autism
wellbeing

Supporting an autistic child or young person preparing to adjust to the "new normal" after Covid-19 social distancing measures have been lifted.

All of us have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Steps are being taken towards restrictions lifting and there is discussion about what the "new normal" will look like.

Everyone will undergo a period of adjustment and will need support through this process; this could be from friends and families, from professionals who are skilled in providing specialist interventions and of course, most importantly, people will need to have compassion for themselves as well as for others.

Readjusting will take time and people may benefit from introducing the extra demands of new social and environmental interactions in a slow and measured way. A step by step approach that recognises each child's unique processing of the situation could be helpful. Perhaps building up to more social contact and getting used to the noise, smell and people in town gradually will be helpful and less overwhelming.

Prepare – discuss your child's concerns with them and do some research about what is to be expected in new situations e.g. going back to school. Use social stories or films if this is useful and helps reduce your child's anxiety.

Changes – It is likely that systems, environments, and attitudes will change frequently as we find out what works and what does not as restrictions are lifted. This may feel really tough to deal with. Your child may have lots of questions.

Unpredictability – We don't know how we will react or how others will react when we go back to school or work or start using shops more frequently. Consider what you find helpful and have a strategy or plan for coping, made in advance. This can help your child feel more confident and safe, and can be more effective than reacting to the situation once you are in it.

Self and Co-regulation – Our nervous systems will be processing lots of new sensory information as well as all the new rules in society. Make time throughout the day to attend to your own and your family's needs. It is important that we all look after ourselves and show ourselves more kindness than normal in the "new normal".