

## Tips For Using Public Transport

Using public transport is sometimes impossible to avoid, therefore pre-empting issues and learning methods/strategies to deal with them before they become a problem, is key, and will help with issues like feeling confined.

There are many challenges to face on public transport, however there are tried and tested solutions that can definitely help with proper planning and preparation. Here are some examples:

### Before:

- Unreliable structure / timetables may cause anxiety, regain some control by downloading the company app, this will give information in real time about delays and changes to services.
- Buying tickets on the day can be a confusing task - do try to avoid the challenge by purchasing tickets ahead of time.
- Have a practice run of the journey by going inside the train/bus station, maybe even without the person you will be supporting, or you could ask a friend to go on your behalf if you are worried about this yourself. Notes can be made of any possible triggers or things to take into consideration like noises, smells, bright lights, traffic etc.
- Watch YouTube videos of train/bus journeys and train/bus stations- this will help give the person an idea of what to expect. You could also look at books or photographs
- Pack a toolkit- ear defenders/headphones, sunglasses, sensory toys.
- Have activities/games planned for during the journey- these will be a welcome distraction and can help make the person feel more comfortable.
- If the person relies on an iPad or other digital device ensure this is fully charged and you have a charger with you.
- Take visual countdowns with you- these could be used when you are preparing the person to board the train/bus or when you are preparing to transition onto another part of the journey.
- Contact the travel company ahead of your journey to ask about special assistance or adjustments that can be made.

### During:

Other people travelling can bring lots of unpredictability. Use techniques to communicate to those around you whether or not you are happy to engage in communication. Things like wearing headphones or reading a book can be a non-verbal cue to others that you won't want to talk.

Not knowing what stage of the journey you're at, or when the next stop will be, can increase anxiety. Using apps such as Google Maps will show you where you are on your journey and what's coming next. Also memorising particular landmarks/buildings will help bring familiarity to the respective point on the journey you are at. You could also use a visual countdown for the numbers of stops that the bus/train will make. This will help to understand how long you have left on the journey and help make the transition from the transport easier too.



While travelling write a list or draw pictures of things you may see on your journey- talk about these before you go on your trip and encourage the person to look out for them while on the bus, train etc. This may be a welcome distraction and helps the person to focus on something.

**After:**

Remember that travelling on public transport may have been a stressful experience so leave time to decompress.

