

ASD support groups can provide opportunities for learning information, and guest speakers are often invited to speak to groups about ASD-related topics. This resource provides some ideas for potential speakers and topics to discuss at your support group.

Bureau of Autism Services Programs

Contact ASERT to schedule a training on the Bureau of Autism Services' programs available for autistic adults.

ASERT

Contact ASERT to schedule a training to learn about ASERT, learn about utilizing the Resource Center, and discuss resources that are available in your local area.

Medicaid/Medical Access

Invite someone from HealthChoices to talk about the benefits of utilizing Medicaid/Medical Access benefits for those who qualify.

Social Security/Supplemental Security Income

Contact the Social Security Administration to request more information and get in contact with your local office. They can provide info on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for children under 18 and SSI Redetermination at age 18.

Pennsylvania County Legislators

Invite your local legislators to talk to your group about their focus areas and initiatives. This will also give your group members a chance to have their voices heard.

Employment

Invite someone from your local Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to speak about how to apply and make the most of their services.

Mental Health Support

Invite a psychiatrist or psychologist who specializes in treating individuals with ASD to talk about the signs and symptoms of potential co-existing mental health concerns, such as anxiety and depression. A psychiatrist can also talk about medication management, side effects, and the importance of using medications regularly.

Relationships and Social Expectations

Invite someone who has experience with the ASD community to speak about the social expectations of various environments. Some examples:

- Holiday events and traditions
- Workplace (ex: managers, coworkers, customers, meetings, tasks)
- Parties
- Weddings
- Funerals
- Transportation (ex: bus, train, plane, carpool, Uber)
- Relationships (ex: romantic, friendships, family, community)

Life Skills

Invite an experienced individual to speak about life skills with the group. Topics could include: household cleaning and organization, cooking, personal hygiene, budgeting, safety, and doctor's visits. Topics can vary according to the group's needs.

Emergency Personnel

Invite a police officer or firefighter to help members of your group feel more comfortable with them. This can prepare them to ask for help or advocate for themselves if a situation arises.

Specialized interests

Invite group members to present information about their specialized interests (ex: Star Wars, crocheting, reading, Pokémon, etc.) Suggestion: Have one group member speak for 5 minutes during each meeting. Plan according to each group's needs and wants. This activity helps foster communication and relationship-building.