



# Meeting Community Social Needs in Autistic Visitors

# Overview

## Learning Objectives:

After reading this powerpoint, you should be able to

- Describe common situations when social skills are needed
- Provides strategies for developing social supports
- Outline safety factors

# Social Skills

- Social skills require knowing when and who to ask for help, being able to effectively communicate needs, and being able to navigate a social setting
- Some autistic individuals have challenges in managing social expectations
- Crowded places often cause anxiety
- Community settings can provide environmental supports that minimize social distress and the behavioral outbursts that sometimes come along with them

# Strategies

- An environment that promotes easy navigation and minimizes the energy required to learn paths, rules, and expectations
- Keeping things organized and predictable
- Have employees wear easily identifiable uniforms
- Post success stories for autistic individuals so they can better prepare to attend an event
- Post about most and least crowded times so autistic individuals can choose a time most appropriate for them

# Promote Safety

- Some visitors without typical restraint may find themselves in harm's way
- Posting information about hazards in easily understood language or images will help autistic individuals and their families relax
- Make sure all entrances/exits are clearly marked
- Assess the area and ask yourself
  - Are sharp objects out for display?
  - Are toxins at eye level?
  - Are poisonous plants out of reach?

# Use Technology to Your Advantage

- Using digital scanners is a great way to bypass tricky human interactions
- Some autistic visitors might also appreciate having a keyboard chat with an employee rather than a face-to-face interaction
- Centralizing technology supports in a consistent and easily found location will also help autistic customers and visitors (the more predictable, the better)

# Final Takeaways

- Many social factors can be met by delivering information in a variety of ways, including images and different languages.
- They can also be supported by human and technological options for gaining information.
- These types of supports not only help autistic visitors, but also those who do not speak English or understand your culture and expectations.



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