An ongoing financial, emotional toll

Many parents quit jobs as well as face stress and physical challenges

IT IS a picture of calm – mother and daughter sitting on the beach on a sunny Sunday, saying little but en

joying each other's company.

Ravindra is a few minutes and it was a very different story.

Some years after they arrived at Changi beach, Ashwin Gopal Ramkissoon, 21 years old, was screaming, "I can't bear it. I can't bear it. I can't bear it. I can't bear it..."

He is thinking about his wife, Mrs Choon, 20, and their newborn daughter, Aaliyah, who is only two weeks old. He is angry that he has not been able to support his family.

"I have to go to work, but I don't have a job," he says. "I have to go to work, but I don't have a job..."

Ashwin's father, Captain Gopal Ramkissoon, 57, a senior manager at Singap

ore Property, always finds it difficult to handle his son. "It is getting very strenuous for me and I am struggling to control him when he gets violent," he says.

Yet despite the difficulties, the family feels it is important to keep talking with Ash

win outside of the confines of the home. "Like other boys his age, he craves a social life. There are times when he gets lonely and eats," says Madam Karn.

If the family cannot handle Ashwin during one of his mood swings in public, they are sometimes forced to turn to security guards or passers-by for help.

Mrs Choon, 57, a retired restaurant manager, faces a similar challenge with her 16-year-old daughter, Jyoti, who is becoming increasingly difficult to manage.

"I get very stressed and tense whenever I see him, said Mrs Choon. "I am a big boy in size, but he acts like a child and I have to be on the alert all the time. He is frightened when there are large crowds or loud noises around him.

A year ago, the couple came to a head when she broke her leg after having to chase him.

They had been on their way to the St Andrew's Day Nursery Centre when he bolted from her side. She had no choice but to pursue him and, in her haste, stumbled and fell.

"I was so worried I wouldn't be able to catch up with him and would see him run down the road," she explains.

Despite the mishap, she remained deter

med to keep up with her son as much as she can.

"He enjoys going out, so I will still try to take him out no matter how bad it is," she says.

The discomfort that Ashwin experiences is public in a common problem for those with autism.

And it is not just the family with individ

uals affected by autism, the Temi that it difficult to socialise even as a boy as 16 years old. He is feeling bored and lonely.

"We haven't been out as a family in years, because something always has to be done to stay home for the weekend," says Mrs Choon.

Temi's family is made up of his parents, his younger brother, and his two older daughters.

"We go to the park or to the local pub, but we don't go out as a family a lot," says Mrs Choon.

"I love going out with my family and I love being around people," she says. "I love being around people..."

For Mrs Choon, who has been married for 20 years, the lack of social interaction is a major source of frustration.

"I want to be able to go out with my friends and do things together," she says. "I want to be able to go out with my friends and do things together..."

Ashwin's father, Captain Gopal Ramkissoon, 57, a senior manager at Singapore Property, always finds it difficult to handle his son. "It is getting very strenuous for me and I am struggling to control him when he gets violent," he says.

Yet despite the difficulties, the family feels it is important to keep talking with Ashwin outside of the confines of the home. "Like other boys his age, he craves a social life. There are times when he gets lonely and eats," says Madam Karn.

If the family cannot handle Ashwin during one of his mood swings in public, they are sometimes forced to turn to security guards or passers-by for help.

Mrs Choon, 57, a retired restaurant manager, faces a similar challenge with her 16-year-old daughter, Jyoti, who is becoming increasingly difficult to manage.

"I get very stressed and tense whenever I see him, said Mrs Choon. "I am a big boy in size, but he acts like a child and I have to be on the alert all the time. He is frightened when there are large crowds or loud noises around him.

A year ago, the couple came to a head when she broke her leg after having to chase him.

They had been on their way to the St Andrew's Day Nursery Centre when he bolted from her side. She had no choice but to pursue him and, in her haste, stumbled and fell.

"I was so worried I wouldn't be able to catch up with him and would see him run down the road," she explains.

Despite the mishap, she remained deter

med to keep up with her son as much as she can.

"He enjoys going out, so I will still try to take him out no matter how bad it is," she says.

The discomfort that Ashwin experiences is public in a common problem for those with autism.

And it is not just the family with individ

uals affected by autism, the Temi that it difficult to socialise even as a 16-year-old boy as he was on the verge of tears. He is feeling bored and lonely.

"We haven't been out as a family in years, because something always has to be done to stay home for the weekend," says Mrs Choon.

Temi's family is made up of his parents, his younger brother, and his two older daughters.

"We go to the park or to the local pub, but we don't go out as a family a lot," says Mrs Choon.

"I love going out with my family and I love being around people," she says. "I love being around people..."

For Mrs Choon, who has been married for 20 years, the lack of social interaction is a major source of frustration.

"I want to be able to go out with my friends and do things together," she says. "I want to be able to go out with my friends and do things together..."