**Navigating the Path Ahead: Helping your Autistic Child Thrive**

**Course Overview**: The journey of understanding and supporting a child diagnosed with autism is unique for each family. This course aims to provide parents of recently diagnosed children with valuable insights into the condition and the support available, helping them navigate the path ahead with confidence and understanding.

The course is based on insight from PAACT’s 2 decades of supporting local families.

It is led by parents and includes input from autistic young people and professionals.

**Week 1**

**Understanding Autism:**

The core characteristics of autism seen at diagnosis.

Debunking common myths and misconceptions.

 Why tell my child their diagnosis?

Communicating with others about your child.

**Communication & executive function.**

How communication differs in autism

 Supporting your child to communicate

Alternatives to verbal communication

 Tools to help your child move through the day

 **Week 2**

**Sensory issues**

 Sensory sensitivities (under and over sensitive)

Meltdowns and shutdowns

Food and the senses

 Accommodating sensory sensitivities Self-regulation through sensory input

**Autism and mental health**

Potential causes of anxiety in autistic children

Behavioural issues e.g. when cannot communicate needs

Masking ‘acting normal’: pros and cons

How a positive understanding of autistic identity helps Lincolnshire’s mental health support for autistic children

**Week 3**

**Professional support**

 Special Educational Needs (SEN) support for different ages

Education , Health and Care Plans: what are they and when needed

How to engage with school, social & health professionals

**Family-Centred Support:**

 How having an autistic child might affect siblings

Nurturing the well-being of the entire family

Effective communication within the family Self-care for parents

**Week 4**

**Future Planning:**

 Transitions to different life stages

Setting realistic goals and expectations for the future

Where to go for more support Local support in Lincolnshire

**Throughout the 4 weeks we will also incorporate**

Interactive Activities:

Group Discussions:

Providing a platform for parents to share experiences, tips, and resources.

Case Studies:

Analysing real-life scenarios to understand different approaches to intervention.

Role-Playing: Simulating communication scenarios with a child with autism

Resources and Handouts:

List of Recommended Reading: Books, articles, and websites on autism and parenting strategies