

# WHAT TO DO

## when you don't know what to do

Raising a child on the autism spectrum means making decisions- lots of them. At times this can seem overwhelming. Often we get "stuck" and don't know what to do. Here are a few suggestions for these times.

### A guide for autism families

#### TAKE A BREAK

We often feel overwhelmed and stuck when we have gone too long without a break. Maybe you need a nap, an evening out, or a whole weekend away. Getting away from the problem often results in coming back to it with a clearer head.

#### CALL SOMEONE WHO GETS IT

Make sure there is at least one person in your life who lives a life similar to yours, and can truly empathize. Make a pact with that person that you'll call each other when things get rough.

#### GO ONLINE

Special needs blogs, forums, websites and podcasts can provide helpful advice. Social media is full of groups with other parents just like you. Learning from others who have been there can provide hope.

#### GO OFFLINE

Autism parents are notorious for spending too much time online researching issues and searching for solutions. While the internet is a great resource, it can also be too easy to over-do it. Taking a break may be the solution.

#### STAY PUT

If you're emotionally charged- extremely sad, angry or resentful- it may be a good time to lay low. Wait for the feelings to pass before making a major decision. You may find that not making a decision was the best decision.

#### DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING

This saying comes from the Alcoholics Anonymous tradition. We often get stuck because we feel like we need to know what will happen after we make a decision. Often, we just need to do what is next; what is in front of us, and allow life to unfold.

#### HIRE A PROFESSIONAL

Sometimes we need the help of a doctor, therapist or parenting coach who specializes in our problem. It isn't easy to put our trust in someone else, so find your professionals through other parents who have had positive experiences. You don't have to do autism or special needs alone.