

Tips for going 'Out and About'

Plan:

Whenever possible encourage involvement in the planning of the outing, this can encourage a sense of being in control and can reduce anxiety. It is, however, important to note that for some people the planning itself may cause anxiety. In these instances it may be that you communicate the plan, using a preferred communication method that is meaningful. For example, visual stories, *now and then* boards, to-do lists, apps.

Consider sensory experiences:

Validate sensory needs and be aware that in some instances a certain environment may be a complete no-go area. Plan with this in mind. It's okay to avoid 'no go' destinations. You don't need to try and make anyone 'get used to something' - certainly if it's not a necessity.

Familiarise:

Google! Check out the place you will be visiting on the internet first. Lots of venues have their own websites where you can see pictures and other important information (like where the toilets and exits are located).

Liaise:

Wherever possible phone ahead and ask what facilities are on offer, and discuss any worries you have, and enquire as to what adjustments they have in place - or can provide - within the venue.

More plans:

Have a backup plan in case things do not go according to the original plan.

Toolkit:

Encourage and support the carrying of a toolkit, of all the things that may be needed when out and about. What you put in this bag will be unique to you or to the person you are supporting, but may include items like ear defenders, fidget toys, books, music players.

Inform:

Some parents or autistic adults choose to carry alert cards, which is a wallet-sized card informing people in the community that the person carrying it is autistic. Please only use tools like this with caution, as negativity can have a detrimental impact on the person.

Review:

Later, review how it all went, where possible. You could discuss what things could make it better next time.