



Routine and Change

Discussing strategies and support
available

Who I am?

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What we are going to cover today:

- Routines
- Change
- and the effect that both of these have on us.
- strategies

What is a routine

- A routine is when a person does the same thing repetitively so that they know what will happen *Definition of routine (Cambridge dictionary 2021)*
- ‘A usual or fixed way of doing things’

Why do I need a routine

- Prompt to complete daily living tasks
- Structure to the day
- Help with sleep regime
- Prompt to eat and drink
- Time management

Benefits of Routines

The world can seem a very unpredictable and confusing place.

People often prefer to have a daily routine so that they know what is going to happen every day. Eg. travel the same route, or eat the same food. This makes them feel safe and secure. They often dislike change.

Having routines can ease anxiety around the uncertainty, set clear goals and establish predictability.

Routine makes people feel safe and secure.

Many people with Autism have rules and rituals they have to do.

Be aware of the importance of...

Routine



AND



Quiet Time

and exercise



Routine also helps us:

- Remember to do personal care tasks.
- Stops us feeling lost.
- Keeps the body regulated.
- Keeps the body hydrated and fed
- Prepares the body for sleep

amongst other things.

The use of rules can be very important. It may be difficult for an autistic person to do something a different way. Autistic people may not be comfortable with the idea of change, but may be able to cope better if they can prepare for changes in advance.



Disruption to routine

- This can lead to a not knowing what to do, panic or a meltdown due to a sudden change
- You may need quiet time in a dark room to process the situation.
- You may need help to verbally express your feelings.

Discussion Point: on what helps you when you feel overwhelmed?

Why Change may occur:

- Changes to an environment eg (physical-house, job etc)
- Changes to plans (eg cancelled appointment)
- Changes to people(eg change of doctor).
- Urgency of a situation.

Impact of changes

- This may lead to an autistic person to feel anxious, have a meltdown, become withdrawn.
- They may take longer to settle than others
- It can have a long effect.
- It can affect functioning.

Discussion Point How do you feel when there is a sudden change?

Cancellations

- Have strategies or a plan in place you can use when dealing with this.
- Find a calming distraction such as listening to news, using an app.
- Complete an action plan of what you are going to do next to get you back on track.

Strategies

Care • Well-being • Partnership



Strategies for Routine

- Having a visual timetable / diary / calendar
- Using apps such as routines
- Using alarms, prompts or reminders
- Organised to do lists
- Allocating time for certain tasks
- Allocating time for personal care tasks

Discussion Point: what strategies do you use for routine?

Strategies to help with change

- Use guided imagery or imagine a scene or picture that relaxes you.
- Meditation
- Helpful apps calm harm, headspace, clear fear
- Self soothing behaviour(stimming)
- Do an activity such as exercise, listening to music

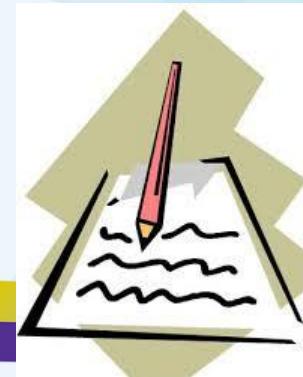
Discussion Point: what strategies do you use for managing change?

Other strategies to manage change

- Make a plan of what to expect, having all the information.
- There will be events that you can't plan for, so have some tools you can use.
- Utilise acceptance strategies, look for positives to the situation, recognise emotions and self soothe.

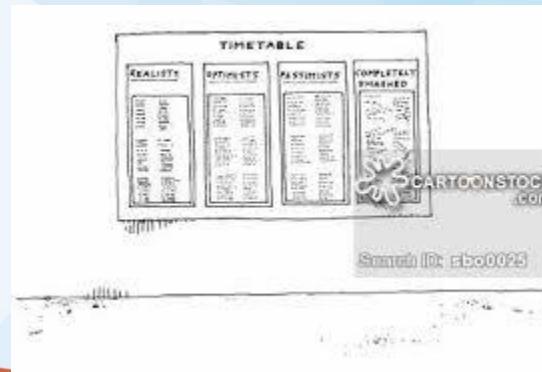
Top tips for preparing for change known about in advance

- Find out about the change
- Find out when exactly changes are going to take place and what is involved.
- Describe the change
- Plan for the change
- Mark the day of the change on a calendar.
- Photos or images can help you to explain what will be happening.



On the day of the change, or during a holiday, a timetable or a list can be useful to explain exactly what will be happening.

Be aware and look out for signs of anxiety.



Discussion Point: what strategies do you use for changes you know about in advance?

Managing change:

- Here are some helpful videos for managing change
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGtM8YO9dZ4>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aV6M8bMcm8>

National Autistic Society

- The NAS has produced some guidance here - <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/dealing-with-change/all-audiences>
- <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/resources/tips-for-autistic-people-and-families>

More resources

- This Website from Northern Ireland which has some good resources –

<https://www.autismni.org/resources-for-autistic-adults-1>

Increased stress and uncertainty

- Routine and plans can help prevent you from feeling overwhelmed.
- Provide structure in relation to meals or activities.
- Exercise can also be very helpful

There are many apps available to aid routine, different types of alarms as well as Alexa devices that can be used to set reminders.

Employment

It may be useful to alert your employer about your diagnosis so that they can support you in the workplace if things change suddenly.

Reasonable adjustments can be put in place to support you.

Make sure your line manager knows that you may need notice if there are any changes in the workplace

If you are moving to new office or work space having notice that this is happening can be helpful and try and visualise space.

Proactively managing change

- To do something different or to try and meet others it is helpful to have an interest based activity.
- Gather as much information as you can about the activity beforehand.
- Visit the place for a trial run
- Arrange to meet the leader outside, before the session.
- Take someone with you.

Relationships

In a relationship it is important to explain why you need notice, how you will react and what is helpful to you if there is a sudden change.

It is helpful if others understand so that they know how much notice and what strategies to put in place if there is a sudden change.

Summary

Thank you for coming