

Purple Ella

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- Anxiety = a feeling of unease,
 - worry or fear.
- When you are unable to control your
 - worries and it impacts on daily life
 - you may have an anxiety disorder.
- Roughly 40% of people on the autistic
 - spectrum have significant levels of
 - anxiety or at least one anxiety
 - disorder. Compared with 15% in the
 - general population (The National
 - Autistic Society).

•Types of anxiety;

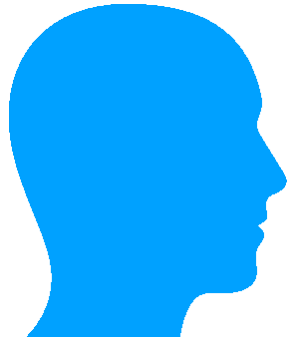
- Generalised anxiety - constant
 - feelings of anxiety about many things.
- Social anxiety - fear of social things.
- Fears and phobias about specific
 - things - needles, dogs, the dark etc.
- Obsessions and compulsions -
 - unwanted, unpleasant thoughts and
 - repetitive behaviours.
- Separation anxiety - fear of separation
 - from a caregiver.

- Underlying factors;
 - The need for routine and structure
 - Sensory sensitivities
 - Difficulties with emotional
 - regulation
 - Physiological difficulties -
 - overactive amygdala
 - Medical issues (such as
 - gastrointestinal problems)

- Flexible
- routine
- to
- reduce
- anxiety



•ndfulness



- Study of mindfulness participants
 - showed;
- Increased grey matter density in the
 - hippocampus (learning and memory).
- Increased grey matter density in
 - structures associated with self
 - awareness, compassion and
 - interception.
- Decreased grey matter density in the
 - amygdala (anxiety and stress)

•Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging, a team led by Massachusetts
•General Hospital

- Energy accounting = activities which
 - use energy need to be balanced by
 - rest or activities which input energy



- Slowly learn to
- unmask, and be
- authentic autistic
- self.



- Over responsive:
- Hates noisy, busy
 - environments
- Easily overstimulated

- Strategies:

- Deep pressure activities - pushing, pulling, massage
- Weighted blankets, lap pads, compression clothing
- Fidget toys
- Ear defenders to reduce sensory input

- Under responsive:
 - -Withdrawn
 - -Passive but not engaged
 - -Seeks intense sensory input
- Strategies:
 - -Therapy balls to bounce
 - -Swinging, jumping and movement games
 - -Loud music with a strong beat

•Sensory Toolkit









•Special Interests can be helpful:

- They can be a very mindful activity, which reduces
 - anxiety and helps regulate our central nervous system
- They can be used as a social opportunity. Shared interests
 - give us something to do, and something to talk about.
- They can help raise self esteem
- They can lead to future employment

•Mood/anxiety monitoring;

- Learning to identify emotions, and levels of emotion/
- anxiety can be a useful way of learning to manage anxiety.

Anxiety Level	None	Mild	Mild-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	Highest
Faces						

•Increase self esteem;

- Autistic self esteem can be like a leaky bucket**



- Create opportunities for success.**
- Keep evidence of success to refer**
 - to when self esteem dips.**
- Remind of strengths and positives**
 - about you - write a list (can ask**
 - others to contribute).**



Find your tribe;

- **Can help you to feel accepted.**
- **Shared experiences can be**
 - **healing, reassuring and affirming.**
- **Look for your tribe online, autism**
 - **groups, and through special**
 - **interests.**

•Ask for accommodations;

- The world is not autism friendly
- Accommodations can help reduce anxiety
- We may need accommodations in;
 - workplace, social, medical etc
- Start by identifying needs and ask for help
 - with this process
- Access autism friendly events and location -
 - National Autistic Society autism friendly
 - award