

**🗹 Neuro Developmental Conditions Pathway**

Obsessions, repetitive behaviour and routines

Many children on the autistic spectrum can show some or all of the behaviours listed below:

* **Obsessions:** intense or highly specific interests (e.g. learning all the local bus routes or timetables or football scores) that often interfere with other activities.
* **Repetitive behaviours:** doing the same thing over and over again. These may include sensory seeking behaviours like hand-flapping, spinning or rocking.
* **Insistence on keeping things the same (e.g. routines, plans):** it may be very difficult for your child if things are not done in a particular way/the way they are used to them being done, or if plans change unexpectedly.

To many people without ASD, these behaviours appear disruptive or problematic. However, for many autistic people they are enjoyable, and they can help them cope with anxiety and stress (e.g. associated with social or academic demands).

Trying to stop a young person from engaging in these behaviours may lead to them feeling unable to cope, more anxious, and/or showing challenging behaviour(s). Therefore, before attempting to change any of these behaviours, it is important to very carefully consider the effects/consequences of doing so.

If it is considered important to attempt to alter or reduce any of these behaviours (e.g. if the behaviour puts the child at risk), it will be important to consider alternative/replacement behaviours that would have the same positive effects for your child.

For further information and advice on obsessions, repetitive behaviours and routines, go to the following website:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/obsessions-repetitive-routines.aspx>