

Questions to Think About Before Attending Social Events and Meeting New People

I often find myself excited about events in my community and wanting to go to them. However, as a person who has autism, I need and want to put more thought into participating in an event than others might need to. Why do I need to think more about socializing than most people? Well, I find that preplanning and knowing what I need helps me be more confident, at ease, and “ready to go” with trying something new and meeting new people. It is also useful in troubleshooting and finding possible areas that might be difficult for me beforehand.

It is good to think about yourself because knowing your likes and dislikes makes it easier to answer the questions below. These questions are examples of what to ask yourself before going somewhere or trying something new. If needed, ask someone you trust to help you with answering these questions, researching events/groups, and preplanning.

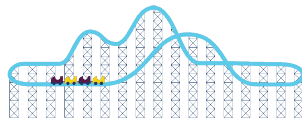
What Do You Like to Do?

- Examples include reading, walking, video games, and swimming.



What Do You Enjoy Doing with Other People?

- Examples: Bowling, playing board games, basketball, a museum trip, a cooking class, amusement park outing.



To look for an event: Research groups or activities at places like local libraries, community centers, community colleges, Internet cafes, & coffee shops.

- Choose one that sounds fun, age-appropriate, and meets your interests.
- If you cannot find one right away, keep checking the event calendars for these places every week to see if they're updated with new activities.

You can also check out ASDNext's social calendar to find events throughout Pennsylvania! [Social Calendar — ASDNext.org](https://www.asdnext.org/social-calendar), an ASERT Website for Teens and Adults with Autism.

Once You Find an Event You're Interested In, Think About Support:

Do you need or want support at this event? (Skip this section if support is not needed or wanted.) If YES, here are follow-up support questions:

- **How much support do you need or want?**
- **Do you only need a person to drive, or do you need someone to stay with you?**
 - If you only need transportation and feel comfortable, you can use Uber or Lyft if you have the money and a smartphone.
- **Is someone available to support you?**
 - Make sure you ask someone with enough time in advance so they can plan and/or figure out if they want to go.
 - They may not want to go or be available to support you, so you may need to ask somebody else. It is important not to lose your temper or be argumentative if they cannot support you.
- **Do you have options in who can support you?**
 - It's good to have options in case someone cannot go.
- **Would this person be okay with the outing or event?**
- **Are they interested in this type of event, or is this something that they wouldn't like?**

Are you able to figure out what you need beforehand and talk about these needs and expectations for the event with your support person?

Planning For an Event: Things to Do and Questions to Ask Yourself Before Going

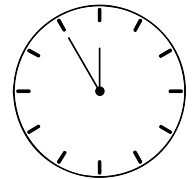
If you have questions about the group or event, contact the group/event coordinator if you need or want more details (such as the approximate number of attendees and parking accommodations).



- **Try to check out the place (if public) ahead of time.**
 - Do you feel comfortable going to this place?
 - What is the place like during the time of day and day of the week for the event?



- **How much time, energy, and money can/will you use towards meeting people?**
 - Can you afford to do the activity and still pay your bills?
 - Be honest with yourself regarding your budget.



- **Before going, make sure you have enough money for the event in case you need to pay for a ticket or buy food.**
 - Having money for emergencies is important too.



- **Do you have a transportation plan for both ways?**
 - Do you have a backup plan in case you need or want to leave early?
 - Make sure someone knows where you're going and when you plan to return (especially if you don't have a support person with you).