

OSSME NEWS

Supporting Schools and Families In Challenging Times

In this issue:

- Parent/Carer tsupport & training during COVID
- OSSME Education & CPD updates
- Update on our Transition Resources
- Interview with an OSSME student

Welcome to the June/July edition of our newsletter! We have been working flat out to support all of our young people and families during the ongoing situation and have adapted our services to meet all needs successfully, taking in to account any viable suggestions from all. Our transition resources have been so popular that we have sent out over 3.5k requests so far, reaching as far as Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Morocco and even the USA! These are still available, so see page 3 of the newsletter which has all the clickable links you need. IF you need any more information please contact: Sharon.williams@autisminitiatives.org

In addition to the parental online support provided by the OSSME team and the video training uploaded on a weekly (and sometimes daily!) basis from Manager, Sharon Williams, we decided to trial a live ZOOM call for parents in June. This was a great success with many parents joining the call and discussing what would be useful in terms of topics for live video calls going forward. We then spoke about issues prevalent for those parents who were present at the time. It wasn't quite the same as seeing each other at the MeCycle Café once a month, but it was lovely to interact with one another and be able to answer questions pertinent to those who joined us. We fully intend to run this session again, hopefully once per month in the absence of some 'real time' meet ups. Keep your eye on the OSSME Mecycle Parents Group for updates on when these will be. Also, if you would like to be a part of the Parent-parent support WhatsApp group, **please [click here](#)** and enter your details. We will endeavour to get you set up as soon as possible.

You're Never ALONE



An interview with one of our AMAZING students!

1. Tell us about yourself. Things that you like doing and things that you dislike
I like doing media and playing games. I don't like crowds or sometimes people.

2. How long have you been supported by OSSME in school?For about 2 years. It started in year 12. I started having transition support for getting used to my current high school. Then, we did work on autism (improving understand of self) and support work. Recently, OSSME has been helping me to get ready to go to university by working on independent living skills.

3. Have you received OSSME support regularly in school over the last 2 years? Yes, every other week for an hour. Although, sometimes it can be as little as 30 mins and as much as 2 hours. It's based on my needs. During lockdown (COVID-19), it got changed to online support so I could

still get the support in this stressful time whilst staying in a safe environment. This support works really well, so does face to face.



4. How do you think OSSME has helped you over the last few years, including now lockdown? I think OSSME started helping me to get used to school. They educated my teachers and other members of the staff. They educated me more about Autism and they have also helped me to come up with coping strategies, helped me with my sleep and just be someone to talk with. They helped me to get the confidence to apply to university then, they helped giving

me evidences for my disable students allowance (DSA) so I can get the support I require when I move on. Currently doing transition work from high school to university. During lockdown, they have helped me by being somebody that wants to speak to me and being there if I had any concerns or needs. Also, somebody who can have a joke with you about random things.

5. Overall, have you had a positive experience with OSSME?YES! I really enjoyed it and it helped me a lot.

6. Would you recommend OSSME support to other students in a similar situation to you? I would definitely recommend it because it has been greatly beneficial but, it is a bit sad that OSSME is not available to more people because you can get it through your schools or parents can pay but it's not currently available on the NHS either which is sad. **-by Rocio Manzanera**

OSSME NEWS

Outreach Specialist Support Newsletter

Students flourish under OSSME education!

Even more achievements!

...last month, we brought news of all the students who have completed their courses in GCSE Maths, English and BTEC ITQ Level 2; this month, we are ecstatic to announce more of our students have completed their both Open Awards AND AQA's Higher Project Qualification. We are IMMENSELY proud of you all!



Young People's Support Groups Coming Soon!

During lockdown OSSME has realised how beneficial it has been for some of our students to be able to communicate virtually, both with ourselves and other students. This has also been an area of need identified by parents and guardians as many students during lockdown have had no social interaction at all with peers. Based on this experience we have decided to create a virtual, online support group **for students from High Schools or Colleges that OSSME are currently in contract with.** The age limit for this group will be from **13-18 years old**

The online support group will run fortnightly and will take place after school every other Wednesday from 4.30pm-5.30pm. The group will be run by 3 OSSME staff who currently work in schools and colleges so there will be a familiar person for each student attending. This group will run all year round and is not limited to term time so that support can be continuous and reliable throughout the year. The aims of this group is to support social communication, social interactions and the ability to encourage students to build positive relationships with other students of a similar age and who have a similar need in order to expand their circle of support. The objectives of the group will change each session, based on perceived need of students attending the group.

Those families and students that OSSME are currently working with over lockdown will be offered an opportunity to join the group

from their OSSME practitioner so additional referrals don't need to be made on their behalf. In order to refer a student to this group they must either have a diagnosis of Autism or be on the pathway to a diagnosis. There are a limited number of students that can be accommodated into the group in order to make it as comfortable as possible for those attending. If requests exceed the number of places available students may be placed on a waiting list. OSSME would consider opening further groups in the future to accommodate demand if this is the case.

Consent forms for the online groups must be filled in by parents/ students and sent back to OSSME. These forms can be completed online and edited if opened in PDF format using Adobe. Consent forms must be completed before the start of the online groups in order for a student to attend.

If you have any further questions about the groups feel free to get in touch

Details of first group

Date: **Wednesday 15th July 2020**

Time: **4.30pm-5.30pm**

Location: **Microsoft Teams**

Contact:

Victoria.quinn@autisminitiatives.org to register and receive a link to join

Selective Mutism - OSSME Focus of the Month

An ongoing OSSME staff focus over the past few weeks has been upskilling ourselves even further on the very complex topic of Selective Mutism. Building on an already sound knowledge and experience base, the team have been completing training from Maggie Johnson *FRCSLT* and delivered & facilitated by Claire McDonough. We are busy putting together a package that is bursting with support for schools, parents and of course individuals themselves and will be offering discrete training packages for interested parties in the near future. Watch this space!



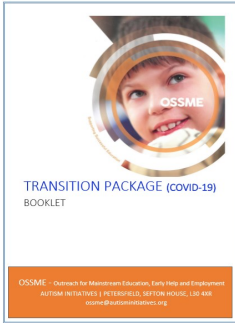
M. Johnson

FRCSLT

OSSME NEWS

CONTENTS OF THE BOOKLET INCLUDE:

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



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?

Request your copies here:

<https://forms.gle/Zyh32qc2Dt47sVZa6>

transition booklet can be requested free, here:

<https://forms.gle/NvS9R2nFDhBtCgGf9>

KS1/2 transition booklet (also suitable for some early KS3 pupils) can be requested free, here:

<https://forms.gle/Zyh32qc2Dt47sVZa6>

KS4/5+ (high school/college and beyond) transition booklet can be requested here :

<https://forms.gle/MG5DrJkgynLY5mLr6>

Lesson plans pack (which can be adapted up or down from a basis of KS2 can be requested free, here:

<https://forms.gle/p35X893dBKJssCQ59>

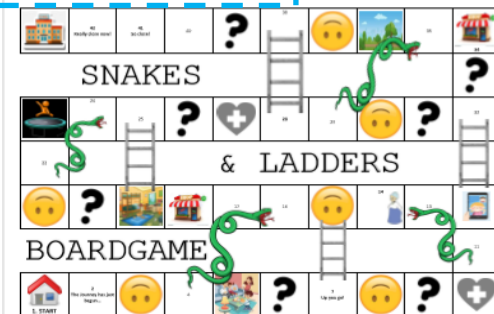
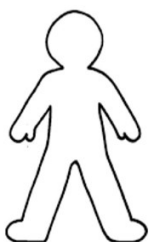
Contact us at ossme@autisminitiatives.org if you would like to request your free copy

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.

CPD for School Staff a Massive Success!

It has been amazing to see how many schools have taken up our offer of online/video based CPD over the past few months. To date we have issued over 300 CPD certificates to dedicated staff who have had the benefit of working through the topics we have sent out during lockdown: The included: - 1) Autism & the Science; 2)Comic Strip Conversations & Social Stories; 3) Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA); 4) Classroom Strategies. If you still have not completed these training courses but would like to do so over the summer, please contact your SENDCO who will be able to share the links with you to this training again. Certification of participation will be sent out whenever you complete each unit, which you can then send to your HR departments.