

BOREDOM BUSTER MENU

Fun things you can still do at this time



It's been a number of weeks since the present public health restrictions began. Whilst we all might have managed at first or even enjoyed the novelty of staying at home, many people are beginning to become bored. This is especially true of autistic people whose favourite activities or ability to access a special interest(s) in the normal way may have been impacted. This resource aims to help you or your son/daughter fight boredom by thinking, in context, about the fun things you can still do at this time.

Use this template to identify new ways of engaging in your favourite activities – this can then form a basis for structuring your unstructured time, away from work or school work. It can be used to fill in time when you just can't think of something to do! We have listed some ideas but we hope this document will help you think about your interests, what you are missing in a different way and create many fun-filled, productive hours as a result!

Note: This document has been written as if it is being accessed by an autistic teenager or adult but can be used by a parent to generate the same resource for your son or daughter!

My interest or interests are

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

If I didn't have to stay at home, I would enjoy these activities by...

My favourite part of these activities is...

New ways I could enjoy my activity time include...

Thinking about your interest and why it makes you happy, decide how you could use the below resources to continue to stay engaged, active and busy at this strange time!

Many interests involve facts, stats or skills – here are some ways you can continue to do that – from home!

Do a short course	Read a book	Watch a documentary	Attend a webinar	Practise!
<p>There are thousands of free courses you can take online.</p> <p>These courses cover everything from cooking to history, colouring and martial arts!</p> <p>Why not use this time to advance your skills or refresh your knowledge?</p> <p>https://alison.com is a platform which offers thousands of free courses.</p> <p>A simple google search will reveal an unprecedented amount of free online content.</p>	<p>No matter what your interest or reading ability there is likely a book relevant to what you enjoy!</p> <p>Did you know that https://www.librariesireland.ie has an extensive category of books you can read or listen to online for free! Join today at https://www.librariesireland.ie</p>	<p>Documentaries can give us a great insight into our area of interest.</p> <p>Our interest can range from the zoo to animals, law enforcement or a particular culture.</p> <p>You can view many documentaries for free on the; https://www.rte.ie/player https://www.virginmediatelevision.ie/player or https://www.channel4.com</p> <p>Also, you will find many more on https://www.youtube.com or affordable streaming platforms such as https://curiositystream.com, https://www.netflix.com/ie or https://www.disneyplus.com</p>	<p>There are countless webinars, both live and pre-recorded.</p> <p>Most are free and some are even being delivered by global experts in their field.</p> <p>Check out the social media channels and websites associated with your interests and it is likely you can prepare for some superb content.</p>	<p>Every interest requires time and patience to develop skills and expertise.</p> <p>We have probably never had more time to do so.</p> <p>Put aside time each day to develop your skills and knowledge in the topic you most enjoy.</p> <p>This could mean practising music, working on sports skills or learning more stats and facts!</p>

One way I could learn more about my interest is...

Many autistic people are creative thinkers and engaging in crafts, design or production can be really relaxing. It is a great way to break up the day!

Make a model!	Colour by interest!	Create a song or movie	Design a game!	Create or participate in a relevant daily challenge!
<p>There are countless brands of models you can purchase online, from LEGO to Warhammer.</p> <p>However there are also many models you can create following online designs and using household objects.</p> <p>Why not create your favourite film set, character or place in model form?</p> <p>This can take up a lot of time, be incredibly relaxing and you will have a lovely keepsake at the end!</p>	<p>A simple google search will provide you a colouring sheet related to just about any topic you can imagine – many are free to download and some can even be completed on screen!</p> <p>Colouring is the ultimate de-stressor and what can be more enjoyable than colouring in something you are passionate about</p>	<p>If you really want to be creative why not create a song, documentary or movie relevant to your interest?</p> <p>Our phones and computers have never been more powerful and there is free software available to help you do both!</p> <p>This can be a fun project to work towards over a few days or weeks and you are bound to learn real skills whilst indulging in your passion!</p> <p>If you take this on we definitely want to see the finished product!</p>	<p>Playing a game can be a fun way of breaking up the day but what about making your own!</p> <p>You could create a knowledge test, trading cards or even a board game built around your interest!</p> <p>This could be especially fun if you are in touch with friends online or are with other people at home!</p> <p>It's also a great way to practise turn-taking and sportsmanship!</p>	<p>The internet has exploded with daily challenges, from sharing your favourite 10 albums through to getting in a certain number of steps!</p> <p>Why not find a challenge relevant to your interest and join in!</p> <p>There isn't one? Why not start one and share it with friends and family or on social media</p>

One way I could create something to do with my interest is...

ORGANISE

Now could be the perfect time to put some structure on our interests or even use what we love to develop our organisation skills.

Declutter	Create a special space	Code by interest!	Make a list or database	How is your interest structured or organised?
<p>Are you a collector? Do you have a vast catalogue of objects which you can barely see or appreciate?</p> <p>Why not put some time aside and try to sort your collection into an accessible display!</p>	<p>Does your interest make you feel really safe and happy?</p> <p>Does it require peace and quiet to enjoy?</p> <p>Why not setup a special space for your interest, it could be a shelf in your room or a table in your shed or playroom.</p> <p>This space will provide you with a happy place to retreat to and also a lovely way to share and celebrate your passion!</p>	<p>We have seen a lot online about how colour coding can help autistic people who might otherwise find staying organised challenging, why not take it a step further!</p> <p>Organise your school, work schedule or materials in line with your interests.</p> <p>For example, link each school subject to particular TV character and code or decorate your materials accordingly!</p>	<p>If you have a big collection or simply a lot of knowledge in your mind why not create a list, chart or database.</p> <p>This will enable you to access, manage, appreciate or share your interest more readily!</p>	<p>We always advocate taking a strength based approach to help in areas you might find more challenging.</p> <p>As executive functioning can be hard for many autistic people, an interesting idea to develop your organisation skills is to look at how your interests are organised.</p> <p>This can be completed by rank, code, colour or sequences.</p> <p>Is there a way you could use this approach to help organise your own day?</p>

One way I could use my interest to get organised at this time is...

We have to keep our social distance at present but that doesn't mean we need to be isolated – there are many ways to stay connected by harnessing our passions!

Take part in a quiz	Members groups or forums	Magazines	Online events	“Visit” somewhere
<p>Whether you want to share a Zoom quiz with friends or take part in an online quiz with other people who share your passions and interests.</p> <p>There are numerous options available!</p> <p>https://kahoot.com and https://www.quizup.com/en are two great platforms where you can access quizzes on a whole range of topics and also create your own!</p>	<p>Whether its Facebook or standalone websites, most topics and interests now have their own member groups or forums.</p> <p>You can interact with others who enjoy the same subjects or activities as yourself in these groups.</p> <p>Why not try and find such a group and join.</p> <p>If you have never used social media before it is a good idea to get some advice before doing this and to always be mindful of sharing personal information online.</p>	<p>From nature to science and hobbies there are superb magazines on the market.</p> <p>They publish content around very specific topics but also often have members pages or letters to the editor.</p> <p>Specialist magazines can be expensive and this can be a barrier but https://www.librariesireland.ie now has a whole suite of magazines available for free!</p> <p>If you can't find what you are looking for there it is worth checking out https://ie.readly.com an affordable platform with 100s of titles and thousands of back issues.</p>	<p>Conventions, conferences and clubs have all had to be cancelled and curtail their activity.</p> <p>However, there is a growing number of online events taking place which you can follow or join in on.</p> <p>This could be anything from a “Watch Party” for followers of a particular movie genre or tv series to concerts with celebrated artists!</p> <p>Have a browse online and see if you can find any relevant to your interest!</p>	<p>So many interests involve us going to particular places be it family farms, cultural institutions, wildlife parks or airports, this isn't possible right now.</p> <p>Many attractions have live cams or special online visitor experiences. This includes Dublin Zoo and some of the world's leading museums.</p> <p>Why not take a look around and visit somewhere you love – from the comfort of your couch!</p> <p>There are also interesting apps you can download to monitor nature, airplanes, boats and trains in real time, so avid “spotters” can still stay in touch with their passion.</p>

One way I could stay connected with others who share my interest this time are...

Every autistic person has strengths and abilities. They need to be shared with the world! Sharing your interests and skills is a great way to develop your job or education application for the future!

Publish a video	Create a podcast	Share photos or drawings	Write	Sell your wares!
<p>If you have created a movie or enjoy explaining particular topics – why not create a video in which you can share your knowledge?</p> <p>The quality doesn't have to be TV standard – all you need is a camera/mic on your phone or laptop to get started!</p> <p>Platforms you can publish to include YouTube, www.vimeo.com or social media.</p> <p>When deciding which to use be conscious of who you want to be able to see, comment and share your work – sometimes it is a good idea to start with people you know and go from there!</p>	<p>Podcasts are hugely popular and a great medium for going into a topic in a little more detail – you could even create a series!</p> <p>Most phones or computers have a voice recording software you can use.</p> <p>There are a range of platforms that accept podcasts – some require you to submit it and for it to be of a certain quality whilst others and open to everyone!</p>	<p>Not everyone communicates through speaking or not every interest is shareable in that format!</p> <p>Artwork and photography are two examples of visuals you could share to highlight your interest.</p> <p>You could create a Wordpress blog or use a platform like https://www.pinterest.ie (great for tutorials or interest based subjects) or www.instagram.com</p>	<p>Do you have lots of knowledge you just love sharing, are you a creative writer or do you prefer writing about things rather than talking about them?</p> <p>Why not open a blog, write an article for a website linked to your interest or maybe you could even get to work on a novel or book!</p>	<p>If your interest involves making things or a unique skill which is useful to others (such as genealogy or research)</p> <p>Why not sell your talent!</p> <p>Self-employment suits many autistic people and this could be a great time to hone your skills.</p> <p>Platforms like www.shopify.ie are easy to use and promote.</p> <p>Many people are enjoying buying themselves little presents online during these restrictions!</p>

One way I could share my interest at this time is...

OTHER WAYS

Other ways I could enjoy my interests at this time include...

OUR MENU

As well as the things we enjoy doing, there are other activities we have to do every day. These can include chores, school work or keeping on top of our job! These activities can be used to break up the day or maybe you can enjoy something you have identified in between tasks, during lunch or in your free time! On days that you are finding things stressful, picking an item from your menu in order to re-centre and stay positive could be a great idea. Either way, we have established – we don't need to be bored! Structure your ideas above into the menu document below and put it somewhere to remind you of things you can do when you feel bored or low!

It's worth noting that if you have more than one interest – you could make two! If you have more than one idea you could add them both or rotate them! If you are supporting someone who is completing the menu remember you can use relevant visuals instead of words and adjust the ideas to the person's age, interests and abilities!

One thing I could learn about is...	One thing I could create is...	One thing I could organise is...	One way I could connect with others is...	One way I could share my interest with others is....	Other ways I could enjoy my interest are...

Disclaimer: All children should be supervised when using the internet and only be permitted to access safe, age-appropriate and moderated content. Adults who may find it hard to protect themselves online should be supported in accessing the internet and receive the necessary guidance and supervision.

For more support resources visit

<https://asiam.ie/asiam-and-covid19/> and <https://supervalu.ie/real-people/autism-friendly/autism-friendly-support-tools>