SPACE TO BREATHE THERAPY

When Your Child’s World Becomes Your World

A practical action plan for a healthier balance at home

Start with balance, not perfection

This plan is not about reducing your child’s needs or expecting them to manage without support. It is about recognising everyone’s needs, making care more sustainable and helping responsibilities become visible and shared.

Choose one small change at a time. You can revisit the plan whenever routines, energy or support needs change.

1 | Notice what your household is carrying

Consider daily care, sensory adjustments, appointments, school communication, household tasks, work, sleep, siblings, relationships and your own recovery. Some responsibilities are visible; others are constant planning and anticipation.

The three things currently taking the most energy:

What is working well and should stay the same?

A gentle starting point

Circle or highlight your priority: Rest · Shared tasks · Routines · Connection · Outside support

2 | Map everyone’s needs

A workable home plan considers your autistic child’s regulation and predictability alongside the needs of other children, adults and you. Needs do not have to compete for importance.

Your child’s essential supports

Record what needs to remain consistent: communication preferences, sensory needs, safety, food, transitions, calming routines and trusted relationships.

What must be protected in our child’s routine?

The wider household

What do siblings, partners or other household members need more of?

What do I need to remain well enough to care and live?

3 | Share the invisible mental load

Mental load includes remembering, arranging, monitoring, anticipating and following up. Sharing a task means sharing the responsibility to notice it needs doing—not only helping after being asked.

One responsibility someone else could fully own:

Who will own it, and what information do they need?

4 | Make one realistic home change

Choose a change that fits your child's needs and your household capacity. Avoid introducing several new demands at once. Predictability, choice and a gradual approach can help.

A four-step change pathway

NOTICE	Identify the hardest moment or repeated pressure.
ADJUST	Change one part of the routine, environment or expectation.
SHARE	Agree who is responsible and what backup is available.
REVIEW	Check what improved, what did not, and what needs adapting.

The pressure point I want to change:

My smallest manageable adjustment:

Who can help or take responsibility?

How will I know the change is helping?

If a change causes distress

Slow down, restore predictability and consider what support is missing. A plan can be changed; it is not a test of anyone's effort.

5 | My weekly balance and support plan

Use this page as a working plan. Choose a realistic week rather than an ideal one. Small protected moments for rest, connection and shared responsibility count.

This week's three priorities

1. An essential need we will protect:

2. One responsibility we will share or simplify:

3. One small thing I will do for myself:

Our support arrangements

Trusted person / practical support / backup plan:

A 10-minute weekly check-in

Ask: What felt easier? What remained difficult? Did anyone's needs go unseen? What single adjustment should we try next?

What we noticed this week:

One change for next week:

A reminder for Mum

Your wellbeing is part of your family's wellbeing. Seeking help, setting limits and making space for your own identity can sit alongside loving and supporting your child.

If caregiving demands are affecting safety, sleep or mental health, consider speaking with a GP, relevant professional, school SEND team or local carers' service. This is a planning resource, not individual clinical or legal advice.