

SHOPPING TIPS FOR ADULTS WITH AUTISM

While shopping is a necessary part of life for an adult with autism, it can also cause anxiety. This information sheet provides tips and suggestions for planning your next shopping trip.



Be prepared with a list

Take the time to write out a list so you don't forget what you need and why you went shopping in the first place. Crossing things off as you find them is a good visual to see how close you are to being finished with the shopping trip.



Keep it short

Know your limits and try not to push yourself to get everything done. It's okay to cut your trip short and go back another day if you are ready to go home.

Bring a friend or family member if possible

Shopping can be a good opportunity to spend time with a friend or family member. Also, some people find it calming to have a familiar person close-by.



Make sure you can afford the items you want to purchase before going on a shopping outing

After making a list of the items you would like to purchase, make estimates of how much each item will cost and compare the total to how much money you have in your bank account and how much money you need to pay your bills this month. If you can't afford all of the items, you can decide what you can and can't afford and remove the items you can't afford.

Avoid high-traffic shopping times

Most stores have times when they are typically very busy or typically very quiet with few shoppers. Ask one of the employees about these high and low-traffic times and try to plan your shopping trip during a low-traffic time.



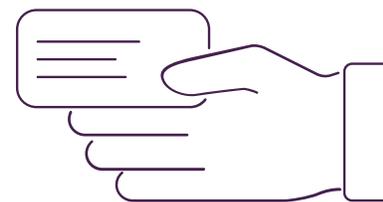
Shop online

There are many things you can buy online these days so that the items are shipped to your house. If shopping makes you very anxious, online shopping may be a good option for you. There are other ways to get out into the community that might not make you so anxious.



Keep cards handy that explain your diagnosis

If you become overwhelmed and are having a difficult time, it may be helpful to have a card that explains you have autism and are having a difficult time responding verbally right now. Remember, it's always your choice to share if you have autism, and should only be done if you are comfortable disclosing this information to others.



Know where the quiet areas are in a store you plan to shop in

If you start to get overwhelmed it is helpful to know where the quieter areas of the store are so that you have a place to go to re-group. You can ask the store manager for suggestions. They might even allow you to use an area of the store that is not available to the general public if it is safe.

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