...although it was 22 years ago now; it really hurts when our children are so scared.’

Interests

'Amongst my daily activities building in some hobby or interest time is important. I know I have mini-breaks within my activities, but it's easy to miss out on doing substantial interest 'me time'.'

'I try to do this a few times a week even if just for an hour or so. It's extra difficult during Covid-19 times as some of my hobby interests require me to be out and about.'

'Interests and passions are supposed to be our strong point; but I know I'd really struggle without access to those of my passions that I can access in my house and garden. I'm already thinking of how I could develop these further if I was in the confines of isolation in my room.'

Exercise

'I've got a steps tracker on my wrist and I do about 4000 steps a day at least just pacing around the house, you know?'

'I keep moving every hour with ideally a little time outside at least sometime during the day for a bit of fresh air. I bought myself a Fitbit watch a couple of years ago. Part of this was so that if I didn't move around enough during an hour it rattles and reminds me to walk around. I usually go up and down the stairs at home to make up the 250 steps!'

'Go for nice scenic walks keeping a distance from others. It helps give a feel good factor.'

'Aerobic exercise. At the moment I use a cycling machine which I am fortunate to have, but in dry weather I like to run first thing followed by a shower and having some breakfast. The feel of being clean and fresh is good for me.'