Speech, Language and Communication: Universal and targeted approach

SOLIHULL
ACADEMY

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) TOOLKIT

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS?

Teaching assistants (TAs) play a crucial role in educational settings, primarily in schools, colleges, and universities. Their responsibilities can vary depending on the institution and the level of education they're working with, but generally, their role includes:

Supporting teachers

TAs assist teachers in various tasks such as preparing classroom materials, setting up equipment for experiments or demonstrations, and grading assignments or tests.

Classroom management

They help maintain discipline and order in the classroom by monitoring student behavior, helping with group work, and ensuring that students stay on task.

One-on-one assistance

TAs often work closely with individual students or small groups who may need extra help or attention, providing personalized support to ensure all students can grasp the material.

Administrative tasks

They may help with administrative duties such as keeping attendance records, organizing files, and preparing reports.

Special needs support

In inclusive classrooms, TAs often provide additional support to students with special needs, including those with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or behavioural challenges.

OVERALL, TEACHING ASSISTANTS SERVE AS VALUABLE MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM, PROVIDING ESSENTIAL SUPPORT TO TEACHERS AND HELPING TO CREATE A POSITIVE AND CONDUCIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

5 TOP TIPS FOR A TEACHING ASSISTANT:

Build Positive Relationships

Take the time to establish rapport with students and create a supportive, inclusive classroom environment. Building positive relationships fosters trust and encourages students to engage more actively in learning.

Collaborate with teachers & other staff

Work closely with the classroom teacher to understand lesson plans, learning objectives, and individual student needs. Effective collaboration ensures consistency in instruction and support, maximizing student learning outcomes.

Provide individualised support

Recognize that students have diverse learning styles, abilities, and needs. Offer personalized assistance and adapt instructional strategies to meet the unique requirements of each student, ensuring equitable access to learning opportunities.

Communicate effectively

Regularly communicate with teachers to understand lesson plans and student needs, while also fostering open dialogue with students to address any concerns or questions they may have, promoting a supportive learning environment.

Continuously reflect & improve

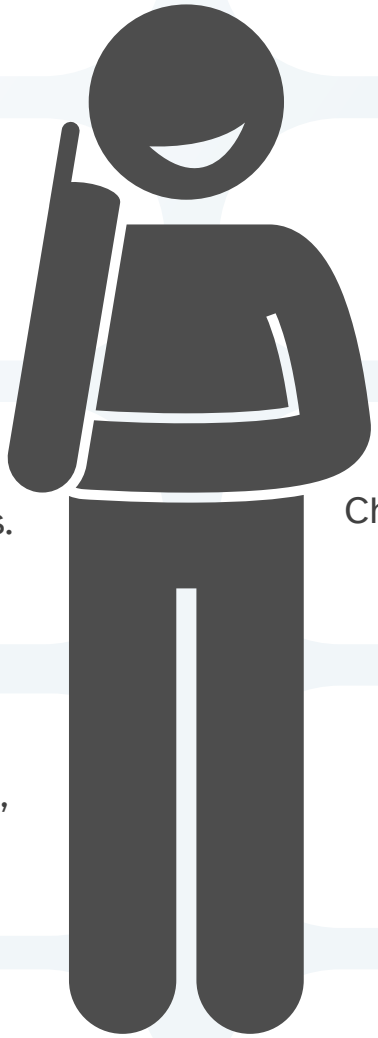
Engage in ongoing self-reflection and seek feedback from colleagues to identify areas for growth, adapting teaching strategies and approaches to continuously enhance your effectiveness as a teaching assistant.

GROWTH MINDSET

Encouraging a growth mindset as a teaching assistant is crucial for fostering a positive learning environment where students feel empowered to take on challenges and persist in the face of setbacks. Here are some strategies which can be employed to encourage a growth mindset...

Provide constructive feedback, guidance for future learning.

Praise effort, not just intelligence.



Emphasise the learning process.

Normalise mistakes & failures.

Set realistic expectations.

Change to growth language (I cant do this...yet)

Model a growth mindset, share personal stories.

Celebrate progress.

Encourage & provide opportunities for reflection.

Encourage peer support.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AT SOLIHULL ACADEMY

BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS:

1. TO BE READY TO LEARN
2. TO BE RESPECTFUL
3. TO BE RESILIENT
4. TO BE RESTORATIVE
5. TO BE SAFE

LANGUAGE TO CONNECT BEFORE WE CORRECT

We need to model good behaviour and avoid confrontation. To make expectations clear:

1. Be specific in requests
2. Remind students about their behaviour
3. Avoid 'you' statements
4. Encompass the expectations from all staff

Example: "John, we expect all pupils to listen when they are asked. We learn best when we listen so that we know what to do. I would like to see you facing me and not talking. Thank you".

TEACHING ASSISTANTS CAN...

ENCOURAGE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR:

- Verbal praise/ reinforcement
- Postcards / record positive points
- Positive phone calls
- Student of the week
- Inform pastoral teams
- Reward-based incentives (e.g. 3 postcards in a day for a phone call home)
- Provide oppurtunities for positive redirect

DISCOURAGE NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR:

- Verbal and visual reminders
- Corridor chat: Ask the students what they need to redirect to be successful in the lesson.
- Log negative behaviours
- Ring parents to inform them of the negative behaviour choices
- Inform pastoral teams

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

A pro-social approach to resolving conflict

- ✓ Resolve conflict
- ✓ Reduce, prevent and improve harmful behaviour
- ✓ Repair harm and restore positive relationships
- ✓ Promote accountability

WHAT

A whole school teaching and learning approach that focuses on working *with* students to repair the harm caused by an incident or conflict.

HOW

Restorative practices focus on understanding the needs of all individuals involved, by including them in discussions about how behaviour may impact others. The focus is on the behaviour, not the person. It encourages students to take responsibility through facilitated conversations where all individuals involved feel safe sharing how a situation or event impacted them. Implementation may include:

COMMUNITY BUILDING:

Create a positive school culture by promoting relationships, respect, and responsibility. Community building activities can include team-building exercises, collaborative projects, and classroom discussions about shared values.

RESTORATIVE LANGUAGE:

Focus on the impact of the *behaviour*, not the individual, and use language that promotes repairing the harm and moving forward. E.g.

- Communicate feelings using 'I' statements.
- Ask questions that promote reflection and problem-solving.
- Avoid interrogation, scolding and judgement.
- Use active listening.

RESTORATIVE CONFERENCES:

Impacted students are brought together to discuss the incident, how to repair the harm, and what can be done to prevent future incidents.

RESTORATIVE CIRCLES

Students and teachers are brought together to discuss an issue, express their thoughts and feelings, and collaborate on finding a solution.

PEER MEDIATION:

Students are trained to mediate conflict between peers. The mediator is the neutral third party who facilitates between the involved parties.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

ROSENSHINE'S PRINCIPLES

Barak Rosenshine, an educational psychologist, developed a set of principles based on research evidence that outline effective teaching practices. These principles are widely recognized and utilized by educators to enhance student learning. Here are Rosenshine's 10 principles of learning and how we use them at SA:

01. DAILY REVIEW

Regularly review previously learned material to reinforce retention and understanding. Incorporate visual aids to help with recall, use multisensory approaches to engage diverse learning styles.

02. NEW MATERIAL SMALL STEPS.

Break down information into smaller, sequential steps, and provide frequent opportunities for reinforcement and practice. Use visual organizers or graphic organizers to support understanding.

03. QUESTIONING

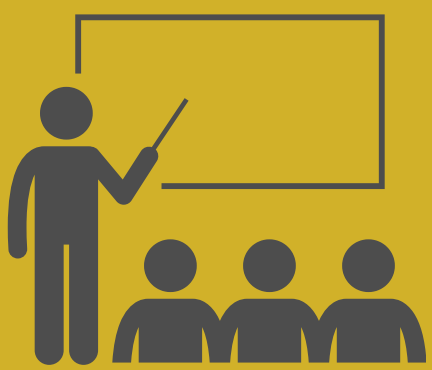
Use effective questioning techniques to stimulate thinking, check for understanding, and promote deeper learning. Questions should be clear and concise, and provide additional processing time for students to respond. Use differentiated questioning techniques.

04. PROVIDE MODELS

Demonstrate the desired skills or concepts clearly and explicitly to provide a model for students to follow. Use concrete examples and visual demonstrations to illustrate concepts. Offer multiple representations of information.

05. GUIDED PRACTICE

Scaffold learning by providing structured, guided practice opportunities with feedback to support students as they develop new skills or understanding. Offer structured practice activities with clear instructions and visual supports. Individualised support and feedback to address specific needs and challenges.



06. CHECK UNDERSTANDING

Use a variety of assessment methods, including verbal, visual, and hands-on tasks, to gauge student comprehension. Offer alternative assessment formats, such as oral presentations or projects, to accommodate diverse abilities.

07. HIGH SUCCESS RATE

Set achievable goals and provide opportunities for success at each step of the learning process. Adjust tasks and expectations based on individual student needs to promote confidence and motivation.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

08. SCAFFOLDING FOR DIFFICULT TASKS

Offer additional support, such as visual aids, prompts, or peer assistance, to help students complete challenging tasks. Break tasks into manageable components and provide step-by-step guidance as needed.

09. INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Provide opportunities for students to practice skills or apply knowledge independently to promote mastery. Support students in developing self-regulation skills by providing clear expectations and routines. Offer structured independent practice activities with built-in supports and check-ins to promote autonomy.

10. WEEKLY AND MONTHLY REVIEWS

Conduct regular reviews of material over longer periods (weekly and monthly) to strengthen retention and transfer of learning to long-term memory. Incorporate regular review sessions that reinforce key concepts and skills. Use interactive review activities that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences.

BY IMPLEMENTING THESE STRATEGIES, TEACHING ASSISTANTS CAN CREATE AN INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THAT MEETS THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIORAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, PROMOTING THEIR ENGAGEMENT, UNDERSTANDING, AND SUCCESS.

MORE ON SCAFFOLDING...

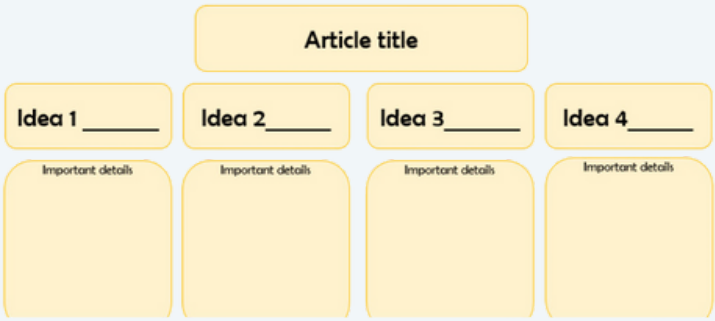
Scaffolding means providing temporary support for an inexperienced learner to help them complete a task or acquire a new skill and then gradually withdrawing the support.

Combined with modelling, providing scaffolds is part of a 'cognitive apprenticeship' process.

Scaffolds are particularly beneficial for....

- Dyslexia : getting all the BIG ideas down then knowing where to focus
- ADHD : helps with executive functioning, knowing where to start and what to prioritise.
- SEMH: less overwhelming when tackling a BIG task.

Example framework:

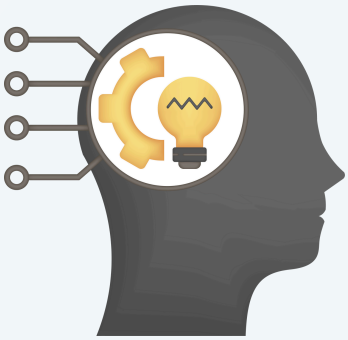


COGNITION AND LEARNING

Cognition and learning are fundamental concepts in education, shaping how individuals acquire, process, and apply knowledge. As a teaching assistant, understanding these concepts is essential for supporting students' academic growth and facilitating effective learning experiences.

WHAT IS COGNITION?

Cognition refers to the mental processes involved in acquiring, organizing, understanding, and using knowledge.



KEY COMPONENTS:

- Perception: The process of recognizing and interpreting sensory stimuli.
- Attention: Focusing mental resources on specific information or tasks.
- Memory: The ability to encode, store, and retrieve information.
- Language: The use of symbols and rules for communication and thought.
- Problem Solving: Applying cognitive strategies to overcome obstacles and achieve goals.
- Decision Making: Evaluating options and selecting the most appropriate course of action.

HOW DOES COGNITION INFLUENCE LEARNING...

1 ATTENTION

Students need to pay attention to the material being presented to learn effectively. Teaching assistants can help by using engaging teaching methods, reducing distractions, and providing clear instructions.

2 PROBLEM SOLVING

Teaching assistants can encourage students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills by presenting challenging tasks, providing guidance when needed, and fostering a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable taking risks.

3 MEMORY

Memory plays a crucial role in learning. Teaching assistants can reinforce learning by using strategies that enhance memory retention, such as repetition, mnemonics, and chunking information into smaller, more manageable parts.

4 MOTIVATION

Motivation influences students' willingness to learn and their level of engagement. Teaching assistants can motivate students by setting clear goals, providing constructive feedback, and recognizing their achievements.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

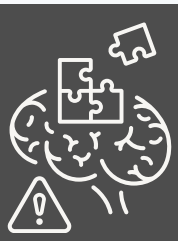
USING KNOWLEDGE OF COGNITION TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN:

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION	Recognizing that students have diverse learning styles and abilities, teaching assistants can tailor instruction to meet individual needs. This might involve providing additional explanations, offering alternative learning materials, or adjusting the pace of instruction.
ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES	Teaching assistants can incorporate active learning techniques that encourage students to participate actively in the learning process. This could include group discussions, hands-on activities, problem-solving tasks, and interactive demonstrations.
FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT	Providing timely and constructive feedback is essential for student learning. Teaching assistants can assess students' understanding through quizzes, assignments, and discussions, and then provide feedback that helps them identify areas for improvement and build on their strengths.
CREATING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT	Teaching assistants can foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel valued, respected, and encouraged to take intellectual risks. This involves promoting collaboration, providing emotional support, and celebrating diversity.

COGNITIVE LOAD

Cognitive load refers to the total amount of mental effort being used in the working memory. It's like the mental burden or demand placed on a person as they process information. Cognitive load theory suggests that there are limits to how much information our brains can process at once. When the cognitive load is too high, it can lead to difficulties in learning and understanding.

WORKING MEMORY



Working memory is a component of the cognitive system responsible for temporarily holding and manipulating information needed for cognitive tasks. Think of it as a mental workspace where we actively process information. It's crucial for tasks such as problem-solving, comprehension, and learning new concepts. However, working memory has limited capacity, so overloading it with too much information can hinder learning.

RETENTION

Retention refers to the ability to remember or recall information over time. It's essential for learning because if information isn't retained, it cannot be used later when needed. Factors such as repetition, meaningfulness, and relevance can influence retention.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIORAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS:

Understanding cognitive load can be particularly beneficial for teaching assistants when supporting students with behavioral and special educational needs. Here's how:

1. **Modifying Tasks:** By being aware of cognitive load, teaching assistants can modify tasks to ensure they are appropriate for the student's cognitive abilities. This might involve breaking tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks, reducing the amount of new information presented at once, or providing additional support and scaffolding.
2. **Multi-Sensory Learning:** Engaging multiple senses can help reduce cognitive load and enhance learning for students with special educational needs. Teaching assistants can incorporate visuals, hands-on activities, and auditory cues to reinforce concepts and make information more accessible.
3. **Repetition and Practice:** Repetition is crucial for retention, especially for students with special educational needs who may require more time and practice to learn new concepts. Teaching assistants can provide opportunities for repeated practice and review to reinforce learning and help information move from working memory to long-term memory.
4. **Scaffolding and Support:** Scaffolding refers to providing temporary support to help students achieve a task or goal that they would not be able to accomplish independently. Teaching assistants can offer scaffolding techniques such as prompts, cues, and modeling to guide students through challenging tasks while managing their cognitive load.
5. **Managing Anxiety:** Students with behavioral and special educational needs may experience heightened levels of anxiety, which can further impact their cognitive load. Teaching assistants can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment, establish clear expectations, and provide reassurance to help reduce anxiety and optimize learning.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING?

Executive functioning (EF) is a set of mental skills that help us manage our thoughts, emotions and actions. These skills are crucial for success in school as they allow students to:

1. **PLAN & ORGANISE** : break down tasks into steps, prioritise assignments, and manage time effectively.
2. **FOCUS & PAY ATTENTION** : stay on track during lessons, minimise distractions and complete work accurately.
3. **MANAGE IMPULSIVITY** : think before acting, control emotions and resist distractions.
4. **WORKING MEMORY** : hold information in their mind while working on a task.
5. **SELF MONITOR & REFLECT** : Evaluate their progress, learn from mistakes, and adjust their approach as needed.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WORKING MEMORY:

Decrease Memory Load

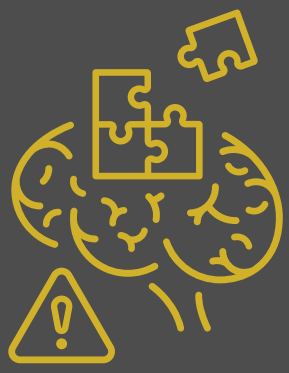
- Break tasks into smaller chunks or one task at a time.
- Instructions in multiple formats.
- Concise and brief with new material and giving instructions.

Review Information

- Repeat information multiple times.
- Provide students with the opportunity to repeat a task.
- Visual reminders for tasks that need to be completed.

Utilize Graphic Organizers

- New concepts - use graphic organizers. Allows picturing of how ideas are connected.
- Activate prior knowledge with advanced organisers, allowing for focus on material.



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

Speech, language, and communication difficulties encompass a range of challenges that affect a person's ability to understand, express, and interact with others effectively. These difficulties can manifest in various forms and can have significant impacts on young people's educational, social, and emotional development.

WHAT ARE SPEECH, LANGUAGE, AND COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES?

1 SPEECH DISORDERS

These involve difficulties with producing sounds, such as articulation disorders (difficulty forming specific sounds), fluency disorders (stuttering), or voice disorders (abnormalities in pitch, volume, or quality of voice).

2 COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

These involve challenges with the overall process of communication, which may include difficulties with social interaction, pragmatics (the social use of language), nonverbal communication (such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language), and understanding the subtleties of conversation.

3 LANGUAGE DISORDERS

These pertain to difficulties with understanding and/or using words in context, forming sentences, or using language appropriately for communication. Language disorders can affect both receptive language (understanding spoken or written language) and expressive language (using language to communicate thoughts and ideas).

Disorders Associated with Speech, Language, and Communication Difficulties:

1. **Specific Language Impairment (SLI)**: A developmental disorder characterized by difficulties in language acquisition and use, often with no apparent cause.
2. **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** Individuals with ASD may experience difficulties with social communication, including challenges in understanding and using verbal and nonverbal communication.
3. **Stuttering (Dysfluency Disorder):** Characterized by disruptions in the flow of speech, such as repetitions, prolongations, or blocks of sounds or syllables.
4. **Apraxia of Speech:** A motor speech disorder where individuals have difficulty planning and coordinating the movements required for speech production.

IMPACT OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Speech, language, and communication difficulties can have profound effects on young people:

Academic performance

Difficulty in understanding instructions, expressing thoughts clearly, or comprehending written material can hinder academic progress.

Social interaction

Challenges in communication may lead to difficulties forming friendships, participating in group activities, or understanding social cues, which can impact social integration and self-esteem.

Emotional wellbeing

Frustration and anxiety may arise from struggles to communicate effectively, leading to feelings of isolation, low self-confidence, or behavioral issues.

How Teaching Assistants Can Support:

1. **Provide Individualized Support:** Recognize each student's specific needs and provide tailored support, such as simplified language, visual aids, or alternative communication methods (e.g., sign language or augmentative and alternative communication devices).
2. **Facilitate Communication:** Create a supportive environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves. Encourage peer interactions, provide opportunities for collaborative activities, and teach social communication skills through role-playing and modeling.
3. **Collaborate with Teachers and Speech Therapists:** Work closely with classroom teachers and speech-language therapists to implement strategies and interventions that support students' speech, language, and communication goals.
4. **Promote Confidence and Self-esteem:** Acknowledge and celebrate students' progress and efforts in communication. Provide positive reinforcement and create opportunities for students to succeed and build confidence in their communication abilities.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

TRAUMA INFORMED LEARNING

Incorporating trauma-informed practices, utilizing models like THRIVE, understanding the fight or flight response, and recognizing the impact of ACEs can help create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that meets the diverse needs of students who have experienced trauma.

WHAT IS TRAUMA INFORMED LEARNING?

Trauma-informed learning is a holistic approach to education that recognizes the widespread impact of trauma on individuals, particularly children and young people, and seeks to address their unique needs in educational settings. Here's a deeper dive into the key principles and practices of trauma-informed learning:

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

Educators in trauma-informed learning environments have a deep understanding of the prevalence and effects of trauma on students' lives. They recognize that trauma can manifest in various ways, including behavioral challenges, emotional dysregulation, academic difficulties, and interpersonal conflicts. By understanding the root causes of students' behaviors and responses, educators can respond with empathy, compassion, and support.

CREATING SAFETY

Safety is a foundational principle of trauma-informed learning. Educators prioritize creating physically and emotionally safe environments where students feel secure and supported. This includes establishing clear boundaries, routines, and expectations, as well as providing opportunities for students to express themselves and be heard without fear of judgment or reprisal.

BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

Strong, trusting relationships between students and educators are essential for healing and growth in trauma-informed learning environments. Educators work to build authentic connections with students based on empathy, respect, and positive regard. They strive to be consistent, reliable sources of support and validation for students who may have experienced betrayal or abandonment in the past.

PROMOTING EMPOWEREMENT

Trauma-informed learning empowers students by recognizing their strengths, resilience, and capacity for growth. Educators support students in developing self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-advocacy skills, empowering them to navigate challenges and pursue their goals. This includes providing opportunities for choice, autonomy, and collaboration in the learning process.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

FOSTERING RESILIENCE

Resilience-building is an integral part of trauma-informed learning. Educators help students develop coping strategies, problem-solving skills, and adaptive responses to stress and adversity. They cultivate a strengths-based approach that focuses on students' assets and abilities rather than deficits or limitations.

ADAPTING INSTRUCTION

Trauma-informed educators recognize that trauma can affect students' ability to learn and engage in academic tasks. They adapt their instructional strategies to accommodate diverse learning styles, preferences, and needs. This may involve incorporating multisensory, experiential, and differentiated instruction techniques, as well as providing accommodations and supports as needed.

PROMOTING SELF CARE

Finally, trauma-informed learning prioritizes the well-being of educators themselves. Recognizing the emotional demands of working with students who have experienced trauma, schools and organizations support educators in practicing self-care, setting boundaries, seeking support, and maintaining their own resilience and well-being.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

ACEs, or Adverse Childhood Experiences, refer to potentially traumatic events or circumstances that occur during childhood.

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Household substance abuse
- Household mental illness
- Parental seperation or divorce
- Domestic violence
- Incarcerated household member

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

By understanding how childhood trauma impacts the nervous system and the flight/fight response, teaching assistants can better support young people in regulating their emotions, managing stress, and developing positive coping skills. Through compassionate and trauma-informed care, teaching assistants can help create a nurturing environment where all students can thrive.

WHAT IS THE FIGHT/FLIGHT RESPONSE?

The flight/fight response is an innate physiological reaction that occurs in response to perceived threats or danger. When activated, the body releases stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, preparing the individual to either confront the threat (fight) or flee from it (flight).

CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Childhood trauma (especially early childhood), when the brain is still developing, can disrupt the normal functioning of the nervous system. Trauma can dysregulate the automatic nervous system, which governs involuntary bodily functions, including fight or flight response.

UNREGULATED FIGHT/FLIGHT RESPONSE

In the context of childhood trauma, the flight/fight response may become hypersensitive or dysregulated, leading to exaggerated or inappropriate responses to stressors.

IMPACT ON BEHAVIOUR

For children who have experienced trauma, the dysregulation of the flight/fight response can manifest in various behavioral challenges. Such as hyperarousal, hypoarousal, impulsivity, avoidance, and difficulty with transitions.

WHAT WE CAN DO :

- Establish safety in the environment, structures and stability.
- Building trusting relationships based on empathy, respect and consistency. Become a reliable and supportive presence.
- Teach self-regulation techniques to manage their emotions and responses to stress.
- Provide predictability, allows them to feel in control.

HYPERAROUSAL : hypervigilance, heightened sensitivity to stimuli, exaggerated startled response.
HYPOAROUSAL : withdrawn, numb or dissociated. May seem disconnected from surroundings and exhibit a lack of emotional responsiveness.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

THRIVE APPROACH

Thrive is a comprehensive approach designed to identify and address emotional developmental needs in children and young people early on. By quickly implementing tailored support, it aims to enhance accessibility, effectiveness, and enjoyment of learning. Drawing from various fields such as neuroscience, attachment theory, and child development, Thrive equips educators with practical tools and techniques to foster emotional literacy and bolster learning power.

THRIVE APPROACH FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS.....

Teaching assistants play a crucial role in implementing the Thrive Approach as they often work closely with students on a day-to-day basis. Here's how teaching assistants can utilize the Thrive Approach:

01. EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Teaching assistants can observe students closely to identify signs of emotional developmental needs early on. They can notice behaviors, emotions, and interactions that may indicate areas requiring support.

02. SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

Teaching assistants can work alongside teachers and other staff to implement differentiated provisions based on the identified needs. This might involve creating a supportive learning environment, adapting teaching methods, or providing additional emotional support to students.

03. BUILDING EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Teaching assistants can integrate activities and discussions into their interactions with students to enhance emotional literacy. They can help students identify and articulate their emotions, understand the emotions of others, and develop strategies for managing emotions effectively.

04. USING PRACTICAL TOOLS

Teaching assistants can learn and apply practical tools and techniques provided by the Thrive Approach to support students' emotional development. This could include using sensory materials, engaging in therapeutic activities, or facilitating mindfulness exercises.

05. COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

eaching assistants can collaborate with other staff members, including Thrive mentors and counselors, to ensure a holistic approach to supporting students' emotional well-being. They can share observations, insights, and strategies to provide comprehensive support to students.

06. MONITORING PROGRESS

Teaching assistants can monitor the progress of students in their emotional development and adjust support strategies as needed. They can communicate regularly with Thrive mentors and other staff to share updates and insights about students' progress.

07. EMPOWERING STUDENTS

Teaching assistants can empower students by involving them in the process of identifying their emotional needs, setting goals, and developing strategies for self-regulation. They can encourage students to reflect on their emotions, behaviors, and choices, fostering self-awareness and autonomy.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachments are emotional bonds formed between individuals, typically between children and their primary caregivers, which greatly influence social and emotional development. These bonds serve as a foundation for future relationships and provide a sense of security and safety. However, when attachment experiences are disrupted or inconsistent, attachment disorders may arise, impacting a child's ability to form healthy relationships and regulate emotions effectively.

Students who have experienced trauma or disruptions in attachment may exhibit various behavioral issues in the classroom, such as difficulty forming relationships, emotional outbursts, withdrawal, aggression, or difficulty regulating emotions. As a teaching assistant, understanding attachment theory and recognizing the signs of attachment disorders can be crucial in providing effective support for these students.

TYPES OF ATTACHMENT STYLES...

Secure

- **Characteristics**: Trusting, emotionally regulated, seek support when needed, positive self-image, healthy boundaries.
- **Causes**: Consistent caregiving, emotional availability, providing a secure base.
- **Behaviors**: Open communication, seeking support, healthy relationships, emotional resilience.
- **Support**: Responsive relationships, emotional validation, encouraging independence, promoting healthy boundaries.

Avoidant

- **Characteristics**: Emotionally detached, self-sufficient, avoidant of intimacy, difficulty expressing emotions.
- **Causes**: Emotionally unavailable caregivers, dismissive or intrusive caregiving.
- **Behaviors**: Avoiding discussing personal feelings, reluctance to seek support, difficulty expressing emotions.
- **Support**: Building trust, fostering emotional awareness, providing space for autonomy.

Ambivalent

- **Characteristics**: Desire for closeness, fear of abandonment, clingy behavior, mood swings.
- **Causes**: Inconsistent caregiving, alternating between responsive and distant.
- **Behaviors**: Seeking attention, jealousy, mood swings, fear of rejection.
- **Support**: Providing reassurance, consistency, validation of feelings, setting boundaries.

Disorganised

- **Characteristics**: Contradictory behaviors, difficulty regulating emotions, fear and confusion in relationships.
- **Causes**: Trauma, neglect, abuse, inconsistent caregiving.
- **Behaviors**: Erratic behavior, aggression, withdrawal, difficulty forming relationships.
- **Support**: Patience, consistency, therapeutic interventions, fostering positive relationships.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

HOW TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH ATTACHMENT DISORDERS.....

Helping Children with Avoidant Attachment (e.g., Lilly 'Leave me alone!'):

- Provide subtle adult support, such as sitting nearby but not directly next to the child.
- Use the presence of other children to diffuse tension between the adult and child.
- Focus on tasks during conversations and provide clear, structured tasks for self-sufficiency.
- Explore feelings and emotions indirectly through stories or metaphors.
- Offer opportunities for structured play and games with clear rules.

Helping Children with Ambivalent Attachment (e.g., Harry 'Here I am!'):

- Break tasks into small, manageable chunks and schedule regular progress checks.
- Utilize board games for safe experiences of separation and expression of emotions.
- Provide transitional objects for comfort during separations.
- Ensure the child feels acknowledged and included in class discussions.
- Assign the child responsibilities or tasks rather than authority over peers.
- Facilitate small group work to foster peer relationships.

Helping Children with Disorganized Attachment (e.g., Cally 'Can't beat me!'):

- Establish predictable routines and provide physical safe spaces.
- Communicate clear behavior plans and remain calm and empathetic during crises.
- Encourage verbal expression of feelings and desires.
- Ensure staff receive support and training to effectively assist the child.
- Offer differentiated tasks with minimal threat and engage in soothing activities.
- Consider referring the child for therapeutic intervention if needed.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

NURTURE SCHOOLS

The National Nurturing schools programme provides educators with tools to implement nurture into school life. It helps to support a whole school approach to nurture and helps to build connections and resilience which can be vital in leading to better attainment and less exclusions.

WHAT IS THE NURTURE APPROACH?

The Nurture approach focuses on addressing the social, emotional, and mental health needs of children and young people, recognizing the importance of creating supportive environments for learning. Here are the main points and how teaching assistants can use this approach:

Importance of Nurture:

Nurture helps children develop vital social skills, confidence, and self-esteem, preparing them to learn. It emphasizes the influence of social environments on social and emotional skills, well-being, and behaviour.

How Teaching Assistants Can Use It: *Teaching assistants can support the implementation of nurture by creating inclusive, supportive environments in classrooms and throughout the school.*

Nurture in the Classroom:

Nurture offers tools and resources to address students' social, emotional, and mental health needs. It promotes a whole-class approach to social and emotional learning, ensuring all students can access support.

How Teaching Assistants Can Use It: *Teaching assistants can assist in implementing social and emotional learning activities in the classroom, facilitate peer interactions, model positive social and emotional skills, and monitor students' well-being using assessment tools.*

6 PRINCIPLES OF NURTURE:

01. SAFETY

The classroom offers a safe base.

02. WELLBEING

The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.

03. LANGUAGE

Language is a vital means of communication.

04. TRANSITIONS

The importance of transitions in children's lives.

05. LEARNING

Children's learning is understood developmentally.

06. BEHAVIOUR

All behaviour is communication.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

FOETAL ALCHOHOL SYNDROME

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a condition that occurs in babies whose mothers drank alcohol during pregnancy. It's characterized by a range of physical, cognitive, and behavioral abnormalities. Here's a breakdown of some key aspects:

01. PHYSICAL FEATURES

Babies with FAS may have distinct facial features such as a smooth ridge between the nose and upper lip (smooth philtrum), thin upper lip, small eye openings, and a small head circumference. They might also exhibit growth deficiencies, including low birth weight, poor growth, and short stature.

02. COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

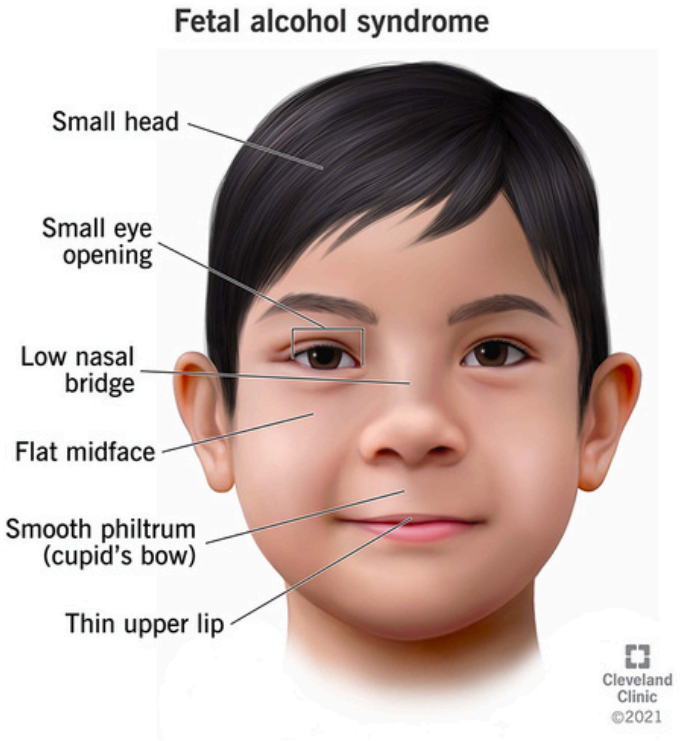
FAS can lead to intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties. Children with FAS may have trouble with memory, attention, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. They might also struggle with academic tasks and may require additional support in the classroom.

03. BEHAVIOUR CHALLENGES

Individuals with FAS may exhibit behavioral problems such as impulsiveness, hyperactivity, poor impulse control, and difficulties with social skills. They might have trouble understanding social cues and norms, leading to challenges in forming and maintaining relationships with peers.

04. SENSORY ISSUES

Sensory processing difficulties are common in individuals with FAS. They may be oversensitive or undersensitive to sensory stimuli such as touch, sound, light, and taste. This can affect their ability to focus in class or engage in certain activities.



What we can do...

- **Structured Environment:** Create a structured and predictable learning environment to help students with FAS feel safe and secure. Establish clear routines and expectations, and provide visual supports such as schedules and charts to help them understand and navigate the classroom environment.
- **Break Tasks into Manageable Steps:** Break down tasks and instructions into smaller, more manageable steps to help students with FAS process information more effectively. Use visual aids, verbal cues, and repetition to reinforce key concepts and instructions.
- **Provide Positive Reinforcement:** Recognize and reinforce positive behaviors to encourage students with FAS to stay engaged and motivated. Offer praise, encouragement, and rewards for effort and achievement, and use constructive feedback to help them learn from mistakes.
- **Sensory Supports:** Be mindful of sensory sensitivities and provide accommodations to help students with FAS regulate their sensory experiences. This might include offering noise-canceling headphones, fidget tools, or sensory breaks as needed.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD).

ADHD, or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects individuals' ability to sustain attention, control impulses, and regulate activity levels. It's typically diagnosed in childhood but can persist into adulthood.

THERE ARE THREE MAIN SUBTYPES OF ADHD...

INATTENTIVE (ADD)

Individuals with this subtype have difficulties sustaining attention, organizing tasks, following through on instructions, and often seem forgetful or easily distracted.

HYPERACTIVE-IMPUSLIVE

This subtype involves symptoms such as excessive fidgeting, restlessness, impulsivity, and difficulty waiting for turns.

COMBINED

This subtype combines symptoms of both inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity.

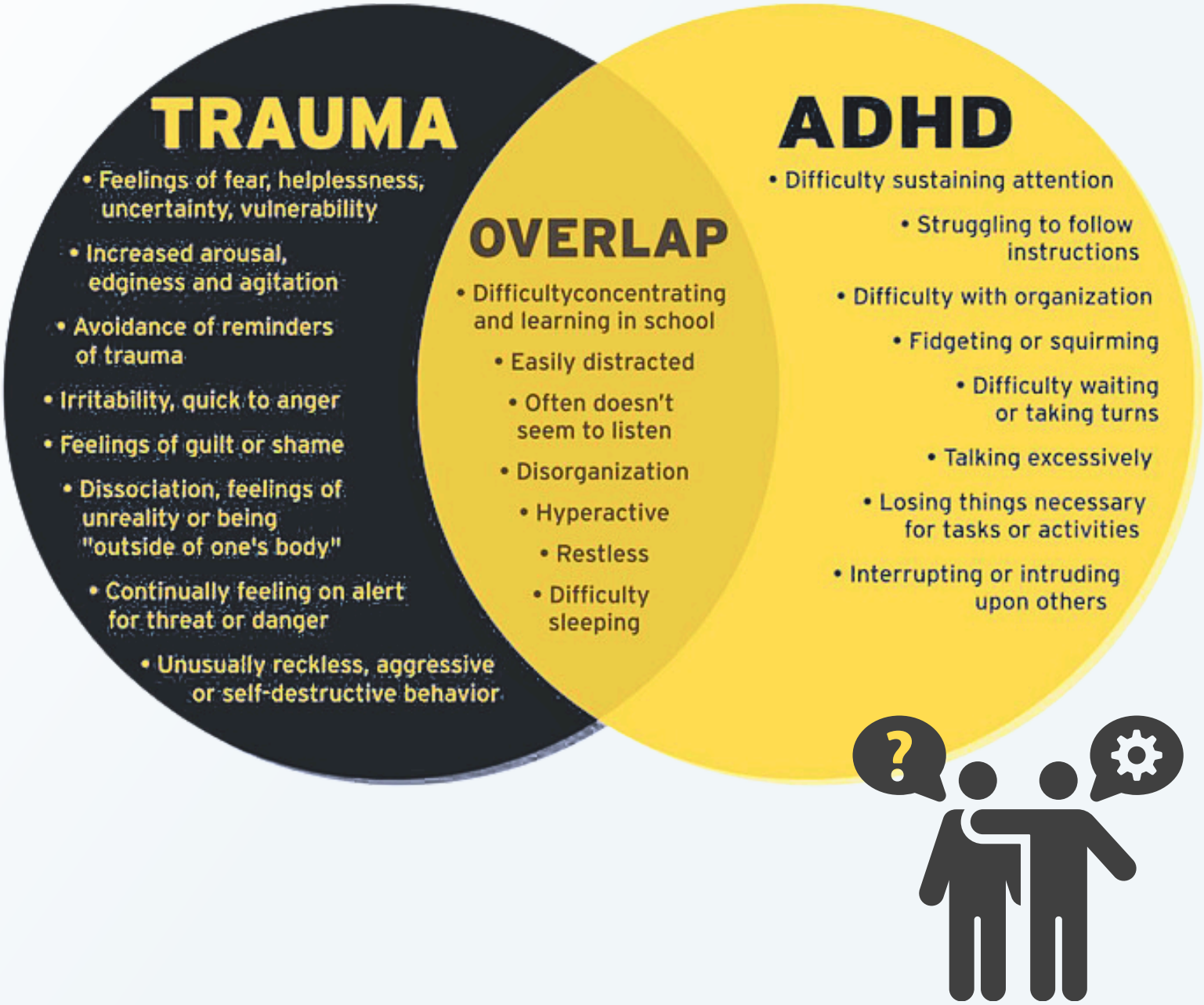
WHAT CAN WE DO?

- IMPLEMENT SENSORY STRATEGIES
- OFFER POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT
- STRUCTURED ENVIRONMENT
- ENCOURAGE SELF-ADVOCACY AND SELF REGULATION
- BREAK TASKS INTO MANAGEABLE CHUNKS
- COLLABORATE WITH PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS
- USE VISUAL AIDS
- PROVIDE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS
- ENCOURAGE MOVEMENT BREAKS

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

ADHD VS TRAUMA

When it comes to behaviour, ADHD and trauma can sometimes have overlapping symptoms, but they have different underlying causes. ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects attention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. It's usually present from childhood and continues into adulthood. On the other hand, trauma refers to experiences that are distressing or harmful, which can lead to a range of emotional and behavioural responses. These responses can vary depending on the individual and the type of trauma experienced. It's important to remember that a professional assessment is needed to determine the specific cause of someone's behaviour.



SOLIHULL ACADEMY

AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITION

UNDERSTANDING AUTISM

What is Autism Spectrum condition?

Autism, or Autism Spectrum condition (ASC) is a developmental condition that affects how people communicate, interact with others, learn, and process sensory information. It's a spectrum, meaning experiences can vary greatly, but social communication difficulties and repetitive behaviours are common.

Core Characteristics of ASC:

Difficulties with social communication and interaction
Repetitive behaviours and restricted interests
Sensory sensitivities

Sensory Processing

- Oversensitivity or undersensitivity to sound, touch, light, taste, or smell
- Difficulty filtering out background noise
- Discomfort with certain textures or clothing

Social Interaction:

- Difficulty understanding social cues (facial expressions, tone of voice)
- Challenges with turn-taking and conversation flow
- Limited understanding of social expectations

MAIN DIFFICULTIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Repetitive Behaviours and Routines:

- Engaging in repetitive movements (stimming)
- Insistence on routines and predictability
- Difficulty with transitions and changes

Communication:

- Difficulty expressing wants and needs clearly
- Preference for non-verbal communication
- Echolalia (repeating words or phrases)

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

HOW TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH ASC....

Sensory processing

- Identify sensory triggers and consider accommodations such as noise-cancelling headphones, 1-1 support in a quieter environment, and sensory toys.
- Become aware of environments which may be overstimulating, students may struggle to follow or process any instructions when overstimulated.
- Be patient and allow time when student is overstimulated. Often, just being present and not speaking may support the students regulate themselves.

Routines and behaviour

- Develop visual schedules and routines.
- Use positive reinforcement, and praise desired behaviours.
- Collaborate with the teacher to create a behaviour management plan.
- Consider incorporating the student's special interests into lessons.
- Create a structured and predictable environment, if there will be a change in the day, provide time for the student to process.

Communication

- Use clear, concise language with visual aids.
- Provide wait time for responses, avoid interrupting.
- Break down instructions into smaller steps.
- Offer alternative communication methods (pictures, sign language).

Emotional regulation

- Students with ASD may struggle to understand, express and manage their emotions.
- Help students identify preferred calming activities (deep breathing, fidget toys, quiet space).
- Identify a 'safe space' where students can go and regulate themselves undisturbed.
- Validate the students feelings, if they are communicating how they are feeling this a positive and should be supported.

Importance of visual aids:

Students with ASC massively benefit from visual cues such as post-it/task board/ bullet pointed list to support the student during lessons in knowing what they need to do.

Masking...

- Students with ASC often mask or hide their true feelings and ASC symptoms to fit in socially; this can be subconscious or conscious.
- Recognising and understanding masking is important for supporting individuals with ASC.
- It is helpful to be aware of masking and check in with them. Some students prefer this to be a subtle check-in as they dislike being different from their peers.

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

PERSISTANCE DEMAND AVOIDANCE (PDA)

Pathological Demand Avoidance (or PDA for short), is usually understood to be an Autism profile. PDA people share Autistic characteristics, and also have many of the 'key features' of a PDA profile, which are:

- Resisting and avoiding the ordinary demands of life.
- Using social strategies as part of the avoidance.
- Appearing 'socially able' - but this may mask underlying differences or difficulties in social interaction and communication.
- Experiencing intense emotions and mood swings.
- Appearing comfortable in role play, pretence and fantasy.
- Having intense focus, often on other people (real or fictional).
- A need for control, often driven by anxiety or an automatic 'threat response'.
- Conventional approaches in support, parenting or teaching are ineffective.

HELPING STUDENTS WITH PDA...

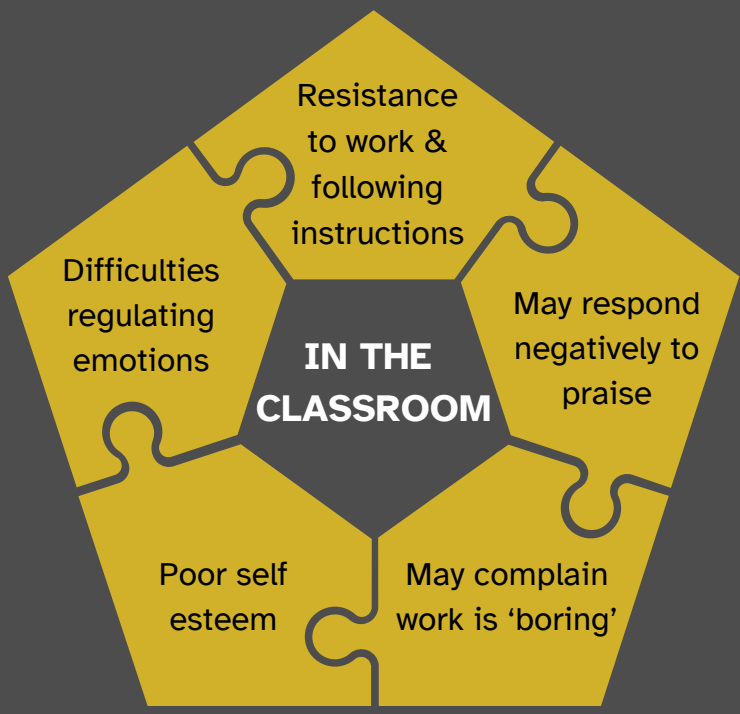
Pick battles
- Minimise rules
- Explain reasons for instructions
- Allow choice and control

Anxiety managment
- Reduce uncertainty
- Recognise & prepare for triggers
- Relaxation strategies

Negotiation & collaboration
- Remain calm
- negotiate to solve challenges
- fairness &trust are central

Disguise & demands
- Phrase requests indirectly
- monitor tolerance for demands
- Work with the student

Adaptation
- Humour, distraction and novelty
- be flexible
- always have a plan B
- allow plenty of time
- balance 'give and take'



SOLIHULL ACADEMY

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, MENTAL HEALTH (SEMH)

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

SEMH stands for Social, Emotional, and Mental Health. It's a term used in education to encompass a range of difficulties children may face that impact their ability to learn and thrive in a school environment. These difficulties can manifest in various ways, including behavioral issues, emotional instability, social withdrawal, anxiety, depression, and more severe mental health disorders.

HERE'S HOW KNOWLEDGE OF SEMH CAN BE USED:

IDENTIFICATION & UNDERSTANDING

Teaching assistants can learn to recognize signs and symptoms of SEMH issues in pupils. This could include observing behavioral patterns, emotional outbursts, social interactions, and academic struggles. Understanding the underlying causes of these behaviors is key to providing appropriate support.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Teaching assistants can develop strategies to build trusting relationships with pupils experiencing SEMH difficulties. Building rapport and establishing a safe and supportive environment can help pupils feel more comfortable discussing their feelings and seeking help when needed.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Teaching assistants can teach pupils techniques for managing their emotions and developing resilience. This might involve practicing mindfulness exercises, deep breathing techniques, or using visual aids to help pupils identify and label their emotions.

BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT

Teaching assistants can work with pupils to develop behavior management strategies tailored to their individual needs. This might involve setting clear expectations, providing positive reinforcement, and implementing structured routines to help pupils feel more secure and in control.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Teaching assistants can collaborate with teachers, counselors, and other professionals to create comprehensive support plans for pupils with SEMH difficulties. This might involve attending meetings, sharing observations, and implementing interventions both in and out of the classroom.

PROMOTING INCLUSION

Teaching assistants can advocate for inclusive practices within the school environment to ensure that pupils with SEMH difficulties feel valued and supported. This might involve promoting anti-bullying initiatives, organizing peer support groups, and fostering a culture of acceptance and understanding.

DYSLEXIA AND DYSPRAXIA

SOLIHULL ACADEMY

DYSLEXIA

Definition: Dyslexia is a learning disorder characterized by difficulty reading, spelling, and writing despite normal intelligence and adequate instruction.
Symptoms: Dyslexic individuals may struggle with phonological awareness (recognizing and manipulating sounds in language), decoding words, recognizing sight words, spelling, and reading fluency.

DYSPRAXIA

Definition: Dyspraxia, also known as Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), is a neurological disorder that affects movement and coordination.
Symptoms: Dyspraxic individuals may have difficulty with motor coordination, balance, fine motor skills (such as handwriting), planning and organizing tasks, and spatial awareness.

HOW WE CAN SUPPORT THESE STUDENTS...

- Offering to scribe or read out loud for the student.
- Coloured overlays and coloured paper (green, yellow, blue)
- Allow for extra time when completing tasks.
- For reading/writing activities offer 1-1 support.
- Chunking information and scaffolding tasks.
- Multi sensory learning (eg manipulative, audio books, graphic organisers)

RESOURCES

In the shared folder (eg in ‘teaching and learning’ or ‘SEN’ folder) there is lots of information on how we can best support our students. Some other places to find information are..

- **Autism Society** : https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism
- **ADHD UK** : https://adhduk.co.uk/about-adhd/
- **SEMH**: https://semh.co.uk
- **British Dyslexia Association** : https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/about-dyslexia/what-is-dyslexia
- **Speech and language Uk** : https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/help-for-families/signs-and-symptoms/
- **Principles of instruction** : https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Principles-of-Insruction-Rosenshine.pdf
- **Twinkl & TES** : lots of resources and information
- **FutureLearn** : lots of free online courses on SEN / teaching