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## Supporting Someone with Autism Workbook

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### Disclaimer

This workbook has been created by Safe Haven Connect CIC to provide general information and practical guidance for people supporting an autistic person.

Autism is a spectrum, and every autistic person is unique. This workbook encourages respectful, person-centred support and recognises that people have different strengths, preferences and support needs.

This workbook is not a substitute for professional medical, psychological or educational advice.

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## Supporting Someone with Autism

### PAGE 1 – Understanding Autism

Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental difference that affects how a person experiences and interacts with the world.

Every autistic person is different. Some people may need very little support, while others may need more assistance in daily life.

Many autistic people have unique strengths, talents and ways of thinking. Understanding and accepting these differences can help create supportive and inclusive environments.

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♥ An autistic person may experience differences with...

- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Social interaction
- ☐ Sensory experiences (sound, light, touch, smell)
- ☐ Changes to routine
- ☐ Understanding emotions
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Organisation and planning
- ☐ Other:

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♥ What do I hope to learn from this workbook?

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♥ How can I become a better supporter?

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### Remember

There is no "one size fits all" approach to autism.

Take time to understand the individual, respect their differences and recognise their strengths.

Support acceptance, not conformity. See the person first and value who they are.

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Supporting Someone with Autism

PAGE 2 – Understanding the Person

Every autistic person is unique.

They have their own personality, interests, strengths, preferences and ways of experiencing the world.

Taking time to understand the individual—not just autism—helps you provide respectful, meaningful and person-centred support.

Remember, what works well for one autistic person may not work for another.

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### Things they enjoy

- ☐ Music
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Gaming
- ☐ Art or drawing
- ☐ Walking

☐ Nature

☐ Animals

☐ Technology

☐ Favourite TV shows or films

☐ Other:

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♥ Their strengths and talents

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♥ Things that help them feel calm and comfortable

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♥ How can I support them today?

☐ Respect their routine.

- ☐ Listen without judgement.
- ☐ Give them time to process information.
- ☐ Respect their need for space.
- ☐ Be patient.
- ☐ Offer reassurance.
- ☐ Celebrate their strengths.
- ☐ Other:

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♥ Remember

Autistic people don't need to be "fixed."

They need to be understood, respected and supported in ways that work for them.

When you understand the person, you can provide support that builds confidence, trust and wellbeing.

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PAGE 3 – Communicating with Understanding

Communication is different for every autistic person.

Some people communicate using speech, while others may use gestures, communication devices, writing or other methods.

Good communication starts with listening, being patient and respecting the person's preferred way of communicating.

Remember, communication is about understanding each other—not expecting everyone to communicate in the same way.

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#### Helpful ways to communicate

- ☐ Speak clearly and calmly.
- ☐ Use simple, direct language.
- ☐ Give plenty of time to respond.
- ☐ Listen without interrupting.
- ☐ Avoid saying too much at once.
- ☐ Respect their preferred communication style.
- ☐ Check they have understood if needed.
- ☐ Other:

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#### Things that help them communicate

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#### If communication becomes difficult, I can...

- ☐ Stay calm.
- ☐ Repeat information differently.
- ☐ Write things down.
- ☐ Reduce distractions.
- ☐ Give more processing time.
- ☐ Ask how I can help.
- ☐ Other:

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♥ What helps us communicate well together?

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♥ Remember

Everyone deserves to be heard and understood.

Taking time to communicate in a way that works for the individual helps build trust, reduce anxiety and strengthen relationships.

Good communication begins with patience, respect and understanding.

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## Supporting Someone with Autism

### PAGE 4 – Understanding Sensory Differences

Many autistic people experience the world differently through their senses.

Sounds, lights, smells, textures or busy environments may feel much more intense or, for some people, less noticeable.

Understanding sensory differences can help you create a more comfortable and supportive environment.

Remember, what feels comfortable to you may feel overwhelming to someone else.

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♥ Things that may affect them

- ☐ Loud noises.
- ☐ Bright lights.
- ☐ Busy or crowded places.
- ☐ Strong smells.
- ☐ Certain food textures.
- ☐ Physical touch.
- ☐ Changes in temperature.
- ☐ Wearing certain fabrics.
- ☐ Other:

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♥ Things that help them feel comfortable

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♥ If they become overwhelmed, I can...

- ☐ Stay calm.
- ☐ Speak gently.
- ☐ Reduce noise where possible.
- ☐ Move to a quieter place.
- ☐ Give them space if they need it.
- ☐ Follow their preferred calming strategies.
- ☐ Offer reassurance.
- ☐ Other:

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♥ Their calming strategies

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### Remember

Sensory overload is a genuine experience and can be exhausting or distressing.

Responding with patience, understanding and respect can help someone feel safe and supported.

Creating a calm, accepting environment can make a significant difference to an autistic person's wellbeing.

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PAGE 5 – Routines, Change and Predictability

Many autistic people find comfort in familiar routines and knowing what to expect.

Unexpected changes can sometimes cause anxiety or stress. While change is a normal part of life, preparing for it where possible can make it feel more manageable.

Remember, routines can help provide a sense of safety and stability.

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### Things that help create a predictable routine

- ☐ Keeping regular mealtimes.
- ☐ Following a daily schedule.
- ☐ Giving advance notice of changes.
- ☐ Using calendars or visual timetables.
- ☐ Explaining what will happen next.

☐ Allowing time to prepare.

☐ Other:

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♥ Changes they may find difficult

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♥ How can I help prepare for change?

☐ Explain the change calmly.

☐ Give as much notice as possible.

☐ Use pictures or written reminders.

☐ Answer questions honestly.

☐ Offer reassurance.

☐ Be patient if they need extra time.

☐ Other:

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♥ What usually helps them feel more settled?

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### Remember

Routines aren't about avoiding change forever.

They're about creating a sense of security that helps someone cope when change does happen.

Understanding, preparation and patience can make change feel less overwhelming and help build confidence over time.

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PAGE 6 – Supporting Emotional Wellbeing

Like everyone, autistic people experience a wide range of emotions.

Sometimes it may be difficult for them to recognise, express or explain how they're feeling, particularly during times of stress or sensory overload.

By offering understanding, patience and reassurance, you can help them feel safe, accepted and supported.

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 Signs they may be feeling overwhelmed

- ☐ They become quieter than usual.
- ☐ They seem anxious or worried.
- ☐ They avoid social situations.
- ☐ They become frustrated more easily.
- ☐ They need more time alone.
- ☐ They appear tired or exhausted.
- ☐ Their routine changes noticeably.
- ☐ Other:

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♥ What usually helps them feel calmer?

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♥ Ways I can support their emotional wellbeing

- ☐ Listen without judgement.
- ☐ Respect their need for space.
- ☐ Keep routines consistent.
- ☐ Offer reassurance.
- ☐ Encourage activities they enjoy.

☐ Reduce unnecessary pressure.

☐ Celebrate their achievements.

☐ Other:

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♥ One thing I can do today to support them

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♥ Remember

Every autistic person experiences emotions differently.

The most valuable support often comes from acceptance, patience and taking time to understand what the person needs.

Feeling accepted for who you are can make a lasting difference to emotional wellbeing.

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PAGE 7 – Encouraging Independence and Strengths

Every autistic person has their own strengths, abilities and interests.

Supporting independence means encouraging the person to make choices, develop skills and build confidence while respecting the support they may need.

The goal is not to change who they are, but to help them thrive as themselves.

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♥ Ways I can encourage independence

- ☐ Offer choices whenever possible.
- ☐ Encourage problem-solving.
- ☐ Give plenty of time to complete tasks.
- ☐ Respect their decisions.
- ☐ Support them to learn new skills.
- ☐ Praise effort and progress.
- ☐ Encourage self-advocacy.
- ☐ Other:

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♥ Their strengths and abilities

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♥ Things they enjoy and do well

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♥ One opportunity I can help them explore

☐ A new hobby.

☐ Volunteering.

☐ Education or training.

☐ Employment.

☐ Community activities.

☐ Building friendships.

☐ Developing life skills.

☐ Other:

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♥ Remember

Autistic people have many strengths, talents and unique ways of thinking.

By recognising these strengths and encouraging independence, you help build confidence, self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

Support people to be themselves, celebrate their strengths and create opportunities for them to succeed.

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PAGE 8 – Looking After Yourself as a Supporter

Supporting an autistic person can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be demanding at times.

Whether you're a parent, family member, friend, carer or volunteer, looking after your own wellbeing is important too.

Taking care of yourself helps you continue providing calm, patient and compassionate support.

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 How am I feeling today?

☐ Happy

☐ Calm

☐ Tired

☐ Stressed

☐ Overwhelmed

☐ Frustrated

☐ Worried

☐ Hopeful

☐ Other:

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♥ This week I will...

- ☐ Take regular breaks.
- ☐ Get enough sleep.
- ☐ Eat healthy meals.
- ☐ Spend time outdoors.
- ☐ Talk to someone I trust.
- ☐ Make time for my hobbies.
- ☐ Accept support when I need it.
- ☐ Practice self-care.
- ☐ Other:

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♥ People who support me

1.

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2.

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3.

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♥ One thing I will do for myself this week

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♥ Remember

You don't have to do everything on your own.

Looking after your own wellbeing helps you remain patient, understanding and resilient when supporting someone else.

A supported carer is better able to provide supportive care.

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PAGE 9 – My Autism Support Plan

Every autistic person has different strengths, preferences and support needs.

A personalised support plan can help you provide consistent, respectful and person-centred support while encouraging independence, confidence and wellbeing.

Remember, the best support is based on understanding the individual.

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♥ What helps them feel safe and comfortable?

- ☐ A familiar routine.
- ☐ A quiet environment.
- ☐ Clear communication.
- ☐ Time to process information.
- ☐ Predictability.
- ☐ Favourite activities.
- ☐ Trusted people.
- ☐ Their own space.
- ☐ Other:

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♥ My Three Priorities

1.

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2.

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3.

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♥ People and Services That Can Help

1.

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2.

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3.

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### My Personal Reminder

When supporting an autistic person, I want to remember...

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### Remember

Supporting an autistic person isn't about changing who they are.

It's about understanding their individual needs, respecting their differences and helping them feel accepted, confident and included.

Acceptance, patience and understanding create the foundation for meaningful support.

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PAGE 10 – My Commitment as a Supporter

Congratulations on completing this workbook.

Supporting an autistic person is about building understanding, respect and trust.

Every autistic person is unique, with their own strengths, interests, challenges and ways of experiencing the world. By listening, learning and adapting your support, you can help them feel accepted, valued and empowered.

Remember, the goal isn't to change the person—it's to help them thrive as themselves.

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 I Will Remember To...

- ☐ Respect their individuality.
- ☐ Listen to their needs and preferences.
- ☐ Be patient and understanding.
- ☐ Communicate clearly and respectfully.
- ☐ Encourage independence and choice.
- ☐ Recognise and celebrate their strengths.
- ☐ Support inclusion in the community.
- ☐ Continue learning about autism.

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 My Personal Reminder

When supporting an autistic person, I want to remember...

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### My Support Promise

"I will support this person with kindness, acceptance and respect. I will value their individuality, encourage their strengths and create opportunities for them to make choices, build confidence and be included. I will continue learning so I can provide compassionate, person-centred support."

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

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### Final Thoughts

Being a supportive person doesn't require perfection—it requires understanding, patience and compassion.

By accepting differences, encouraging strengths and respecting individuality, you can help an autistic person feel safe, confident and valued.

Thank you for taking the time to learn how to provide supportive, respectful and inclusive care.

Explore more free workbooks, resources and wellbeing tools at:

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♥ Supporting people, families, carers and communities with understanding, acceptance and compassion.