

Self Resources



★ Knowing Myself: My Body and My Mind

Understanding yourself means learning about:

- Your sleep
- Your food and drink
- Your hygiene
- Your movement
- Your feelings and energy
- When you are masking

Supporting neurodivergent young people means giving support that fits **their needs**.

This includes:

- Listening carefully
- Believing what they tell you
- Creating safe spaces where they do not have to pretend to be someone else

★ Sleep

Why Sleep Can Be Hard

Sleep problems are common for neurodivergent young people.

Some children:

- Do not feel tired at "normal" times
- Wake up during the night
- Find it hard to settle
- Feel uncomfortable because of noise, light, or textures
- Feel anxious at bedtime

This can be linked to **melatonin**, the sleep hormone.

For some children, melatonin does not work in the usual way.

★ Building a Sleep Routine

A steady routine helps the body feel safe.

Try:

- Same bedtime and wake-up time every day
- Visual bedtime charts (bath → pyjamas → story → bed)

- Calm activities before sleep
- Dim lights and quiet sounds
- Soft, comfortable bedding



Use unscented products if smells bother your child.

★ Helping the Body Get Ready for Sleep

You can help by:

- Turning off screens 1–2 hours before bed
- Encouraging outdoor play in daylight
- Offering light snacks if hunger stops sleep (for example bananas or warm milk)

★ Creating a Safe Bedtime Space

Sleep can feel scary for some children.

Help by:

- Offering comfort items
- Speaking gently
- Avoiding pressure

If a child masks all day, bedtime may be when big feelings come out. Be patient and understanding.

★ Eating and Drinking

Why Food Matters

Good food helps with:

- Energy
- Growth
- Brain focus
- Mood
- Sleep
- Fighting illness

It also means:

- Drinking enough water
- Listening to hunger and fullness

★ Common Food Challenges

Some children may:

- Only eat certain foods
- Avoid textures
- Feel anxious at meals
- Like strong routines

This is common in neurodivergence.

Helpful Food Strategies

Visual Meal Plans

Show meals with pictures or charts.

Gentle Food Exploration

Let children touch, smell, and prepare food without pressure.

Help With Cooking

Let children choose and prepare food.

Predictable Choices

Keep favourite foods and add new ones slowly.

Respect Preferences

If food feels wrong, listen.

★ Personal Hygiene

Why Hygiene Can Be Hard

Some children:

- Dislike smells, textures, or temperatures
- Forget steps
- Feel rushed
- Get anxious

This is linked to sensory needs and planning skills, not laziness.

★ Hygiene Support Strategies



Visual Guides

Use pictures or lists for steps.

Timers and Music

Use songs or timers to guide time.

Sensory-Friendly Products

Choose gentle soaps, soft towels, and mild smells.

Small Steps

Build up slowly.

Routine

Do tasks at the same time each day.

★ Movement and Exercise

Why Movement Matters

Movement helps:

- Reduce anxiety
- Improve sleep
- Increase focus
- Build confidence
- Improve body awareness

It does not need to be competitive.

★ Practical Movement Tips

Short Activities

Try dancing, scooters, trampolines, or games.

Routine Movement

Walk, stretch, or clean with music.

Inclusive Clubs

Look for:



- Small groups
- Calm spaces
- Trained staff



Let Children Lead

Respect energy and interests.

Sensory Support

Use comfy clothes and quiet spaces.

★ Masking

What Is Masking?

Masking means hiding your real self to fit in.

This can include:

- Hiding stims
- Forcing eye contact
- Planning conversations
- Smiling when upset
- Hiding feelings

It is common at school.

★ Why Masking Is Tiring

Masking can help in the moment.

But over time it can cause:

- Tiredness
- Anxiety
- Burnout

Some children seem “fine” at school and then struggle at home.

This is often masking fatigue.

★ Supporting Healthy Unmasking

Create Safe Spaces

Make home a place to relax and be real.

Celebrate Identity

Say:
"You don't have to pretend here."

Talk Openly

Ask about energy and feelings.

Support Expression

Use art, music, or writing.

Therapy Support

Find therapists who understand neurodiversity.

Peer Support

Help children meet others like them.

★ Key Message

Knowing yourself means learning:

- What helps you sleep
- What foods feel safe
- How your body works
- When you need rest
- When you are masking

With:

- Listening
- Patience
- Support
- Respect

Young people can grow into confident, healthy adults who understand and value themselves.

★ Helpful Resources

- [Masking](#) – National Autistic Society
- [Understanding Masking | Kids Charity](#)
- [Masking](#) -hiding in plain sight

