

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

DOS & DON'TS

DO

ASSISTING IN A CRISIS

DON'T

CREATE A CALM AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Create a calm environment and model calm body language (slow breathing)

- Give individual extra space
- Use low gestures for attention
- Always seek out a support person to be present
- Provide regular movement breaks
- Individual may not react well to the presence of uniformed strangers: Remove /reduce identified sensory stimuli (lights, canine partners, badge, weapon, belt) and extra auditory stimuli (radio, sirens, Flashing lights)
- Be supportive and reassuring
- Ensure privacy, respect and dignity of the person
- Give time for the individual to de-escalate
- Use simple language
- Speak clearly and slowly

ASK



Always ask the individual if it is a good time to talk

- Speak in a calm and normal voice
- Speak facing the individual
- If there is a dominant ear speak towards that side
- Repeat, rephrase if necessary
- Use non-threatening verbal and body language
- Use language that is literal and concrete
- Ask only one question at a time
- Allow processing time – Wait for a response
- Give only one directive at a time
- When intervening in a potential suicide use specific and direct questions to determine if the person is truly at risk or is simply fixated on the topic of suicide
- Use visual, electronic aids if possible
- If appropriate have them draw
- Check for sensory sensitivities
- Allow extra time for response
- Always check person's understanding

LISTEN



Understand the person may be non-verbal/limited verbal skills so may not respond to your verbal commands or questions

- Ask for an example of what you are trying to communicate
- Use geographical containment, maintain reasonable distance until situation is fully assessed
- Allow repetitive movements if necessary
- Be alert to the possibility of outbursts, impulsive acts

DON'T...

- Touch
- Get too close
- Back into a corner
- Expect eye contact
- Make quick unexpected movements
- Wave or point rapidly
- Chase or run after them
- Shout, yell or raise voice
- Speak quickly or loudly
- Use threatening language (including body language)

DON'T...

- Ask several questions at once
- Give several instructions at once
- Don't ask a question without pausing for 10 seconds at a time
- Use open questions
- Use leading questions
- Use abstract language and concepts
- Use idioms or slangs
- Pretend to understand if you don't
- Make any promises that can't be kept

DON'T ASSUME THAT...

- They understand what you are communicating
- You understand what they are communicating
- The person's ability to express themselves is an indication of how they understand
- The ability to generalize skills learned in one context can be transferred to another



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