

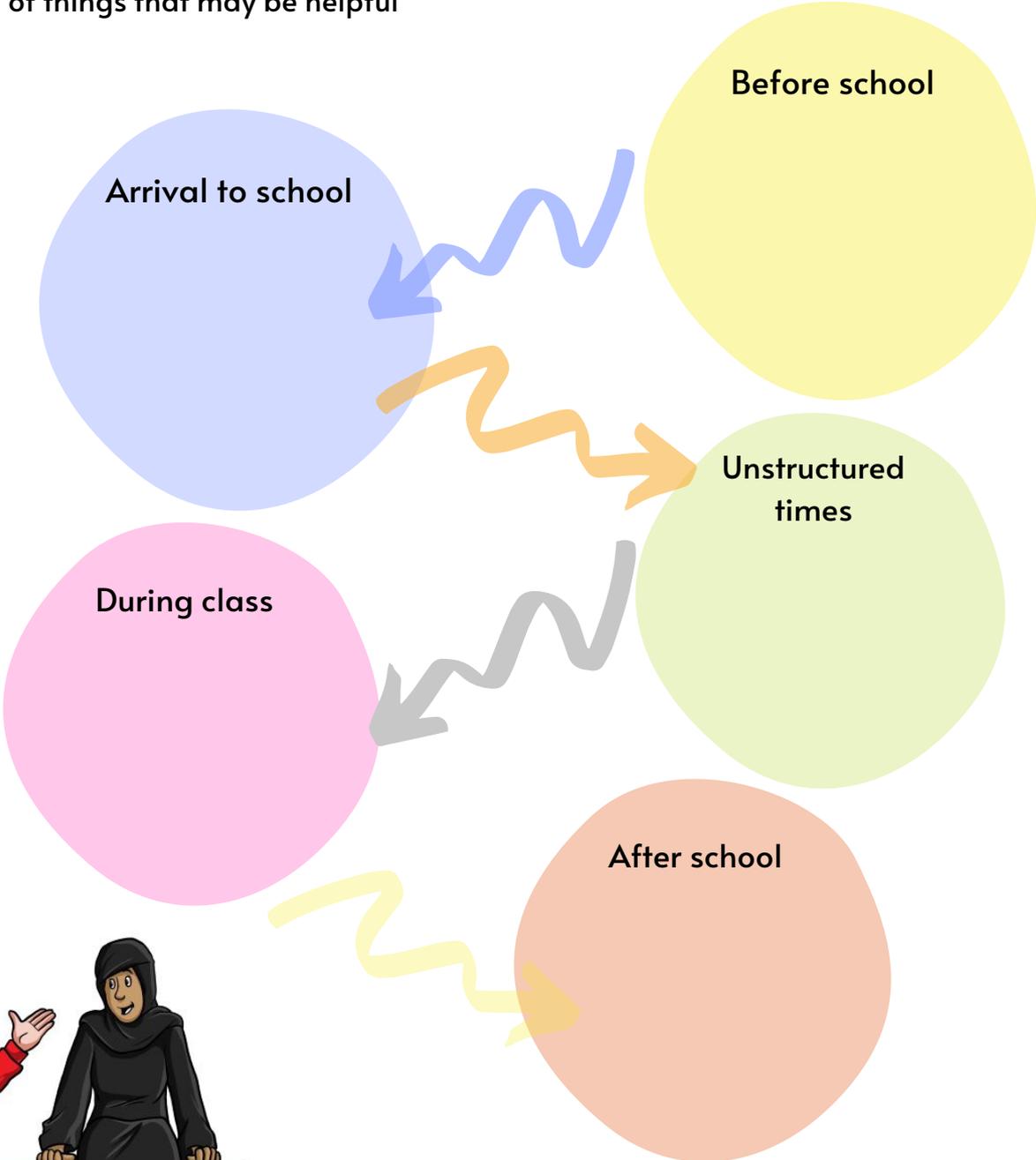
Tourette's Strategy School toolkit



A resource pack to help think about different ways to include young people with Tourette's Syndrome in the class

Tourette's Strategy School toolkit

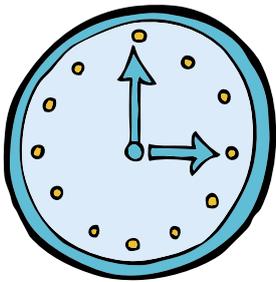
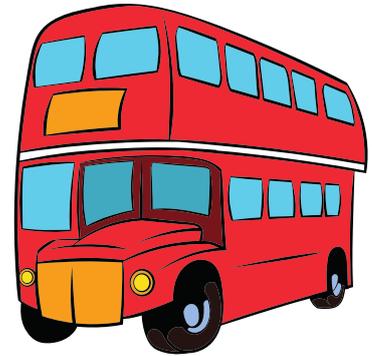
Here are some ideas gathered from parents/carers and pupils with Tourette's syndrome. This sheet sets out examples of what they've found helpful within the schooling context. Use this front sheet to write your own plan of things that may be helpful



Before School & Arrival to school

Transport

There is little adult supervision for pupils taking public transport. This could be a hot-spot for bullying even if everything in school seems fine. Another aspect is that some people with Tourette's also have difficulty around sensory processing. Issues such as too much noise or too many people can all have an effect on an individual's agitation and may lead to an increase in tics.



Lateness

Lateness dealing with co-morbidities such as OCD as well as ticcing can have an impact on time-keeping. Explore with the pupil about potential lateness and together look at strategies to support coming to school on-time. Some parents have found the use of Local Authority transport invaluable.

Peers

Pupils may travel to school and be exposed to young people from other schools who may not know or understand how Tourette's presents. It maybe helpful to offer support to local schools so they are aware of Tourette's and how this may affect an individual.



Planning

The best planning happens when teachers and teaching assistants plan together and talk about how the needs of pupils may be best met in the classroom. Discuss with the teaching assistant about the implementation of individual learning plans to provide a consistent approach in working with a pupil diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome.

Approachable staff

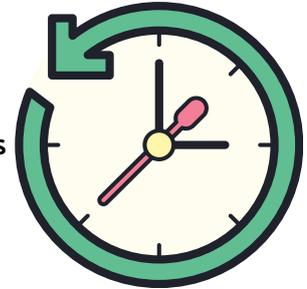
Approachable and available staff member the journey to school may not be straight-forward. If a pupil knows that upon arrival to school they have a key member of staff they can talk to briefly, it may help to set them up to be in a positive frame of mind for learning



During class 1 of 2

Tic out time

"Tic-out time" feeling the need to suppress your tics can feel uncomfortable, or for some individuals, impossible. The use of a time-out card or exit-slip may enable the pupil to let out their tics and be able to concentrate more on the class content

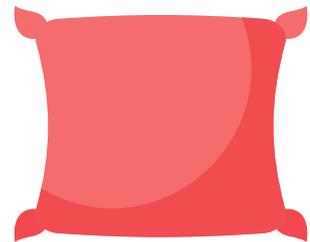


Seating position

Pupils may want to be able to tic discretely and not disturb the class with their motor tics. In discussion with the pupil consider them perhaps sitting at the back of the class or near the door to leave as necessary

Equipment

They may include simple things such as a cushion on the lap of the pupil to prevent pain from motor tics or a rubber grip at the end of the pencil to chew on rather than grinding teeth or biting down.



Circle-time

Pupils in primary school may require specific instructions on where they should sit. The use of a flat disc marker that pupils identify as their own may make the transition from activity to carpet clearer.

Music

Some pupils with Tourette's find the use of music on personal headphones a helpful way of managing their tics within the classroom. Consider this allowance when young people are working on individual work which needs little teacher direction.



During class 2 of 2

Sensory equipment



Different to the fiddle toys as these are more of a focus on a range of sensory activities that can be provided in a small box for younger children to engage with. For example objects such as marbles, materials of different textures (string, ribbon, feathers), plasticine all might be helpful ways of supporting the pupil to stay in class.

Permission

Permission to get up provide responsibilities for young people with TS. Can they hand out the books, get pens from out of a cupboard or hand out worksheets? Giving permission to get out of their seat may help pupils not feeling constrained and also to let out more subtle tics.



Use of classroom space

It is good practice for teachers to use the classroom space to check that pupils are on task. For pupils with TS and ADHD this might be a good way of ensuring they are doing what has been asked of them and understand the instructions given

Safe space

Safe-space/calming room ticcing in front of others can be uncomfortable and may not be what the individual wants to do. Consider the use of a safe space where pupils can tic in private if they wish (do not assume they would prefer this). This room may include large beanbags for pupils with 'drop-tics' (complex motor tics) to fall safely and return to class.



Allowed to chew

Jaw clenching tics can be incredible uncomfortable, the sensation and need to bite down can interrupt learning. Consider allowing pupils to chew gum in class to relieve this sensation.

Unstructured time and after school

Peers

Peers pupils with Tourette's syndrome may have negative experiences of social interaction or find it difficult to maintain conversations because of vocal tics interrupting. Consider the use of a buddy system or providing structured clubs or a safe-space such as learning mentor room for pupils to tic in front of people they feel comfortable with.



Transitions

Movement between class may be over-stimulating. A pupil may find it helpful to leave two or three minutes early to miss the noise and get to their class before the rush of other pupils. This may also be a mechanism to ensure they sit in the seat that is allocated to them.

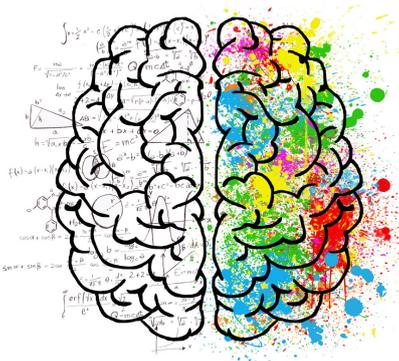
Communication

Communication it is obvious, but worth reiterating: communication between parent/carer and school is invaluable. The teacher may notice their student was more anxious, more tippy, quieter, wasn't able to concentrate on their work. A number of people said they felt e-mail communication was better for them as didn't single their child out like a daily log/report might do. Concentration for pupils that are able to suppress it can make concentration later on difficult. They m



Concentration

Concentration for pupils that are able to suppress it can make concentration later on difficult. They might also be tired from the effort of suppression. It is worth remembering this when it comes to things such as handing out homework and giving individuals additional support to complete it. Headaches a number of pupils reported frequent headaches. These could be from neck, shoulder and head tics or as a consequence of suppressing tics. Either way this may have an affect on a young person's ability to concentrate on extra-curricular activities or homework.





College support network Ideally at the application stage for college or sixth form, if a potential pupil declares Tourette's syndrome, use this as an opportunity to engage learning support in arranging some strategies to support the young person from enrolment to successful completion of the course.

Ticcing in front of new people a young person might have been used to ticcing in front of their peers for many years, suddenly in college, work or psychiatric in-patient services there is the need to get used to feeling safe and comfortable to tic in front of new people.

This is no easy task and there is a whole range of emotional issues that may come into play. Travelling to new environment their college or sixth-form will likely be further away. To support with transition a learning mentor may be able to do a graded exposure to independent travelling to ensure the pupil knows the route and feel confident about using it.

