Cygnet Autism Support Programme Information

What is Cygnet?

Cygnet is a parenting support programme for parents/carers of children and young people aged 5-18 years of age, who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD). The programme was developed by Barnardo's by looking at existing parent training groups, examining research findings, completing a pilot training group and from consultations with parents/carers and professionals. Its effectiveness has been supported by a number of studies. In Swindon, Cygnet is delivered by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in partnership with Swindon SEND Families Voice (SSFV).

The programme contains six core sessions, but parents can also attend further sessions on three additional topics if they feel they are relevant to their families. Further information about the Cygnet course can be found at the following website: https://barnardos-parenting.org.uk/cygnet-programme/

Why might I be interested in attending the Cygnet programme?

Attending the Cygnet programme gives parents and carers an opportunity to better understand Autism. It offers practical strategies that you can implement at home, and gives you a chance to meet with others in a similar position and hear about their experiences.

The training is presented quite informally. There is an opportunity to share experiences and insights within the group so that everyone can learn from each other.

Parents comments from previous courses:

- "*Fantastic! Really enjoyable and helpful!"*
- *"Our biggest problems are related to behaviour so understanding our son's behaviour properly is a very big step!"*
- *"This has given me the tools to help with my child's communication."*
- *"I can now identify my child's sensory issues and have ideas for practical strategies."*
- *"The support of other group members is really valuable."*

Overview of sessions

Sessions last approximately three hours each and are held face to face. Some groups will be held in the morning and some in the evenings over the year. Tea and coffee will be provided. Dates and venues will be shared when available.

Core sessions

Session 1:	Session 2:	Session 3:
Introduction to Autism	**Overview of Autism**	**Thinking and Sensory**
Introduction to the group	Parent journey	Thinking
Background to the group	Four areas of autism	Sensory
Introduction to autism	Challenges and strengths	

Session 4:	Session 5:	Session 6:
Social Interaction and Communication	**Understanding and Supporting Behaviour**	**Analysing Behaviour**
Social interaction theories	Understanding human behaviour	Behaviour frameworks
Communication needs and abilities	Behavioural challenges linked to autism	Evaluations and certificates
	Supportive strategies	

Additional sessions

Siblings:	Growing Up:	Sleep:
Understanding and supporting sibling relationships	Relationships, puberty and sexual wellbeing	Understanding and supporting sleep

Do I have to attend all the sessions?

Yes – you should try to attend all the core sessions if possible. You will gain a lot more from coming to the group if you come to all the sessions as each session builds on the one before. Please do not accept a place in the group if you are only able to attend one or two sessions – you may take the place of someone else who is able to fully benefit from the group.

The additional session topics may not be relevant to your family at the current time, so these sessions are offered separately to the core sessions for those who would like to attend. These sessions build on knowledge from the core sessions, so you should have attended the core sessions before joining the siblings, sleep or growing up sessions.

Is childcare available?

Unfortunately childcare is not available.

Under the Employment Act 2002 (parental leave), parents of disabled children are entitled to 18 weeks unpaid leave to care for their children. Parents must have worked for their employer for at least 100 days prior to taking leave and give 21 days notice of leave. If you would like to attend a programme and are currently in employment, you

may wish to talk through this legislation with your employer, to enable you to have time off to attend Cygnet. For further information please refer to the Working Families website: www.workingfamilies.org.uk or telephone: 0300 012 0312.

I would like to attend, so what do I do now?

Either a professional working with you can make a referral with your consent, or a referral can be made direct by yourself as a parent/carer. Your child needs to be aged 5-18 and have a diagnosis of Autism. Just complete a Cygnet Enrolment Form and return it to the Educational Psychology Service Business Support at the email address below.

For further information please contact:

Email: EPSenquiries@swindon.gov.uk