

## **Growing Up In Greater Manchester – A Guide for Young people with Autism and their Supporters**

### **SECTION: FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS**

#### **HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT:**

- Knowing what behaviours are expected from a friend and knowing how to be a good friend
- Knowing about keeping safe and being respectful in relationships
- Whether to tell people about your autism, and how you might explain this
- Learning how to behave in different social situations – formal and informal for example
- Knowing when someone is being unkind or taking advantage
- Knowing how to be safe and appropriate online
- Knowing how to keep in touch with people and knowing when to leave them alone

#### **TOP TIPS:**

You can use some of the resources at the end of this section to help you learn about the following issues concerning friendship and relationship safety and skills. People close to you will be able to help too. Sometimes Social Stories are a good tool to use to explain social rules that someone is struggling with.

- Learn how to negotiate with others about what to do, when and where to meet etc
- Become aware of the signs that someone is not being a good friend and/or may be trying to take advantage
- Learn about staying safe online
- Know who your safe and trusted people are, and where you can go to if you are distressed, confused or in trouble
- Learn about being a good friend yourself – how to stay in touch with people and when to leave them alone
- Learn about sexual safety – how to avoid pregnancy and diseases, and learn how to keep yourself and others safe
- If you identify as gay or transgender, talk to one of the relevant organisations listed below for support

## **SKILLS CHECKLIST:**

### **Bronze level suggested targets -**

- I know when someone is happy, sad, or annoyed
- I know what a friend is and what a girlfriend or boyfriend is
- I can say 'no' when someone does something I don't like
- I know who I can go to if someone has upset or hurt me
- I can use a mobile phone
- I understand some body language

### **Silver level suggested targets -**

- I recognise warning signs that someone is not a friend
- I know when someone fancies me/doesn't fancy me
- I know the law and what I can do and say online
- I have the phone numbers of close friends and family in my phone, and I know when it is appropriate to contact them
- I can say 'no' to doing something I don't feel comfortable with, whoever is asking

### **Gold level suggested targets**

- I understand my sexuality
- I understand different relationship boundaries
- I can organise and attend social events with friends or colleagues when I want to
- I can problem solve relationship difficulties
- I know what to do when friendships go wrong
- I know how to disagree with friends and know what a good friend is
- I am safe online
- I know when I am being bullied and I know where I can go for support
- I understand what to do when things don't go to plan

## RESOURCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

- **NAS E-Befriending Scheme** Tel: 02920 629314 or 07920295911  
Email: [e-befriending@nas.org.uk](mailto:e-befriending@nas.org.uk)
- **e-Buddies a Best Buddy International Programme**  
[www.ebuddies.org/about/](http://www.ebuddies.org/about/)
- **NAS Trafford Buddy Scheme** A buddy scheme for people aged 10-18yrs in the borough. Volunteers are aged 16-25yrs. Befriending and Mentoring Co-ordinator Tel: 07768 463763 Email: [traffordbefriending@nas.org.uk](mailto:traffordbefriending@nas.org.uk)
- **PenPal section of NAS publication called Asperger United** – free subscription  
[www.autism.org.uk/aspergerunited](http://www.autism.org.uk/aspergerunited)
- **Netbuddy**  
[www.netbuddy.org.uk](http://www.netbuddy.org.uk)
- **The Heroes Project** including Frogstastic Club Nights and Autistic Superstars  
<http://www.heroesproject.org.uk/>
- **CHILDLINE Tel No 0800 1111**. Lots of really good resources on many issues  
<https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- **Greater Manchester Police Hate Crime** reporting Tel No 101  
<http://www.gmp.police.uk/content/section.html?readform&s=C4D5E39C4F3817F680257961004019B9>
- **CRUSE Bereavement Care** Helpline Tel No 0808 808 1677  
<http://www.cruse.org.uk/>
- **The Samaritans** Helpline Tel No 116 123  
<http://www.samaritans.org/>

### PUBERTY AND SEX EDUCATION RESOURCES:

- NAS website [www.autism.org.uk/about/communication/sex-education.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/communication/sex-education.aspx) has some good information and resources listed
- **Jessica Kingsley, publisher**  
<http://www.jkp.com/uk/exploring-friendships-puberty-and-relationships>

**FPA – Family Planning Association** [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)  
Resources also include info for parents/carers

- **Autism Sex Education** [www.autismsexeducation.com](http://www.autismsexeducation.com)  
Davida Hartman is a Registered Psychologist with the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) and a member of the PSI ASD Special Interest Group. She's a regular

lecturer and trainer in the area of disability and ASD This site is specifically for those supporting children and adolescents. Although a good deal of the content may be relevant, it does not cover all topics related to adults. The resource selection is also not geared towards individuals who are themselves on the spectrum although again they may find some of the content useful.

**Life Support Productions** Have produced DVD's and resources for special educational needs, Primary and Secondary. Highly recommended for children and young people with autism,  
[www.lifesupportproductions.co.uk](http://www.lifesupportproductions.co.uk)

**Brook Young People** [www.brook.org.uk/our-services](http://www.brook.org.uk/our-services)  
Charity for young people under 25yrs providing relationship and sex information

- **Halton NHS Clinical Commissioning group** commissioned a series of comic strip novels and apps by SPARC including, mental health and fake mates and trouble with the law. If funding was made available GMAC would like to develop material on Keeping Safe for young people with Autism in this same format.
- **Sex Education Forum** <http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk>  
The Sex Education Forum is a membership organisation and works together with its members and other stakeholders to achieve quality sex and relationships education Members include schools, colleges, youth settings, local authorities, NHS trusts, local and national organisations and individuals.
- **A.S.P.E.C.S. LGBT Autistic Network Bi-Monthly Meeting 7-9pm**  
An informal bimonthly get-together and discussion for LGBT people with autism as well as relatives and friends of LGBT autistic people and those in the support profession, particularly LGBT support workers. Currently meetings are in Manchester and Sheffield and are open to people aged 16 and over. For more information contact Dan Kahn on 07896 474 243 or [dan@alacroart.com](mailto:dan@alacroart.com)
- **Gendered Intelligence** website with resources  
<http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/trans-community/resources>
- **GALOP – National LGBP domestic abuse helpline** Tel: 0800 999 5428  
<http://www.galop.org.uk/>
- **Emily Brooks** is a journalist with ASD who writes on the topic of sexual orientation and Autism  
<http://www.emilybrooks.com/>