@REALLYGREATSITE

FREE EVENT!

RAISING NEURODIVERSE

KIDS

An evening of understanding, strategies, and support for parenting children with ADHD and/or Autism



Alison Schroeder
Director/Speech Language Therapist,
Socially Speaking



Kallysa Hollis, *Ngāti Hauiti* Practice Leader/Registered Social Worker, *Christchurch Methodist Mission*

Thursday 12th June 2025 7-9pm 111 Seaview Rd, New Brighton

HOSTED BY YOUTH ALIVE TRUST AND MANA AKE



Evening timente

7pm	Introductions
7:15pm	Alison: Autism
7:55pm	BREAK
8:05pm	Kallysa: ADHD
8:45pm	Wrap up, mingling, Q&A

Kanakia





Mana Ake — Stronger for Tomorrow provides mental health and wellbeing support for children in primary school years 1-8 across Canterbury and Kaikōura.

Mana Ake kaimahi (workers) are employed by one of 13 NGO providers and support schools, families and whānau when children are experiencing issues that impact their wellbeing such as managing emotions, friendship skills, self-esteem, and coping with change.



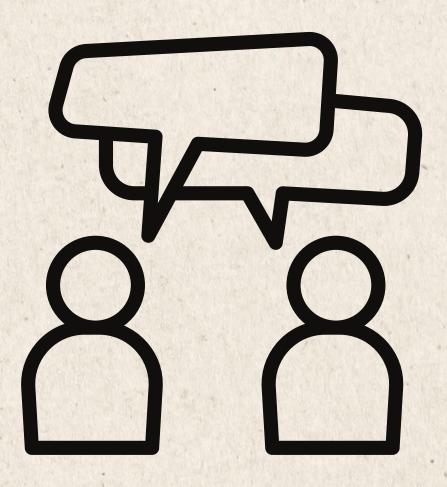
A youth and whānau support agency based at Grace Vineyard Beach Campus in New Brighton. We have worked for over 30 years on the East of Christchurch, running a wide variety of programmes, clubs, groups, events and various supports for hundreds of people each week. A small staff team, is supported by an army of volunteers who want to make their community a better place!

Chat to those around you about what brought you to this event.?



On a scale of 1-10:

What's your knowledge about Autism What's your knowledge about ADHD?





Introduction to Neurodiversity

A little understanding goes a long way

Initial consultations with Speech & Language /Occupational Therapists

Workshops

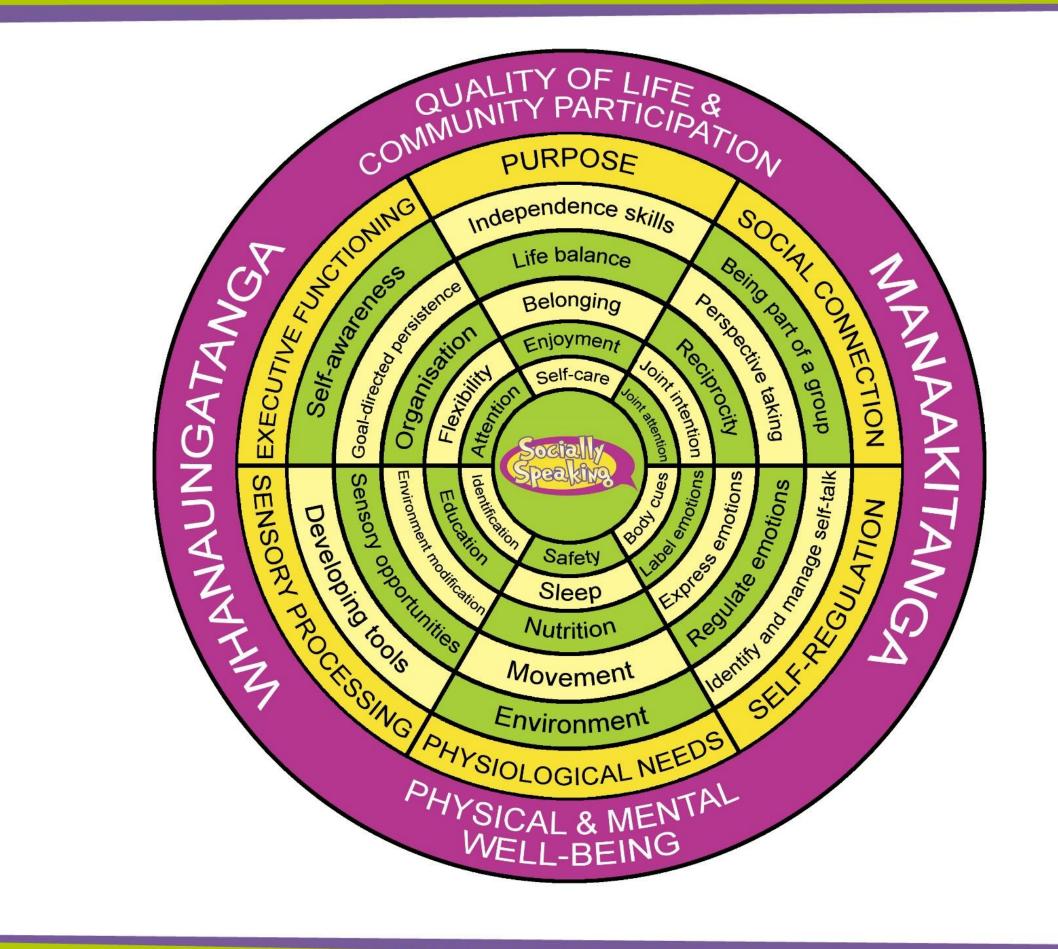


Individual therapy

Social connection groups
School groups

Home/School/
Community
Support







Challenge









Neurodiversity:

People experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as disabilities

Neurodivergent:

Individuals whose brains develop or work differently for some reason





Great contributors to our lives....

Dan Aykroyd – Comedic Actor Hans Christian Andersen – Children's Author

Susan Boyle – Singer Tim Burton – Movie Director Lewis Carroll – Author of "Alice in Wonderland"

Henry Cavendish
- Scientist

Charles Darwin – Naturalist, Geologist, and Biologist

Emily Dickinson

- Poet

Bobby Fischer – Chess Grandmaster Daryl Hannah – Actress & Environmental Activist

Thomas
Jefferson – Early
American
Politician

Steve Jobs – Former CEO of Apple James Joyce – Author of "Ulysses"

Stanley Kubrick – Film Director Barbara
McClintock –
Scientist and
Cytogeneticist

Michelangelo – Sculptor, Painter, Architect, Poet Sir Isaac Newton

– Mathematician,
Astronomer, &
Physicist

Jerry Seinfeld – Comedian

Nikola Tesla – Inventor Billie Eilish -Singer

Andy Warhol – Artist









Autism

- How common is autism (2021 figures)? 1/100,
 1/75, 1/31, 1/54
- Can autism be cured?
- Do people with autism have the same, lower, higher IQ than people without autism?
- What are three positive strengths for someone with autism?



Autism

- Neurodevelopmental lifelong condition that affects cognitive, sensory, and social processing, changing the way people see the world and interact with others.(1/31)
- Some autistic people need only a little support while others need a lot of help with learning and everyday activities
- Every person living with autism is unique, with a wide range of skills, qualities, interests, and personality styles.





The Three Functional Levels of Autism

ASD Level 1

Requiring Support



difficulty initiating social interactions

organization and planning problems can hamper independence **ASD Level 2**

Requiring Substantial Support



social interactions limited to narrow special interests

frequent restricted/ repetitive behaviors **ASD Level 3**

Requiring Very Substantial Support



severe deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills

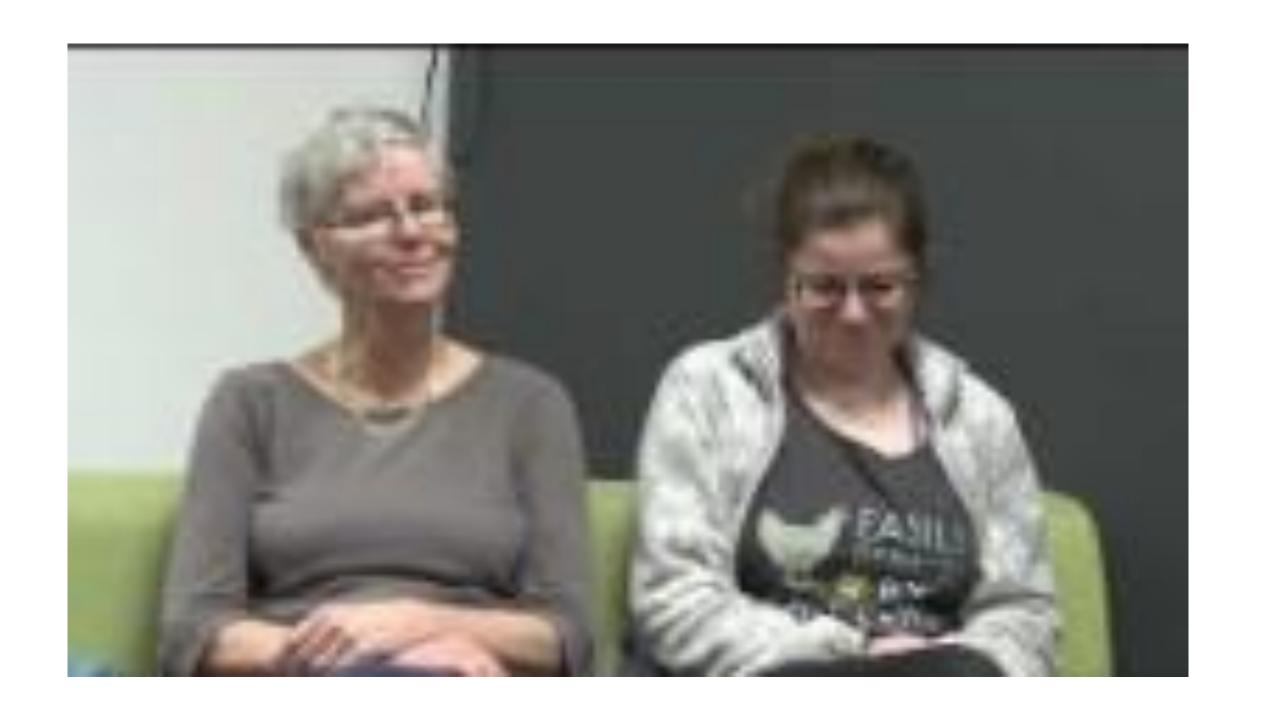
great distress/difficulty changing actions or focus



Just because you experience my autism mildly, doesn't mean I experience it mildly. I mask to the point that I make everyone else feel comfortable, yet inside I'm trying to hold everything together.

Frances Brennan, autistic speech language therapist









Autism +

Individuals who received their diagnosis earlier in life expressed more acceptance of being autistic and a more positive sense of self."

Early identification positively influences the individual's psychological health

Late identification of autism also associated with improvements in overall wellbeing, generating a sense of relief and empowerment



Autism



- IQ scores are not inherently affected by autism; however, other conditions that do affect IQ, can co-exist with autism.
- Above/below average intellectual ability is generally due to a separate diagnosis, not the autism itself.
- Approximately 70% of individuals with Autism also have ADHD
- Often co-exist with specific learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia, dyscalculia etc)



Females



- Females- average age of diagnosis 13 yrs
- Males- average age of diagnosis is 8 yrs
- True prevalence in females much higher than previously thought – identified much later
- Diagnosis often triggered by another issue e.g. anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, OCD, ADHD, selective mutism, gender dysphoria or anorexia nervosa



Females



- may be extremely sociable or chatty, or very shy and isolative. It is common for them to have one or two strong friendships, but struggle socialising in groups.
- may have a fear of making mistakes perfectionist
- observe, analyse, imitate, mask and appear to cope in the community then fall apart at home.
 Masking requires a phenomenal amount of effort by the person, which is not always obvious to an observer
- In many cases masking leads to meltdowns at home as a result of an overwhelming and confusing day, with family life becoming very difficult

ASD - Strengths

Every person living with autism is unique, with a wide range of skills, qualities, interests, and personality styles.

"If you have met one person with autism, you have met one person with autism."

- Memorising and learning information quickly in some areas and contexts.
- Full of facts/information about their special interest
- Thinking and learning in a visual way.
- Logical thinking ability, precise and detail orientated
- May excel in
 - a)academic areas such as science, engineering and mathematics as they are technical and logical subjects or b) music and foreign languages



ASD - Strengths

- Exceptional honesty and reliability say what they mean
- Strong desire for equality and fairness- strong advocates for others when they see injustice, can be highly empathetic
- Unique (being different is what allows space for new ideas, inventions, solutions etc)
- Being dependable in regard to schedules and routines, very punctual and loyal
- Determined
- Able to concentrate for long periods of time when motivated.

Being autistic:

is considered clinically to be a medical condition but is also a source of social identity





ASD - Challenges

Difficulty making conversation

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issues understanding sarcasm, idioms and humour processing challenges small talk might not make sense listening – maybe only do one thing at a time e.g. sit still or listen, make eye contact or listen
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Difficulty making or maintaining close friendships

problems reading the emotions/body language/facial expressions of others

extreme interest in special topics

Ioneliness is a big issue amongst the autistic community



ASD - Challenges

Rigidity/inflexibility

Insistence on daily routines, sameness, repetitive behaviours are efforts to reduce uncertainty, uncontrollability, and exposure to adverse stimuli and social interaction. This is an adaptive response to optimise their wellbeing, quality of life, and interaction with the environment

Challenges with regulating emotions

Difficulty with interoception/identifying and expressing emotion Often working harder than others to regulate as can often be 'heightened' and more prone to react in 'big' ways to seemingly 'small' problems



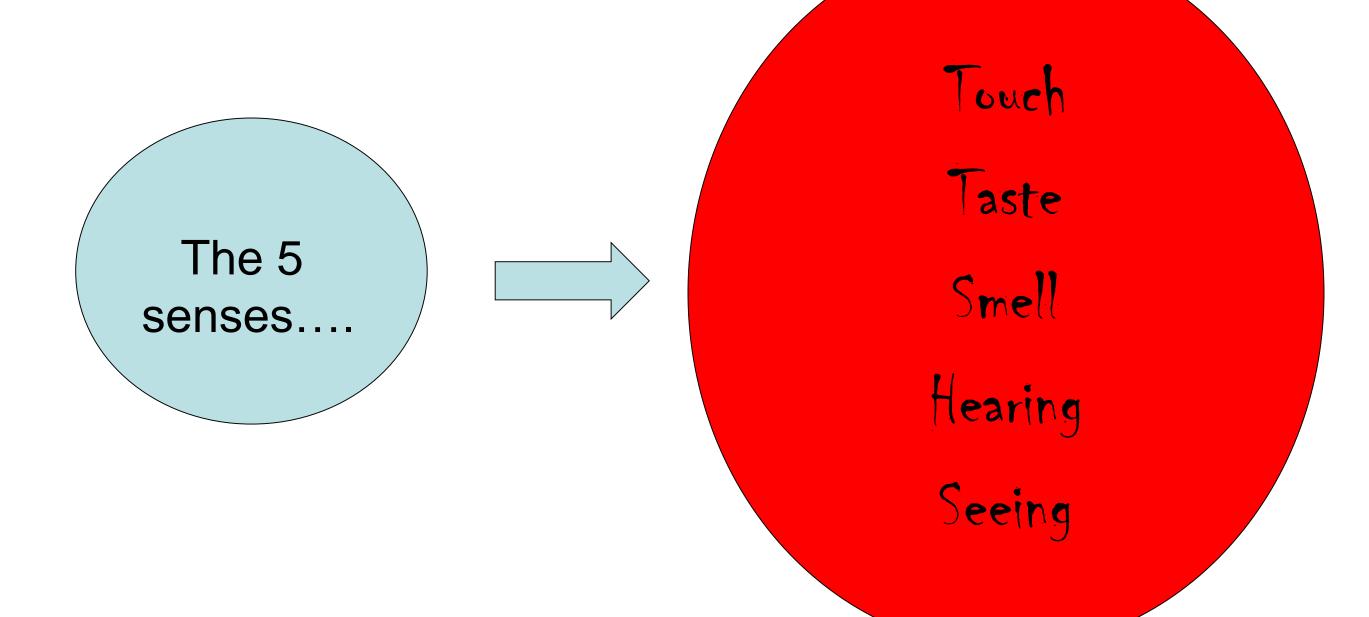
Sensory processing

How our brains take in information through the senses, understand what that information means, and respond in some way.





The Sensory Systems



The Sensory Systems

Other senses...

Proprioception

Vestibular

Interoception



- Overly sensitive to loud noises
- Picky eater
- Chewing things
- Finds it hard to line up with others
- Bumps into people/clumsy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Always 'on the go'
- Touching others and objects...





Behaviour presentations

- Externalised
- observed as outwardfacing behaviour or traits in response to stress or stimuli
- is what is generally thought of as autism. In other words, it meets our society's stereotyped understanding of what autism looks like.

- Internalised
- hold stress/anxiety
 inside in an attempt to
 appear like everyone
 else
- generally hidden
- very common in autistic females





What happens when a child becomes dysregulated?

Meltdowns

Meltdowns may occur when a person's ability to cope with a situation is exceeded. It may be **triggered** by cognitive, sensory or emotional overload

Fight, Flight or Freeze

Brain activity moves from higher order processes to lower order processes to keep oneself safe





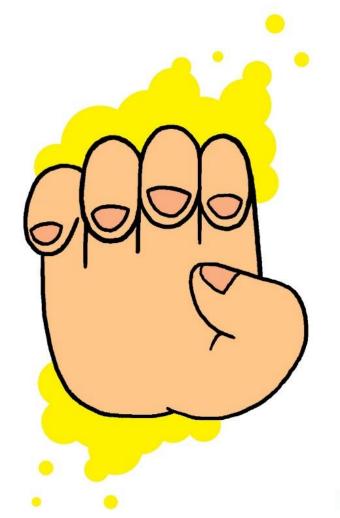


Hand Model of the Brain

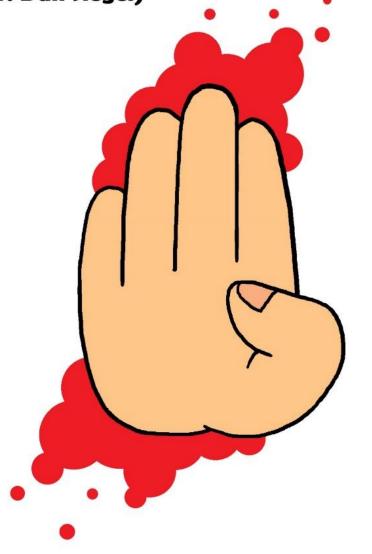
(Dr. Dan Siegel)



- Thinking brain
- Upstairs brain
- Ready to learn



- Be aware



- Feeling brain
- Downstairs brain
- 'Flipping your lid'

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All stress, big or small, real or imagined, registers the same way – DANGER! – and we go into the 'brain stem' the part of the brain responsible for survival

- Primitive brain doesn't know the difference between the stress of struggling with maths and the stress of a bear
- Amygdala (fear centre of the brain)lights up and we go into fight, flight, or freeze mode – SURVIVAL
- Problem solving becomes more difficult
- With self-regulatory skills a child's brain can dampen the stress response to a manageable level by using adaptive strategies







STRESS RESPONSE



- Yelling
- Swearing
- Hitting
- Moving towards
 what feels
 threatening
- Oppositional
- Defiant
- Controlling
- Angry



- Running away
- Avoiding
- Procrastinating
- Ignoring
- Overwhelmed
- Panicked
- Wanting to escape
- Moving away



- Zoning out
- Difficulty completing tasks
- Shutting down
- Isolating self
- Says 'I don't know'
- Urge to hide
- Unable to move

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False assumptions....

- that all children possess "top-down" control that allows them to think about their bodies and minds and control their behaviours.
- that if a child sometimes displays control, then the child always has the ability to do so.



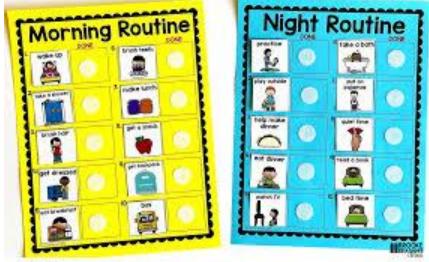
The truth is.....

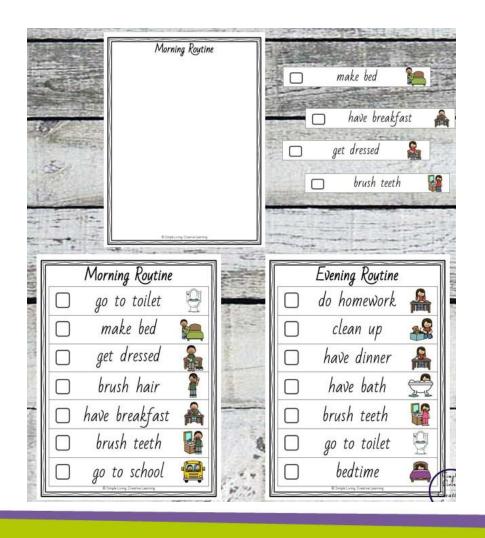
many behaviourally challenged children/young people don't yet have the ability to self-regulate.

Like all skills, self-regulation takes time and teaching.



Visual timetables, lists and schedules:





These can help to create structure and routine, take away uncertainty and make daily life more predictable



Executive Functioning

Time Menegement



ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS

-Turn off music and TV. -Keep electronics away from the workspace. -Splitting attention may increase the length of time a task takes.

READY ON TIME

-What does 'ready' look like?

-Take a photo of your child or

-Take a photo of your child or

their things when completely

their things when completed to as a

ready - use this picture as a

- Encourage them to imagine what the completed task looks like.





-Predict how long you think a task will take. -Record how long it actually takes to help plan for next -Some children struggle with awareness of the passage of time. Visual timers are useful to clearly show the movement of time.

THINK IN CATEGORIES

-Categories take up less room in our memory than lots of inividual items/tasks of inividual items/tasks
-Encourage your child to think
in categories, e.g. 'Personal
items' (keys, wallet, phone),
'Food' (lunchbox, drink bottle, snacks), etc.



TEACH SCHEDULING

-Teach your child to use a planner to anticipate due dates and commitments.

FAMILY CALENDAR

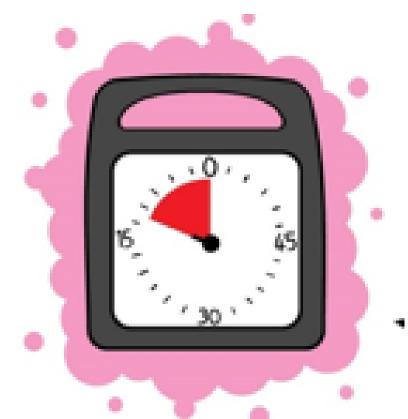
-Keep a family calendar everyone can see what's coming up and prepare for any changes.



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Preparing for change:





- Include a new and positive daily activity into visual schedule
- Use visual timers to indicate how long the task will last
- Reboot, take a break

Functioning

Flexibility



-we need to teach these calming strategies - start by modelling them.

-Show your child that you can get frustrated too - this normalises the feeling.





Let's take a break to 'reboot'.

REBOOTING

-Sometimes we can get stuck - our brains can feel overloaded. -Provide an opportunity to reboot with a short break. -Going for a walk or listening to some calming music are good strategies.

THOUGHT **PROCESSES**

-Sometimes we can get 'stuck' on a thought - e.g. 'He shouldn't have...' -Stop that thought in its tracks by changing it to a 'sometimes' and tagging on an fit's okay. - Encourage the use of a positive mantra, e.g. "I can try..."

NOTICE FLEXIBLE

-Comment when characters in books or TV use flexible thinking -Make comments during play when something new is tried - "Wow, that's a great idea - nice flexible thinking!"

Wow, Susie changed her plan and it turned out great! That was super flexible

game and that's

Sometimes, other people

will choose the

SWITCHING TRACKS

-Prepare your child for change if you know it's coming - talk about it and put it on the family calendar. -Help them develop coping skills by introducing small changes regularly, like the route to school or having food prepared slightly differently.

BUILDING COPING SKILLS

-Empathise - ask them how it made them feel, or you can model the emotions - "That must have been frustrating." -Explain the problem and see if you and your child can come up with an alternative solution together.

I know you were really disappointed that you couldn't play your game today. It's not okay throw your tablet down, so let's think of another way to show you're mad without breaking







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VISUAL SUPPORTS

Visual support is more accessible than verbal information for some children. It doesn't replace verbal information, it adds to it - and lasts much longer.

Attention and Listening

- It is important that you ensure you have your child's attention when you are giving them instructions don't try and compete with other activities.
- · Use your child's name and make sure they are looking at you when giving them an instruction. Ask them to repeat back the instruction to ensure they have understood.
- · Use visual cues such as gesture or an object your child may recall the visual instruction better than the spoken one, especially if they are in a heightened emotional state or have auditory processing difficulties.
- Break down intructions into smaller, more manageable tasks and give them one at a time.
- Alternate 'listening' and 'doing' activities to help them focus for longer.



Visual Timers

A timer can support your child in seeing how long an activity is going to last and to help them with transitioning from one activity to another. Time Timers are a great resource which show the passing of time in red, and are available from www.fishpond.co.nz.

Alternatively, there are Time Timer apps that you can download on your computer or an iPad. This also supports children with waiting - they can see how much longer something is going to take and use a strategy to regulate themselves.

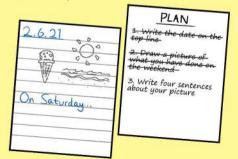


Visual Timetables, Lists and Schedules

These can help to:

- Create structure and routine, take away uncertainty and make daily life more predictable.
- Provide reassurance in knowing what is happening 'now and next' (or 'first', 'then') in a task or routine. This gives clear guidelines and expectations to follow.
- Increase independence and organisation skills, including task initiation and task completion.
- Support working memory difficulties by acting as a 'backup' to spoken instructions.

Teach your child how to use these visuals, for example, to cross off each step as it is completed. Start by helping with most steps and then gradually increase the amount your child is doing independently. For example:



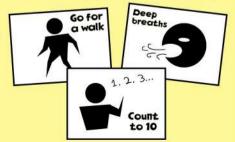
Preparing for Change/Transitions/Flexibility

Some children find it difficult to cope with change. To encourage flexibility, you could try:

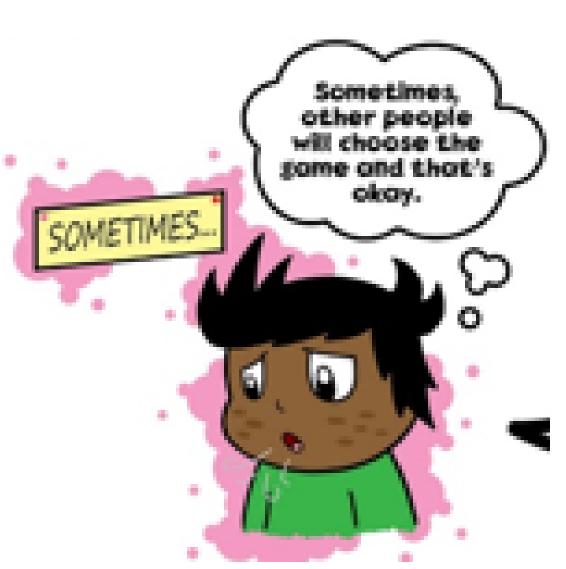
- Taking a break picture/word prompts for calming strategies can be pinned up in useful places to remind your child to stop, do something different (such as a 5 minute walk), then try again.
- Including a new (and positive) daily activity into a visual schedule. Over time this may become a neutral activity and eventually you can include any changes that may come up once the child

is befter able to manage.

 Social stories/scripts can also be a great resource in preparing for change or an anxiety-provoking event. Please contact Socially Speaking for more information on what they are and how to create them.

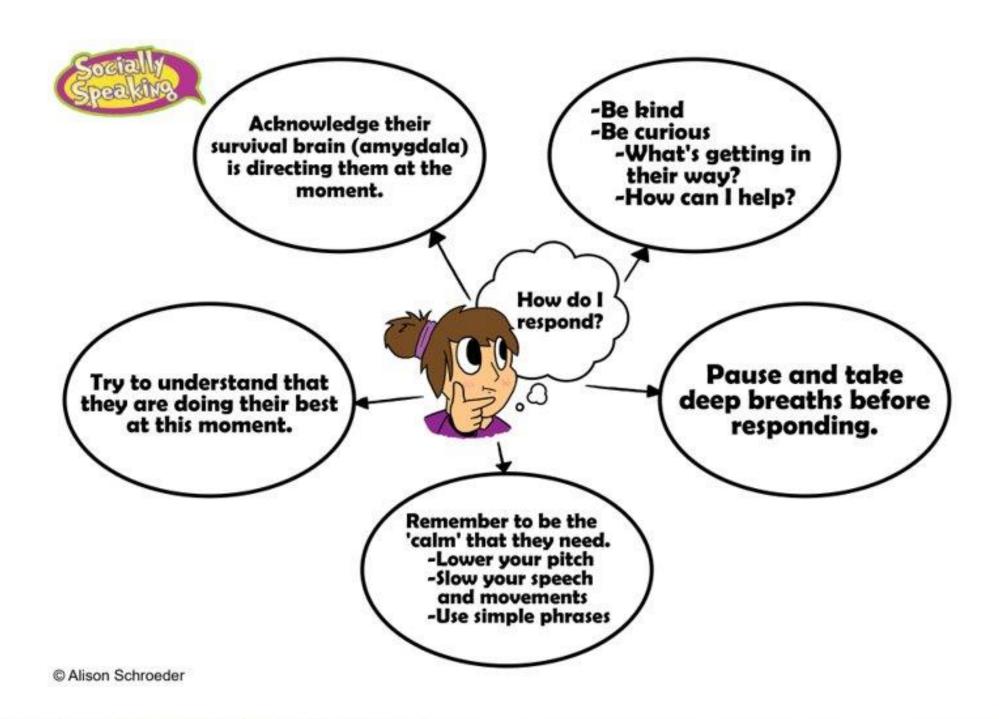


Game Playing:



- Together make 'Fair Play rules' and 'Adding to the Fun rules'
- Choose simple turn taking games
- Take turns to choose a game – record on calendar

Five things to remember...



Take Away thoughts

- A greater understanding from adults goes a long way to ensure a child feels valued and confident
- Neurodivergence is not an excuse but an explanation. When you have an explanation, you have the ability to do something about it. Putting in the appropriate accommodations/adjustments will reduce the likelihood of overwhelm and problematic behaviours



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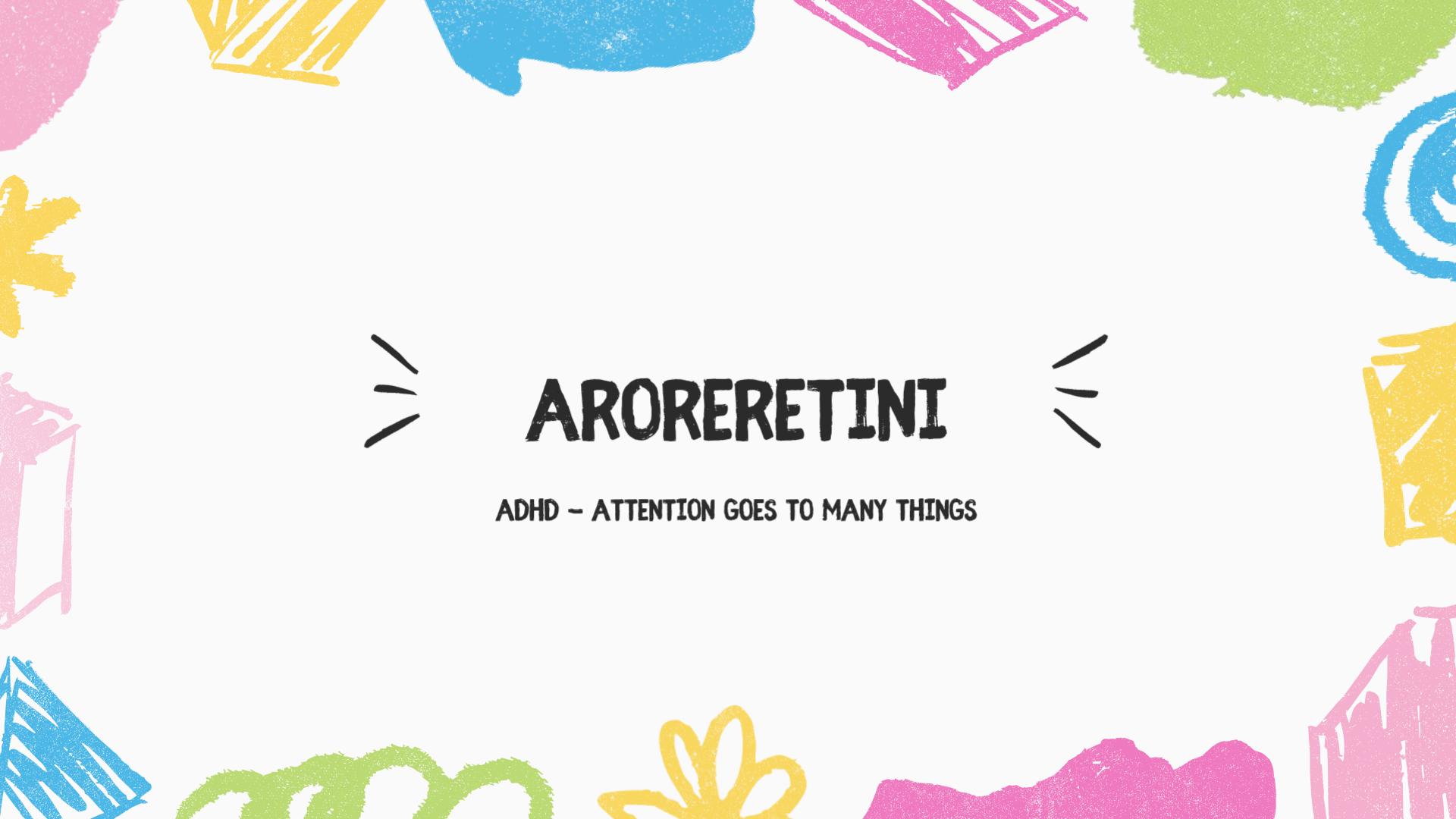
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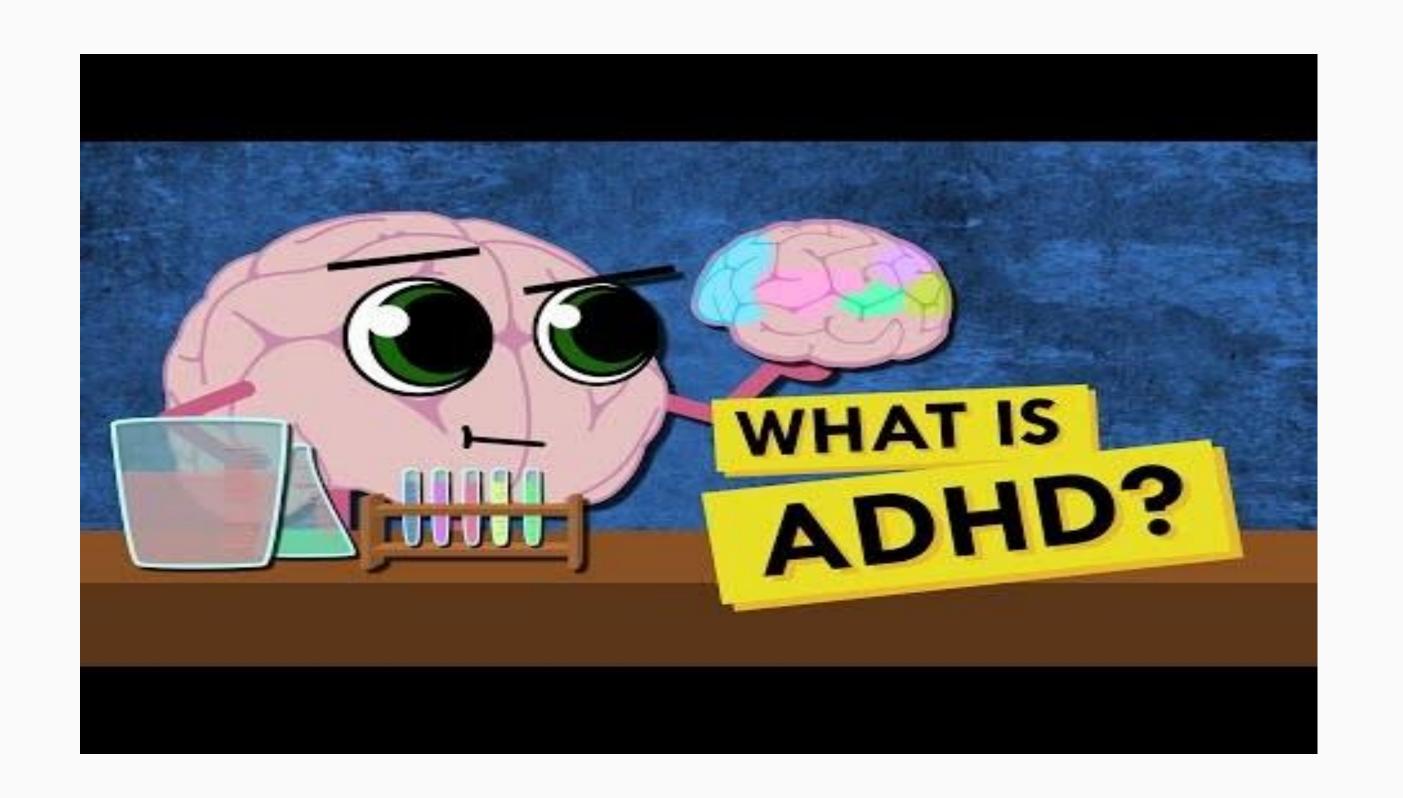
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- 7. http://psychcentral.com/lib/neurotransmitters-involved-in-adhd/
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- 9. http://www.hawking.org.uk/the-grand-design.html
- 10. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dqXHHCc5IA



Break Time

5-10min grab a cuppa!





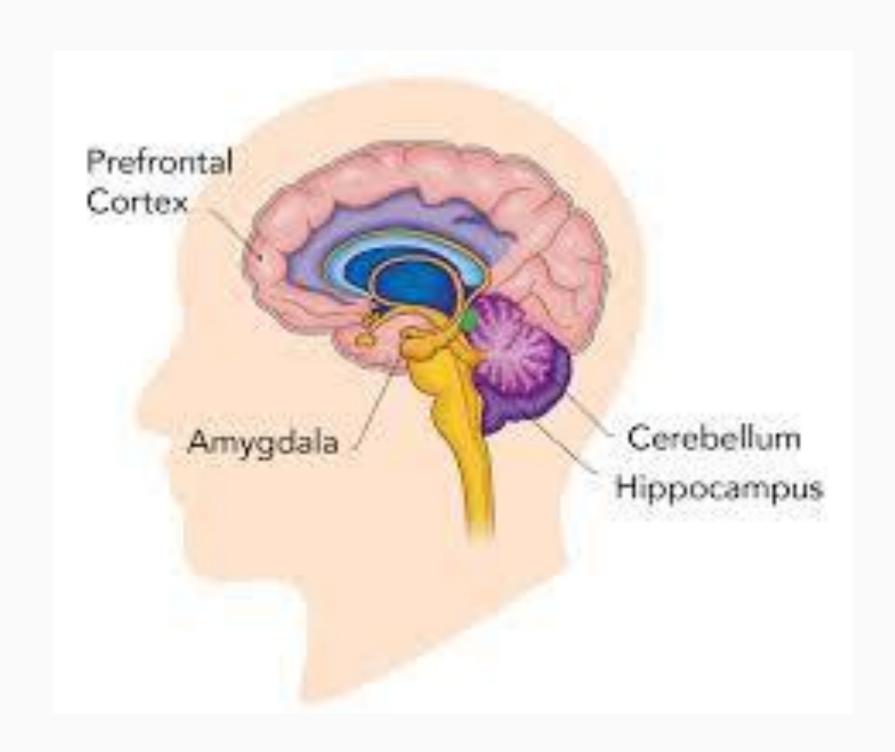


QUICK MYTH BUSTERS

- ADHD IS OVER DIAGNOSED
- WE'RE ALL A LITTLE ADHD
- ADHD IS CAUSED BY TOO MUCH SCREENTIME (AND FIXED BY NO SCREENS)
- REDUCING PROCESSED FOODS, SUGAR AND FOOD DYES CURES ADHD
- ADHD IS CAUSED BY BAD PARENTING







WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE BRAIN?

- Prefrontal Cortex is thought to develop slower, right hemisphere is particularly impacted
- Cerebellum is smaller in volume
- Smaller Amygdala
- Hippocampus is larger in ADHDers



DOPAMINE

THE FEEL GOOD CHEMICAL

A chemical messenger which plays a key role in motivation, reward and pleasure

Triggers feelings of reward and pleasure

Helps with working memory, learning, motivation, emotional regulation and sleep!

Two working theories about ADHD and dopamine



LENS SHIFT



QUICK PARENTING TIPS

- Scaffold tasks
- Break it down
- Visual reminders, lists, timers
- Body doubling
- Create a Dopa menu
- Praise often
- Reward frequently
- Speak less
- Scaffold interoception

NOVELTY

INTEREST

CHALLENGE

URGENT



Research shows ADHDers are able to focus better and respond more to difficult tasks when they are moving intensely

When Neurotypical kids move intensely it does not increase their ability to focus

Some hypothesizes suggest hyperactivity is the brains unconscious way of compensating underarousal or underactivity in the brain

MOVEMENT

HOW ADHDERS FOCUS AND LEARN BEST

Fidget toys
Elastic bands
Repetitive and rhythmic
exercises

Movement breaks should be part of the daily routine - break boring and mundane tasks up with movement.

Movement should not be a reward nor should it be taken away

BIG FEELINGS

RESPONDING TO EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

- Regulating our emotions is another key aspect of executive functioning
- Emotional Dysregulation originally part of diagnostical criteria
- Mindfulness
- · Spoon Theory
- Co-Regulation

Newgladecounselling

Spoon Theory

Spoon Theory is a way of explaining how life can be for some people with autism, ADHD or chronic pain conditions. A spoon is used to represent a unit of energy

Imagine in any one day, you have 12 spoons available.
Activities during the day use up some of your spoons.

For example:

Shower & dress = 1 spoon School/work = 3 spoons Socialising = 4 spoons Travelling = 4 spoons You can use more than 12 spoons in a day, but this will have to be deducted from the next day's spoons

The more overwhelming the activity (due to sensory issues, pain, social anxieties, masking etc) the more spoons it will use up.



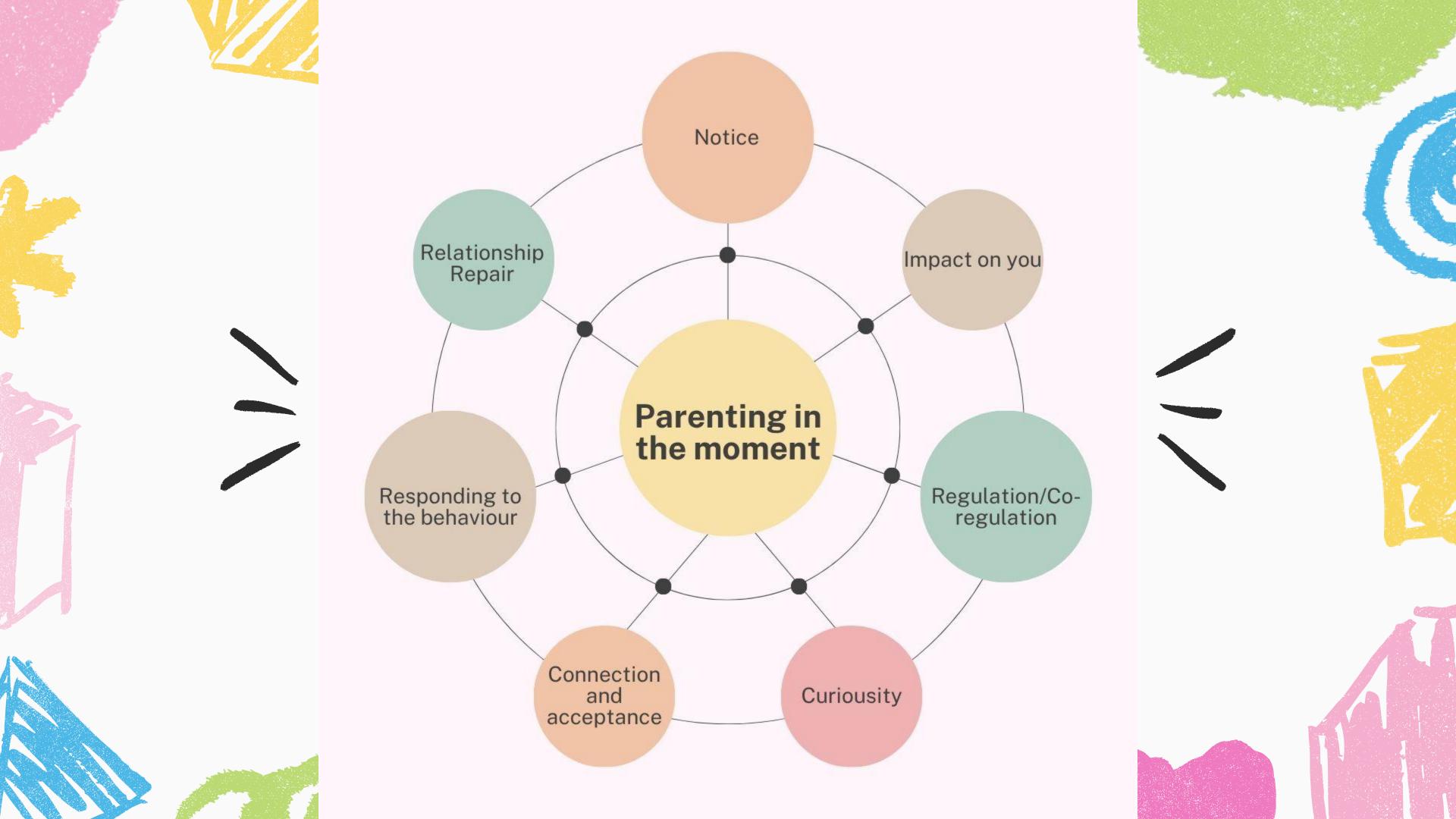


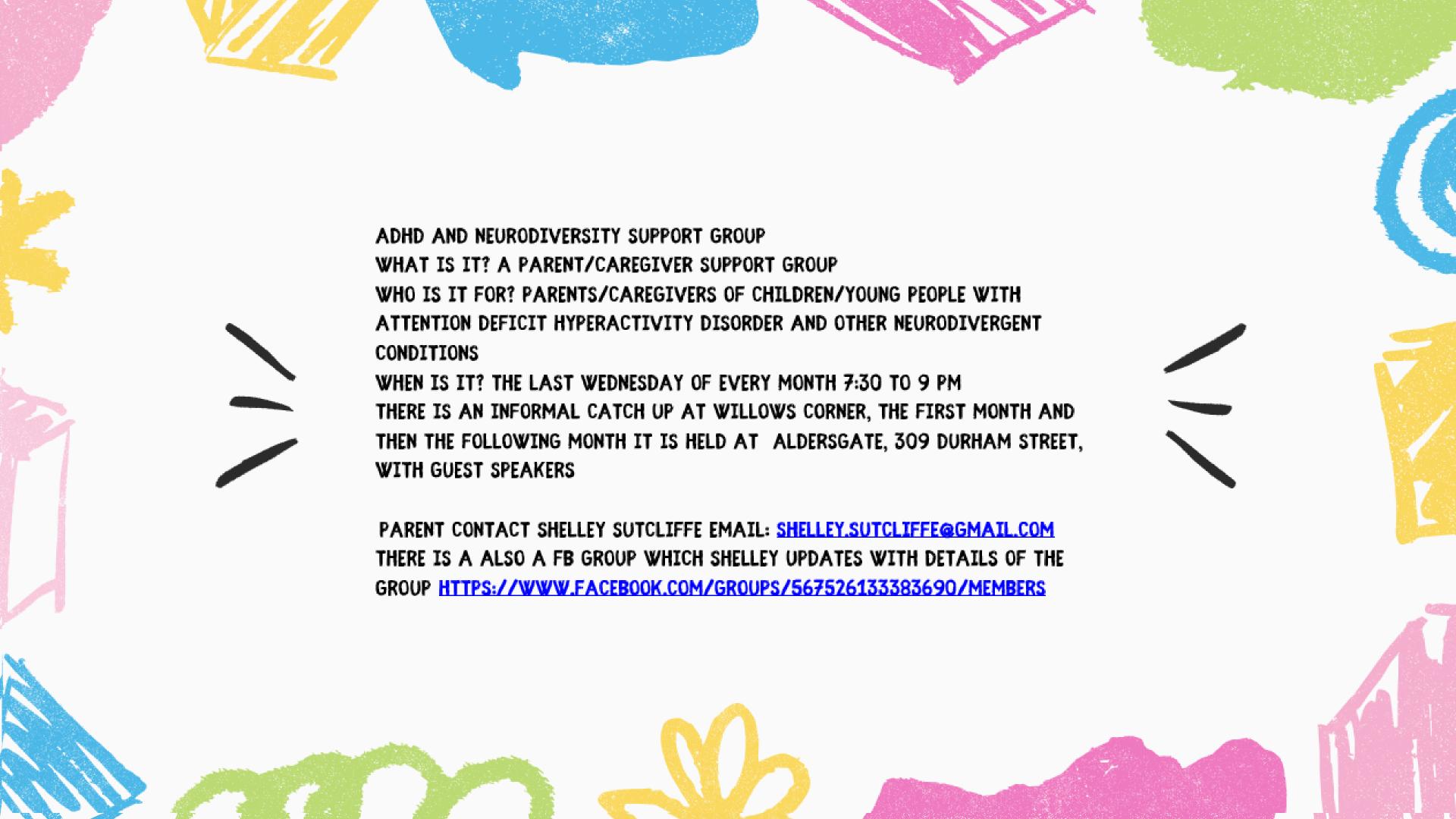






Using up too many spoons may mean you feel overloaded, overwhelmed, or even go into shutdown or burnout.





Thank you!

- Mingling in the foyer
- Q&A with our team
- Resources tables



we value your feedback!

Karakia

