

STAYING SANE DURING LOCKDOWN!



Some more of the best free resources we have found to keep busy while isolating...please click on the links to get to the webpages. Please note, although some may be aimed at particular age groups, they may appeal to a wider age range depending on the developmental level of your own child.

Bored Games - Free family games and activities: <https://www.boredgames.club/>

Calm - Sleep, meditation and relaxation: <https://tinyurl.com/y9mbf6p5>

CBeebies - Games, puzzles and more for young children:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies>

Explorify - Activities for science fans: <https://explorify.wellcome.ac.uk/activities>

Gymnastics with Max - An Olympic gymnast leads these: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu-rJFVlr7ZAZ0en3RRALPw>

Headspace - Mindfulness app: <https://tinyurl.com/ybnjpd7>

Five Minute Mum - Fantastic five-minute activities for young children: <https://fiveminutemum.com/>

GoNoodle - Get kids moving and using their minds! <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2YBT7HYqCbbvzu3kKZ3wnw>

ICT Games - Maths and science games for 4-7 year olds: <https://www.ictgames.com/>

Little Dots - Printable learning activities for young children: <https://www.littledotseducation.com/>

Myleene's Music Class - Music sessions via YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQh2wgJ5tOrixYBn6jFXsXQ>

Scratch - Kids' programming where you can make stories, games, and animation: <https://scratch.mit.edu/>

Sparklebox - 100s of free printable resources for home learning including a fantastic special needs section: <https://www.sparklebox.co.uk/parents/>

Topmarks - Home learning for different age categories: <https://www.topmarks.co.uk/>

Don't forget...keep an eye on our Facebook group for more ideas, plus look out for our virtual events we will be running to carry on offering support to parents and carers throughout this challenging time. If you have discovered any good websites, please share them with us on the group!



HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Maybe you have recently joined AWARE and are wondering how we can help you through these challenging times, or perhaps you are an existing member who is struggling and needs support. Though we can't currently offer face-to-face support, we can still help you in many ways:

- **Support Sessions:** Nikki is running fantastic video support sessions via Zoom, where guest speakers give talks on issues such as anxiety, neurodiversity and local services. Members have plenty of time to ask questions and discuss topics raised. Zoom is easy to install on a computer, phone or tablet.

The next sessions will be:

Thursday 30th April - Personal Budgets with Josh Wadsworth from SEND Services

Thursday 7th May - What is Pathological Demand Avoidance? A session about PDA and strategies to support parents with Seba Thomson

Thursday 14th May - Breathing exercises, Reiki, mindfulness & meditation with Lois Skilleter

You can view all of the video sessions retrospectively using these links:

- *Mark Glenton's session on spinning to help stress and anxiety: <https://tinyurl.com/ybpaoe36>*
- *Mark Glenton's session on tapping (the Emotional Freedom Technique) for anxiety: <https://tinyurl.com/y8c49vdg>*
- *Seba Thomson's session on Neurodiversity & ADHD: <https://tinyurl.com/ycv6bg6b>*
- *Local Offer's session on what the Local Offer involves in terms of information and support: <https://tinyurl.com/y8kasfjp>*
- *Mark Glenton's session on anxiety (and in particular relating to coronavirus worries): <https://tinyurl.com/y77y2aaa>*

- **Moving-On Club:** Our Moving-On Club for young people aged 18+ continues to meet at 7pm every Tuesday using Zoom. Members get to take part in activities such as bingo, quizzes and Taskmaster games. If your young person would like to be involved in the meetings or join the Moving-On Club WhatsApp group, please let Rachel know at rachel.aware@outlook.com or Fiona at fiona.aware@outlook.com know and we will add them.
- **Nebula Girls' Group:** This group is run by AWARE member Lesley Brook and currently takes place on Friday evenings via Zoom. The group will run different virtual activities every week. If your daughter is interested in joining Lesley's group please contact Lesley on 07814486693 or at lesleybhtb@gmail.com
- **One-to-One Support:** We are still available to provide one-to-one support via email, telephone or Zoom.
- **Facebook Information and Support:** Our closed Facebook group is very active and contains useful information about autism, support services and goings-on within relevant sectors; helpsheets such as private therapists and childcare contacts; peer support between members - if you have a problem or question the chances are some of our members have been there and done that!; and Facebook Q&A sessions such as the recent one with education law firm Simpson Millar - these are always left open after the event so you can view them if you missed them.

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- Our Website includes a member-only section with helpsheets on areas such as benefits and funding, plus our book library list and a back catalogue of our newsletters, and more!

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

We love seeing photos of our members and what they have been getting up to. It is especially lovely during this troubling time to see you having some fun during lockdown, and it is useful for other members to get ideas for different activities.

This issue's photo of the month is of 6-year-old Myles Griffin-Robinson, who had fun baking a crumble topped with sprinkles!

Please keep sending us your photos - we love to see them all. Email becciaaware@outlook.com with any you'd like us to include.



Myles hard at work!



The finished product

TELL US YOUR STORY

AWARE members get up to all sorts of fabulous activities and we'd like to hear all about them!

Maybe your child has achieved something that you and they are particularly proud of, or maybe you would like to tell us about life as a parent and/or carer - the good or the bad.

It could be that you and/or your child/children attend a group at AWARE that you would be happy to write about for us.

Or you might have some great tips for members about days out, events, products or strategies to help their children.

If you would like to have a piece submitted please email no more than 500 words (with photos if possible) to becciaaware@outlook.com

NEED TO CONTACT US?

Not sure who you need? Cut out and keep this handy guide!

Email: info@aware-uk.org

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Project Manager: Rachel Miller
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Please note, emails will only be checked during working hours. It is best to email rather than send Facebook messages as these can be easily missed.

LAST CHANCE TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP

Please note: you need to renew your membership if you haven't already done so as members who have not renewed will soon be removed from our database so will not receive next month's newsletter or have access to the Facebook group.

Anyone who has joined since September 2019 please be aware that your membership will not expire until 31 March 2021.

You can renew by following this link <https://data.aware-uk.org/membership-renewal> or by paying in to our bank account: Account Name - AWARE Sort Code- 40 52 40 Account No - 00031712 and emailing Rachel at rachel.aware@outlook.com to let us to let us know you have paid.

WIN FREE AWARE MEMBERSHIP!



Apologies for asking for your help you at this time but AWARE really values the opinions of ALL its members and partners so we would really appreciate your taking five minutes to complete our annual survey.

Our member surveys are the main way we gather feedback on AWARE and are crucial to allow us, as an organisation, to evolve to meet the needs of our members. They are also essential for securing funding as they allow us to collect evidence showing the difference we make to our members and how previous funding

has been used to improve the lives of the families we support. We were successful in securing around 50% of our funding through the National Lottery's Reaching Communities grants nearly two and a half years ago but this funding comes to an end in January 2021 and there is no guarantee that we will be granted any more monies from the Lottery after that date, so we need as much evidence as possible of the need for and the benefits of what we are doing

There are four different surveys: **Parents and Carers; New Members; Professionals/Support Services & Groups and the Children's and Young People's survey..**

If you are both a parent/carer and a professional or run a support service or group, we would really appreciate you filling out two surveys to reflect your experiences both in a parent/carer and professional/support role: **Parents and Carers and Professionals'/Support Services & Groups.**

If you have joined AWARE in the past four months as a parent/carer, please complete the **New Members** survey.

If your child or young person is old enough, please help them (if necessary) to complete the **Children/Young People** survey.

If you would like to be entered into the prize draw to win the membership, please remember to include your name and email address in the comments section of the last question on the survey or email Becci at becciaaware@outlook.com

Please follow these links to access the surveys:

Parent/Carer:<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZGYLBNQ>

Professionals/Support Services & Groups :<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZG8RYNN>

New Member:<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZGJGN6W>

Children/Young People: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZGSSFBV>

Thank you - we are all in this together!

AUTISM WITH LOVE



Imagine a life where we needn't explain...a life where kids are happy not being the same ...

... My name is Jodie Isitt, and this is my dream.

At the heart of this brand new initiative is Lola Rabbit (based on my daughter, Lola), along with a group of cute, but meaningful, woodland

animals. These characters provide children with learning resources and give them knowledge that is desperately needed in order to understand and accept differences.

They do so by taking the reader on an educational journey embracing differences and showing kindness. It is my passion to create gentle stories for young children, in the hope that it will explain what it is like to live with autism and anxiety and help shape a kinder and more inclusive future for the children of the next generation.

We NEED to teach children about disabilities and here's why.

When growing up as a little girl it was very rare to see a disabled person walking down the street or doing their shopping. Disabled people were segregated and no one spoke about it. No one taught young children why there were certain facial differences, behaviour difficulties or more physical disabilities such as multiple sclerosis for instance. I wasn't taught. I was scared and fearful and confused.

I would ask: "What was the matter with them? Why are they different? Why did they just make that loud frightening noise?"

I would ask myself those questions in my head but I would never ask them out loud. It was almost like there was this unwritten rule that we shouldn't speak out loud incase people heard.

I would be devastated if an adult or child actively avoided my children because of their differences and this is why we have to start talking about them in schools and at home. We should be shaping the next generation into kinder, thoughtful and more understanding individuals who are inclusive.

We NEED to teach children about disabilities, and this beautifully written and illustrated story book does just that and more. In fact, it has proven to not only help children who are not neuro-divergent to understand those who are, but it has also helped autistic children understand themselves! This has led to them being able to start communicating their feelings to their parents and caregivers.

Parents were overwhelmed when their children started communicating to them their worries and feelings when previously they had never done this before. This then made me realise what a huge impact this book is having and my dream was coming true.

These children's books don't just help children understand others or accept themselves. They even have an 'Expert Section' designed to help parents, teachers and carers create discussion points in the home or the classroom to further enhance their learning experience. I wanted to ensure that all angles were covered within this book, I didn't want for any parent or carer to feel overwhelmed or concerned so I thought it was vital to have the expert section included.

All of these stories will contain very valuable and exciting advice from experts in this area such as occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. Each contributor is extremely valued and dedicate their time for free in order to help promote inclusion in the classroom and at home.

You can find out more and buy the books at www.autismwithlovepublishing.com

A big thank you to all of AWARE's generous sponsors for helping us to continue to do the work we do...



ROUNDTABLE



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