

## ***Understanding and Supporting Individuals and Families living with Autism Spectrum Disorders***

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### **Autism Spectrum Disorders - strategies for workers and caregivers**

- Provide as predictable an environment and routine as possible. Prepare the individual for any changes.
- When giving instructions or communicating with the individual use their name first before talking to them.
- State clearly exactly what you expect the individual to do in every situation as it arises.
- Present instructions in a brief, precise and concrete manner. Make sure the individual understands.
- Avoid situations that are intolerable for the individual.
- Allow the individual "time-out" to relax and calm down. This will avoid overloads.
- Use opportunities that arise to show the individual about how other individuals react when they are hurt and the accepted verbal and physical response.
- Play with the child and assist them to practice social skills.
- Use good role models and if necessary instruct the role models what to do and how to do it.
- Match the child with another (possibly older) to act as a buddy/guardian.
- Concentrate only on changing behaviours that are really unacceptable. Don't worry about those that are simply odd.
- Use child's obsessive or preferred activity as a reward after they have spent a specified amount of time at a non-preferred activity.
- Limit and allocate appropriate times for certain behaviours. Set limits to the number of questions the child may ask at one time but allow times for the child to talk about his/her special interest.
- Have sensory items available for eg, feathers, bean bags, water toys, massage beetles, beads, etc, Keep them in a quiet space and allow the individual time to seek the comfort of these sensory items.