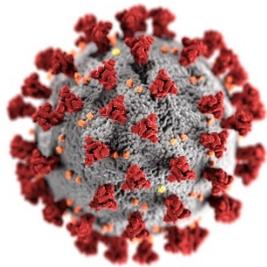




# Support Understanding

Individuals with autism may have varied levels of understanding about the COVID-19 virus, how it spreads, and how to reduce risk of exposure. Below are several strategies to use to provide additional meaning to this complex scenario.

**Describe the virus and current situation (e.g. closures, social distancing) in concrete language and terms and avoid flowery or abstract phrasing.** The understanding of abstract phrases and metaphors such as “she is under the

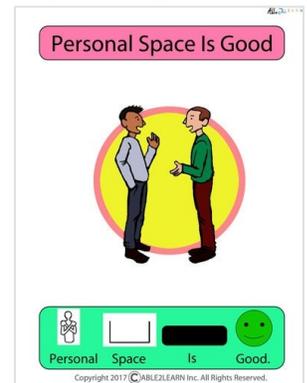


weather”, “she caught the virus”, and “he is scared stiff about this” can be difficult for individuals with autism and can create confusion (Lipsky,

2013). Using direct and clear language is recommended. Though stark-sounding, phrases like “The coronavirus is a type of germ. These germs are very tiny, and when they get inside your body, they can make you sick” may be easier for individuals with autism to understand. For more information, (<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/10-tips-for-talking-about-covid-19-with-your-kids>).

Use a **social narrative**, a story that clarifies a situation and possible responses through modified text, photos, or the use of technology (Wong et al., 2014). Individuals on the autism spectrum benefit from

receiving information in multiple formats, as they often have receptive language deficits (Mody et al., 2013). Several example social narratives have been developed to give individuals more information about COVID-19, help them understand how to reduce risk, provide insight into how they may be feeling, and offer assurance that those feelings are normal. Reading the narratives to/with the individual with autism regularly across several days is helpful. Revisit and adjust as needed as circumstances shift.



Provide **visual supports** to offer guidance on coronavirus specific actions and behaviors. The “rules” around how we greet people (e.g. no more handshakes), how we interact with



people, even family members (e.g. social distancing), and how often/when we wash our hands (e.g. every time we come inside) are changing. Using

visual cues to break down the steps of these new expectations may be helpful, as individuals with autism may respond best to a more explicit and concrete explanation. Several examples are provided.

Offering **visual cues to clarify the passage of time** may be helpful. Individuals with autism may have trouble perceiving the passage of time, an invisible concept, and the use of a monthly, weekly, and/or daily

calendar may aid in tracking time out of school/in a quarantine situation. While we do not know an “end” date to today’s uncertainty, marking the passage of time as well as including favorite activities, such as shows, online meetups, or game night on the calendar can be a helpful coping strategy.



## Resources include:

[Social Narrative: COVID-19](#)

[Social Narrative: Coronavirus](#)

[Social Narrative: Greeting People](#)

[Social Narrative: Giving People Space \(Social Distancing\)](#)

[Social Narrative: Giving People Space When Talking](#)

[Visual Support: Hand Washing \(Clipart\)](#)

[Visual Support: Hand Washing \(Photos\)](#)

[Task Analysis: Hand Washing](#)

[Creating Visual Supports and Social Narrative Apps](#)

[Visual Support: Calendar Template](#)

[Visual Support: Countdown Example](#)

[Visual Support: Timer \(Using Sticker Notes\)](#)

[Timer Apps](#)

# COVID-19



Right now, lots of people are getting sick with a virus.



Doctors and leaders are working hard to keep everyone



healthy. I need to help keep myself safe and healthy too.



School is closed so students and teachers can stay

healthy. While school is closed, it is important for



everyone to stay home and not visit other people. While I



am at home, I can play, look at books, and learn. I also

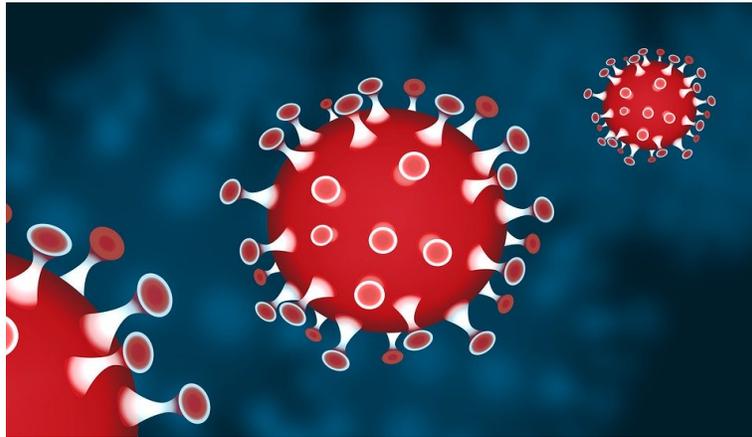


need to wash my hands a lot with soap and water. This



will help keep me and my family healthy.

# Coronavirus – COVID-19



Right now, there is a virus that is making people sick. Because it spreads so quickly, many schools and workplaces are closed. It is important to keep myself and others healthy right now, so I need to change some of my routines. Staying home and staying away from other people will help keep me and others healthy. I also need to wash my hands often and keep my hands to myself.

Doctors and leaders are doing their best to take care of sick people. If I am worried about the virus, I can talk to my parents. I will do my best to stay healthy.

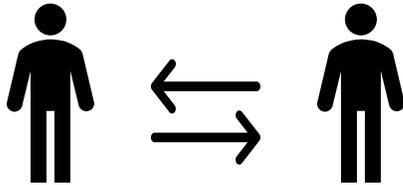
# Greeting People

When I meet new people, I like to shake their hand. When I see people that I know, I like to hug them. Some people do not like to touch when they greet others. They may feel sick and do not want to share germs. They may not be comfortable with touching others. When I greet people, I should ask if they are okay with shaking hands or hugging. If they say no, I can wave and just say hi. Asking before shaking hands or hugging, will make everyone feel more comfortable.



# Giving People Space

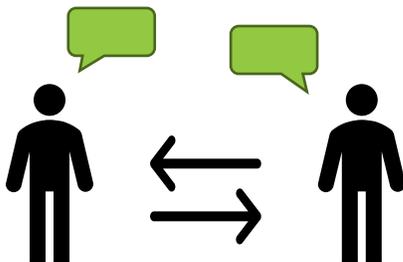
All people need to have personal space.



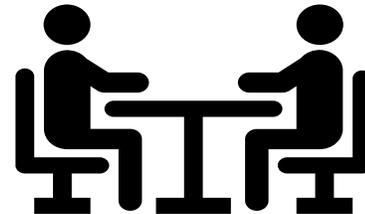
Being too close can make people feel uncomfortable.



When I talk to people, I should give them space.



When I sit with people, I should give them space.



Giving people personal space, keeps them happy and healthy.



# Giving People Space When Talking

I like to talk to my friends and family. Sometimes I stand or sit very close to them when I am talking. When I do this, the other person may feel mad or unsafe. People like to have some space when they are talking to others. When I talk to my friends and family, I can stand or sit at least an arm's distance away. Giving people space when I talk will make them happy.



# Hand Washing



Step 1.

Turn on **warm** water



Step 2.

Get hands wet



Step 3.

Get soap



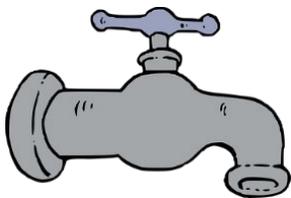
Step 4.

Rub hands for **20 seconds**



Step 5.

Rinse hands



Step 6.

Turn water off



Step 7.

Dry hands

# Hand Washing



Step 1.

Turn on **warm** water



Step 2.

Get hands wet



Step 3.

Get soap



Step 4.

Rub hands for **20 seconds**



Step 5.

Rinse hands



Step 6.

Turn water off



Step 7.

Dry hands

# Hand Washing

1. Turn on **warm** water
2. Get hands wet
3. Get soap
4. Rub hands for **20 seconds**
5. Rinse hands
6. Turn water off
7. Dry hands

# Creating Visual Supports and Social Narrative Apps



First Then Visual Schedule

\$9.99



Pictello

\$18.99



iPrompts

\$9.99



iCreate

Free  
(in-app \$)



Social Story Creator & Library

Free  
(in-app \$)



First Then

Free

# Calendar Template

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

# Countdown Example



5



4



3



2



1



Power Off

# Visual Timer Using Stickers



# Timer Apps



Childrens  
Countdown  
Timer

Free  
(in-app \$)



Visual Timer

Free  
(in-app \$)



Stopwatch Timer

Free  
(in-app \$)



Kids Timer+

\$0.99



Stopwatch &  
Timer+

\$4.49



Tabata Timer

\$2.00