

What Happens Next? Strategies to help individuals with autism and their caregivers proactively overcome anxiety surrounding COVID-19 re-openings

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<https://mssm.zoom.us/j/99855391257>

Meeting ID is 998-5539-1257



Agenda

- Introductions
 - Michelle Gorenstein, PsyD
 - Danielle Halpern, PsyD
- Life after Lockdown
- Strategies to deal with uncertainty and change
 - Visual Strategies
 - Behavioral Strategies
 - Cognitive Strategies
- Question and Answer

What Happens Next?

- **Be kind to yourself and do what works for you and your family.**
- **Accept uncertainty.**
 - Focus on the things that we do know.

We might not know when school will start but you know that on Fridays we will eat pizza and have family movie night.
 - Limit intake of news and focus on trusted sources.
- **Practice and encourage flexibility.**
- **What do we do for individuals with ASD who do not handle uncertainty or change well??????????**

Visual Strategies to Help Us Deal with Uncertainty and Change

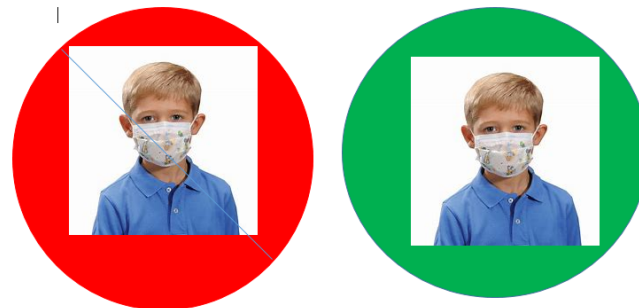
- **Utilize Social Stories.**

The Seaver Autism Center will be posting a social story on life after lockdown over the next few weeks

- **Prepare the child for what to expect**

- **Be specific when possible**

- **Create new schedules**



COAT ON



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SHOES ON



MASK ON

Social Stories: For both wearing a mask and seeing others wear a mask

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnP-uMn6q_U&feature=youtu.be&t=5

<https://paautism.org/resource/wearing-mask-social-story/>

Wearing a Mask Social Story

Overview

This resource provides a visual guide for individuals with autism about wearing a mask to avoid spreading germs. The resource includes why it's important to wear a mask, as well as information about how to safely wear and remove masks.

[View all at once](#)

[View as slides](#)



Because of coronavirus, I need to wear a mask when I go places.



People in my family, neighborhood, and community are wearing masks.

WEARING A MASK



A social narrative for children



Sometimes adults and kids need to wear masks to protect other people from getting sick. This might be something new for me!



<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/FreeDownload/Wearing-A-Mask-Story-for-Children-5463572>

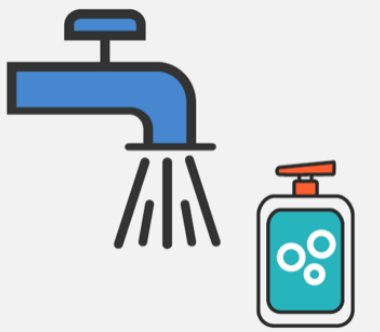
Social Stories: Hand Washing

Hand Washing Social Story


Overview

This resource provides a visual guide for individuals with autism on how to wash hands to help stay healthy. This resource has also been translated into Russian, Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic.

[View all at once](#) [View as slides](#)



I need to wash my hands to stay healthy.



I should wash my hands after using the bathroom.

<https://paautism.org/resource/hand-washing-social-story/>

Hand Washing Social Story

Courtesy of the Autism Research Institute
www.autism.org

Sometimes my hands get dirty	 dirty hands
My hands can get dirty when I play with my toys or when I go outside	 toys  outside
Clean hands help prevent spreading germs. I can help keep germs off of my body by washing my hands.	 clean hands prevent spreading germs to my family and friends
I can clean my hands with soap and water	 water  soap

<https://www.autism.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Hand-Washing-Social-Story-Final-1.pdf>


Social Stories: Social Distancing

Illinois Autism Partnership

My Social Distancing Story

This is a social story to explain social distancing to children with autism.

My Social Distancing Story






easterseals
Illinois Autism
Partnership

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eastersealschicago.org

Social Distancing Social Story

Courtesy of the Autism Research Institute
www.autism.org

Right now, some people around the world are sick with a virus called COVID19.	 sick
The virus can make some people very sick. I can help keep myself, my family, and my friends safe by social distancing.	 social distancing 6 ft
Social distancing means I can only be near the people I live with. When I stay away from people that I don't live with, I am helping the world get better.	 stay home

Use concrete visuals such as tape measures or Legos to display 6 feet

Behavioral Strategies to Help Us Deal with Uncertainty and Change

- If there's anxiety around leaving house —————> Plan short outings to highly motivating places
- Keep some parts of routine/schedule consistent
- Do activities that make you feel happy
- Do activities that make you feel calm
- Do activities that give you a sense of control

Cognitive Strategies to Help Us Deal with Uncertainty and Change

- Validate and label your own emotions and those of family members
 - Ex: I am feeling overwhelmed right now and that is okay.
- Be Kind To Yourself
 - “What would I say to my closest friend if they were in this specific situation?”
- Challenge unhelpful thoughts
- Utilize self talk to help you through stressful situations

Questions & Answers

- Thank you for your attention and participation!
- Please write questions into chat feature and let us know of additional topics you would like covered
- For copies of slides, please email:
audrey.rouhandeh@mssm.edu or bari.britvan@mssm.edu