



**TATF**  
THEY ARE THE FUTURE

# 10 Scripts to Help Your Autistic Child Feel Understood

(Even in Tough Moments.)

Because sometimes, it's hard  
to find the right words.

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Your child's brain works differently and so does communication.

This guide gives you simple phrases for tricky moments.

Adapt them. Make them your own.



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I'm Dr Lucy Russell. I specialize in working with families of autistic and ADHD children. Autism runs in my family too.

# The 10 Scripts

- 1 When they refuse to do something
- 2 When they shut down or go quiet
- 3 When they explode or meltdown
- 4 When they say “You don’t understand me!”
- 5 When they’re overwhelmed in public
- 6 When they’re anxious about school
- 7 When they mask / bottle things up
- 8 When you want to show you’re on their side
- 9 When they feel different or left out
- 10 When you want to repair after a tricky moment

# 1. WHEN THEY REFUSE TO DO SOMETHING

(but it has to happen)

## When this happens...

It's often because getting started feels too big or hard. Transitions are tricky for many neurodivergent children.

## Do this:

Pause. Get alongside them. Help with the first step. Once started, they may manage on their own.

## Say this:

"Let's do the *first bit together*. I'll stay right here until you feel ready to carry on."

## Parent Reflections/Adaptations

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## **When they shut down or go quiet**

**When this happens... Their brain is often overwhelmed and they may be in freeze mode.**

**Do this: Meet them where they are.**  
Pause, focus on safety and connection.

**Say this: “It’s okay to be quiet for a while.  
I’m staying with you, and we’ll figure this out  
together.”**

**Parent Reflections / Adaptations**



### 3 When they explode or meltdown

#### When this happens...

Their brain is in survival mode. It's not the moment for reasoning or teaching. But safety matters — for them and others.

#### Do this:

Stay calm. Keep language clear and minimal. Prioritise safety.

If behaviour is unsafe:

*“I can't let you hurt anyone. I'm going to move us apart until it feels safer.”*

Optional follow-up after calm returns:

*“That was really hard for both of us. Let's talk later about what might help next time.”*

**Parent Reflections / Adaptations:**

# 4. When they shout *“You don’t understand!”*

## When this happens...

They feel unseen, unheard, or frustrated.

## Do this:

Acknowledge their experience. Stay open.

## Say this:

**“You’re right – I might not fully understand.  
But I want to, and I’m listening.”**

PARENT REFLECTIONS / ADAPTATIONS

# 5. When they're overwhelmed in public

When this happens...

Get to a quieter space if possible.

Or if stuck e.g. on a bus - lower your voice, reduce language, offer physical connection (if they like it).



Say this:

“Let's step outside for a breather”

Or if stuck:

“Let's take some slow breaths together. I'm right here.”

**Parent Reflections/Adaptations:**

# When they're anxious about school

## When this happens...

Their brain is fast-forwarding through every hard thing that might happen.

## Do this:

Bring focus to just the next tiny step. Nothing else.

## Say this:

"Right now, all you need to do is get dressed. We'll take one step at a time."

**Optional:** Let's park that worry until later. One step at a time is how we'll get through today.

## Parent Reflections / Adaptations

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## 7. When they bottle things up

### When this happens...

They may lack the words or feel unsure how to explain.

### Do this:

Offer gentle wondering. No pressure to respond.

### Say this:

"I wonder if you're feeling a bit stuck inside - maybe worried, tired, or cross?"

Optional: You don't have to answer - I just want you to know I notice and care.

**Parent Reflections / Adaptations**

## 8. When you want to show you're on their side

### When this happens...

They need to feel you're with them, not against them.

### Do this:

Say it out loud. Be clear.

**Say this:** We're on the same team. My job is to help life feel easier for your brain. We'll figure this out together, even if it takes time.

### PARENT REFLECTIONS/ADAPTATIONS

[Empty box for parent reflections/adaptations]

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## When they feel different or left out

### When this happens...

They're noticing they're not like their peers – and feeling the weight of that.

### Do this:

Validate without pity. Help them see strength in difference.

### Say this:

**"Lots of people feel different at times - including me. Your brain works in its own brilliant way. That comes with challenges - and also strengths. It's part of who you are."**

**Optional: Share a personal story or example of someone they admire who thinks differently.**

**Parent Reflections/Adaptations**

# 10. When you want to repair after a tricky moment

When this happens...

Big feelings are over. This is the moment for calm reconnection.

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## Do this:

Keep it short, neutral, and safe.

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## Say this:

"That was hard for both of us. We got through it, and I'm still here."

## Optional:

"We both learn a bit more about each other every time things feel hard."

**Parent reflections/adaptations**

# Ready to Go Deeper?

These scripts are just the beginning.  
If you're ready for more support, here's what's next.

**If you often find yourself thinking  
“I just don't know how to help  
when my child is overwhelmed”...**

The Calm Kit for Parents of Anxious Kids gives you the tools to step in with calm, confidence, and connection. It's made for those intense moments when your child needs you most – and you need a clear plan.



**If you've ever wondered “Is my child's behaviour really about something deeper, like sensory overload?”...**

What is Sensory Processing? will help you make sense of what's going on underneath. It's the first step to creating a home that truly supports your child's unique needs.

**You don't have to keep guessing.**

These guides will help you feel empowered, prepared, and more connected to your child than ever.

[Check Out The Calm Kit & Sensory Processing Bundle HERE](#)

