An Introduction to Autism - This lecture will provide basic information about the definition and characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and strategies for addressing the behavioral, social, and communications needs when encountering an individual with challenges.

What is Autism?

* A broad group of neurological disorders.
* Characterized by severe and pervasive impairment in several areas of development:
  + Social interaction skills
  + Communication skills
  + The presence of stereotyped behavior, interest, and activities.
* Indicators of autism typically appear by age 2 or 3.

Autism is not… Individuals with autism…

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* People with autism can not be identified by appearance. They look the same as anyone else. They are identified by their behavior.

Common Challenges -

Social Interaction Skills \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Communication Skills \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Stereotyped behavior, interest, and activities \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Sensory sensitivity/desensitivity \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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* Preparation for Encounters
* If you suspect you have encountered an individual with autism:
  + *Enlist the help of their caregiver*
  + *Create a calming atmosphere*
  + *Use simple, direct commands*
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  + *Allow extra time for a response (verbal or action)*
    - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    - They may need extra time to cognitively process what you have asked.
  + *If possible, refrain from physical contact*
  + *Your goal is de-escalation and to minimize stress*