

OSSME NEWS

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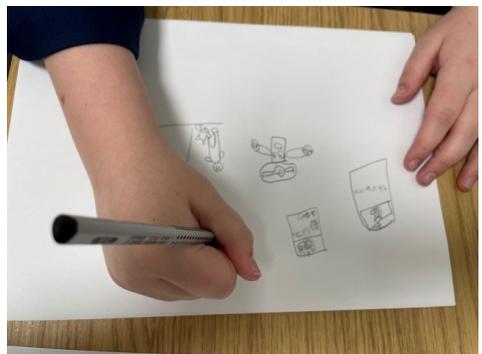
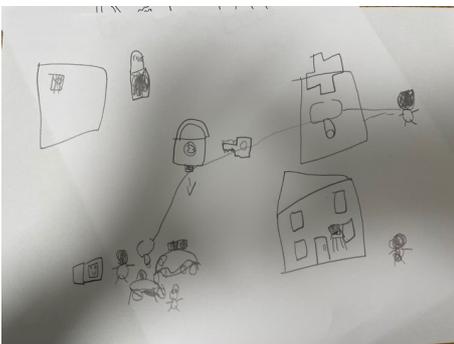
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Welcome to the **April—May 2021 Edition** of our newsletter—our first newsletter after the latest lockdown! We hope you are all staying safe and well and have been enjoying the return back into schools/offices. Here at OSSME we have been keeping incredibly busy supporting students, families and school staff both remotely and face to face. If you would like **further support** regarding OSSME packages, please feel free to contact us via ossme@autisminitiatives.org

A brief Introduction of Drawing and Talking

A short-term intervention therapy method for use with children who are on the waiting list for CAMHS or other external agencies, or for those who are beginning to show signs of anxious-avoidant insecure attachment. Innovative and informed therapy method, equipping adults with tools they need to help children who have suffered trauma or who have underlying emotional difficulties that may be affecting their learning and behaviour.

Working with the child or young person’s inner world needs to be carried out safely and non-intrusively, with respect for the child or young person’s own pace and state of being. This is why anyone using Drawing and Talking learns to stay in the world of the child or young person’s drawing. The child or young person sets the pace and decides what to bring to the session.



SEE BELOW PICTURE OF OUR STUDENT WHILE MAKING KINETIC SAND, SUPPORTED BY OUR AMAZING AIP KIRSTY IN HIS SCIENCE LESSON. THEY WERE WORKING ON ‘SAND SORCERY’ WHICH LOOKED LIKE SO MUCH FUN!



TIP OF THE WEEK

“A simple idea that worked really well in a school this week with a student who was shutting down. I suggested a tick list of things he needs to do in order to get his achievement points. It is stuck in his book and when he has ticked them the TA gives him more verbal praise and informs the teacher so that the achievement points can be put on. The phrasing is important as it empowers the student i.e. it doesn’t say ‘Can i...?’ implying they may not be able to do it, but instead assumes they can and they will want to tick it more (growth mindset/carol dweck) so it is framed as ‘I can....’ i.e. a statement rather than an interrogative. “ - Thanks Claire for sharing!

OSSME OFFERS OPEN AWARDS PACKAGES

For more information contact OSSME Open Awards Lead on Rocio.manzanera@autisminitiatives.org

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TRAINING FOR SCHOOL STAFF

OSSME have continued to offer CPD training for schools and staff who are currently under contract with us. Training links are regularly sent out to schools on a variety of topics such as The Science behind Autism, PDA and Classroom Strategies. Staff can access the training videos remotely. Once training is completed, staff will have access to a training quiz online, following this, OSSME will send out CPD Certificates as proof of training. This method of training has been extremely well received with over 500 certificates being sent out to members of staff so far.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AND CARERS

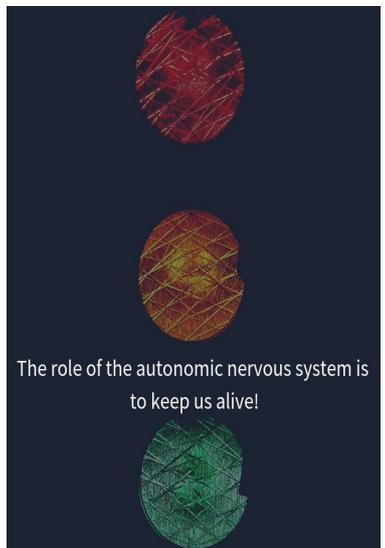
OSSME have been continuing to offer online training sessions throughout lockdown for parents.

For example:

- 1: Autism & the Science
2. Autism & Friendships
3. Autism & Communication#
4. Autism & Puberty
5. Autism & Sensory

OSSME TRAINING—THE VAGUS SYSTEM

The OSSME team have recently received training on 'The Vagus Nerve' and a theory called 'The Polyvagal Theory' and how this may have an impact on a person with Autism. The Vagus nerve is the primary neural pathway for the parasympathetic nervous system (our rest and digest pathway.) It is one of the twelve cranial nerves (skull nerves) responsible for our basic survival, homeostasis and social engagement. The Vagus nerve wanders through the body, linking together vital bodily systems and regions. The Polyvagal theory explains the multi-dimensional roles that the Vagus nerve plays to enhance the survival of vertebrates, relative to the nature of the environmental factors such as safety, danger and life threat.



According to the 'Polyvagal theory,' the autonomic nervous system (ANS) can be divided into three hierarchical branches, these are known as:

- **Dorsal vagal branch** of the Vagus nerve mediates immobility, shut-down, numbness, frozenness, death feigning, fainting, depressive behaviour, dissociation, flat affect, gaze aversion and monotonic voice.
- **Spinal sympathetic branch** of the nervous system mediates fight or flight, mobilisation and fear.
- **Ventral vagal branch** of the Vagus nerve mediates safety, healing, relaxation, social engagement, healthy curiosity, intimacy, healthy adventure and freedom.

OSSME OFFERS TRAINING PACKAGES

For more information contact OSSME Manager and Lead Trainer on Sharon.williams@autisminitiatives.org

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THE PROM

How stressful it can be for any child going to a prom, but add social and sensory challenges to the mix and the stress levels increase significantly. Don't assume you would know the stresses a young person may be thinking about. A person with autism has a great imagination. That imagination can stretch far beyond what you may assume.



TYPICALLY WE MAY SAY:

1. Be Positive and Relax: Your child senses your feelings very strongly and if you are worried about Prom then your child will be worried as well. See it as an exciting opportunity and your child will too. Treat Prom as a normal event and your son or daughter will have no reason to be anxious. The last thing you want to do is unwittingly transfer anxiety. It is understandable that you may feel nervous about your child fitting in, but the chances are it will all go fine and your child will have a good time.

2. Do your Research into the Arrangements: Are there teachers or support staff on hand at the Prom to assist in case of anxiety or distress? Phone up the school and ask. Make sure there are adequate provisions should your child need help. Is your child's date neurotypical, and if so does that person understand your child's requirements? Does the couple require a chaperone?

3. Prepare your Child for the Noise: No Prom is complete without loud music. If your child is uncomfortable with loud music, then prepare them ahead of time for what to expect. Let them know they can move away and take a break from it. Identify areas where they can take a timeout and relax. Perhaps arrange for somebody to assist them with this.

4. Prepare your Child for Flashing Lights: If your child has sensory issues, then the flashing lights typical at Proms can be very distressing. Let your child know they remove themselves at any time, and again, having somebody to assist them away from the lights can be useful.

5. Plan Drop-off and Pickup: Make sure that you, your child's date, chaperone or other person is on hand to safely drop off the couple at the prom and pick them up when it's over. A familiar face ready to pick up your child when the event is over is a good idea to calm any potential anxiety.

6. It's OK to go on Your Own: There is lots of pressure at this age that you have to have a date for prom. This adds unnecessary stress to any child and even more when a child with special needs suffers from anxiety. Make sure your child understands that Prom isn't about just having a date but a celebration with your peers for finishing your studies. If possible arrange to go in a group...it's a lot more fun and memorable!

But what about the worries they have that we could not comprehend, what others will think of them, what they will say to someone who sits/stands by them, how they are to dance/stand/sit, how do they join a group, not understanding the high or low emotions of others on the night or leading up to the event, all the sensory exposure of hair cut/new clothes, new nails and makeup, new smells and noise that may reach its height on the night of the prom causing a meltdown. The day/week after that can feel like a loss or bereavement after months of planning and so much more. Wow, what a picture we can miss. Listen carefully, don't assume and try and find out where their imagination is taking them. Let them write down/draw their fears rather than have to find the words to tell you.

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2nd APRIL 2021 WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY



BEST MEMORY OF WORKING FOR OSSME OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS:
So many, however, working with parents and setting up the parent support group is a highlight.

LOOKING BACK, WHAT DO YOU ADMIRE MOST ABOUT YOUR ROLE IN OSSME?
I admire being able to have the opportunity to help children develop toolkits which they will take with them through the rest of their lives.

THE FUNNIEST THING THAT HAS HAPPENED WORKING IN OSSME:
The funniest moment I have had working at OSSME is a young person role playing their image of me. I didn't realise how scouse and quick I spoke. I have slowed down my speech a lot since then.

THE ATTENTION CARD



THIS IS INCREDIBLY BENEFICIAL FOR CHILDREN, TEEN-AGERS AND ADULTS AND IS FREE THANKS TO THE FUNDING FROM MERSEYSIDE AND CHESHIRE POLICE.

The **Attention Card** confirms 'The person you have with you will have a medical diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition'. They should be treated as a vulnerable person and PACE 1984 guidelines should be followed.

When you apply for an Attention Card you are given the option for the applicant's difficulties to be recorded onto Cheshire or Merseyside Police's intelligence system. This means that in an emergency, irrespective of whether they are carrying the card or Autism Code Keyring, the issues they have will be acknowledged, and appropriate support given. www.cheshireautism.org.uk/news/attention-card/

OSSME OFFERS EDUCATION SUPPORT PACKAGES
For more information contact
OSSME Education Lead on
claire.mcdonough@autisminitiatives.org