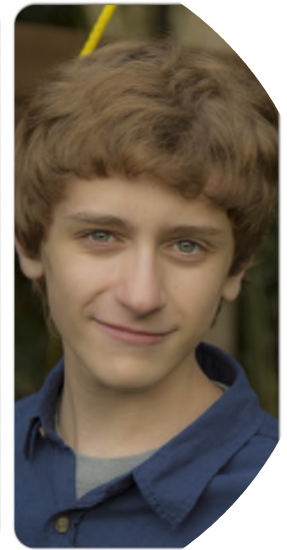


# AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

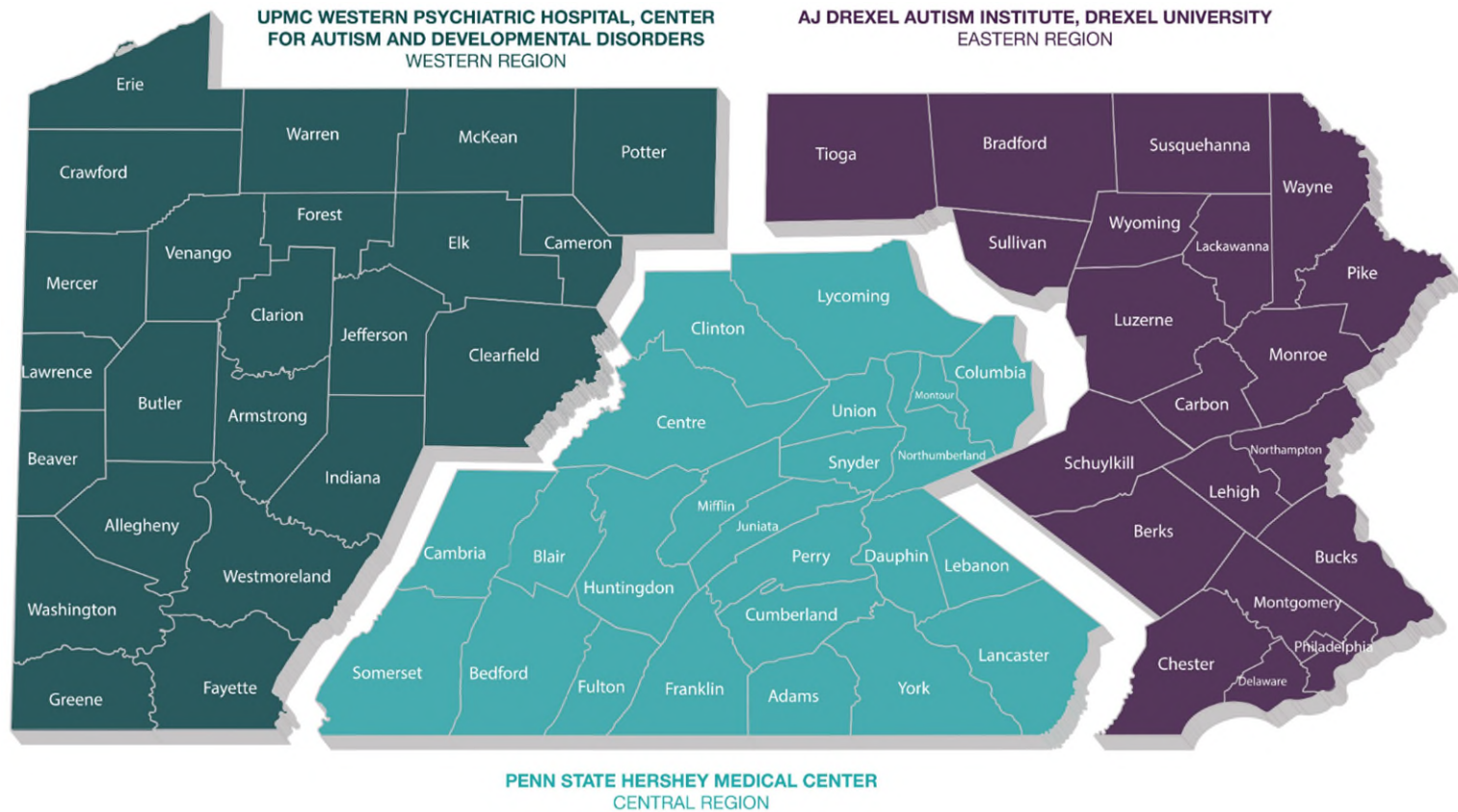
Presented by:  
Kate Hoover, MS  
Justice Project Coordinator  
ASERT Collaborative

ASERT PA [autism.org](http://autism.org)



# What is ASERT?

## Autism Services, Education, Resources and Training



# Role and Purpose of ASERT



Bring together local, regional, and statewide resources



Support (not replace) existing community efforts and activities



Develop innovative projects based on data, community need, and commonwealth priorities

# What does ASERT do?

**support**

THE AUTISM  
COMMUNITY  
THROUGHOUT  
PENNSYLVANIA



**measure**

DATA, NEEDS, AND  
CHANGE



**educate**

INDIVIDUALS WITH  
AUTISM AND THEIR  
FAMILIES,  
PROFESSIONALS, AND  
COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS



**build**

RESOURCES,  
PROGRAMS, AND  
INNOVATIVE  
PROJECTS



**connect**

LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND  
STATEWIDE RESOURCES



# Characteristics

- Autism has **no physical characteristics**
- Autism is a **complex, spectrum** disorder



# AUTISM HAS NO PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS



# SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES

Difficulty making friends

Difficulty expressing emotions

Challenges Starting or Maintaining Conversation

Scripting

Echolalia

Language delays



Difficulty making eye contact



# Language

Speak clearly  
and concisely

Speak in a  
calm, quiet  
voice

One command  
at a time

Ask if they  
understand

No slang or  
abstract  
language

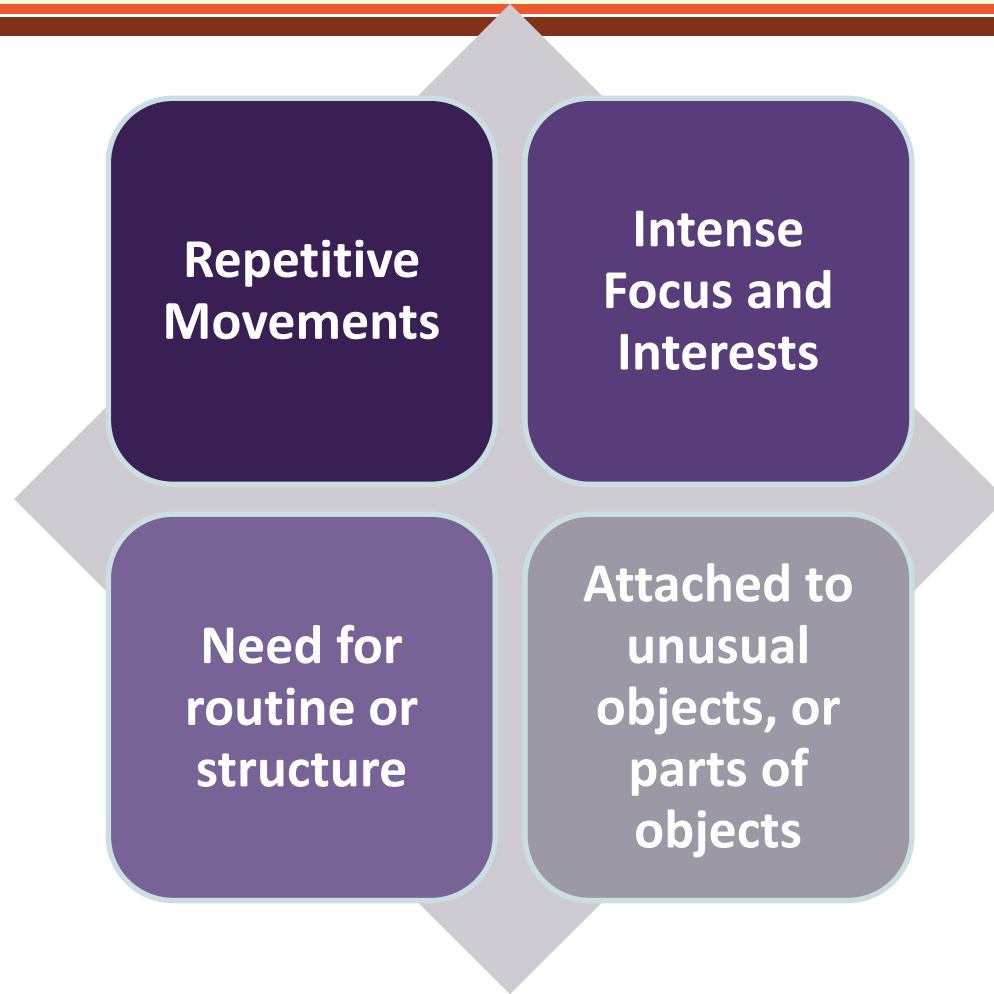
Give them  
time to  
respond

Repeat or  
rephrase

One person  
talks at a time



# RESTRICTED OR REPETITIVE BEHAVIOR



# SENSORY SENSITIVITIES & SUPPORTS

## Sensory Sensitivities

- Temperature
- Lighting
- Noise levels
- Physical boundaries
- Scents or odors
- High tolerance for pain



## Tools & Supports

- Visual schedules
- First- then boards
- Sensory objects or fidget toys
- Avoid quick movements and loud noises
- Do not touch, unless absolutely necessary



# SIGNS OF POSSIBLE OVERSTIMULATION

Flapping

Pacing

Rocking

Scripting

Loud  
Verbalizations

# OVERSTIMULATION CAN LEAD TO...

- Tantrums/Meltdowns (e.g. yelling, flapping)
- Eloping (running away)
- Self Injurious Behavior (biting self, hitting head)
- Aggression

# Other Important Considerations

Poor understanding of **cause and effect**.

Over-select **irrelevant environmental stimuli**.

Attracted to **water**.

Emergency situations will increase **anxiety**.

**Bolt risk**, important to stay with the individual.

May **hide** (especially important for rescue situations).

May become **agitated and aggressive** if restrained.



# MALE V. FEMALE PREVALENCE



1 in 54



1 in 36



1 in 145

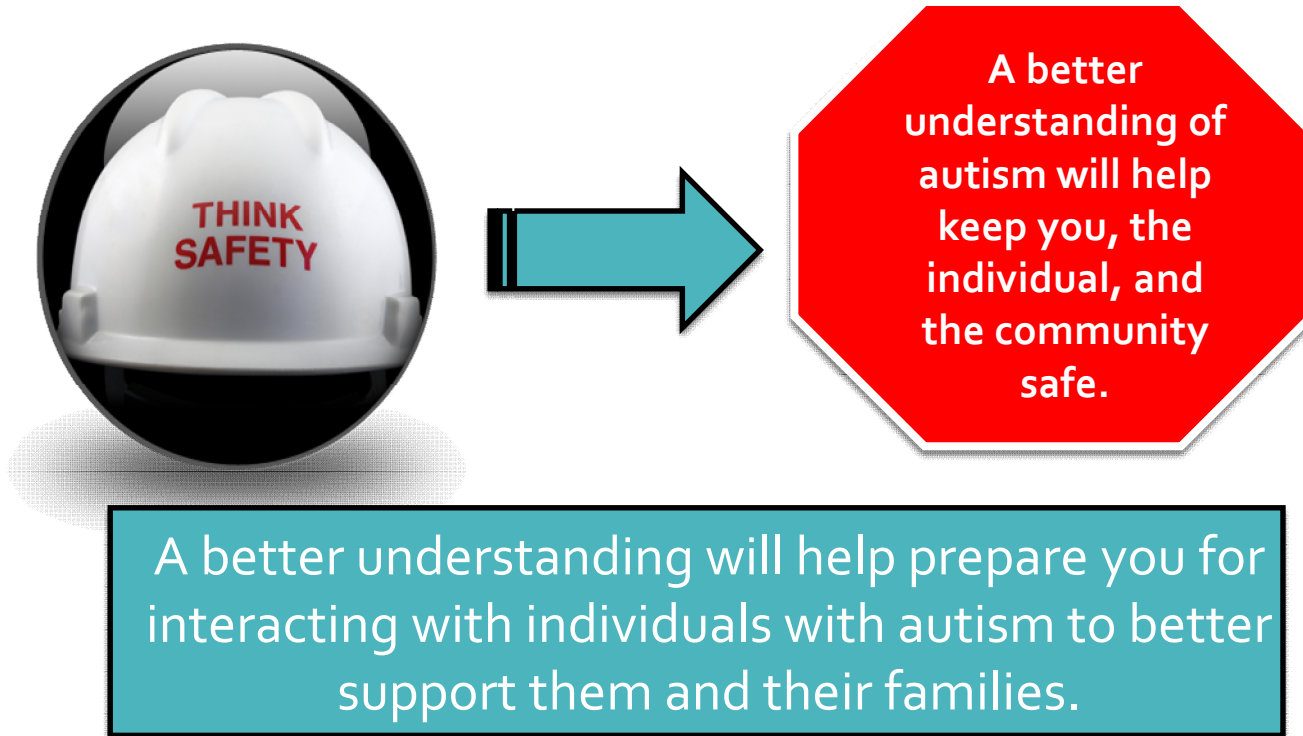
# AUTISM IS A LIFESPAN DISORDER



*Autism is not a childhood disorder and does not go away in adulthood, though the symptoms and presentation may change.*



# SAFETY IS THE GOAL



# HOW TO APPROACH SOMEONE WITH AUTISM



Slowly and cautiously



Give verbal warnings



Keep your voice quiet and calm



If possible, do not put your hands on the individual



Ask if they understand what you are saying



Ask to repeat back what you said

# IN OTHER WORDS...

*Be*

S.

Stay calm

A.

Ask clearly

F.

Facilitate  
Understanding

E.

Explain the  
Process

R.

Repeat  
commands

# Dos and Don'ts for Positive Interaction

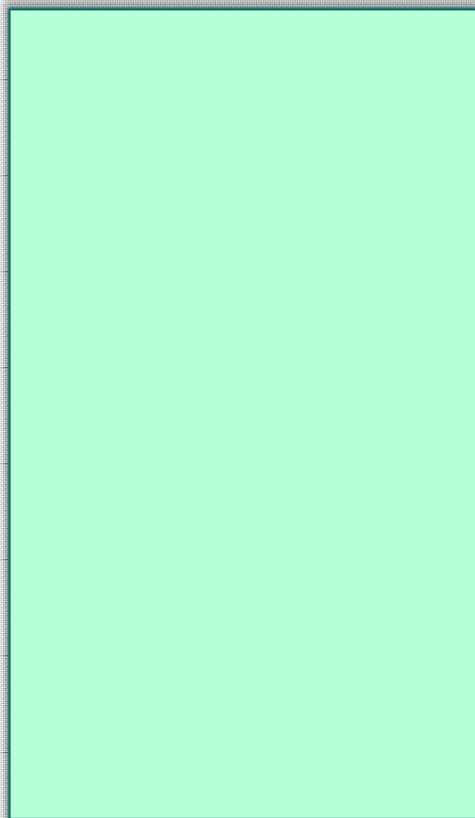
## DO

- ✓ Do maintain a safe distance
- ✓ Do look for autism identifiers (bracelet, card)
- ✓ Do remain calm
- ✓ Do reassure that you are there to help
- ✓ Do model the behavior you are requesting
- ✓ Do turn down/off radio, siren, lights and keep canine in car
- ✓ Do ask if they are hurt
- ✓ Do use pictures or visuals if possible
- ✓ Do ask if they have autism
- ✓ Do recognize that change is very difficult

## DON'T

# Dos and Don'ts for Positive Interaction

## DO



## DON'T

- X Don't stop repetitive behavior if not injuring self or others
- X Don't touch the individual
- X Don't take preferred items or objects if not dangerous
- X Don't use quick or sudden movements
- X Don't give too many commands or choices
- X Don't interpret their silence or failure to respond as non-compliance

# Other Important Considerations

Poor understanding of **cause and effect**.

Over-select **irrelevant environmental stimuli**.

Attracted to **water**.

Emergency situations will increase **anxiety**.

**Bolt risk**, important to stay with the individual.

May **hide** (especially important for rescue situations).

May become **agitated and aggressive** if restrained.



# Interviewing

Determine how the individual communicates  
(verbal/gestures/device)

Use the individual's words (especially if they use a communication device)

Build trust and rapport

Use visuals

Take breaks

Timing of the interview is important

Ensure the physical space is conducive to sensory needs

Avoid Infantilization

Use same interviewer every time

# USING VISUAL SCHEDULES

- A visual schedule is a visual representation of planned activities in the order in which they will occur.
- A visual schedule can use pictures, words, or symbols, depending on the reading level of the child.
- Visual schedules can:
  1. **make transitions from one activity to another smoother,**
  2. **help individuals to be more independent, and**
  3. **give individuals a predictable routine.**

– WE ALL USE SCHEDULES





# TIPS & TRICKS



Use visual schedules

Have a quiet room/space

Use a motivational system

Have communication strategy in place









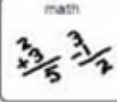



Be mindful of triggers and escalating behaviors

Give alternative, replacement activities

# NEW ROUTINE

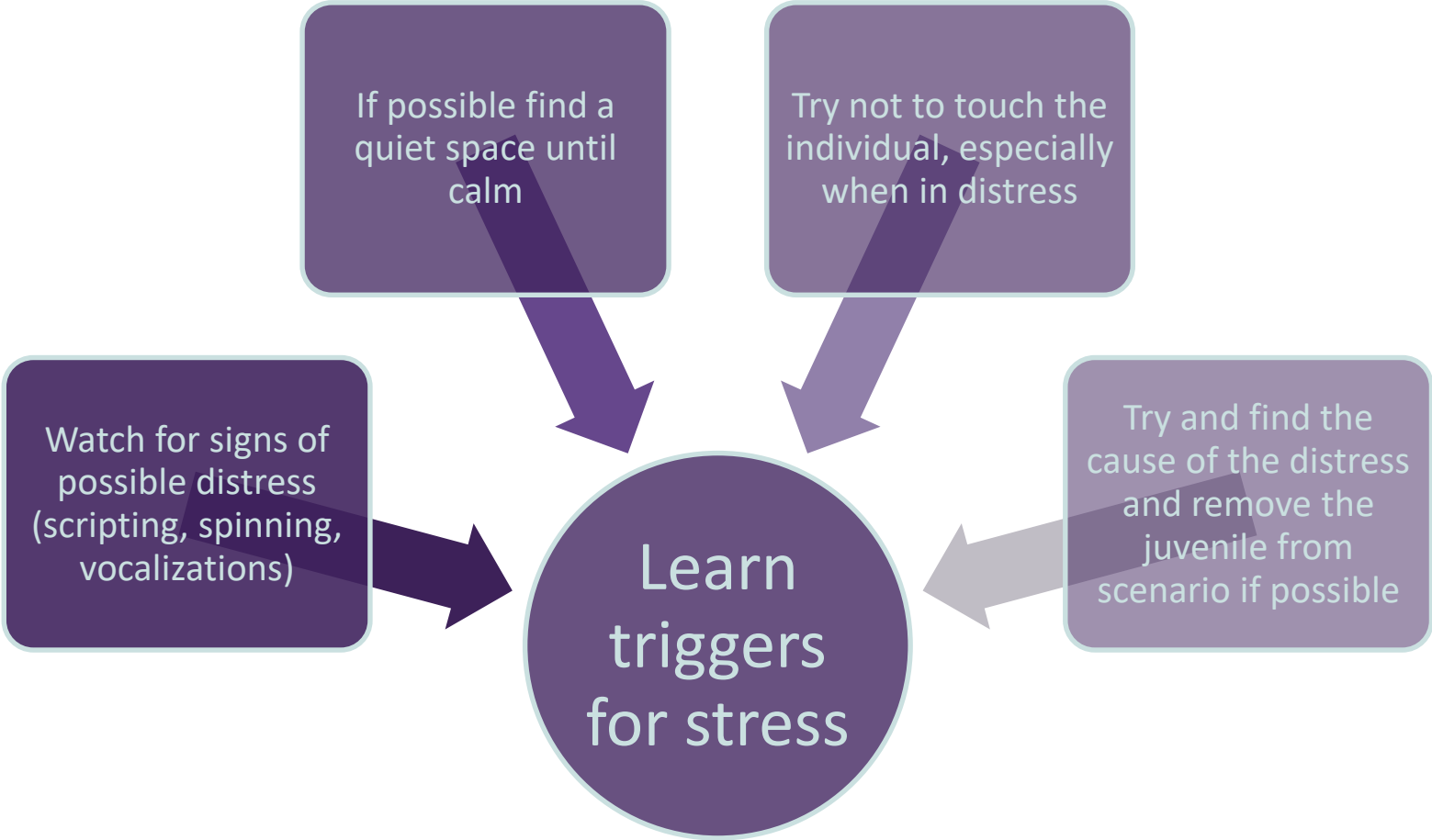
Tools/Strategies for Coping with a New Routine

Daily Schedule

1	arrive at school 	7	Journal 
2	check in 	8	P.E. 
3	reading 	9	lunch 
4	writing 	10	art 
5	math 	11	shared reading 
6	recess 	12	bus 



# STRATEGIES FOR MONITORING BEHAVIOR



# STRATEGIES FOR SHOWER AND RESTROOM



- As few residents as possible
- Soap/shampoo/brush from home
- Toothpaste/deodorant from home
  - Time of day
- Provide a visual chart

# STRATEGIES FOR MEAL TIME



- Find out what is eaten at home
- Provide at least one food they will eat
- Have visual chart of the meal time schedule planned
- Post menu where it can be seen or warn ahead of time what is being served
- If meal time is overwhelming, may eat better alone



# STRATEGIES FOR CLOTHING ISSUES

## Strategies

Remove tags

Use clothes that may seem softer

Give them a choice

Tight or loose clothes may be best depends on individual sensory needs

Exceptions may need to be made

# Wandering

## Types

- Goal-Directed Wandering
- Other
- Fleeing/Bolting

## Strategies

- Alert local law enforcement/EMS about individual's wandering
- Alert neighbors and local businesses
- Enroll child/adult in swim lessons
- Explore areas of fascination in a safe, supervised way
- Create visuals such as stop signs by all doors

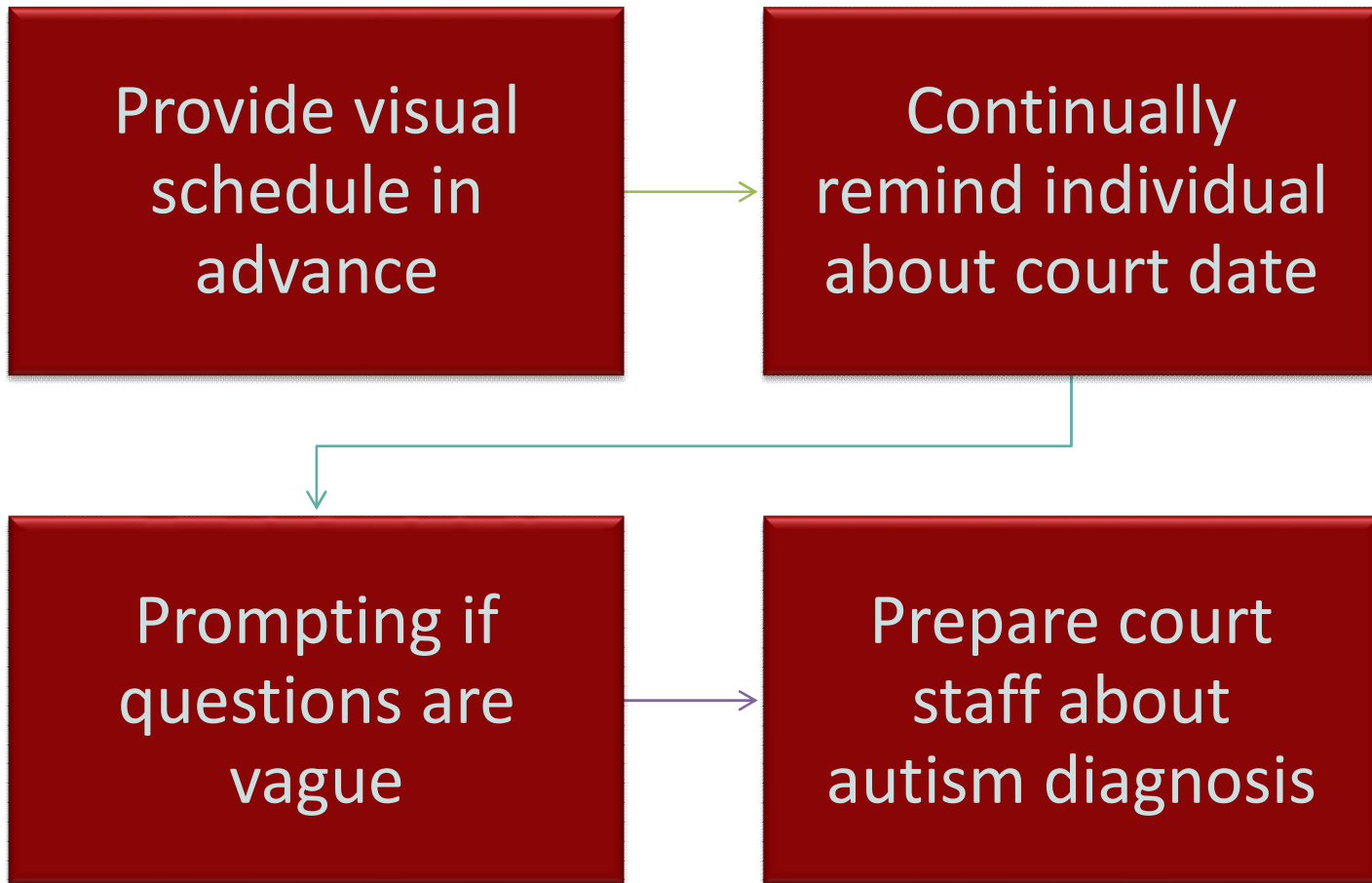
# APPEARING IN COURT





# APPEARING IN COURT (CONT.)

*Tools/Strategies for Supporting Individual in Court*



# PLAN

*Are you looking for information about engaging with law enforcement agencies?*

## PLAN Prepare, Learn, Advise, and Notify

When confronted with an emergency situation, an individual with autism can become overwhelmed and frightened which may cause them to react to the situation in a way others cannot understand. ASERT has come up with a PLAN that will help the autistic individuals, their family and emergency responders stay safe in an emergency if they Prepare, Learn, Advise and Notify. Visit [paautism.org/PLAN](http://paautism.org/PLAN) for more details.

**P**



- Develop a PLAN in case of an emergency.
- Make sure the individual with autism has some type of identification on them at all times.
- Create a document of information as noted below regarding your child and place it in your home where it will be easily found by emergency service personnel.
- Practice various emergency situations with the individual with autism to help them be prepared in case of an emergency.
- Practice various scripts an individual with autism may use in certain emergency situations.

**L**



- Find out where your local emergency service personnel are located.
- Learn what you need to do to ensure all local emergency service personnel know there is an autistic individual residing in your home.
- Inquire about which hospital your child or adult with autism would go in case of an emergency in your home and take your child there so they are familiar with the location and understand the people are trying to help them.
- Learn the proper language used by emergency personnel and familiarize your child with this language.

**A**



- Advise your child to not put their hands in their pockets.
- Advise emergency service personnel if the individual with autism is verbal and/or will respond to his or her name being called.
- Advise emergency service personnel of any aversions or aversions they may have, such as strangers, bugs, dogs, etc.
- Advise emergency service personnel of any sensory sensitivities they may have such as loud noises, smells, being touched, etc.
- Advise emergency service personnel of any interests or special objects the individual with autism may have that could help them relate and/or motivate them.
- Advise if there are repetitive behaviors the individual may resort to in times of stress or as a way to calm themselves.
- Advise if there are any particular methods that help calm the individual when stressed or overwhelmed.

**N**



- Notify police and all emergency personnel that you have an individual with autism living at your residence and include the address along with any other home addresses they frequent with regularly.
- Notify neighbors, family, and friends of your PLAN in case you are not present in an emergency.
- Notify emergency service personnel if your child has a favorite hiding place or spot they go when they are nervous or overwhelmed.
- Notify emergency service personnel about any communication devices that may be necessary such as iPads, PECS, etc.
- Notify emergency service personnel if the individual with autism has any type of tracking device.
- Notify emergency service personnel and neighbors if wandering/elopement is a concern.
- Advise emergency service personnel of the best location to meet the entire emergency.

[paautism.org/PLAN](http://paautism.org/PLAN)

Prepare

Learn

Advise

Notify

# JUSTICE RESOURCE COLLECTION

*Are you looking for resources about autism and justice system?*

Justice Resource Collection



Like 6 Tweet Pin It email Share



[paautism.org/justice](http://paautism.org/justice)

ASERT Justice Trainings

Social Stories

Other Resources

# SOCIAL STORY RESOURCE COLLECTION

paautism.org/socialstories

**At The Library Part 1: What is the library?**

We are going to the library.

The library is a place where I can look at, read, or borrow books.

This is also where I return books I borrowed. It is important to return books so that other people can use them.

They also have magazines, videos, and music.

My library may be closed on holidays and at other times.

I can call my library to find out if they are open.

ASERT PAautism.org  
877-223-4244  
Philadelphia ALTISSIMA PROJECT  
www.phillyautismproject.org  
phillyap@drexel.edu  
f/PhillyAutism t/PhillyAutism

ASERT Social Stories

How to make your own social story

Other Social Stories

Social Stories for Adults

**Going to the Doctor Pt. 1**

Sometimes, I might have to go to the doctor.

The doctor is going to check my body to make sure I am healthy and strong.

When we get to the front desk at the doctor's office, we will tell them my name.

# SUPPORT GROUP MAP

*Are you looking for support groups for siblings, participants and families or self-advocacy groups ?*

## Support Groups

Like 20 Tweet Pin It email Share 1

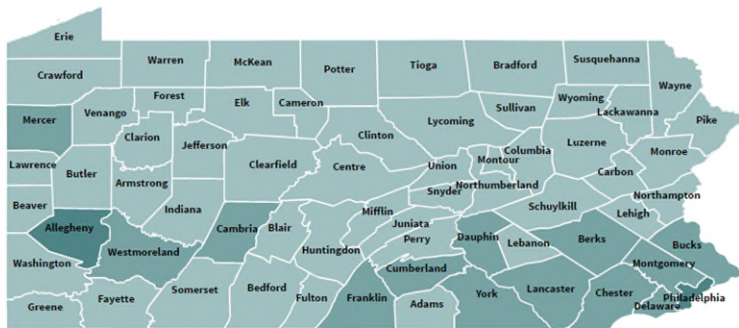
Support and self-advocacy groups are one way for individuals and families to stay connected to each other, and ASERT is pleased to provide information to help you locate an active group in your region. There are many different types of groups for individuals, parents, and siblings currently operating in Pennsylvania. Use the map dropdown below to find the in-person and online groups, organized by county.

Click county below to view the county support groups

OR

Select county

Select county



[paautism.org/supportgroups](http://paautism.org/supportgroups)

Clickable map by county

Online groups

In-person groups



*Pennsylvania's leading source of  
autism-related resources and information.*

**877-231-4244**

Website: [www.PAautism.org](http://www.PAautism.org)

Email: [info@PAautism.org](mailto:info@PAautism.org)

ASERT is funded by the Bureau  
of Autism Services, PA  
Department of Human  
Services



PHILADELPHIA  
AUTISM PROJECT

Website: [www.phillyautismproject.org](http://www.phillyautismproject.org)

Email: [phillyap@Drexel.edu](mailto:phillyap@Drexel.edu)

The Philadelphia Autism Project is  
conducted in partnership with the  
Department of Behavioral Health  
and Intellectual disAbility Services  
(DBHIDS).

**ASERT**  
*bringing autism resources together.*

PAautism.org