CASP
The Council of Autism Service Providers

# TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL OFFICE VISIT WITH YOUR AUTISTIC PATIENTS

## Before your visit

### Provide staff training.

Provide staff with regular specialized training opportunities to better understand and support autistic patients, ensuring safe, effective, and empathetic care. (Scan QR code for resources.)

### Gather patient-specific information.

Each person with autism has their own unique set of strengths and challenges. Prepare for the appointment by conducting a pre-visit phone call or provide an online form to gather specific information about the patient's needs, preferences, and any environmental sensitivities. Inquire whether scheduling the visit during non-peak hours would be of benefit to the patient.

### Help the patient know what to expect.

Prepare the patient for their office visit by providing caregivers with a simple checklist or visual aid that demonstrates what to expect during a typical checkup.

### Consider modifications to waiting areas and exam rooms to minimize overstimulation.

Many autistic people are overly sensitive to a variety of stimuli (e.g., light, sounds, smells, textures). Providing dedicated areas where these environmental factors can be easily customized can minimize patient stress.

## During your visit

### Use clear and concise language.

When speaking to an autistic patient, it is best to use simple, direct language and provide one-step directions.

### Be attentive to nonverbal cues.

Autistic patients may not be able to verbally express discomfort or needs. Be mindful of non-verbal cues and look to the caregiver's experience to help identify escalating behaviors and offer support proactively.

### Provide resources.

Have information readily available about community services, next steps, referral for co-occurring conditions, or additional support resources for families.

## After your visit

### Seek feedback.

After the visit, solicit feedback from the patient and/or caregivers to learn what worked well and what could be improved for the next visit. Continuous learning and adaptation are key to providing the best care.

Scan the code for additional resources.