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Supporting a young person with Challenging Behaviour at Home

There may be an escalation in behaviour that challenges during the time you and your family are together. Many children and young adults find changes to their routines very difficult. Do not underestimate the impact being confined to your home will have on you and all members of your immediate family. It may be helpful to think about the following if you begin to see a change in the behaviour of your child or young person with additional needs, including Autism

- Consider if environmental changes are having an impact and how you might be able to alter these: for example, is it noisier, hotter, are there more people than usual in the house or in the environment they are used to?
- Can I control or reduce setting events (or triggers) i.e. things that happen in the environment or in their body that might make behaviour that challenges more likely to happen?
- Try to let them have as much control as possible about things that are in their control. E.g. how much to do of something or where to do something.
- Communication systems need to be in place- e.g. if a communications system is used at school then try to ensure it continues now. People should have maximum support with their communication.
- If there is a change in behaviour it is helpful to try and work out what the change in behaviour is “saying” so you have a better chance of meeting that need. Do they want:
 - positive attention
 - something tangible – a DVD, sandwich, drink?
 - to avoid doing something (offer an alternative if so)
 - sensory feedback
- Consider how you might introduce a **new routine**:
 - think about activities you may wish to introduce
 - think about activities that can replace the usual daily activities



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- what can you include from other routines that will be familiar to the person
 - choose an activity that you can continue on a daily basis so you can build a new everyday programme together (e.g. if you start cooking, you may not be able to cook everyday)
 - it is important that a new routine is followed through in the same way each time as consistency is very important and can avoid behaviours that challenge.
- Provide as much free access to things the person enjoys, increase their access to preferred activities. These are short term changes to accommodate a crisis
 - At this time of change and increased anxiety consider reducing demands and expectations. E.g. usually your son/daughter may be able to do XX independently, but currently may need more support because the circumstances are different.
 - Displaying Behaviour that challenges is distressing for the person and for anyone in the immediate environment. Consider the following if you see a change in the person's behaviour:
 - Provide choice where possible
 - Praise and reward positive behaviour
 - Keep language simple
 - Use positive language
 - Divert or distract
 - Involve them in everyday activities
 - Use body gestures/signs
 - Give reminders of rules and routines
 - Plan activities
 - Withdraw from a situation if safe to do so
 - Give what is wanted at the start to avoid escalation
 - Stay as calm as possible in a low arousal approach
 - Try to keep a record of what happened before, during and after the incident. This will help you to work out why it may have happened and give you an idea of the changes you might be able to make to reduce the likelihood of it happening again. You will need to do this more than once so you can build up the picture.
 - Ask for external help and advice- contact your relative's social worker or behaviour support team at the community learning disability team. They may be able to give advice over the phone.



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- Look after yourself. Being at home with family members for a long period is hard and challenging behaviour makes this even tougher. Think about:
 - what can I do if XX happens?
 - how is my breathing?
 - can someone else step in?
 - can you have time out after an incident? can you discuss it with someone else? do you have a “phone buddy” who will listen to you?
 - plan breaks for yourself and take them even if the situation appears calm

To Note

Many people with ID, Autism and other special needs have other underlying health conditions, which could be to do with the respiratory system and heart conditions and be more prone to Diabetes (both Type 1 & 2). They may also not have a great understanding of the need for personal hygiene, which may increase the danger of infection.

It may be difficult therefore to establish if someone is feeling ill or is in pain. This may display as challenging behaviour, so it is very important to work out if the behaviour is due to one of the concerns listed above or because they are feeling ill.