



BURNOUT EHC NEEDS ASSESSMENT GUIDE

**YOUR GUIDE TO ENSURING
THAT PROFESSIONAL ADVICE
AND INPUT IS ACCURATE
AND REFLECTIVE OF YOUR
CHILD**



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THIS RESOURCE IS MAY BE HELPFUL, BUT NOT LIMITED, TO CHILDREN WHO ARE/HAVE:

- AUTISTIC & PDA PRESENTATIONS
- EBSA/SCHOOL DISTRESS
- CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS
- BURNOUT PRESENTATION
- SENSORY/SOCIAL OVERWHELM

THIS RESOURCE REFLECTS PRINCIPLES WITHIN THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014 AND SEND CODE OF PRACTICE 2015 REGARDING IDENTIFYING NEEDS, PROVISION AND BARRIERS TO ACCESSING EDUCATION

ABOUT THIS GUIDE



THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014 REQUIRES LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO IDENTIFY AND SPECIFY A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON'S SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND PROVISION REQUIRED TO ACCESS EDUCATION.

AS A RESULT, FAMILIES OFTEN FEEL WORRIED, CONCERNED OR EVEN UNSURE OF WHAT MIGHT NEED TO BE DISCUSSED DURING CONVERSATIONS WITH EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS TO ENSURE THAT THEY TRULY UNDERSTAND THEIR CHILD.

Often—though of course not always— professional framing of burnout in neurodivergent children and young people, or those with chronic conditions, can be focused on behavioural presentation alone. This can mean the barriers making education inaccessible are never properly explored.

I have lost count of how often I see burnout labelled as 'school refusal', 'school avoidance' or 'disengaged from education' in professional reports.

This language shouldn't be underestimated in their long term impact; the professional reports

gathered will go on to form the basis of the EHCP that will follow your child or young person throughout their time in education, should one be issued.

By ensuring that the Educational Psychologist, one of the professionals whose advice is a statutory requirement, actually explores functional impact, nervous system dysregulation, demand avoidance, emotional safety, barriers, and what education is realistically accessible will help in rebuilding your child's education journey.



KEY DISCUSSION IDEAS

1

FUNCTIONAL IMPACT

Are they able to access education safely or consistently or at all?
Do these difficulties also affect the child's daily living outside of education?

Do they spend significant time isolated in their bedroom?
Do daily routines require significant emotional/physical energy or a prolonged recovery period following demands?

2

DEMAND AVOIDANCE/PDA PRESENTATION

Do increased demands lead to escalation, shutdown or withdrawal?
Will prompting or pressure increases distress?
Traditional behaviour approaches are often

ineffective, resulting in dysregulation. This is likely to be highly relevant.
What does anxiety look like for them? This may present as refusal, withdrawal, anger, negotiation or shutdown.

3

BURNOUT

What does the functioning of your child look like compared to previous baseline? Is there a loss of tolerance for ordinary activities? Do they experience exhaustion

following social, sensory or cognitive demands?
How does this look for them?
How do increased sensory sensitivities and emotional dysregulation present in your child?

04



KEY DISCUSSION IDEAS

4

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND SAFETY

Does your child currently feel emotionally safe in educational environments? Experiences of school that have led to heightened anxiety/distress.

Child may associate education with threat, failure or overwhelm. You might be concerned that continued pressure may worsen mental health.

5

CONSEQUENCE OF DEMANDS

Often, it will help enormously by describing: what happens **BEFORE** demands; **DURING** demands; and **AFTER** demands. For example: anticipatory

anxiety, shutdown, vomiting, aggression, exhaustion, sleeping after demands, inability to tolerate noise/social interaction afterwards.

6

IMPORTANT FRAMING POINTS

Many professionals jump in with "How do we get the child back into school?" But, what should be asked is: "What education is currently accessible and

suitable for this child's needs?" Attendance pressure itself will usually end up worsening disability-related distress, medical conditions, or where suitability of environment is in question.

05

QUESTIONS



WHAT YOU MAY WANT TO ASK TO GET THE MOST FOR THE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR YOUR CHILD

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- What barriers are currently preventing [child] from accessing education?
- Is [child] presently able to access a typical school environment safely and meaningfully?
- What indicators suggest autistic burnout and/or chronic dysregulation?
- What impact is anxiety having on cognitive functioning and learning access?
- Suitability
- What type of educational environment is likely to reduce distress and increase engagement?
- What environmental demands currently exceed [child]'s tolerance?
- Would a full-time school environment presently be realistic or sustainable?
- What adjustments would be necessary for education to become accessible?

PROVISIONS

- What provision is required to support emotional safety and regulation?
- What adult approaches are required consistently?
- What sensory/regulation supports are needed?
- What level of flexibility and predictability is required?
- What pace of reintegration (if any) would be appropriate?
- How should educational professionals adapt communication and expectations?
- What approaches are likely to reduce threat responses?
- What approaches may unintentionally escalate dysregulation?
SALT/OT/CAMHS/neurodevelopmental input is also required?
- Are sensory processing difficulties contributing to inability to access education?
- Is social communication contributing to overwhelm and avoidance?

DEFINITIONS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THIS RESOURCE

DYSREGULATION: A PERSON'S NERVOUS SYSTEM BECOMES OVERWHELMED, MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO MANAGE EMOTIONS, SENSORY INPUT, THINKING, COMMUNICATION OR DAILY DEMANDS SAFELY AND CONSISTENTLY

BURNOUT: A PROLONGED STATE OF INTENSE PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND COGNITIVE EXHAUSTION CAUSED BY DEMANDS EXCEEDING A PERSON'S CAPACITY.

DEMAND AVOIDANCE: A NERVOUS SYSTEM-BASED RESPONSE WHERE EVERYDAY DEMANDS OR EXPECTATIONS CAN TRIGGER OVERWHELM, LOSS OF CONTROL, DISTRESS, WITHDRAWAL OR DYSREGULATION.

NERVOUS SYSTEM: THE BODY'S SYSTEM FOR PROCESSING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STIMULI; SAFETY, STRESS, SENSORY INFORMATION AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSES, WHICH CAN STRONGLY AFFECT A PERSON'S ABILITY TO ACCESS DAILY LIFE.

THESE DEFINITIONS ARE BY NO MEANS DEFINITIVE OR EXHAUSTIVE, AND ARE BASED ON INTERPRETATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF NEURODIVERGENCE AND BURNOUT AT THE TIME OF WRITING

CONTACT US

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