

Talk Sense to Yourself: A Program for Children and Adolescents

10 Tips to Support Children with Autism through Puberty, Adolescence and Beyond

By Doreen Harrison



1. **Be prepared.** Although children on the spectrum may be delayed in other areas of development, they will experience puberty, adolescence and all that goes with it at the same time as everyone else. This is absolutely normal and to be expected. However, they are going to need extra support in these areas because of difficulties understanding social cues and less opportunity to learn from other children.
2. **Start early.** Children with autism can struggle with even minor changes in their lives. Learning in general can be slow and confusing, especially if it is anything to do with the social skills. Trying to change rules like 'Where it is ok to get undressed' during puberty, already a turbulent time, can cause unnecessary confusion. Look at the things the child does now which may seem safe or quiet (e.g. going every day) that they meet a bug and think 'Will be ok when they see someone?' In fact, start working on it now.
3. **Teach what may seem obvious.** Most children learn (often confusing and contradictory) information about growing up, relationships and what it is to be a man or a woman from many different places including family, friends and TV. Children with autism tend not to pick up on all of this information, and the information they do take in they find even more difficult to decode, often leading to embarrassing and hurtful experiences. To avoid this, they need things spelled out for them (e.g. that it is not ok to talk someone out on a date regularly after they have said 'No'). Also, don't assume that because they can do

things like fit the rules of internet safety that they will be able to use this information in real life. Real life practice is vital.

4. **Give information clearly and calmly.** Use a positive tone. Don't overload with information or language. Back up information with pictures, whatever works best for the child already. Be concise and use correct terminology (i.e. not make up names that nobody outside of the family will understand). Teach children with good language skills the correct words to use when talking to teachers or other adults, but also the words that are ok to use with their peers when there are no adults around. Be careful about language being taken literally (e.g. 'Mum's voice is not really 'breast').
5. **Don't over protect.** It is a fact that children with disabilities are vulnerable to abuse. Children on the spectrum may be even more vulnerable because of difficulties interpreting the motives of others, a desire to be socially accepted, uncertainty about what a real friendship involves and difficulties reporting past events. It is a parent's natural instinct to protect their children. However, avoiding topics such as private body parts can teach the child that they are either unimportant or shameful and not to be spoken about. Be aware that overprotection from sexuality and relationship education leaves children vulnerable.
6. **Teach the difference between public and private.** All children need to learn the difference between what is public and what is private, including places, body parts, conversations, behaviors and online information. Learning this difference helps children behave in appropriate ways and is a protective factor in abuse. However, be careful about fear and last rules and remember to teach that rules can change over time and why. For example, it makes sense to teach children that in a public space that they can only discuss with their parents, but what are they to do when all of their peers are talking about it in the yard at school? Address such conversations or worse telling the teacher will be even more embarrassing for them.
7. **Teach how to say 'NO'.** While compliance is highly valued in special education, it does little to support a child's safety skills. Remember that if you teach a child to do everything that you tell them to do, you have taught them to do everything a bully or abuser tells them to do also. The best way to bring about positive change is to know your rights and to have them put back behind you, and that you have control over what you do with it. When a child says 'No' to an abuser it shows that they understand the risk of touching and sexual behavior and, very importantly, they are able to report it.
8. **Don't do anything for them that they can do independently.** Often people get so used to making decisions and doing things for a child with special needs that they start to do so automatically. However, this inevitably leads to the child being less and less able to do things or make decisions for themselves. Instead, set up situations where the child can experience success and eventually gain insight from their successes. Encourage them to do daily tasks independently, even if it takes them longer to complete. Involve them in decisions about their lives. Give them meaningful choices throughout the day. Also allow

them a wide range of experiences from which to learn from (even if they had these new experiences once or twice) or that and need extra support if they have an OT, consider them being involved in the process.

9. **Help them develop friendships.** If teenagers are to develop the skills needed to enter adult relationships, they will need practice and support getting there. However, people on the spectrum often need and enjoy spending time alone and may actively avoid social situations. Don't be mistaken, this does not mean that they do not also need or want friendship. It is a way that is meaningful for them or that they do not experience intense loneliness. Teach them the social skills involved. Use them in with other normal children. Find socializing events where there is a common focus, e.g. the cinema. The internet can also be great for linking together like-minded people with obscure interests.
10. **Help them to understand themselves.** Developing a healthy and realistic self-concept means understanding your own personal weaknesses as well as your strengths. Children on the spectrum have many fantastic qualities, including being honest, reliable, interesting and having a strong sense of social justice. They need to learn that they are valuable human beings with unique contributions to make to the world. However, they also need to learn about their diagnosis, the challenges that come with the diagnosis, what they need to overcome these challenges, and how to go about getting them (e.g. being able to tell their teacher 'I find it difficult to listen to you when that light is flashing can be please turn it off?'). This does not have to be done in one big difficult conversation. Start talking about difference early. Read books about autism with them geared for their age and ability level. Make links with groups like the Autism Self Advocacy Network. Introduce them (through books, TV or the internet) to role models who have a disability. One of the best things that you can do to develop your own understanding of autism is to read books by authors on the spectrum. They have a lot to teach us.

These tips were written for the Psychological Society of Ireland to coincide with their Autism Day 17 of April 2016.

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Talk Sense to Yourself: A Program for Children and Adolescents [Jeffrey Wragg] on evilchimpo.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Talk sense to yourself: a program for children and adolescents / Jeffrey Wragg This resource focuses on self-control and self-management skills for children. Talk sense to yourself: a program for children and adolescents / Jeffrey Wragg. Author: Wragg, Jeffrey. Published: Harlow, Essex: Longman, Physical. This book for teachers, school counsellors, guidance personnel, welfare teachers, psychologists and students of behaviour modification focuses on the. Talk sense to yourself: [development of self-management and self-control in educational and clinical settings]: a program for children and adolescents. Children/adolescents can join the program at any point. Two researchers independently familiarized themselves with the transcripts, and all All participants spoke of developing a sense of connection with other program. South to South (S2S) Programme for Comprehensive Family HIV Care and Treatment team, PSS Needs of Children and Adolescents Infected and Affected by HIV and AIDS, and How to talk to adolescents. the unfulfilled need for a sense of belonging in the family .. Stop yourself before you threaten the child: Making Adolescent Anxiety: The Coping Cat Program. Rinad S. ... children by measuring their self-talk. It measures. develop confidence in their own ability to help themselves meet daily success in each exposure in order to build a sense of self-confidence. The child and therapist talk about different bodily. TDMHSAS Programs Serving Children and Adolescents .. talking therapies or interventions for which there is no level of evidence and help children and youth (1) regain a sense of choice in their daily lives, Brain Lock: Free Yourself from Obsessive-Compulsive Behavior by Jeffrey M. Schwartz. Abstract. Depression among adolescents has received recognition as a significant. as the Reynolds Adolescent Depression Scale or the Children's Depression .. Talking sense to yourself is a classic rational emotive therapy technique. Building Social Problem-Solving Skills: Guidelines From a School-Based Program. Programs (EAP) can be helpful in identifying child and adolescent. sense of control only when she says "no" to the normal food demands of her body. . Parents can prevent their children from using drugs by talking to them about drugs, open .. display excessive worry and fear about parents or about harm to themselves. This article from Talking SENSE (Winter) discusses co-active movement, I was teaching the children years myself) and the child-care working staff and that is by means of filming the program at regular intervals. sense of right and wrong that would be harmed by adult interference. These. Understand how child and adolescent development across cognitive, physical, and we can create developmentally appropriate counseling programs and adapt our skills to. At the youngest ages, it is important that we talk to children about. 25 schools Development Developing a Sense of Identity 15 dedicated federal officials from the Maternal and Child Health. Bureau: Program Planning for Adolescent Health (PIPPAH), a collaborative. harmful either to themselves or others (e.g., getting preg- .. the time to talk about puberty, but for many boys and .. approaches and

programs to children of all ages and help ensure that no child is left behind. Helping .. On the other hand, if you talk to adults who work with young adoles- of themselves and need to be reassured that differences in growth rates . with their different roles, adolescents struggle in developing a sense of. Doctoral student in Graduate Nursing Program, Collective Health area, The Brazilian Child and Adolescent Statute (CAS) has generated an and achieving the goal of defending yourself of social, political, economical, and other orders(5). . In Brazil, we talk about certain social classes and in this sense, the political.

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