

# ASD Family Help

Pembrokeshire

Registered Charity No. 1135718

## 5 Top Tips Time Autism and Anxiety

Our young people can become anxious and will often try to avoid situations/places/demands and may mask or become distressed and have a meltdown. Here are our 5 top tips when supporting our children with regards feeling anxious. Do always try and put yourself into how they are feeling.

1. Always monitor, observe and try and connect with how your child is feeling, which zone are they in?
  - i. **Green**- Relaxed, calm open to talk to you – you can ask questions and usually ask them to follow an instruction.
  - ii. **Yellow** – starting to rumble. Not feeling ok, getting frustrated – A distraction may work here or a simple hug / fiddle toy.
  - iii. **Red** – Cross, angry, distressed, anxious – they will probably need some space, know that you are there. Take the Low Arousal approach.
2. Keep language simple and try and reduce demands, can you try and change it into a request or choice? Really stop, slow down and think about how to best communicate and what words to use. Sometimes just saying and doing nothing for a moment can really help. Be aware of your facial expressions. Individuals with extreme anxiety can be hyper sensitive to tone of voice and facial clues, which can often cause them distress.
3. Think about creating a Happy Box or Calm Bag – put fiddle toys in it, headphones, books/magazines, ideas on what else they can do such as breathing, count to ten, calming activities, sensory ideas, a sign encouraging them to ask for help etc.
4. Write worries down on post it notes, use worries boxes or get them to text them to you. Show empathy: “I know you find math’s really hard. I do too. Shall we work on this together?” Understand and genuinely accept your child’s feelings in response to a situation. Feeling their feelings with them.
5. Work on their wellbeing, create a 5 ways to wellbeing plan.

Most of all create Structure and Nature with lots of love and empathy. Its ok not to have all of the answers, however you can just let them know you are there and on their side. Working on their wellbeing can really help. Along with them understanding that anxiety is normal, teach them slowly how to manage it.

**Do book onto the Autism and Anxiety Workshop and learn more about why our young people become anxious and how we can support them.**