

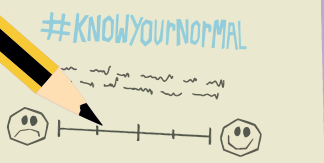
# HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUNG AUTISTIC PEOPLE

## SUPPORT THEIR FEELINGS AND MENTAL HEALTH BY:

- 1 **Not accepting that being unhappy or stressed** is an inevitable part of autism – it isn't.
- 2 **Taking the time to learn** our preferred method of communication and enabling us to respond in writing or other visual methods.
- 3 **Always explaining** what is going to happen, allowing time for processing and checking understanding.
- 4 **Creating an environment** that considers and supports sensory differences so we can feel at ease and able to communicate.
- 5 **Keeping us aware** of any possible changes that may occur with our care and being honest when you don't know something.
- 6 **Using our toolkit** to record what we're like when we are well and happy – so it is easier to notice and explain if something changes.



## REMOVE THE STIGMA AROUND MENTAL HEALTH AND AUTISM BY:

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- 1 **Using positive language** to describe autism; it's not helpful to refer to autism as a problem or a disorder or to use negative language around mental health conditions.
  - 2 **Not making assumptions** about us or our needs. Every autistic person is different, and our care should be individualised.
  - 3 **Respecting our experiences** and acknowledging we are the experts in our own lives.
  - 4 **Acknowledging** that seeking help and self-care are signs of strength.

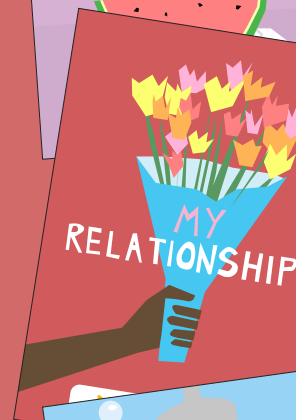
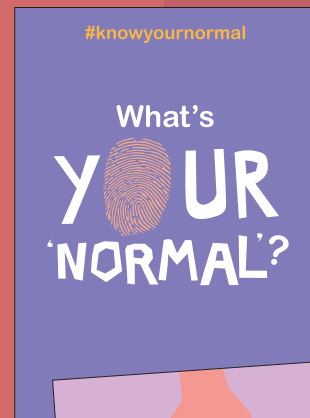
## GETTING THE RIGHT HELP AT THE RIGHT TIME WOULD BE EASIER IF:

- 1 **Everyone who supported us** knew enough about autism to plan for our appointments to be as successful as possible. This means asking us what reasonable adjustments we need to be in place.
- 2 **Every healthcare trust or setting was able to identify** where they have staff who truly understand both autism and mental health and refer to them accordingly.
- 3 A diagnosis of autism didn't exclude us from accessing services; **everyone has individual needs and it isn't right to turn people away for being too 'complex'**.
- 4 Mental health support services were **co-designed** with people who are autistic, so our needs are considered right from the start.

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#KNOWYOURNORMAL

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