

Parents and Carers Reflective session

Suicide Prevention for Autistic Children and Young People



Introductions



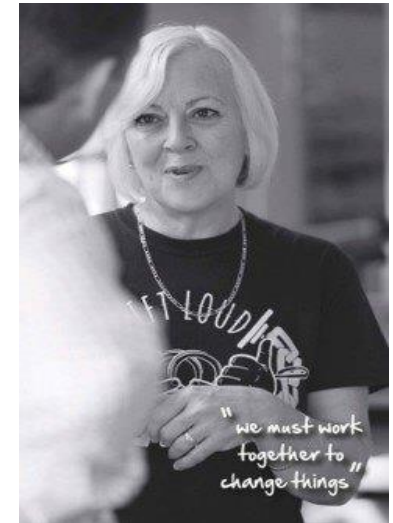
Conall



Emily



Stephen



Sue

Training Etiquette



- Please mute your mic when not talking.
- Please turn your camera on during this session for us to see each other during discussions.
- Please ask questions or add comments by putting the raise hand icon up or in the chat function if that's more comfortable for you.
- All of your questions are important. Don't be afraid to ask.

Wellbeing



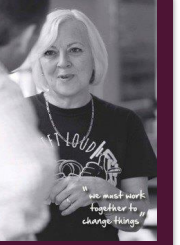
- This training will discuss matters concerning suicide and self harm. You may find the sensitive nature of the issues being presented upsetting.
- Please feel free to take a break and turn your camera and sound off.
- Share your thoughts in this session in this session if you wish to do so
- We will have a break out room running in this session if anyone wishes to take a break and talk to one of our team if you find the content distressing
- Call Papyrus and ask to speak to one of their advisors
Call: 0800 068 4141 Text: 07860 039 967 Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org available 24/7
- Call Samaritans on 116 123 –available 24/7

What We Are Going To Do Today



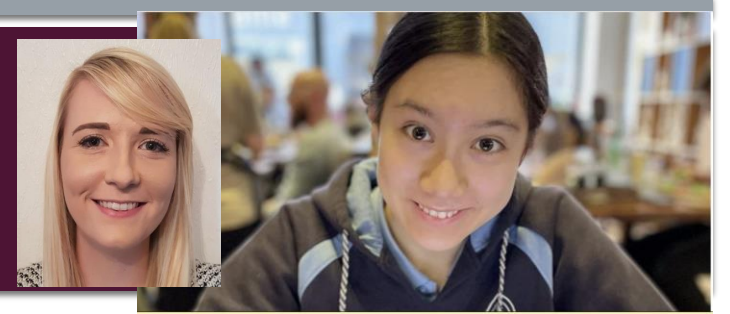
- Today's session is an opportunity to reflect on the learning from your first session
- It is a time to ask further questions and raise any concerns you might have about supporting your family members based on the first session
- We will share some thought pieces written by autistic people and a parent to help us think through the issues you may face
- We will look at warning signs and explore further how you can support your loved ones

Questions To Reflect On



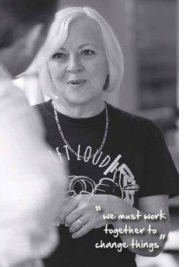
- What do you feel you have learned about why autistic children and young people are more vulnerable and at greater risk of suicide?
- How did the training make you feel? Were there things that surprised you or concerned you?

Case study – Caitlyn Scott Lee



- https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/my-daughter-wrote-diary-one-29851213?int_source=amp_continue_reading&int_medium=amp&int_campaign=continue_reading_button#amp-readmore-target
- Her father Jonathan Scott-Lee, in an interview with the Sunday Times, said that his daughter, who had been diagnosed with autism, had been dreading facing the “headmistress’s detention” and had “hyper-fixated” on the punishment
- “Mr Scott-Lee, who has two younger daughters, said: “She was mortified to receive a detention. To some of us, it is a badge of honour, sitting in a room for two hours to work. But Caitlyn seemed hyper-fixated on the concept of a detention, and it seems she was determined to do anything she could to avoid it.
- “She even spoke to her housemistress and asked for an upgrade to a ‘suspension’, despite the fact that it was a more severe punishment.”

Questions to reflect on



What information and support do you feel you need as families to be able to help your child or young person who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts?

What has helped you to support them? What have been barriers to you getting that support?

Warning signs



- Can you think of some warning signs which indicate that an autistic person is thinking about taking their own life?

Warning signs



- ***Some of these signs include:***
- Sudden or increased withdrawal
- No words to communicate acute distress
- Current traumatic event, reported by self or others
- Marked increase in rate and/or severity of self-harm
- Worsening in levels of symptoms of anxiety and/or depression

Warning signs



- What preventative steps have you learned you can take?
- What changes have you made/ are planning to make ?

Blog – Lisa Morgan



- "Here are some suggestions on what *not* to say to someone who is suicidal:
 - Everything will be ok. No, it's not ok, nothing is ok. In the moment this feels dismissive and condescending.
 - You have so much to be thankful for... which may be true, but the suicide ideation remains. It doesn't go away because there are things to be thankful for any more than a person with a fatal disease can make *it* go away by being thankful for what *they have*. For me, suicide ideation is not a feeling or a personal fault. It's an intrusive thought process of the brain.
 - You just need to think about good things. That is not going to help. It's like telling a person who is paralyzed that if they think enough about good things, they will be able to get up and walk."

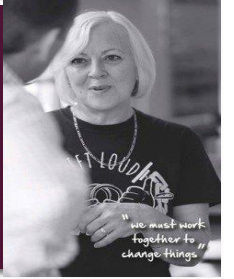
Blog – Lisa Morgan



- "And here are some suggestions for what to say to a person struggling with suicide ideation.
 - I'm glad you called. After reaching out, it feels comforting to know it was ok to call.
 - You matter. With all the negative thoughts swirling around in the mind of someone with suicide ideation, hearing that they matter can make a huge difference in the way they view themselves in the moment.
 - I love and care about you. Oh! A connection to another person has just been made. Telling someone they are loved and cared for is one of the best things to say."



Getting started on difficult conversations



- Looking at the Grassroots “Stay Alive “App
- Learning more – <https://prevent-suicide.org.uk/training/safetalk/>
- [Autism and Suicide Awareness Training :: Zero Suicide Alliance](#)
- Validation
- Offering hope
- Kindness
- Empathy
- Safety Planning

Blog by Trevor Stevens: Polly's Experiences



Polly had struggled with anxiety and low moods throughout school and had gone through various Associations that provided talking therapy. Unprovoked, her mental health started to spiral and she suffered a severe depressive episode. She became dependent on self-harm. She opened up to her Head of Year who was incredible in supporting her. This teacher contacted services immediately and did all she could to get Polly the help she needed. She stayed behind after school for hours if Polly ever felt unsafe and got cover for her lesson when Polly was in crisis. She made sure Polly told her father how she was feeling. As Polly's situation became more serious and she became increasingly suicidal her teacher gave her yet more of her time. She would phone Polly in the evening if she felt she was going to hurt herself. When Polly first attempted suicide she checked on Polly's closest friends to ensure they were coping.

Why is this response helpful to Polly?

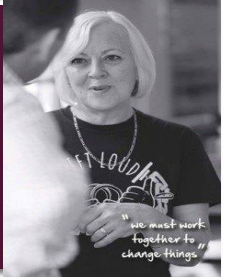


Challenges for Families



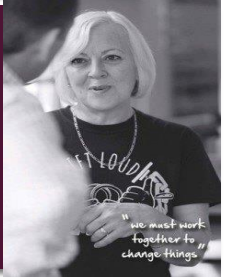
- Balancing the needs of your other children with the needs of your autistic child who is experiencing suicidal thoughts or self-harm
- Families can feel guilty about having to send their child to school, because of the pressures of full attendance arising from Government educational policy
- Trying to manage your job whilst being available to support your child or young person who is in a mental health crisis or who is feeling suicidal- see Working Families for advice and support
- <https://workingfamilies.org.uk/news-events/blogs/how-employers-can-adapt-to-meet-the-needs-of-carers/>

Challenges for Families



- Check to see if you're entitled to a parent or carers assessment through your local council
- Getting short break services –see Surrey Short Breaks information- contact the Family Information Service to find out what is available
- Look at the Surrey Local Offer
- <https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/parents-and-carers/help-and-support/childrens-services>

Getting Support for Family Carers



- Parenting in Autistic Burnout - Dr Alice Nicholls- excellent article full of practical tips on supporting your child if you are an autistic parent
- Online community for parents and carers | Ambitious about Autism
- Local Support through Family Voice
- <https://familyvoicesurrey.org/>

Questions and Answers



Thank you.

Any further questions?

Final Thoughts

- Resources are available on the portal.
- Please fill in the final poll and the feedback form
- <https://forms.office.com/e/B0y7UjX0Xq>

Thank You!

Suicide Prevention for autistic
young people | Parents & Carers |
Reflective Session

