



Wellbeing Pack 16

Assert

Boxing Training Course

On Thursday 30th at 4pm, Anton, the boxing instructor who taught a class for January's Active Club, will be leading an online boxing training session. The session will be via Zoom and do-able from your home. We will work on some of the foundation steps and moves. Each session will be £5. If you have any questions, please email jenna@assertbh.org.uk

Budgeting Advice Service

As well as the usual benefit casework, Alex is now offering 1-to-1 budgeting advice and support sessions. Please contact her by email with any benefits questions or to arrange a remote appointment benefits@assertbh.org.uk

Peer Discussion Group

Debbie is organising a weekly Peer Discussion Group to take place on a Friday evening from 5:30pm to 7pm. Each week there will be a different topic for the conversation. Please email Debbie on debbiet@assertbh.org.uk

Workbook: Communication

With the introduction of mandatory face masks, what we had previously learnt about 'how to communicate' has changed. Many people are now finding communicating very difficult, especially those who have hearing or speech impairments and need to lip read.

Face masks cover the majority of someone's faces, therefore making it more difficult to read someone's facial expression.

Eye Contact

Many people with autism struggle with eye contact. They may find it confusing, over stimulating or painful. Some people find they can only process audible information if there are no other distractions – like eye contact. With face masks now being mandatory, and the fact that they cover most of the face other than the eyes, could make avoiding eye contact difficult when still trying to show that you are listening. If you find eye contact difficult, try to look a person's eye brows or the top part of their forehead. If this still feels to uncomfortable, you can try to look in their general vicinity. However, because face masks are new for everyone, I think that lots of people, including neurotypicals, are finding this new way of communicating difficult so I think that everyone will be learning new ways of talking to one another I would encourage you to do what makes you feel comfortable.

Body Language

Verbal communication is not the only way people can show how they are feeling. Body language refers to the nonverbal signals used to communicate. Understanding body language, especially when you may not be able to read someone's facial expression due to face masks. People tend to use their hands or legs to show nonverbal information. Many of these poses are instinctive and some are learnt from others when growing up. For example; crossing arms over the chest can indicate defensiveness, crossing legs away from someone can show discomfort, extending arms wide may attempt to seem larger and more important, and keeping arms close to the body may be an attempt to hide away and withdraw.

Pointing and using fingers to indicate numerical amounts are common and useful ways of communicating – especially if you find yourself in a shop and are finding it difficult to communicate with a face mask on. Other hand movements such as giving a thumbs-up or a peace sign might show a positive gesture. Whereas a clenched fist may show anger or solidarity and a thumbs-down indicates disapproval.

Face Covering Exemptions

There are some exemptions from wearing a face mask. These include if you have a physical or mental illness or impairment or a disability that means that you cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering. You could also be exempt if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering would cause you severe distress. Exemptions also apply to those who are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip-reading to communicate.

Sunflower Hidden Disability Lanyard & Exempt Card

The Hidden Disability recognises that not all disabilities are visible. This includes learning difficulties, mental health, autism, as well as speech, visual and hearing impairments. These Sunflower lanyards are used to discreetly indicate that you have a hidden disability.

If you struggle with communicating and understanding others due to the mandatory facemasks, having a hidden disability or condition can mean that you are exempt from wearing a mask. Wearing a sunflower lanyard with an exemption card will show others that there is a hidden reason you are not wearing one. Sunflower lanyards can also be used to indicate that you may need additional support, help or a little more time.

This is a short video published by Hidden Disabilities about face masks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nin9riHjyfE>

If you believe that this applies to you, or someone you know, please look at the Hidden Disability website who sell Exemption Cards.

<https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/hidden-disabilities-face-covering.html>

You can now also purchase a [Sunflower lanyard from the new Assert online shop](#) and more products are coming soon

<https://assertbh.org.uk/shop/>

Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions

This article may be useful for anyone who wants to check the official guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do#social-contact-and-events>

Easy to Read Coronavirus Guidelines

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876996/Easy_read_looking_after_your_feelings_and_body.pdf