

SATURDAY 27TH JAN 2024

With Lavinia Ponling

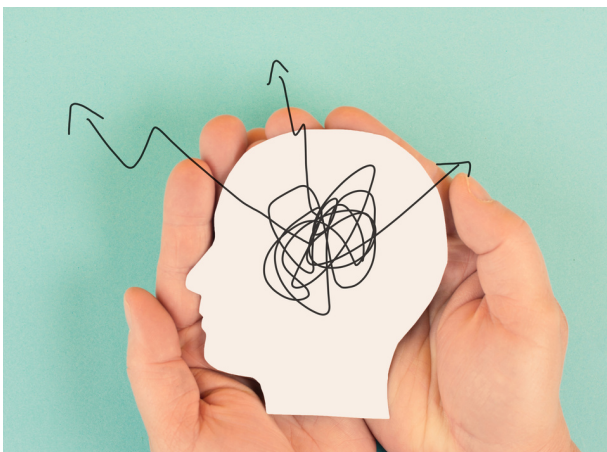
LAST WEEK OF JANUARY

Last weekend in January! Time is just flying, but then last year shot by so fast. Like many Autistic people, not many of us are appreciating the short days and long nights, but this month we are beginning to see a shift in the day in the length of daylight becoming more and more. Many of us have been blasted by the wind that has wrecked havoc with domestic waste bins, garden fencing, and, for some, roof tiles. It is quite noisy and keep some of us awake for most if not all night. One of our NEDs stated they could not sleep at all one night, and another had to sleep downstairs. They are adults and have an understanding of what is happening and why this might be. Yet to a 7yr old, it feels like we are all going to die! Naturally, parents are quick to reassure with 'We're not going to die' when the young person is not really expressing that, but rather they need reassurance in a different way, yet naturally resorting to their most dramatic PDA language. That anxiety because they simply do not understand other than their anxiety has been triggered with their sensory around noise, and when anxiety is heightened, they become very sensitive to noise and they do not know why other than they do not like the wind making the noise.



FEELING THE LOVE

This week I have had 3 parents tell me over the course of the week they love me and their sessions. Humour is a necessary ingredient to learning, and with each respective parent, we most certainly have that, even though John says he often knows which family I am working with dependent on my 'cackle' - how rude! However, whilst they love my sessions, there is a keen reminder, that I love what they do in that they trust me enough to listen, go away and do the detective work, and come back to me with their reports.



It is fascinating how the Autistic presentation works in tandem with a young person's mental health, and I, as well as my parents, are learning all the time. One family managed to persuade even their Tutor to attend, which was so amazing in having the team right there and then. Yet, all the while this process is better described as Action Research model.

According to Wikipedia (friendly wording) Action research is a philosophy and methodology of research generally applied in the social sciences. It seeks transformative change through the simultaneous process of taking action and doing research, which are linked together by critical reflection. Kurt Lewin, then a professor at MIT, first coined the term "action research" in 1944. In his 1946 paper "Action Research and Minority Problems" he described action research as "a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action" that uses "a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action".

So with my family, we look at issues most prominent in the week, we discuss, we make a plan and they go and be detectives to then return and update me, where we then discuss again pulling out vital pieces of information that helps us understand our own behaviour as well as that of the young person. This then helps guide us as to what we should then consider. Yet, all the while we continue to make progress with our understanding, our communication, and ultimately everyone's mental health within the household. It is really quite mind blowing. Throughout all of this, the EPS model of care shows that learning development is the key to success.

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Many of you are now aware we have a new staff member who joined us 2 weeks ago. Ellie is a qualified Teacher and has considerable experience with the SEN system (and its flaws). She has very kindly agreed, as part of her role as Education Consultant, to be available to parents who want to know how best to approach schools, especially when parents have completed a Mental Health assessment and Initial Screening with clinical directives. This is what Ellie has written as a way of advising what she can do to help.

The consultation with Ellie looks at where to go next with school and support for your child, using her knowledge and understanding from studying and working within education and through her lived SEN and mental wellbeing experiences. Ellie will support families about approaching schools around their child's needs, reasonable adjustments, supporting with EHCP questions and advice, other educational based queries you might have and supporting the family in advocating for their child.

Yesterday we launched a new exciting chapter with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Accreditation as we prepare to put 4 of our courses through their paces. This is so that many more people can gain points towards their learning in understanding more about the Autistic presentation in and around Mental Health. Which is very exciting.

So, on that note, I wish
you a lovely weekend.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lavinia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'L'.