

# Helping teenage girls manage anxiety by Alis Rowe

Puberty - the most difficult thing may be becoming an adult but still feeling very young/like a young child

Developing slower socially/emotionally has consequences for the teenager with ASD, including:

- Feels left out/may be bullied
- Unable to express feelings through talking
- Has different interests/childhood interests
- Wants to be with parents rather than peers
- Questions sex/gender/sexuality

## 5 problems and solutions

1. Younger sibling "growing up" at a faster rate and child with ASD still holding on to her childhood

Encourage 'ageless' activities they can do together to maintain the relationship, e.g. cooking, exercise

Explain they will always be siblings

2. Social anxiety being mistaken for rudeness, e.g. if the person with ASD does not greet family friend

Explain to family friend that they have some difficulties and that they do not mean to be rude

Parents can be 'ice breakers' and help with introductions

3. Theory of mind

Develop theory of mind using social stories, talk about characters in books or on TV

4. Problems with housework due to sensory issues

Have a rota

Use interventions to make tasks more pleasant, e.g. earplugs, gloves

5. Not fitting in with friends/having problems with friendships

Equip the child with a 'get out of social situations' tool box so they feel comfortable in saying "no" politely

Educate the school and classmates about ASD

Look outside the box and help them develop friendships outside of school