

COSY UP

A half termly newsletter for by the Autism Advisory Teacher Service for Peterborough's Autism community

FATIGUE & BURNOUT

Rob Emery (*Autism Advisory Teacher*)

'Autistic Fatigue' or 'Autistic Burnout' are relatively new terms that have been used by adults with autism to describe the intense physical, mental or emotional exhaustion they can experience as a result of coping with the demands placed on them by the neurotypical world. The increasing demands of the academic curriculum as well as the daily social demands of school life, can make our children with autism particularly susceptible to fatigue/burnout. Here, we re-visit the causes, signs and ways to help.

THE CAUSES

Autistic adults have described several reasons that they experience Autistic Burnout:

- Sensory Overload
- The increased demands that social situations place on them
- Masking autistic traits for prolonged periods
- Suppressing stimming
- A sense of not meeting other people's or society's expectations

Burnout could happen at any time throughout a child's development, but we may need to monitor our children and young people more closely at times of increased stress such as during transitions or in the period leading up to exams. The early signs of burnout or fatigue can present itself in different ways. Changes in behaviour such as becoming withdrawn and avoiding social situations or activities that they used to enjoy. Also, more volatile behaviours resulting in periods of distress. Changes in diet or sleep patterns could all be warning signs of burnout.



HOW TO HELP

If we think a child or young person may be showing signs of Autistic Burnout, we may need to dial down the demands we are placing on them. Allow extra leisure/relaxing time or find a time/space for them to not have to mask their autism. Communication between parents and schools is key.

Energy accounting is a system for considering the emotional energy that the individual has available on a given day and the amount of energy that will need to be expended on the day's tasks. These are assigned numerical values to help the individual plan how they will spend and replenish their energy levels throughout the day. This can be a useful strategy for older children and young people but for our younger children we need to support them to know themselves and their emotional tolerance levels.

Emotion coaching is a good way to begin to help younger children to explore the language related to emotions and identify their own feelings. We calmly label the emotion that is being demonstrated: 'I can see that you feel upset'. We validate the emotion: 'Sometimes I get upset too, especially when I can't have something that I want'. Then we offer a strategy to support them: 'When I'm upset, I like to go for a short walk on my own, it helps me to feel better'.

By supporting our children and young people to be aware of their emotional energy levels and supporting them to find strategies to replenish their levels when they are running low, we can help our children and young people to avoid burnout.



Music Inclusive

A Saturday Music Group for young people of ALL abilities

PCYM Music Inclusive
is held Weekly, term time only

Saturday's
Juniors: 10:30 - 11:00
Seniors: 11:15 - 12:15

**Ormiston Bushfield Academy,
Orton Centre, Peterborough**

REGISTER NOW



<https://forms.office.com/e/0B8X9n8TLq>



soundabout Associate Choir PCYM MUSIC PLUS Peterborough City Council

Email: musicclub@peterborough.gov.uk

Pinpoint Cambridgeshire have a range of webinars and talks from guest speakers that are free to access.

ADHD – Noticing those early signs and differences

Rebecca Champ
16th April

Under 5's Starting School – How to help your child get read

Chris Barton
24th April

For more webinars, talks and events,
[click here.](#)

Out & About

Nene Park

lots of activities including the Easter Activity Trail [Click Here](#)

Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery

Easter Egg Trail and more!
See what's on:
[Click here](#)

Showcase Cinema

Autism Friendly Screening on the 2nd Sunday every month.
[Click here](#) for more.

Peterborough Cathedral:

Climb the narrow steps of the tower! Must book in advance and be 14+.
[Click here](#) for more.

VIVACITY

Short breaks for children and young people aged 7-19 with SEND.
[Click here.](#)

ANGLE GAMING LOUNGE

Enjoy a boardgame library, virtual reality headsets and games consoles for a £5 daily wristband.
[Click here.](#)

Rainy Days

Try these...

Easter Hunt Tips:

Create the perfect Easter Hunt!
[Click here](#)

Easter Treat Recipes:

Bake some Easter treats!
[Click here](#)

Egg Decorating Ideas:

[Click here](#)

Easter Activities:

Easter Egg Pebble Crafts.
[Click here](#)

Egg Boats:

[Click here](#)

Chocolate Playdough:

Great for Easter themed sensory play!

[Click here](#)

NOTICE BOARD

To do:

- Consider exam preparations [Click here.](#)
- Have your say in the Pinpoint annual survey [Click here.](#)

Upcoming events:

- PinPoint SEND Annual Conference
20th June

... And more! [Click here](#)

PARENT AND CARER PHONE CONSULTATIONS

Advice and support at home.

To book a phone call with one of our Autism Specialist Teachers please email
SEN.Inclusion@peterborough.gov.uk