



NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DIVERSITY

WHAT EVERY SCHOOL AND PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW

Psychology in Schools Team, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

With thanks to Essex Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools - Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Services, Essex Family Forum, Essex Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Autism Diagnostic Youth Service Suffolk and Under 18s ADHD Service (Suffolk) and Suffolk Parent Carer Forum

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CHILDHOOD NEURODIVERSITY?



HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR CONFIDENCE IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO ARE NEURODIVERGENT?





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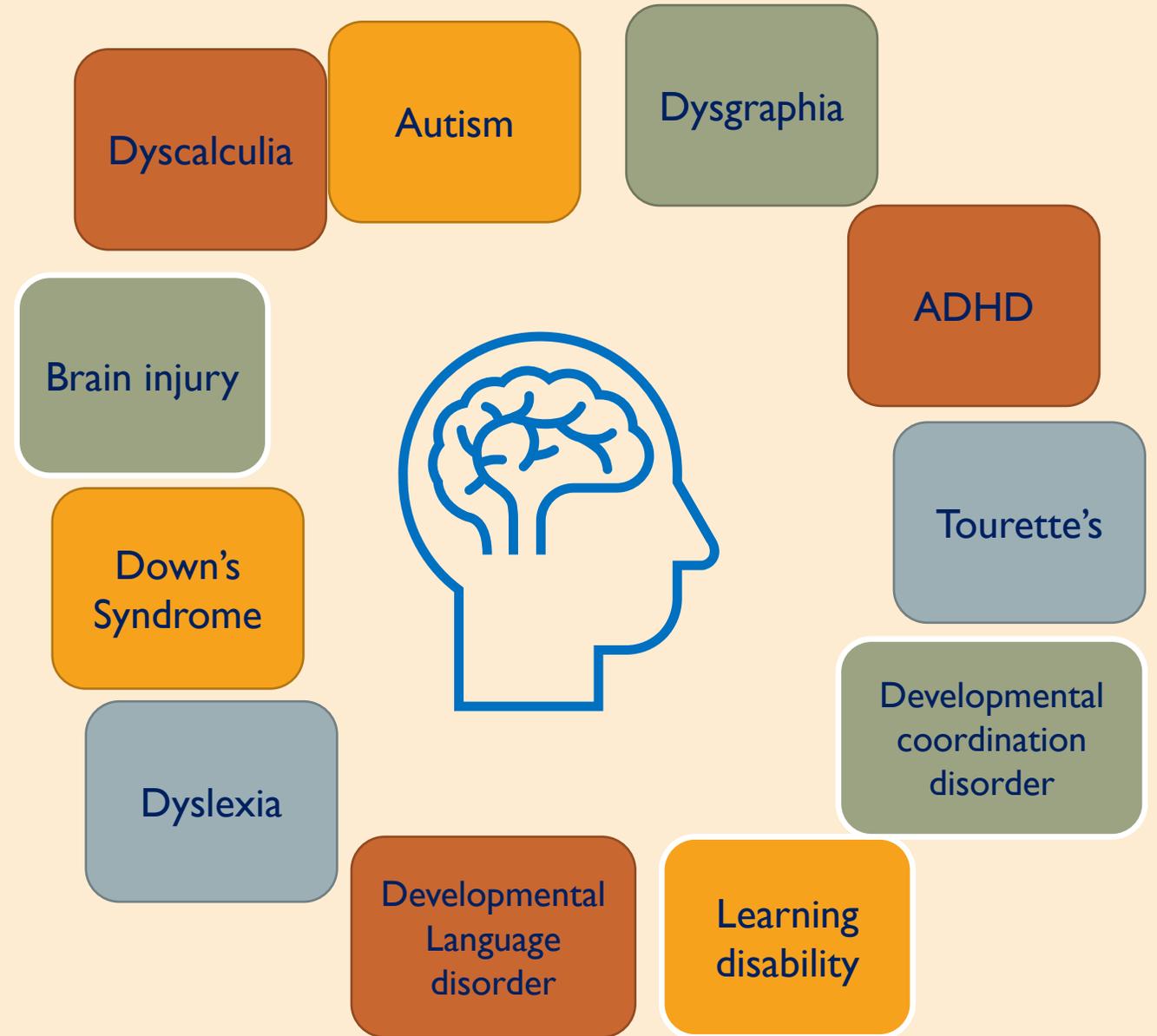


INTRODUCTION TO NEURODIVERSITY

- What is neurodiversity?
- Neurodevelopmental diagnoses
- Co-occurring challenges
- Talking to children about neurodiversity
- Ensuring a consistent approach between home and school
- Further support and resources

WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

- An 'umbrella term'
- Part of normal human evolution
- Neurotypical and neurodivergent

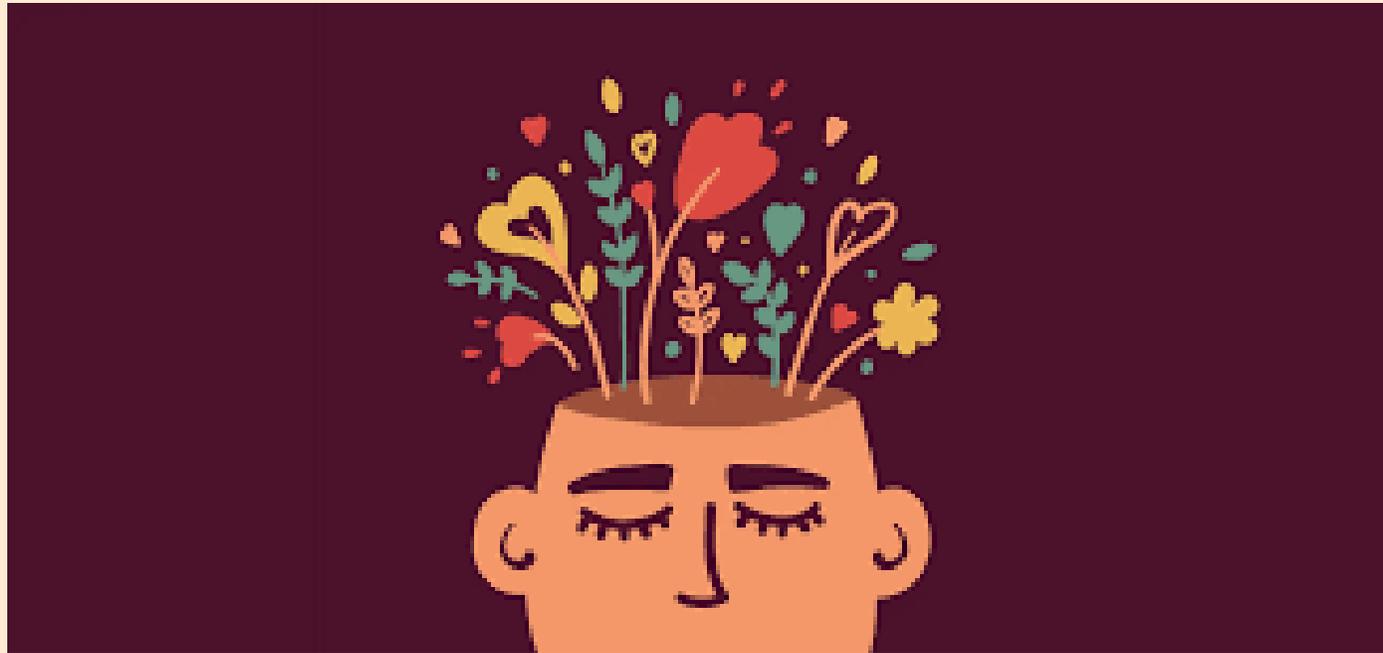


LANGUAGE IS A PERSONAL CHOICE

- Language is a personal choice
- Neurodivergent community, sense of belonging



SELF-REFLECTION EXERCISE



WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

- The world is typically designed by and for 'neurotypical' people
- Move from disorder/deficit to strengths and challenges
- Moving towards better understanding, acceptance and adaptations



NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DIAGNOSES

- Autism
- ADHD
- Learning disability
- Down's Syndrome
- Specific learning differences
- Speech and language differences including developmental language disorder

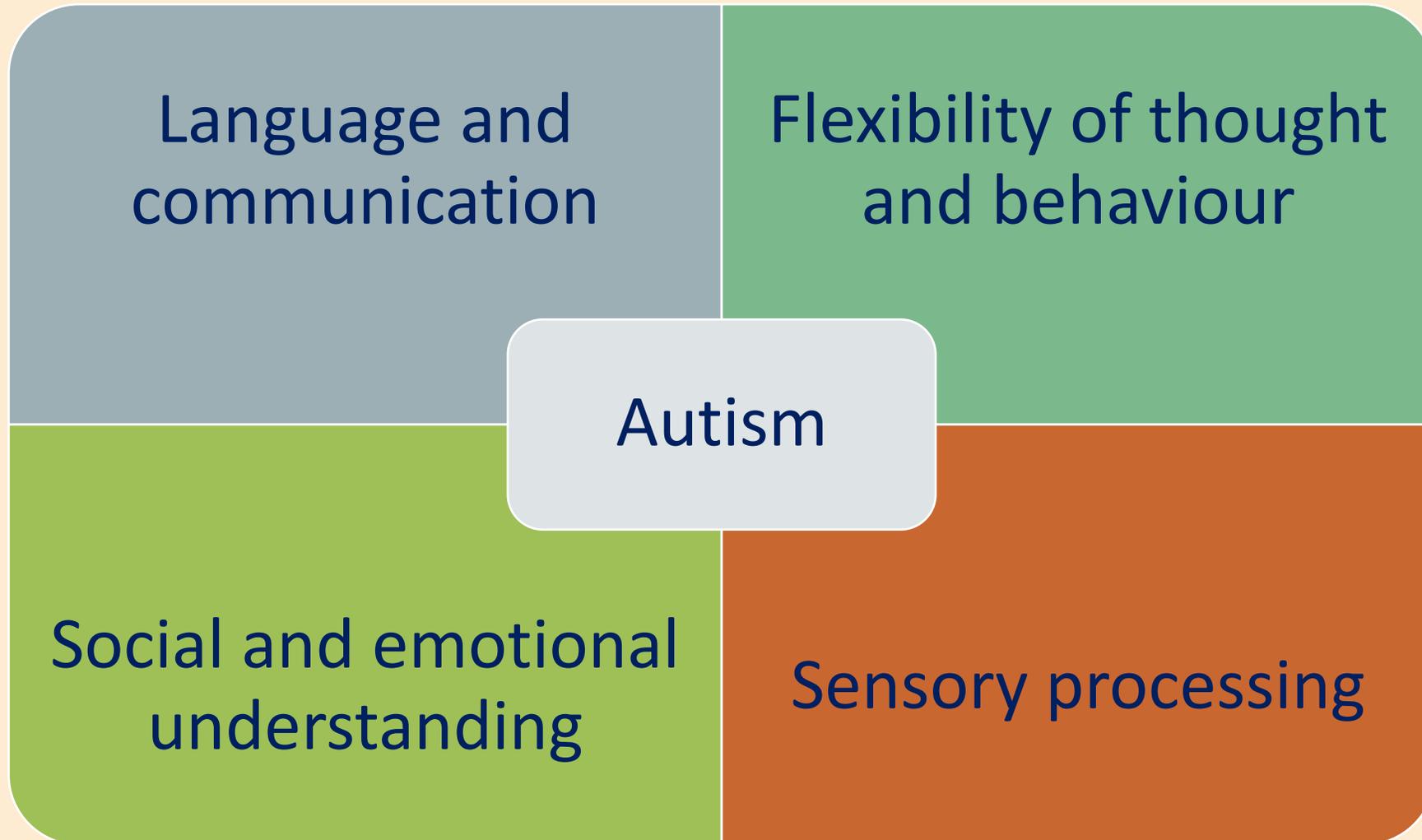


**ACTIVITY: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE STRENGTHS YOUR CHILDREN'S
NEURODIVERGENCE BRINGS TO THEM?**

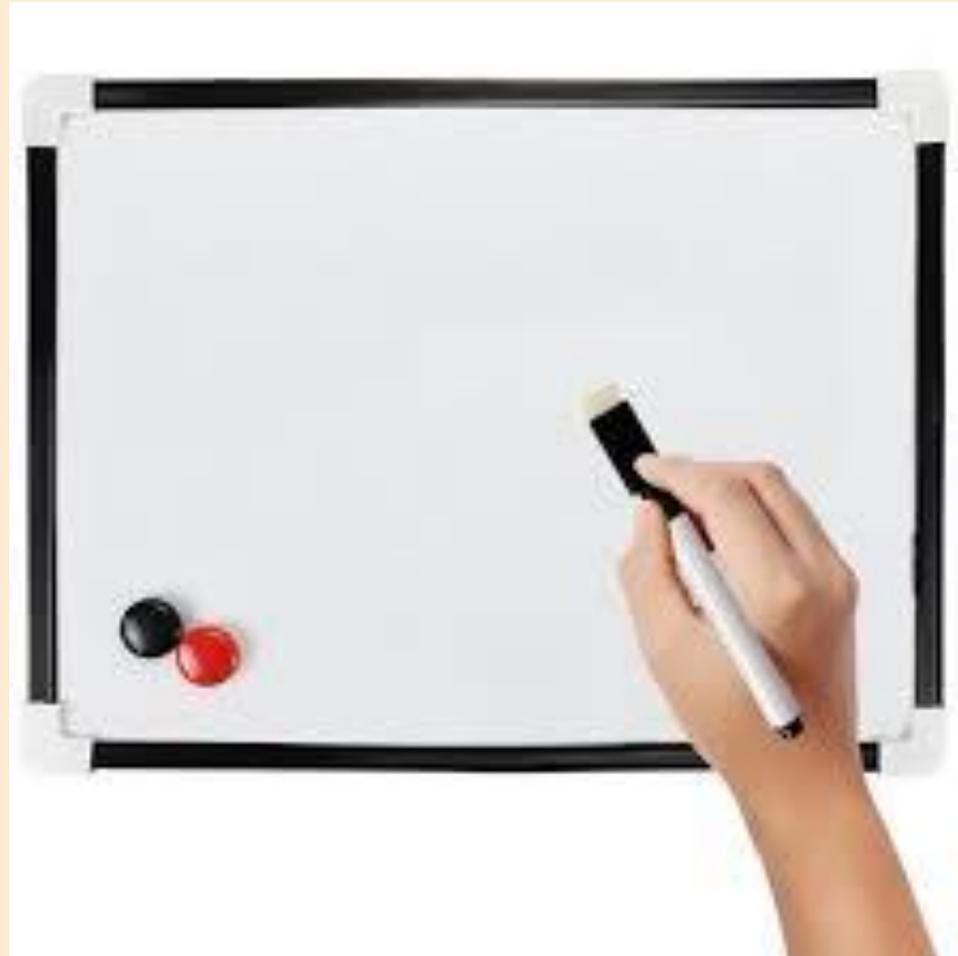


ACTIVITY CONTINUED: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOUR CHILDREN'S NEURODIVERGENCE BRINGS TO THEM?





ACTIVITY: TRUE OR FALSE



TRUE OR FALSE? AUTISTIC PEOPLE DON'T LIKE SOCIALISING



TRUE OR FALSE? ALL AUTISTIC PEOPLE HAVE GENIUS ABILITIES



TRUE OR FALSE? AUTISTIC PEOPLE HAVE EMPATHY



AUTISM IN GIRLS

- Under-recognised
- More socially motivated
- Masking
- More likely struggle with emotional difficulties

<https://www.acamh.org/podcasts/how-autism-presents-differently-in-girls/>



AUTISM
STRENGTHS

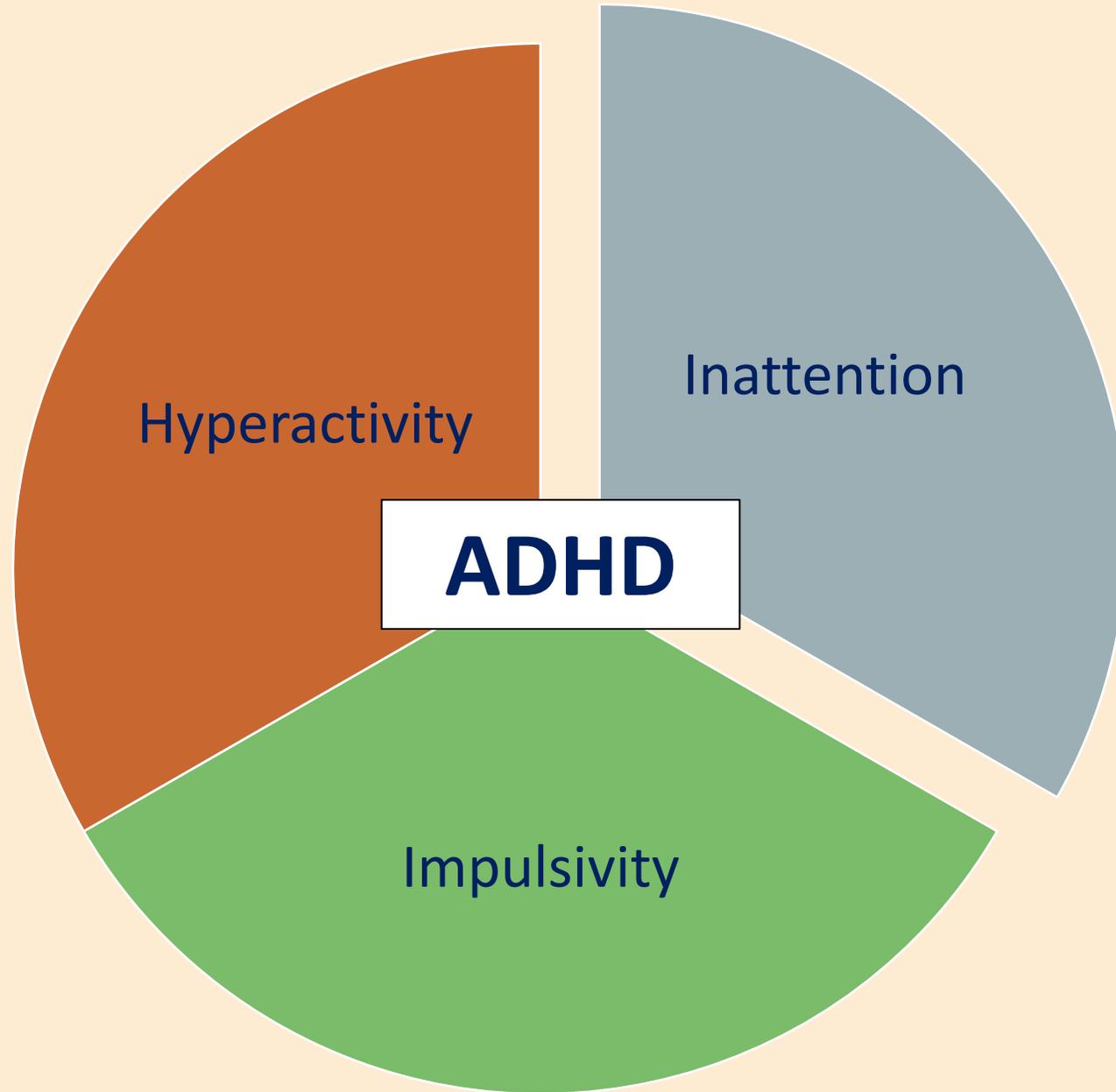
Loyalty

Morals

Attention to detail

Deep focus

In-depth knowledge



ACTIVITY: TRUE OR FALSE



TRUE OR FALSE? ADHD DOESN'T EXIST, SOME CHILDREN ARE JUST NAUGHTY



TRUE OR FALSE? CHILDREN WITH ADHD CAN CONCENTRATE ON SOME THINGS



TRUE OR FALSE? ADHD ONLY AFFECTS BOYS



ADHD
STRENGTHS

Creativity

Courage

Spontaneous

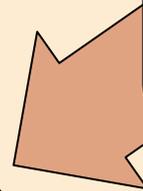
Hyperfocus

Energetic

Low
intellectual
functioning



Daily life
skills



LEARNING
DISABILITY
STRENGTHS

Friendly

Loving

Honesty

Interests and hobbies

DOWN'S SYNDROME

- A genetic condition where young people are born with an additional chromosome
- This leads to developmental differences

Common Needs in Down's Syndrome

- Learning disability
- Speech, Language and Communication
- Vision and Hearing
- Often co-occurs with other neurodiverse conditions



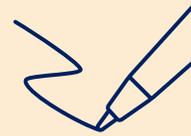
SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCES



[Literacy Differences including Dyslexia](#)



[Dyscalculia](#)



[Dysgraphia](#)



[Developmental Coordination Disorder](#)

Click on the links to find more information

DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER

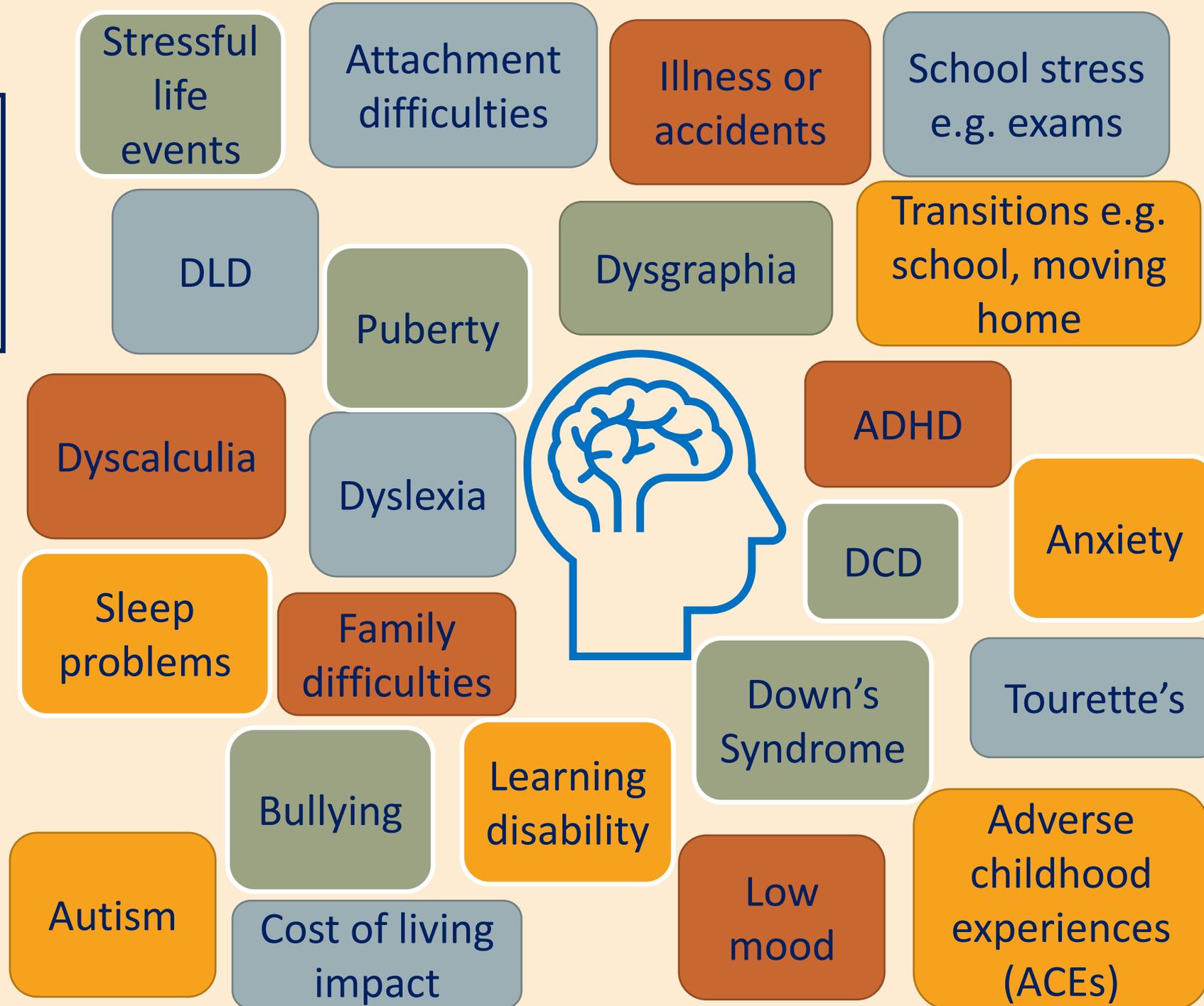
Persistent difficulties in the acquisition, understanding, production or use of language

DLD

Significant limitations in communication, with **functional impact** on daily life at home, school

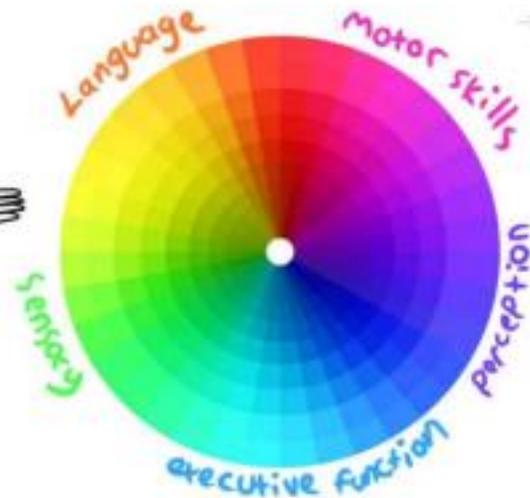
POSSIBLE CO-OCCURRING CHALLENGES

- High co-occurrence between neurodivergent conditions
- Impact of other factors on children's lives



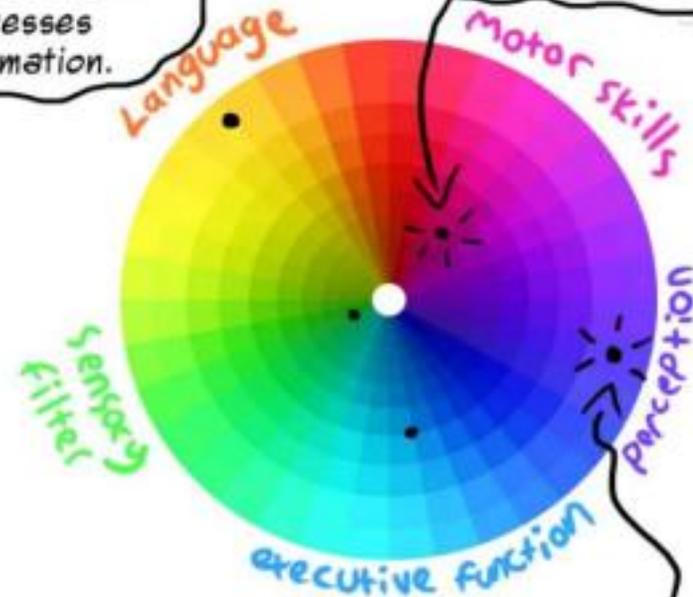
NEURODIVERGENT PROFILE

The truth is though, someone who is neurodivergent in some areas of their brain, will also be no different to your average person in other areas of their brain.



The spectrum consists of many different 'traits', or ways in which the brain processes information.

Some traits create difficulties in every day life. (hence being diagnosed)



But also many traits are useful in every day life.



**ACCESS TO SUPPORT IS NEEDS-BASED NOT
DIAGNOSTIC**

[What are reasonable adjustments and how do they help disabled pupils at school?](#)

NEURODEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENTS IN SUFFOLK

Autism / ADHD

- Speak to school to make joint referral to the Suffolk Neurodevelopmental Pathway

Learning disability

- Discuss with school/education provider
- Contact the GP – possible referral to paediatrics

Specific learning disorder e.g. dyslexia

- Discuss with school e.g. SENCo
- School can arrange consultation with specialist teachers

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT NEURODIVERSITY

- [Umbrella Gang Comics](#)
- [Newsround video: What is Neurodiversity?](#)
- NAS video on autism [Amazing Things Happen](#)
- [Comic book on understanding the autism spectrum](#)
- Fun workbook for kids – [Detectives Elena and Ruben Learn All About ADHD'](#)
- [A Teenager's Guide to ADHD](#)



THE IMPORTANCE OF A CONSISTENT APPROACH BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

- Having a consistent approach and shared understanding is key
- Children can access needs-based support regardless of diagnosis
- Learning About Neurodiversity in School (LEANS) curriculum free for primary schools

Everyone's Included:

Talking to your child's school about neurodiversity

[Parent and Carer Information Sheet and FAQs](#)



THE IMPORTANCE OF A CONSISTENT APPROACH BETWEEN HOME AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS



How I communicate



I have a communication book.
The pages are colour-coded for each
thing I want to talk about.

I can select by picture to tell you what I am saying.

I prefer to talk using single words, but my speech is
not very clear. My body language and facial
expression may let you know how I feel.

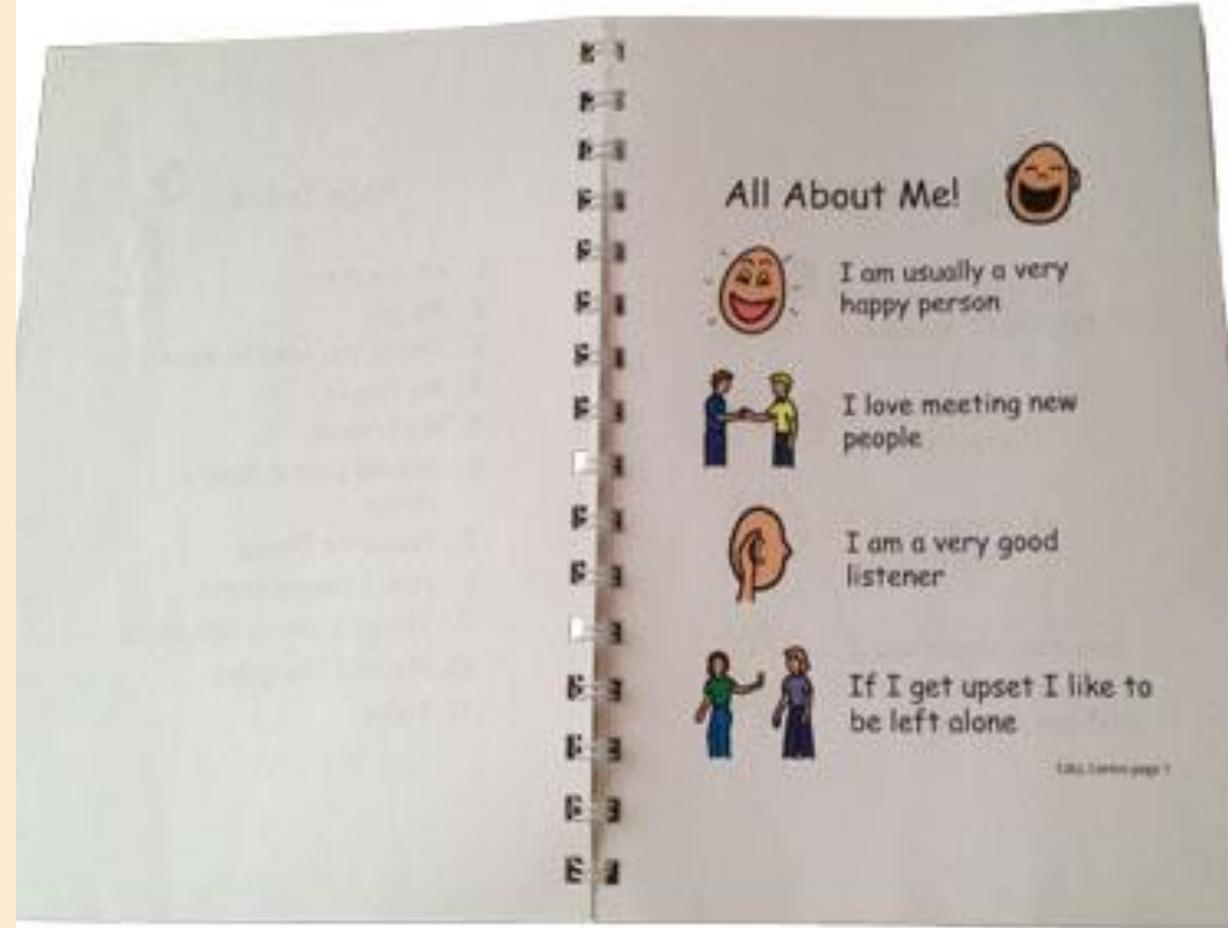
**Please listen carefully to me and encourage me to
use my communication book as well.**



It helps me if you give me time to respond
to your questions and comments.



If I'm in pain, I hit my wheelchair arm
with my fist!



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: HOW CAN WE PROMOTE A CONSISTENT APPROACH BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL?



HOLDING HOPE

“Keep being curious, become the detective and stay resilient. Be your child’s Ambassador, give them a voice. Everyday is a learning day. Talk to Others and ask for support, remember to take 5 minutes for yourself. Create a WOW board, take a photo of every achievement, don’t try and solve everything at once”



“Every child is different. You’ve just got to find what works”

“Embrace who your child is. Let them be them”

“Ask for support. Do not try to do things alone”

“You are not alone”

SUPPORT AND ADVICE IN SUFFOLK

- **Suffolk Local Offer**

<https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/>

- **Parenting courses and more:**

[The Parent Hub - Suffolk County Council](#)

- **Parent/carer networks:**

[PACT | Parents And Carers Together | Suffolk](#)

[Suffolk Parent Carer Forum \(suffolkpcf.co.uk\)](#)

- **The Source Engagement Hub:**

<https://thesource.me.uk/engagement-hub/>

RECOMMENDED BY

NHS
Norfolk and Suffolk
NHS Foundation Trust

PARENTS FOR PARENTS ON THE ADHD/ASD PATHWAY

THE CURLY HAIR PROJECT



Uses animated films, stories and comic strips to support young people on the ASD spectrum.

[The Girl With The Curly Hair - Autism Training, Animations, Books](#)

PARENT WORKSHOPS

Workshop programme designed by the Psychology in Schools Team to support parents

Sign up here -



ACTIVITIES UNLIMITED

Short breaks open to young people with SEND needs in Suffolk

<https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/short-breaks-and-leisure-activities/activities-unlimited>



SENDIASS

A free support service which offers information and resources for supporting special educational needs and disability.

<https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/>

NEURODIVERGENT ABILITIES GROUP (IPSWICH)

<https://www.neurodivergentabilities.org/>

Bespoke support tailored to help young people thrive in a neurotypical world.

Offers 1-1 face to face support in Ipswich. Also offers remote sessions and independent living support.



SCHOOL SUPPORT

Find key staff members to understand and support your child. Roles who may be most helpful include SENCO, pastoral lead, teaching assistant, form tutor, head of year, mentor, thrive leader, school nurse, nurture group leader. They can consider reasonable adjustments.

ELSA:

Your school may offer ELSA intervention. A 6 session intervention supporting young people to develop their emotional literacy skills

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/>



FAMILY ACTION (SUFFOLK)

<https://www.family-action.org.uk/>

Offer self help resources, local services and a free helpline called 'FamilyLine' which can be used to help through



BEANS

Offers support for families journey with neurodiversity. Support for parents/carers, young people (11-25), siblings. Support includes drop ins, groups and activities.

<https://accessct.org/beans/>

SUPPORT IN SUFFOLK CONTINUED

SENDIASS

Parent workshops on SEND including:

- What is a special educational need (SEN)?
- SEN support in schools
- EHC Needs Assessment
- Preparing for school transitions

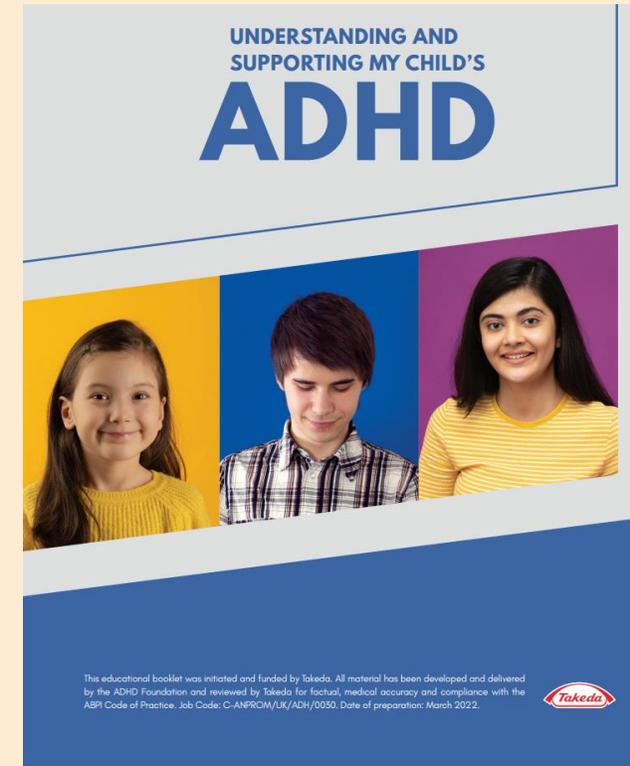
Recorded previous workshops on YouTube

[Parent & carer information sessions - Suffolk SENDIASS](#)

[Suffolk Sendiass - YouTubeFS](#)

ASD AND ADHD SPECIFIC INFORMATION AND ADVICE

- [What is autism?](#)
- [Understanding and supporting my child's ADHD](#)
- [What is a learning disability? | Mencap](#)
- [What are Specific Learning Difficulties \(SpLDs\)?
- The Dyslexia Association - The Dyslexia
Association](#)



USEFUL WEBSITES

- [National Autistic Society](#)
- [The ADHD Foundation](#)
- [Learning Disability Matters](#)
- [Contact](#) (for families of disabled children)

PSYCHOLOGY IN SCHOOLS: FREE LIVE WORKSHOPS AND VIDEO RECORDINGS

Upcoming LIVE Parent/Carer workshops on mental health

www.nsft.uk/workshops



Previous recorded workshops include school avoidance, Tics and Tourette's, self-harm, supporting behaviour, social media, OCD and more!

Childhood Neurodiversity Workshops:

[Neurodiversity online parent/carer workshops - Suffolk SEND Local Offer](#)



Previous recorded workshops include supporting sensory needs, eating difficulties, sleep, anxiety, social relationships and more!

Access recorded workshops here:

[Parent workshops | Norfolk and Suffolk NHS](#)

WHAT TWO THINGS WILL YOU TAKE AWAY FROM THE SESSION?



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HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR CONFIDENCE IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO ARE NEURODIVERGENT?



FEEDBACK FORM

PINS Feedback Survey (Suffolk)



[click here](#)

WHAT HAPPENS TO ADHD REFERRALS

ADHD team carefully review the information to see if a neurodevelopmental assessment is required for either ADHD, ASD or both.

If the ADHD team think your child may have ADHD, questionnaires need to be completed by people who know the child or young person well across multiple settings e.g., school, carers, parents

AFTER SCREENING

The ADHD team will advise you and the lead professional of the outcome of pre-assessment screening by letter.

If it is decided that the child/young person does not require assessment, they will make recommendations in response to needs that have been identified.

Young people who have moderate to severe symptoms will be added to the assessment waiting list.

Neurodevelopmental assessment is a complex process - may involve several steps depending on the needs of the young person.

Initially an appointment will be offered with a specialist nurse. This may result in the offer of a diagnostic appointment with consideration of treatment or discharge with recommendations regarding what future support is needed.

WHAT HAPPEN FOR AUTISM REFERRALS

The Integrated Paediatric Service Accept Referrals for children under the age of 11 for ASD assessment.

Young people over the age of 11 are referred to the Autism Youth Diagnostic Service Suffolk (ADYSS).

Referrals are reviewed in a similar way to ADHD service often with multi professional input.

Specific assessment tools are used in ASD assessments.

- BOSA Brief Observation of Symptoms of Autism
- Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) assessment – designed to assess social communication, interaction and play of those suspected of having autism. It has different activities to suit different developmental and language needs.
- ADI – R Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised

AUTISM DIAGNOSTIC YOUTH SERVICE FOR SUFFOLK (ADYSS)

Autism
assessment
service for 11-17
year olds in
Suffolk

Needs-led

Develop an
understanding
together

Unable to
update on
individual
waiting times
but are working
to reduce them

POST AUTISM ASSESSMENT



If your young person is given diagnosis of ASD, you will be invited to a post diagnostic appointment (optional in ADYSS service)



It is important you share the diagnosis with your child's education provider so that they can receive the right support