

Horizons Newsletter

Winter 2020

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Autism Society
of
Michigan



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Temple Grandin Has Some Great Tips to Help Kids with Autism Cope during the Coronavirus Quarantine

At a time when we all need to be kinder and more accepting of one another, here are seven tips from Grandin on how we can help our loved ones with autism during this global health pandemic.

1. Set a schedule

“Routine, schedules and figuring out what helps you cope. First, you need to make a new routine. You convey to your children that they are going to get up and get ready for school, just like we always have, even though we are doing it at home. After breakfast and getting dressed, go and do schoolwork and homework. Have lunch and then after lunch get some exercise by going for a walk, as long as you practice social distancing. I advise working on the schoolwork in the morning when the child is fresh. Then tell them, ‘we are going to have lunch together, and then we can do a board game or a puzzle. We will take a walk or do some other exercise.’ And then he or she can have one hour of downtime on a device where the child gets to pick what he wants to watch. Just one hour a day. I don’t like binge-watching, so I recommend maybe one or two episodes of a favorite show a day. I also feel like us living together in such close proximity is like living in the space station in which everyone requires their alone time to read a book or work on their laptops—we all need a bit of this as well.”

2. Show no fear

“One of the first things is for parents not to show fear. It is also important to put [the health crisis] in perspective using language that the child will understand. We can compare it to a storm that you have to hunker down for; except this is a longer storm. Explain that we will have a schedule, we will do our work, schoolwork or homework, play some games and watch movies as a family, and when we do things together it will help keep us safe.”

3. Fun over fear

“Board games are great. And with all the TV shows and movies there are to watch, take turns choosing them for movie night. So, if there are two adults and a child in the home, the child gets to pick the movie every third night. And each of you has to sit through all of the movies. Watching the movie and playing games are more than entertainment. It helps with turn-taking and gets your mind off the fear. It goes back to the **Jaak Panksepp** emotional systems. You have fear, anger, separation distress, nurturing, hugging, sex and play. You also have ‘seek’ (the urge to explore where you engage your mind). So, when I’m looking up and reading studies online about medications for COVID-19, I’m doing ‘seek’ and that turns off the fear. So, when you and your child are making cookies, figuring out how to make cookies turns on the seek emotion and turns off the fear emotions. All animals and people have them. I mention them in my book [Animals Make Us Human](#), and it is in my talk that I did on zoo animals.”

4. Get involved in their video therapy

“I’m really worried about young children ages 2 and 3 who can’t get speech therapy and other vital services. That’s really bad because the younger you can work with these kids, the better the outcome. So, if a 3-year-old goes 6 months without therapy that could be detrimental. And there isn’t a really good answer to what to do about it because you can’t do that work online, it requires one-to-one interaction. You could have a therapist assess your child and give you advice about some work to help them do online, but the fact is those children need a lot of hours of one-to-one therapy. One recent option that I’ve seen was a therapist doing a videoconference in which the parents are coaching the child and the therapist was helping the parents.”

5. Limit the news to one hour per day for teens and adults with autism

“That’s plenty of news, and let’s not watch it in the morning. Many of us have work to do and the children have schoolwork to do.”

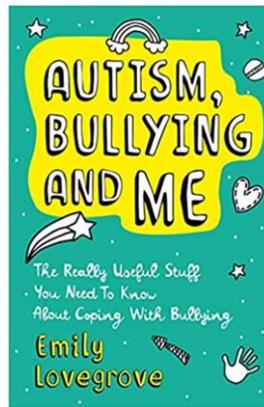
6. Put it in perspective

“I think we can explain that we will get through this as individuals, families, communities and a nation. And there are things we need to do to be careful, like staying home, keeping our homes clean, engaging in social distancing and other safety measures, including washing our hands and using hand sanitizer.”

For kids worried about canceled plans, school activities or future vacations, you explain that movie theaters are closed right now. I went by a movie theater the other day and the little glass cases where they put the posters were empty. You explain that our stuff got canceled, too. Our work and my speaking engagements were canceled. You’ve got people who can’t pay their bills. The people I feel the sorriest for are the ones who are financially strapped. We have storms and floods that are dangerous and we have to take precautions and we have to do this right now. But it will get solved.”

7. Stay social and stimulating—no slouching!

“I would suggest getting your child online with some friends from school on [Zoom](#) or calling them on the phone. It’s something specific, something they can look forward to and it doesn’t cost money. Let’s keep to our schedule and take the child who is getting bored and find some grown-up literature on history, politics, science, or anything else that piques their interest. And absolutely no slouching around in our pajamas.”



TITLE: Autism, Bullying and Me: The Really Useful Stuff You Need to Know About Coping Brilliantly with Bullying

AUTHOR: Lovegrove, Emily

SUBJECT AREA: Autism-Bullying

PUBLISHER: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

PUBLICATION DATE: 2020

NUMBER OF PAGES: 121

BY: Anne Carpenter

Even though many middle school students and high school students are still learning virtually at home, schools are starting to reopen and once again students on the autism spectrum not only have to worry about COVID-19, but bullying as well. Because of their different communication and socialization styles, they are more vulnerable to being bullied, so what to do?

Emily Lovegrove, a teacher and lecturer in the UK who has her own practice, The Bullying Doctor, comes to the rescue with a reassuring little book that starts out with a chapter titled "Am I Normal?" It addresses the anxieties that teens with ASD feel about being normal and fitting in, comforting them in describing the ways that one can be "normal" and that there is no one way.

Another chapter describes just what bullying is, dispelling misconceptions that the author calls "fake news", and then discusses in the next chapter how one feels about oneself and how that fits into being bullied and picked on. In addition, there are chapters on depression, how to calm down and why people are so mean. She states that some of the common strategies such as ignoring the bully often don't work. Which comes to the real heart of this book-the strategies that one can use, to defuse a bullying situation such as distraction, complimenting the bully on his colorful shirt and best of all, saying NO.

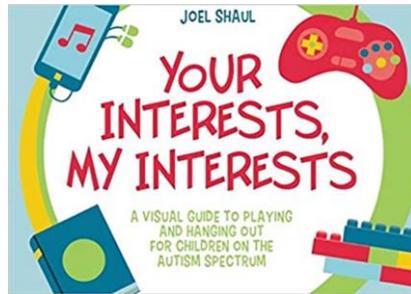
The book is written in clear, easy to understand language and the author never talks down to the reader and she comes across as a warm, caring aunt or teacher ready to help and guide anxious teens who not only have to cope with ASD but the double whammy of ASD and bullying. This is a "Must Have" for every library's young adult collection!!

No-Sew Sock Snowman

Materials:

- 1 white sock
 - 1 sock in color for the hat
 - rice
 - rubber bands (or thread)
 - colorful buttons
 - ribbons
 - glue gun
 - markers or paint
 - orange pom- poms
1. Start by filling your white sock with rice. You will need a hefty amount (we were quite surprised to see how much rice can go into one sock).
 2. Once you are happy with the amount (and size) of your sock snowman tie the top with the rubber band.
 3. Take another rubber band and place in the middle – more to the upper side – of the rice filled sock to form the head shape.
 4. Now glue the buttons to the bottom side by using a glue gun (glue dots do a fairly good job too).
 5. Draw the mouth and eyes with a black marker or with black paint.
 6. We also added pink cheeks (Crayola washable paints were great for the job). We made the nose out of two orange pom- poms – turned out amazing.
 7. Add a ribbon for the scarf – we found that glue dots and glue gun work best for ribbons, while other glues kind of fail miserably. You can cut off excess white sock (or you can tuck it in the hat we will be making next).
 8. Cut the colored sock (we cut the foot part, without heel). Roll it a bit and place it on the head of your snowman. You can leave it as it is or you can secure it with some glue.
 - 9.





TITLE: Your Interests, My Interests:

A Visual Guide to Playing and Hanging Out for Children on the Autism Spectrum

AUTHOR: Shaul, Joel

SUBJECT AREA: Autism-Children's Literature-Social Skills

PUBLISHER: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

PUBLICATION DATE: 2020

NUMBER OF PAGES: 111

BY: Anne Carpenter

One thing that is generally understood about children on the autism spectrum is their difficulty with playing with others. They can often get so wrapped up in their own special topics of interest such as vintage traffic lights, politics or the functions of the brain that they aren't as able to share in another person's interests. Joel Shaul, an LCSW who has written several other children's books that I have reviewed just came out with a really brilliant way to help kids with ASD learn how to engage with others by sharing the interests of other people around them.

Your Interests, My Interests: A Visual Guide to Playing and Hanging Out for Children on the Autism Spectrum is just that—a visual road map to help a child find ways to engage with others and the author uses color coding to get the concept across. The individual with ASD is indicated in red and the other person is indicated in blue. Divided into Parts 1-6 is a series of short stories about children learning how to share with others including a story about Jeff and his all-consuming love of dragons and not being sure how to share in the other students' interests. On the following pages Jeff's interests are shown in a red box and the interests of the other students: are shown in blue boxes. Then there is a set of Venn diagrams that show how Jeff can take turns with the other students with the red and blue circles intersecting. There is one big Venn diagram showing activities that Jeff does with the other students. The author helps the child find things he can do alone and things he can do with others.

In addition, there are exercises that help the child find things to do and to talk about with other kids at school. Other chapters include a story about "Sara and the Day That Keeps Changing" which is about being more flexible and open to what others may want to do. Each chapter has its own set of exercises for the child to do on his own or with a parent or other adult; these are activities that reinforce the concepts at hand and the numerous color photos and artwork make everything stand out. There are color-coded games and activities making this a real teaching tool! This is a brilliant way to help kids learn how to share interests and activities with others—it is often more fun to do things together!

Reindeer Rice Krispies

www.thirtyhandmadedays.com

Ingredients:

- 6 TBSP butter
- 1 10 oz. marshmallows
- 6 c. Rice Krispies cereal
- 1 package candy eyeballs
- 1 package M&M candies, red
- 12 oz. dark cocoa candy melts

Instructions:

1. Melt butter in a large pot and add marshmallows.
2. Stir until marshmallows are completely melted.
3. Take off of heat and add Rice Krispies cereal.
4. Spoon into buttered 9x13 pan.
5. Let harden and cut into rectangles for reindeer.
6. Carefully push your craft spoons into the treats.
7. Melt chocolate following the instructions on the package and then spoon into a plastic baggie.
8. Cut a small hole in the corner of bag and to make antlers.
9. Use a small dot of chocolate under the candy eyes and M&M nose to attach them to the Rice Krispies Treat.



SUPPORT SYSTEM

Who can I call when...

I'm feeling lonely:

I need some company:

I need someone to talk to:

*I need someone to encourage me to get out of the house
and do something fun:*

*I need someone to remind me to follow my self care
plan:*

Other:

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