

Prepare, Learn, Advise and Notify (PLAN)

When confronted with an emergency situation, an autistic individual can become overwhelmed and frightened, which may cause them to react to the situation in a way others cannot understand. Below is a PLAN that will help the autistic individuals, their family, and emergency responders to stay safe in an emergency if they Prepare, Learn, Advise, and Notify.

P

- Develop a PLAN in case of an emergency.
- Make sure the individual with autism has some type of identification on them at all times.
- Create a document of information as noted below regarding your child and place it in your home where it will be easily found by emergency service personnel.
- Practice various emergency situations with the individual with autism to help them be prepared in case of an emergency.
- Practice various scripts that an individual with autism may use in certain emergency situations.

L

- Find out where your local emergency service personnel are located.
- Learn what you need to do to ensure all local emergency service personnel know there is an autistic individual residing in your home.
- Inquire about which hospital your child or adult with autism would go to in case of an emergency in your home, and take your child there so they are familiar with the location and understand that the people are trying to help them.
- Learn the proper language used by emergency personnel and familiarize your child with this language.

A

- Advise your child not to put their hands in their pockets.
- Advise emergency service personnel if the individual with autism is verbal and/or will respond to his or her name being called.
- Advise emergency service personnel of any aversions or anxieties they may have, such as strangers, bugs, dogs, etc.
- Advise emergency service personnel of any sensory sensitivities they may have, such as loud noises, smells, being touched, etc.
- Advise emergency service personnel of any interests or special objects the individual with autism may have that could help them relate to and/or motivate them.
- Advise if there are repetitive behaviors the individual may resort to in times of stress or as a way to calm themselves.
- Advise if there are any particular methods that help calm the individual when stressed or overwhelmed.

N

- Notify police and all emergency personnel that you have an individual with autism living at your residence, and include the address along with any other home addresses they frequent with regularity.
- Notify neighbors, family, and friends of your PLAN in case you are not present in an emergency.
- Notify emergency service personnel if your child has a favorite hiding place or spot they go when they are nervous or overwhelmed.
- Notify emergency service personnel about any communication devices that may be necessary, such as iPads, PECS, etc.
- Notify emergency service personnel if the individual with autism has any type of tracking device.
- Notify emergency service personnel and neighbors if wandering/elopement is a concern.
- Make sure that a trusted adult stays with the individual throughout the entire emergency.