

Avoiding Isolation Due To Anxiety

There are lots of different types of social groups around the country, many of which focus on their members' shared special interests (such as sports, reading, art or religion). Being part of a group of people with common interests can make it easier to start and maintain a conversation. Places where you can find out about local interest groups include:

- Local council websites
- Local newspapers or specialist magazines often have a section about groups and activities taking place in the area.
- Libraries, cafés and adult education centres often have noticeboards with details of local groups.
- If you are interested in sports or keeping fit, contact your local leisure centre or swimming pool. Details of these services can be found on council websites and in local phone directories.
- Day centres often arrange activities and trips.
- Community Centres and colleges will have information about courses and groups.

If you are interested in meeting other people on the autism spectrum, many areas have social groups or organisations that

can help. You can search for these online, for example by using www.autism.org.uk/directory

If you prefer to interact online or are not yet ready to meet people in person, there are various online autism and Asperger Syndrome forums that you can join. To find one, just carry out a search on the internet for “Asperger’s forum” or “Autism forum”. Before joining a forum, have a read through some of the pages and posts and decide whether or not you feel it is suitable for you, and whether the other members share common interests with you. There are various relevant forums online, so don’t worry if you feel that the first one or two you look at aren’t right for you.

When interacting with people online, you can never really be sure that they are who they say they are so be careful not share any of your personal information, like where you live.

Asperger United

This is a quarterly magazine featuring contributions from people with Asperger syndrome, high-functioning autism and other high-functioning conditions on the spectrum and can be subscribed to for free. Contributors share their experiences in the form of articles, poems, artwork and short stories. There is also a pen pals section.

You can read the latest issue of *Asperger United* and subscribe at www.autism.org.uk/aspergerunited.