

Module 9 : Organisational Considerations

- Organisation in the home environment
- Organisation at school
- Organisation in the workplace
- Organisation while out and about in the community

In this module, we discuss the following:

- Organisation in the home environment
- Organisation at school
- Organisation in the workplace
- Organisation in the community
- Helpful resources for autistic people, their families, and their support network

9.0 Introduction

Because the world can often be an overwhelming place for people on the autism spectrum, making organisational considerations can be a tremendous help and boost to their confidence and wellbeing. Being well-organised also prevents some of the challenges associated with sensory overload and resulting behaviour.

Setting up an organisational system for an autistic person is not always easy, and what may be effective for one person may not work for another; much like other methods of support. However,

with commitment and perseverance, the right methods of organisation can be established.

9.1 Organisation in the Home Environment

There are many adjustments to make and systems that can be put in place around the home which can help people on the autism spectrum.

As covered in the previous module, visual support methods are often useful, especially for those individuals who are non-verbal. A good way to avoid clutter is to put items into clear bins with pictures on the outside showing what the items are. The pictures can also help remind autistic people of the appropriate use of the items contained inside.

Other methods of keeping organised around the house can include making charts and lists that indicate times and the purpose of events throughout the day.

These charts and lists may also include expected behaviour and contain reminders pointing to other visual aids, such as chore charts. Colour-coded reminders can indicate the significance of each task to help with prioritising, and small rewards like stickers on a chart can encourage autistic children to make them an integral part of their daily routine.

Charts and lists can be placed wherever they're most useful to the individual, such as in their bedroom, on the bathroom mirror, on the fridge, or by the door. They must be in locations where the individual is inclined to look, or else they are unlikely to be used.

Some families may find it is more effective to create custom charts for their children, while others may choose to access online resources that provide pre-made solutions available to download and print.

Smartphone apps and computer software can also be extremely useful around the home to generate electronic reminders of what's going to happen each day and an explanation of relevant expected behaviour. They can also be used to give auditory reminders.

Assigning certain days to certain tasks can give autistic people the structure they require, and it can also reassure them.

For example

Mondays may be designated to art lessons after school; GP appointments may be scheduled for Wednesdays; Fridays may be pizza night with the family. This type of schedule can be incorporated into the charts, put up around the home, and added to audio reminders; whatever is most effective for the individual.

Technology can also be useful for reminding autistic people of important dates, especially as they get older and may become more independent. Reminders about birthdays, holidays, going shopping, and even when to pay bills can be very valuable. For example, there are numerous apps available that can colour code simple calendars, help establish simple to-do lists, offer reminders to take medication and perform other actions that will keep autistic individuals organised, independent, and on track.

The National Autistic Society offers a free [online module](#) specifically designed to assist individuals with banking, cash machines, budgeting, managing debts, and other finance-related tasks.

9.2 Organisation at School

Many adjustments made in the home to accommodate an autistic person can also be put in place in a classroom setting.

These typically include keeping items organised into clear bins and using visual reminders of classroom expectations and proper use of items.

Charts, lists, pictures and colour coding can be used to remind students of schedules, activities and expectations in the classroom. For homework, the use of a visual planner can keep tasks organised and make them easier to understand.

Technological advances are also helpful with schoolwork, as computers and tablets can be utilised to keep assignments organised and offer electronic and auditory reminders for students. Computers are also helpful for students who have speech delay, as there are systems available that can help them communicate.

Another method of keeping organised at school is to check in regularly with teachers and support workers regarding assignments and other expectations. While this may be done with parental involvement at a young age, older students may be able to manage this on their own by having a certain day of the week to meet regarding homework and any concerns they have. Some teachers may even use break times to review information with autistic students.

UK-wide organisations like the National Autistic Society also offer a wealth of resources for how teachers can alter their lesson plans to provide more structure to autistic students and help them understand their assignments. Teachers who are willing and able to impart such ideas in the classroom can play a vital role in helping students on the autism spectrum to become more organised and self-sufficient.

9.3 Organisation in the Workplace

The Office for National Statistics reports that just 21.7% of autistic adults in the United Kingdom are currently in employment (Census 2021), but that number is rising, as employers are becoming more aware of the condition in general and how autistic individuals can be a significant asset to their businesses.

As more autistic people begin to enter the workforce, more is being discovered about how they can be well-organised and valued members of staff. Many organisational ideas from home and school will translate to a work environment, such as using a computer, tablet or smartphone to keep information organised and use auditory and electronic reminders.

Software and apps such as calendars and to-do lists are especially helpful, as they provide a visual reminder of priorities, commitments and expectations on the job.

Offline, using filing and colour coding systems is also an effective way to remind autistic colleagues of the importance of certain tasks.

For example

A routine may be established where tasks in a red folder must be completed urgently, those in a yellow folder must be completed as soon as possible, and those in a green folder can be worked on once the others are complete.

Whether to-do lists are tracked on a computer or on paper, making sure the instructions are clear, concise and literal is an effective way for employees on the autism spectrum to work through their responsibilities.

Regular check-ins with a line manager or supervisor are also highly recommended for keeping organised and on track. Doing so on a weekly basis can give autistic people time to adjust if changes are being made, and let them know whether they're on track with completing work and fulfilling expectations.

9.4 Organisation in the Community

Whether taking the bus to work, buying groceries or paying bills, when out and about in society, there are methods that autistic individuals can employ to stay organised and on top of what they need to accomplish.

Again, the use of smartphone apps may be effective to manage appointment reminders, medication reminders, grocery lists, bus schedules, and other personal information.

For people who are non-verbal, carrying cue cards or making use of a voice output communication aid can assist with managing time and tasks effectively, by giving the individual the ability to ask questions or address certain matters more promptly.

If an autistic person finds it challenging or overwhelming to go out and manage their affairs in the community, a buddy system may be established where a trusted support worker, family member or friend can assist with banking, renewing prescription medication, taking notes for the individual during GP appointments, and so on.

They may even wish to take the individual out to run errands and buy groceries at quieter times of the day when there might be less noise and crowding in public places, in order to avoid becoming too overwhelmed.

9.5 Helpful Resources

There are many resources available for people on the autism spectrum, their family members, friends, teachers, support workers, and medical professionals.

There are resources to better understand the methods previously discussed, such as SPELL, TEACHH, SCERTS and cognitive behavioural therapy.

Some of the most practical and commonly used resources include the National Autism Society's [resource pack](#) for school staff, which contains information on autism and how it can affect young people, particularly in the school environment.

There is also a popular website called Resources for Autism which takes a holistic approach to providing responsive solutions for autistic individuals and their families. [Resources for Autism](#)

Their UK based services are practical and useful, and include:

- Creating care packages
- Sibling groups
- Music therapy
- Art therapy

- Behavioural support
- Holiday play schemes
- Play clubs for younger children
- Youth clubs for older children
- Home support programmes
- Services for autistic adults.

Play Doctors

Companies like [Play Doctors](#) exist to promote and offer very useful visual aids, as well as inclusion training and communication resources. Treezy is another such company, which sells a range of carefully selected products designed to assist autistic children with their learning and development.

Brainwaves

A charity called [Brainwave](#) has also been established in the UK to unlock the potential of children on the autism spectrum. Their resources include therapeutic programmes. Each programme is tailored to the needs of the individual and can help with sensory processing and communication.

The Autism Education Trust

[The Autism Education Trust](#), another UK charity, focuses on resources and tools for teachers. It has published research into autism education in England and works to promote best practices in schools and classrooms with autistic pupils. Their wealth of resources includes tips on safeguarding, toolkits for outreach, toolkits for taking a person-centred approach, and good practice reports. The organisation also lobbies for better commissioning of autism education.

Twinkl

The website [Twinkl](#) offers a wealth of free, autism-friendly printables designed primarily for children, including daily routine visual timetables, emotions activity worksheets, home chore charts, emotions and feelings word cards, routine charts, and what to say in conversations cards.

The Autism Toolbox

[The Autism Toolbox](#) is a powerful resource designed specifically for Scottish schools, to promote understanding of autism and inclusion of autistic children and young people into mainstream Scottish schools. Their resources introduce and describe the common challenges autistic students can face and offer practical examples of support.

The Autism Directory

[The Autism Directory](#) provides local resources to support autistic people and their families, including information on education, therapies, money and legal advice, travel, and much more. You can easily search for the information you require by locality and category.

While people on the autism spectrum may share certain challenges and traits, many of their circumstances and needs are unique to them. Just as there is no one way to teach an autistic child to communicate, behave appropriately, or have better social inclusion with their peers, there is no one resource that's effective for every autistic individual.

A combination of different techniques and resources may be used for the benefit of the autistic person.

9.6 What We've Learned

In this module, we looked at some of the organisational considerations to help autistic people function with more independence and less anxiety.

These can be implemented at home, school, work, or out in the community.

Easy organisational systems for people on the autism spectrum may include colour coding envelopes

to contain certain documents, displaying charts and calendars with weekly schedules and expectations, and creating simple chore charts with sticker rewards for children.

We also looked at how technology can play an integral role in helping to stay organised. This can be accomplished through smartphone apps and computer software.

We reviewed the vast list of resources available. These include websites that contain helpful downloads like chore charts and visual schedules, and charitable organisations which offer opportunities for autistic people and their families to further develop their skills and strengths in a fun, interactive way.

By implementing good organisational methods at home, school, and work, and accessing the numerous resources available, people on the autism spectrum are better enabled to become independent, manage their time and expectations of others, and develop greater autonomy over their daily lives.

Take a Quick Recap Test

[viralQuiz id=97]

Summary

After completing this module, you should have a good idea of the different organisational considerations that must be included for people on the autism spectrum. This includes having a general understanding of organisational systems to help people at home, school, work, and in the community.

You should also have access to the many different, excellent resources which contain further information and provide opportunities for various types of support and possibilities for autistic individuals, their families, friends, and support teams.

In the next module, we will look at both the ethical considerations and legal obligations that should be taken into account when working with autistic people.
