

OSSME NEWS

Outreach Specialist Support Newsletter: Bumper Edition!

In this issue:

- Live Parent/Carer training during COVID
- Did you know?
- OSSME Education update
- International ASC news
- Free Transition Resources

We've Been Busy As Usual!

Welcome to our second newsletter during official lockdown! We hope you are all staying safe and well and have been enjoying some of the lovely weather even if it has had to be from your own back garden or by taking a walk each day. Here at OSSME we have been keeping incredibly busy supporting families in whatever ways we can. We have continued to educate using online and social distancing drop offs of work, video calls and Google Classrooms; as you will read later in the newsletter,

all of our current students have worked super hard and it is paying dividends for them now most of their final submissions are in and marking can commence. Parents & Carers are still being supported from our online platform with weekly live training sessions on a plethora of issues, and almost daily vlog tips from our very own manager, Sharon Williams. If you haven't managed to get on this yet, you can find out how below. **Should you feel you would like further support from OSSME or have any suggestions for us, please feel free to contact us via manager, Sharon Williams, at this email address: Sharon.williams@autisminitiatives.org**

Live online training and support for parents & carers continues!

In response to the disappointment of parents that we could not continue to meet in person for training at MeCycle during lockdown, OSSME has had massive success with an online Facebook group in which manager, Sharon Williams, vlogs regularly and also broadcasts lots of online training sessions. These can be watched live or in your own time. Parents can direct message OSSME with ideas/requests for further sessions, or can comment directly on the videos. You can join the group by first following OSSME Autism Initiatives page, then joining the group is easy: search FB for 'OSSME/ Mecycle Parents Group' and request to join. Please help us to spread the word! Click on the picture to be taken to the page.



Did you Know...? Autism Facts & Statistics



- Autism now affects 1 in 54 children
- Boys are four times more likely to have autism than girls
- About 40% of children with autism do not speak. About 25%–30% of children with autism have some words at 12 to 18 months of age and then lose them. Others might speak, but not until later in childhood
- Autism greatly varies from person to person (no two people with autism are alike)
- The rate of autism has steadily grown over the last twenty years
- Autism is the fastest growing developmental disorder, yet most underfunded
- Children with autism do progress – early intervention is key



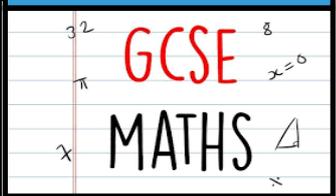
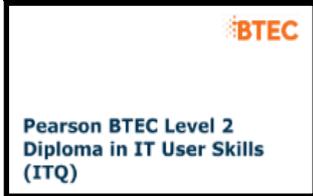
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Students flourish under OSSME education!

A Massive WELL DONE!

...to all of our hard working students who have worked tirelessly -as well as through some very tricky and difficult times recently- in order to be able to say that the end is in sight and their courses should bring them excellent predicted results. As ever, we are immensely proud of every student we work with, and hope they are proud of themselves, too!

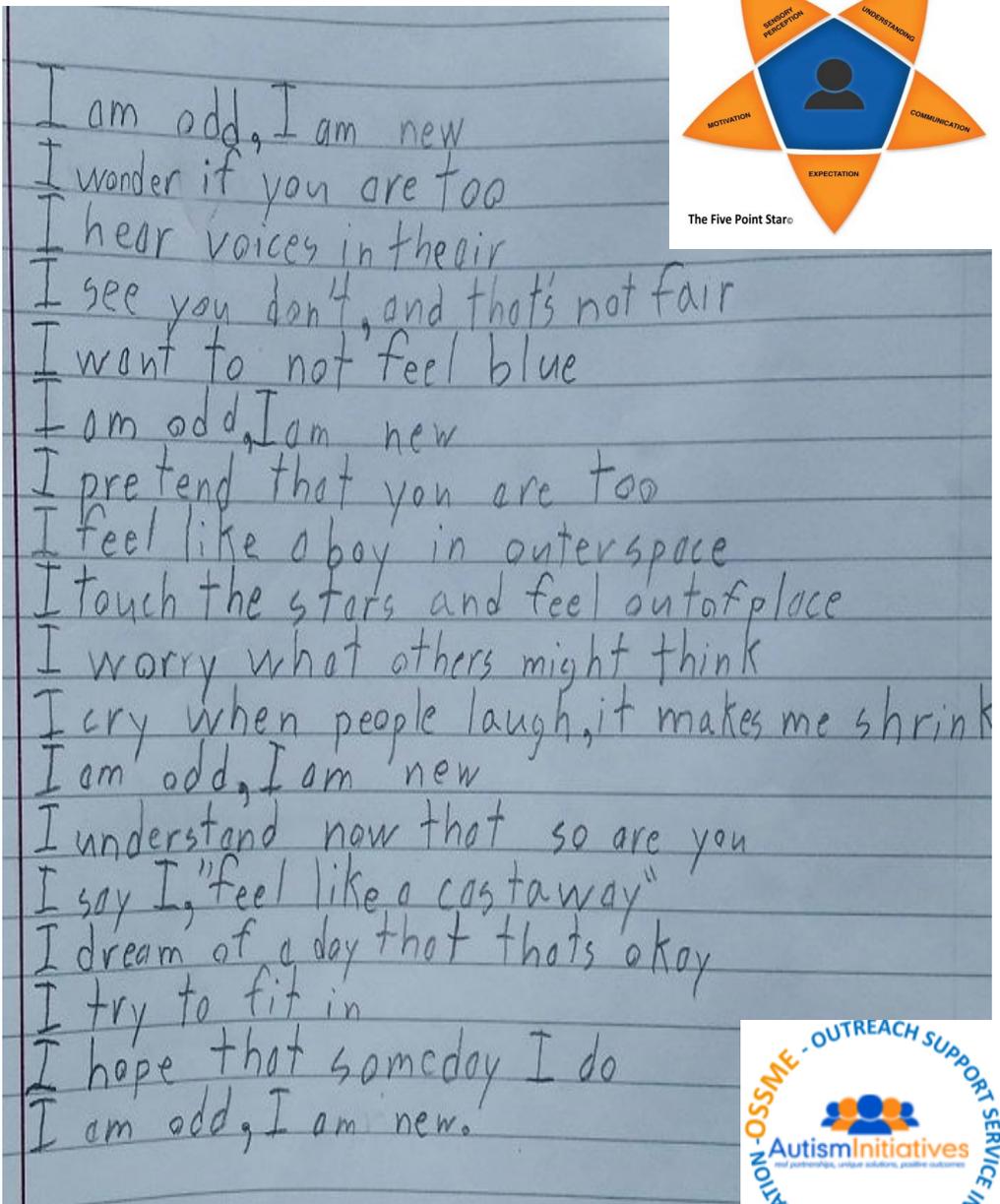


International ASC news

What began as a class assignment has turned into a work worthy of a distinguished author for young Benjamin Giroux, whose raw and emotional poem about life with autism went massively viral and moved thousands of people around the world. The then 10-year-old from Plattsburgh, New York, was immediately inspired after his teacher asked students to pen a poem about themselves, starting every few sentences with "I am." Benjamin, not usually one to express a great deal of emotion, approached this homework task with relish and got straight to work on the following poem. It's a great insight from someone with ASD themselves. We hope you like it :) Well done Benjamin!



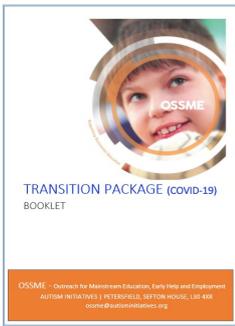
The Five Point Star®



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CONTENTS OF THE BOOKLET INCLUDE:

- About OSSME
- Introduction
- Additional Support
- About me
- Questions we are going to help you with



Adapting to the new 'normal'

The world has changed beyond recognition—there is no denying it. At OSSME we are highly aware of how much this will have affected our students and families, and we want to help them to find a way to structure a reflective process and manage the transition back to school in manageable chunks.

Therefore the team have been busy pooling their expertise in order to create a booklet that can either be completed digitally or can be printed to work through. It is suggested a trusted adult the child feels comfortable guides them through this and is on hand to be a discussion partner.

We have already had much positive feedback on this, but would welcome any suggestions for improvement should you have any. If you wish to also benefit from teach-

Question 1. What was happening in school and home before lockdown?

Question 2. Why did school close and change?

Question 3. How did your life change?

Question 4. What did change feel like?

Question 5. How will we get back to what is was like before lockdown?

Question 6. What will school look like when we return?

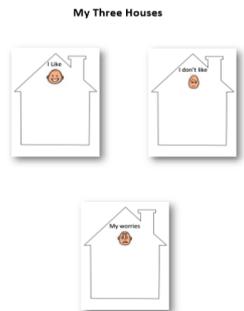
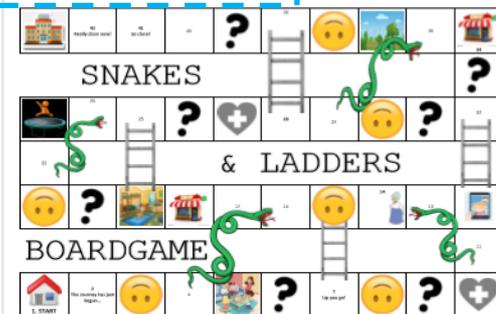
Contact us at ossme@autisminitiatives.org if you would like to request your free copy

Not only have we responded to this clear need for a guidance resource to help children reflect on recent experience and build their expectations of going back to school, we have also created a pack of lesson resources that teachers and other professionals can request and adapt for their own students' needs. This runs alongside the transition booklet or can be used discretely, but covers the following learning objectives:

1. Can I consider how the changes, including working from home, made me feel?
2. Can I show understanding of why school had to close and how this affected everyone?
3. Can I discuss my feelings about change and understanding how everyone feels things differently? Also, the importance of sharing my feelings with someone I trust?
4. Can I feel empowered to move forward?



What change feels like on my body



Click on any of the above pictures to be taken to the request link for these free resources.

OSSME Staff Refresher/Advanced Training Focus

OSSME's Practitioners hold a great variety of qualifications and bring myriad experience in a variety of relevant fields to the team. However, we are of the opinion that learning never stops and we are passionate about upskilling ourselves wherever the opportunities arise. If they don't, we seek them out! This month, staff have updated their qualifications in *Bereavement Counselling*; *Mental Health & Wellbeing Support*; *PTSD Counselling*; *Domestic Abuse and Violence Support* - to name just a few; however the full team focus is currently on refresher training in *Selective Mutism in children and Young People*. Please get in touch if you would like to know what else we can offer. You can email Sharon.williams@autisminitiatives.org