

## Newsletter February 2022

You can contact me by email [Lucy.ellis@lscft.nhs.uk](mailto:Lucy.ellis@lscft.nhs.uk) or phone 07866 063814 (Mon – Fri 9am-5pm) for any queries about your child's assessment if you are on the North Lancashire Assessment Pathway.

### Workshops

#### How to understand and support your child's **behaviour**

##### What this workshop covers...

- Functions of behaviour.
- Strategies to support the relationship with your child.
- Meet other parents/carers experiencing similar issues.
- Anxiety/mindfulness.

More dates to be added

#### How to understand and support your child's **sleep** needs.

##### What this workshop covers...

- Reasons for sleep difficulties
- Effects on the family
- Sleep hygiene
- Expectations of sleep
- Sleep diaries
- Strategies that may help
- Structure and establishing bedtime routine

More dates to be added

#### How to understand and support your child's **sensory** needs.

##### What this workshop covers...

- **What is sensory processing?** It is the way the nervous system receives sensory messages and turns them into responses
- **What is the central nervous system?** Processes all the sensory information and helps to organise, prioritise and understand the information.

More dates to be added

The above workshops are 1 off sessions lasting approximately 2 hours with 2 members of the Assessment Pathway Team. If you are currently on the Assessment Pathway or have recently received a panel conclusion for your child / young person, please get in touch by email to [lucy.ellis@scft.nhs.uk](mailto:lucy.ellis@scft.nhs.uk) with the following details

### Family Connect Post Diagnosis Session

Family Connect sessions are an opportunity for parents / carers to ask members of the assessment team any questions **following the diagnosis for their child / young person**. We meet on Teams for an hour with a maximum of 6 families per session to allow time for questions. The information we share is around what support might be available local activities and how to discuss the diagnosis with your child / young person. We also share information about the This Is Me programme for young people and how to access advice and support from a range of services.

23 <sup>rd</sup> February 7.00pm	11 <sup>th</sup> May 2022 7.00pm
30 <sup>th</sup> March 2022 10.00am	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2022 10.00am
3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2022 7.00pm	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2022 10.00am

Please contact Lucy Ellis to book your place. [Lucy.ellis@lscft.nhs.uk](mailto:Lucy.ellis@lscft.nhs.uk)

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## Local Activities / groups

### **X Height Climbing Wall Salt Ayre Lancaster Thursdays 5.00-5.50 / 6.00-6.50**

**£6.00 per child aged 5+. Siblings welcome.** No proof of diagnosis needed. This session is for children with Special Educational Needs. We use fun sensory activities on the wall to improve climbing ability and confidence. This is also a session that helps to give a comfortable place in which to socialise and raise confidence. Suitable for 5+ years. All children must be accompanied by an adult (Parent guardian/ Carer), non-climbing.



<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/salt-ayre-leisure-centre/xheight-gravity/xheight>



### **Reel Cinema Morecambe Autism Friendly Screenings every other Saturday morning (Starting 28/8/21) No proof of diagnosis needed. Siblings welcome.**

Films and times vary. Posters with details added to NLDG facebook page a few days before <https://www.facebook.com/NLDGAdditionalNeedsSupport> which can also be seen on the homepage of NLDG website [www.northlancsdirectionsgroup.com](http://www.northlancsdirectionsgroup.com) if you are not on Facebook.



### **SEN Kicks Football for all session. FREE football for girls and boys in years 3,4,5,6 and have special education needs.**

Mondays 5.00pm-6.00pm at Heysham Mossgate Community Centre LA3 2AW. No need to book. Follow on facebook / twitter. Phone 01524 412125 or [communityadmin@mfccommunitysports.com](mailto:communityadmin@mfccommunitysports.com)



**C.H.A.T.S** Carers Help Advisory Training and Support, or C.H.A.T.S, is a Morecambe and Lancaster based peer support group. For parents and carers of children and young people experiencing emotional problems or those with mental health concerns. Please email for more information.

Private group to ask questions and share support.  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/598047137613422>  
[chats\\_123@yahoo.com](mailto:chats_123@yahoo.com)



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## Autism and girls

# 10 Things To Know About Female Autism by the girl with the curly hair

1. It's common for autistic women & girls to *mask* their difficulties, leading to their autism being missed

2. Autistic women & girls are commonly described as very "shy", "anxious" and/or "quiet"

3. Autistic women & girls may have a lot of difficulty *maintaining* friendships (even if they are friendly and people like them)

4. Autistic girls may develop fairly typically when they are young, but their difficulties become more severe during the teenage years

5. Autistic women & girls may have 'normal' interests, but to a much greater intensity than other people



6. Autistic women & girls might be more likely to experience depression and anxiety

7. Autistic women & girls may be quite passive and are likely to just go along with things and agree to things

8. Autistic women & girls are likely to be very sensitive and have very strong emotions

9. Some autistic women & girls are very sociable, chatty and loud

10. Not recognising their autism can mean many women & girls not only struggle to manage their problems, but may not fully appreciate their strengths and uniqueness

Always remember that **everyone is different**. These are **general findings** and are not true for everyone  
Find out more about Autism & Females at [www.thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk](http://www.thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk)

**The National Autistic Society say:** Various studies suggest that the ratio of autistic males to females ranges from 2:1 to 16:1. The most-up-to-date estimate is 3:1. [Autistic women and girls \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)

**The Autism parenting Magazine says:** How do girls mask their ASD?

Often girls with traits of autism are able to hide and blend in, this is known as camouflaging or masking. The occurrence of masking in girls is due to the cultural pressure of displaying "right behaviours" that are often expected of them

It is inherently easier for autistic girls to mimic the behaviours of others when it comes to certain interactions, at least initially. Some examples of masking or camouflaging include: the act of mimicking facial expressions, and making intentional eye contact despite the internal discomfort or anxiety-triggering emotions this can elicit. Suppressing stimming behaviours such as flapping of hands, or giving scripted responses to questions, are additional methods of masking based on current studies and clinician experiences.



Typically girls take on these masking strategies in order to "fit in" or avoid standing out by adapting to school environments. The ability to mask autistic traits is often learnt through television shows, from everyday observation, or from peers to appear neurotypical at first glance.

Subtle clues such as difficulty maintaining eye contact during social interactions or escaping difficult events through mental processing or daydreaming can provide clues that girls may be autistic. [Autism in Girls: What are the Signs? \(autismparentingmagazine.com\)](http://autismparentingmagazine.com)

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## Resources

**Autistic girls Network** website with book recommendations, blog links etc. [Resources - Autistic Girls Network](#)

**NASEN** has put together a [wonderful booklet](#) on how to recognise autism in girls.

**National Autistic Society** information [Autistic women and girls \(autism.org.uk\)](#)

**National Autistic Society** women and Girls training module [Women and girls \(autism.org.uk\)](#)

**Girl with the Curly hair** website and webinars – Not Autistic girl specific but founded by an autistic female author "[Life Changing](#)" [Asperger's and Autism Training and Webinars \(thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk\)](#)

**Autism in Pink** documentary from National Autistic Society [Autism in Pink Documentary \(English\) - YouTube](#)

**TED Talk** How autism freed me to be myself by Rosie King “People are so afraid of variety that they try to fit everything into a tiny little box with a specific label,” says 16-year-old Rosie King, who is bold, brash and autistic. She wants to know: Why is everyone so worried about being normal? She sounds a clarion call for every kid, parent, teacher and person to celebrate uniqueness. It’s a soaring testament to the potential of human diversity. [Rosie King: How autism freed me to be myself | TED Talk](#)

**TED Talk** "Copy & Paste": girls with Asperger's Niamh McCann Sixteen-year-old Niamh McCann is passionate about many things, including ballet, the plays of William Shakespeare, the environment and public speaking! Her talk looks at the challenges of the high-functioning end of the autistic spectrum for girls. Niamh is a quiet, sensitive girl, who studied hard, got good grades and not one to cause trouble. She researched the reasons why girls on the spectrum are often misdiagnosed or have late diagnosis. Her hope is that through her talk and sharing what she has learned, all girls on the spectrum will feel freer to embrace who they are, and that those who are yet to be diagnosed are not afraid to do so. [Niamh McCann: "Copy & Paste": girls with Asperger's | Niamh McCann | TEDxDunLaoghaire | TED Talk](#)

## Autism & Gender Identity

Across five datasets, transgender and gender-diverse adults were:



**3.03 to 6.36**

times more likely to have autism compared with cisgender adults

Healio

According to **SpectrumNews.org** Autistic people are [more likely](#) than neurotypical people to be gender diverse, several studies show, and gender-diverse people are more likely to have autism than are cisgender people. The five datasets together include 641,860 people, mostly adults; 30,892 have autism and 3,777 identify as gender diverse. The majority of the data — from about 514,000 people — came from an online survey conducted as part of a 2017 British [television documentary](#) about autism. ([Simon Baron-Cohen](#), professor of developmental

psychopathology at the University of Cambridge and the new study’s lead investigator, led the collection of those data.) To read the full article please go to [Largest study to date confirms overlap between autism and gender diversity | Spectrum | Autism Research News \(spectrumnews.org\)](#)

Autism and gender identity information from the **National Autistic Society** [Autism and gender identity](#)

**The Association for Child and Adolescent mental Health ACAMH** published the following article in 2017 [Gender identity and children with autism spectrum disorder - ACAMH](#)





## Other Resources - Films

Films with autism story lines and autistic characters. **I would recommend a parent / carer watch the film before considering showing a child / young person in case it is not appropriate for them.** Film titles include:



**Temple Grandin (2010)** A biopic of Temple Grandin, a woman on the spectrum who has become one of the top scientists in the humane livestock handling industry.

**Please stand by (2018)** A young autistic woman runs away from her caregiver in order to boldly go and deliver her 500-page Star Trek script to a writing competition in Hollywood. On an adventure full of laughter and tears, Wendy, played with exquisite delicacy by Dakota Fanning, follows the guiding spirit of Mr. Spock on her journey into the unknown. "It is there for us to conquer, not to fear."

**Snow Cake (2006)** Snow Cake is a Canadian drama about a middle-aged woman with autism and the friendship she develops with a man who is traumatized after having a car accident involving her daughter. Sigourney Weaver researched her role, and was coached by autism author and speaker Ros Blackburn.

**Extremely loud and incredibly close (2011)** Oskar, a child suffering from a developmental disorder, sets out to discover a message left by his father when he accidentally comes across a mysterious key.

**The reason I Jump (2021)** Based on the bestselling book by Naoki Higashida, The Reason I Jump is an immersive cinematic exploration of neurodiversity through the experiences of nonspeaking autistic people from around the world.



## Other Resources – TV / series



**Atypical (2017)** [Watch it on Netflix](#) This heartfelt comedy follows Sam, a teenager on the autism spectrum, who has decided he is ready for romance. In order to start dating — and hopefully find love — Sam will need to be more independent, which also sends his mother (Jennifer Jason Leigh) on her own life-changing path. She and the rest of Sam's family, including a scrappy sister and a father seeking a better understanding of his son, must adjust to change and explore what it means to be "normal." The series is created and written by Robia Rashid and Academy Award-winning producer Seth Gordon.

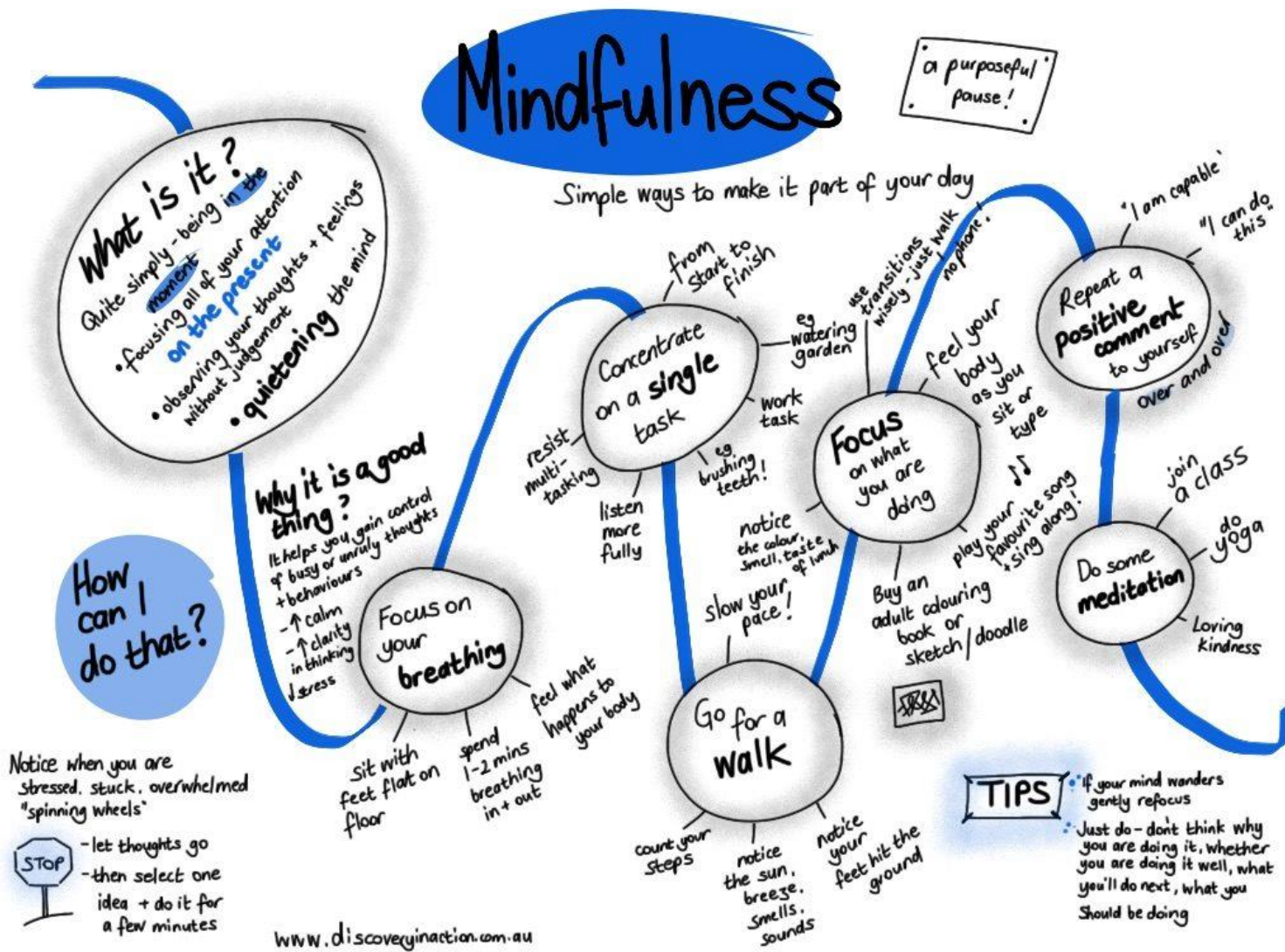
**The Good Doctor (2017)** [Watch it on Netflix](#) Shaun Murphy, a young surgeon with autism and Savant syndrome, is recruited into the surgical unit of a prestigious hospital.

**The A Word (2016)** [Watch it on Amazon Prime](#) The Hughes family work and love and fight like every other family. Then, their youngest son is diagnosed with autism and they don't feel like every other family anymore.

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Any step forward, no matter how small it may seem to others, is a huge step in the right direction. Many of our children make such steps all the time. Sometimes we lose sight of how significant it is **for them**. It's as important to celebrate the small steps as it is the big ones!

**If you feel you are struggling and need support for your own mental health, please speak to your GP.**

**For urgent advice and support call 0800 953 0110**

For a range of mental health support charities please go to

[Mental Health | nldg \(northlancsdirectionsgroup.com\)](http://Mental Health | nldg (northlancsdirectionsgroup.com))