

# Parenting a child with special needs can be difficult, but you are not alone!

In our support group, there are parents who are here to help you. Whether you need to let off steam, listen to the stories of others, share some of the emotions that can come with being a parent/carer or simply be alongside people who truly understand – then our support group is for you.

In this leaflet you’ll find more information about the group leader and how it will be organized.



The support group is an informal group led by Julie Wales. It is open to all parents/carers who have a child who is neurodiverse or has additional needs or disability. This includes children with mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and other difficulties such as learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).



**The group starts on Thursday 20th April weekly until 25th May for 6 weeks to talk, listen and share in a friendly atmosphere over zoom in the comfort of your own home.**

# “You may find support you’ve been missing or didn’t even know existed.”

“We are all in the same boat, so don’t feel you can’t join because your situation is somehow better or worse than others.

“Parenting children with difficulties/disabilities, like mental health, ASD, ADHD, can often make you feel inadequate, inferior and isolated (and I’m speaking from experience!), but in this group you can find acceptance, support and even friendship.”



You may be fortunate enough to already have people around you to support you. But parents often tell me that even supportive friends and family can find it difficult to “get” what things are like for you.

In the support group we are meeting with people with a similar perspective and in a similar emotional/psychological state. Many of us have supportive friends but with children who are OK, so it is difficult for them to appreciate all that’s going on. They are not always able to empathize with what goes on or how it feels, or what problems arise. Their lives are a world apart.

**“Also, my friends don’t always know how to support me whereas sharing with the group provides an empathetic perspective and can provide practical help and advice too. That is so valuable to me.”**

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# Julie is a local Family Counsellor based in Cheltenham and has been in practice for over 15 years. Julie has also been a family support worker for a Special Needs Charity and previously worked for Barnardo’s and Parent Line Plus. Julie has experience of working in schools as a school counsellor and is a lead facilitator on Parent Support Groups for a local charity in Gloucestershire.

I am also a parent of two adult children with varying special educational needs and difficulty. So, I get it!

My hope is that parents will feel less alone and more supported and confident after the 6 weeks support group. Some parents may want to stay in touch with one another and that’s great!

It is a space to talk about what’s happening and just be with others who are in the same boat.

We can discuss options for relieving stress as well as what feels relevant to parents in the group.

And even if the situation for you or others is difficult or worsening, it helps you feel accepted and that there is space to air frustrations and sadness. It will help to feel connected to other’s.

rather than be isolated at home alone.





It is up to you how much you want to share and when. Members are welcome to just come along and listen; there is no pressure to talk if you don’t want to.

Absolutely! We ask all members of the group to respect the information shared in the group and not to share it outside. This is a safe



place to talk.

 

# The support group meets via Zoom:

**Thursday 20th April and every Thursday until 25th May 10am to 11.30am**

If these meeting times are not suitable for you or someone you know who might benefit from the group, please contact Julie Wales and she will look at future face to face support groups in Cheltenham.

Our priority is looking after each other, so as well as respecting confidentiality, it is also important to listen to each other and respect each other’s views and differences.

This is your space to relax too. So, while the subjects might sometimes be tough, it is somewhere you can be yourself, feel relaxed and may be even end up having a laugh together. COST: £60 FOR 6 WEEKS Support Group. Payable by bank transfer. Email Julie to Book your place and Pay.

Please contact Julie Wales. Please also get in touch if you have any questions or would like to know more about the group.

# Key contact:

Julie Wales, Family Counsellor working with special needs families.

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