

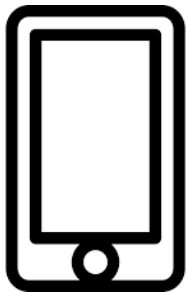
## Social communication

\* In recent years apps have been developed such as 'Pokemon Go' that encourage more outdoor activity and can help to encourage social interaction.

\* Technology can help young people express thoughts and feelings. You could use the video, voice recording and notepads that are available.

\* Expressing and understanding thoughts and feelings can be supported using the camera on your phone or tablet to discuss facial expressions of the family. .

\* An app called Social Stories Creator and Library' is a good free app to create your own stories using photos. You can also buy ready made stories via the app.



This leaflet aims to give you some ideas of how technology can be used to support young people with Autism Spectrum Conditions and other associated social communication difficulties.

The ideas contained in this leaflet are recommendations only.

As with all strategies associated with Autism there is always an element of trial and error. What is right for one young person may not be right for another.

When using technology with students it is important to first consider their strengths and interests.

It may be necessary to consider time constraints and the young person's obsessions when using technology.

When using technology with young people always consider any e-safety steps that may need to be taken.

# Autism Spectrum Team



# Autism & Technology

\* It is important to try and develop independent calming techniques and confidence in self management of stress and anxiety. Try these ideas:

\* Apps around the young person's special interest can be used to help with calming and destressing from the day. If your young person has a specific interest such as Minecraft / Pokemon then accessing appropriate apps can be a great idea.

\* In difficult situations relaxation apps can be helpful to support anxiety and promote a calmer state. They can take the form of sound, music, light and touch. Just having a young person's favourite music on their phone can be very calming.

\* Using a phone or tablet to carry 'what if' instructions or help guides can be great for supporting young people, such as, 'what if the space I am in is too noisy' leave it, put headphones (music) on, or try an app you like.

\* Transitioning from home to school, school to home or at the start or end of a school day. Having time with calming games or apps can help a young person to calm ready for the next part of their day.

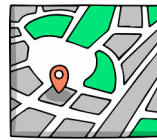
\* Relaxation apps that have been used and recommended by others that you may want to try:

\* **Fluid:** an app that simulates water movement with your finger and plays calming music.

\* **Music Sparkle:** The free part of the app allows you to play instruments and play along with some free music.

\* **Calm:** An app that provides free calming music and pictures including some bedtime stories for older young people.

\* **Heat pad;** reacts to your touch



### Maps

This can help your child gain a better understanding of time / distance and when you will be arriving at your destination. This may help to lower their anxiety.



### Voice

You can help support organisation and motivation through voice recordings, this can also help as a calming tool for some children

### Messenger / text communicate

To reduce confrontation have you thought about putting your direct social communication through a text or something similar.

### Timer / Stopwatch

This can often be used as a count down or a timer to the end of an activity or start of a new one or to structure an activity.

### Going to a new place

Work with your child and find it on the internet, look at pictures and talk through the experience. Use calendar to plan the visit or change.

If your child is not able to manage a family occasion, record the important parts that could encourage them to attend at a later date in the year.

### What is it like to have Autism, including sensory overload?

There are many examples on Youtube of what life is like for someone with an Autism Spectrum Condition. Maybe you could share these with family members to help them understand.



\* Taking photos or videos of new / unfamiliar places, such as the dentist or new house.

\* Encourage your child to use their phone to plan, set reminders, schedule or diary of the days events.

\* Encourage staff to use your child's phone to take pictures of events or letters and homework.

\* Add a "changes" file to your child's phone, that they can access daily and people can add to.

\* Create an exercise programme that supports your child sensory needs and a prompt to calm

\* The use of video to promote positive social interactions and this can be used as a positive reflection tool

\* If your child struggles with handwriting allow the use of your home computer to record their work.

