# Autistic People or People on the Autism Spectrum

# Access Information Form – Advisor Guidelines

# Overview

## Please describe any accommodations, supports, or other help you are requesting.

#### What does this tell you?

* If the person discusses accommodations that are already being received at school or work, or accommodations that have been given in the past, this is a good starting point for fleshing out what accommodations you might be able to provide.
* It might be useful at this point to describe the type of program activities so that the requests can be more specific to the actual settings.
* The person may discuss access needs in more general terms without mentioning what accommodations would be helpful. The person may repeat this information in response to later questions.
* If the person gives a detailed answer, the person likely already knows what accommodations will work best.
* You may receive no answer or be told that the person doesn’t really know. If either of those happen, you will need to use answers to later questions to devise an appropriate plan.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Do you think that the same accommodations you already have would be helpful when living in another country?
* Is there anything else that you don’t receive now but will want to ask for such as visual directions, quiet space, or an individual room?
* Are there any back-up accommodations that you use in the event that a primary accommodation doesn’t work out?

## Please describe any difficulties you have with executive functioning skills (prioritizing, starting tasks, following through on tasks, time management, etc.).

#### What does this tell you?

* If the person describes difficulties with any of these skills, the person may need accommodations like extended time on assignments or projects, flexibility with deadlines, written instructions.
* The person may need more intensive support, like daily, weekly, or monthly check-ins to keep on track with multiple assignments or projects.
* The person may seem disorganized, cluttered, or scattered to an outside observer, but may be self-aware and have adapted to an unconventional but functional work style.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Do you have any strategies or tools that you already use to deal with these issues?
* What kind of help from other people works best? Can we provide that for you?

## Please describe any language processing difficulties you have in your own words. (This means difficulties you might have with understanding language, either written or verbal.)

#### What does this tell you?

* If the person says they have a reading comprehension disability, this means that the person may use other methods to access written information such as screen-readers to create an audio format.
* If the person describes difficulty understanding other people when they speak or that other people go too fast, this means that the person probably understands visual/graphic or written information better than speech.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* What is the best way to share information with you?
* What is the best way to have a conversation with you?
* What tools do you use to help you with reading assignments?
* Would audio versions of written material be helpful?
* Do you feel comfortable asking other people to repeat themselves if you need them to?

## Please describe any communication difficulties you have in your own words. (This means difficulties you might have with expressing language, either written or verbal.)

#### What does this tell you?

* If the person uses phrases like “losing speech,” “can’t produce words,” or “finds language hard,” the person may have discovered or developed an alternative way to communicate that is more reliable.
* The person may describe understanding language much better than expressing language. This is normal for many autistic people.
* Some autistic people might not have issues with language itself, but do have difficulty with the physical act of handwriting. A common label for this is dyspraxia. The person might use terms like “poor fine motor skills.”

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Is typing or writing better for you?
* Do you need to have extra time to write or say something?
* How do you adapt to working in group settings where many different people are trying to communicate at the same time?
* How do you plan to communicate your needs?
* Do you communicate differently depending on who it is you are interacting with (e.g. teacher vs. friend)?

## Please describe any difficulties you have with daily living tasks like eating, dressing, bathing, going to the bathroom, cleaning, or grooming.

#### What does this tell you?

* If the person discusses difficulty with any of these tasks, the person may already receive assistance from a support person or aide. See question 20.
* The person may not feel comfortable disclosing this information with you, and is not required to do so, especially if your program does not provide housing for participants.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Do you use a support person to help with those tasks?
* Do you use any tools or strategies to handle these tasks?

## Please describe any difficulties you have in social environments like living in the same space as someone else, being in an educational program, or working in a shared office space.

#### What does this tell you?

* Many autistic people have had repeated negative experiences in group settings or social environments, often because of bullying. Despite stereotypes that autistic people usually lack social skills or are antisocial, many autistic people enjoy socializing and want to be around people, but may be misunderstood or socially ostracized because of how they communicate.
* If the person expresses anxiety or unwillingness about living in the same space as another person (flatmate, roommate, housemate, etc.), your program should consider housing options that will give the person private space.
* If the person dislikes group work, such as class projects or work teams, the person may need alternatives to assignments that allow interaction with other people on the person’s own terms. This probably means the person experiences a high level of anxiety in groups and may not perform well in that setting.
* The person may have trouble reading other people’s nonverbal social cues. If the person is American, relating to neurotypicals (NT) may be specifically mentioned as an area of difficulty. The term neurotypical means someone who doesn’t have a mental, learning, or psychiatric disability.
* The person may have trouble with cross-talk, which means when more than one person is talking at the same time or when voices overlap. This means that the person can’t understand anything that anyone is saying when there is more than one voice. It will be important to account for this in organized group outings (at restaurants, for example) or in classroom settings. If the person mentions this, it will probably also be described in question 8.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* What kinds of group or social settings do work for you?
* Do you have an idea of when group settings change from being uncomfortable to being unsafe for you?
* How comfortable are you with advocating for yourself and your access needs when in a group?
* How much time on an average day do you prefer being alone?
* How often (if at all) do you have difficulty:
	+ Monitoring your voice level?
	+ Knowing when to start or stop talking?
	+ Knowing how to begin, maintain or end a conversation?
	+ Making eye contact with others while talking?
	+ Standing or sitting close to others?

## Please describe any difficulties you have with body movements or physical coordination. (This might mean difficulty with directions, dyspraxia, spatial agnosia, proprioception, fine motor skills, or gross motor skills.)

#### What does this tell you?

* Many autistic people have trouble navigating environments crowded with people or objects.
* Autistic people may also have difficulty with maps, directions, or even generally figuring out where they are within a building, campus, or neighborhood.
* Many autistic people also have trouble with coordination.
* If the person is described as dyspraxic or having dyspraxia, that means the person has little to no physical coordination.
* If the person mentions having spatial agnosia, that means difficulty orienting one’s body relative to things, people, and surroundings.
* If the person discusses impaired proprioception, fine motor skills, or gross motor skills, that means a formal diagnostic evaluation was probably done at some point. These terms refer to coordinating specific types of physical movement.
	+ Fine motor skills involve tasks like handwriting, typing, and drawing.
	+ Gross motor skills involve tasks like running, throwing and catching things, and walking in a straight line.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* How do you navigate unfamiliar environments?
* How do you deal with getting lost in a new place?
* What kinds of alternative methods do you use for physical tasks? (such as athletics, arts and crafts, etc.)

## Please describe any sensory processing difficulties you have in your own words. (This means being overwhelmed, overstimulated, or hurt by sounds, lights, touch, tastes, smells, environments, or people around you.)

#### What does this tell you?

* The person may simply mention “very mild” or “a lot” or “very severe” sensory issues. If this is the case, you should ask further questions to elaborate. Some of them might be covered in questions 6-11.
* If the person provides a lot of detail, those details may repeat a lot of the same information in questions 6-11. The person might also provide details that are not covered in those questions. If the person does provide a lot of detail, it is likely that the person already knows the best ways to adapt and accommodate.
* For example, the person might describe high tactile hypersensitivity. This means that the person probably dislikes a lot of types of physical contact.
* The person might mention difficulty differentiating from hot and cold. This may be relevant if the host country’s climate differs significantly from the person’s home area.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* How do you cope with those sensory issues?
* What kinds of environments work best for you?
* Do you have any particular sensory concerns about where you will be living, going to school, or working?
* Do you find sensory integration therapy or occupational therapy useful for coping with your sensory issues? If so, would you be interested in continuing that therapy while abroad?

# Sensory Processing

## Do you have any sound or auditory aversions or sensitivities? (such as sirens, fluorescent lights, clapping, buzzing noises, etc.)

### Do you use noise-canceling devices for loud environments? (including headphones, earplugs, or white noise machines)

#### What does this tell you?

* If the person describes aversions to specific types of sounds, that means that those noises are painful or overwhelming to the person even if they are not painful, overwhelming, or uncomfortable for another person.
* If the person uses headphones or earplugs in public or while at school or work, that means the person probably has difficulty focusing with background noise. The person might also use headphones or earplugs to reduce potential pain caused by unpredictable noises.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* What coping mechanisms or strategies do you use for your sound sensitivities?
* Are there sounds that become painful or overwhelming only in certain conditions, like if you are already anxious or stressed out?
* Is there anything the exchange program or other could do to assist or improve the conditions?

## Do you have any light sensitivities? (including types of artificial/electric light or sunlight)

# **How do you best cope with types of lighting that are hard for you?**

#### What does this tell you?

* Many autistic people may say they are extremely sensitive to fluorescent light. People who say that can usually hear even the faintest buzzing of the fluorescent lights and may see them flickering even when another person cannot detect any flickering.
* If the person mentions sensitivity to sunlight, that means that light is sharp and painful, even in moderate amounts. The person might have a better chance of navigating by looking at shadows than looking up if the sunlight is too painful.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Do you use sunglasses or tinted lenses? How often?
* Are there conditions in which there are no types of sunglasses that help? If so, how do you adapt?
* Do you wear a visor, hat, or hoodie? If so, do you wear them indoors?
* Are there any kinds of fluorescent lights that are okay to be around?
* What level or type of lighting works best for you?

## Do you have any sensory issues with food? (including taste, texture, smell, temperature, or mixed food aversions)

#### What does this tell you?

* If the person describes any kind of food-related sensory aversion, that means the person is literally unable to eat that type of food.
* If the person says “too many to name,” you should ask what foods are safe generally and under what conditions.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* What foods or types of food are safe for you? Are there specific conditions on those types of food?
* Do you prefer to make your own meals?
* Do you need your own private kitchen space or meal preparation area?
* Is there anything the exchange program or other could do to assist or improve the conditions?

## Do you have any chemical or electronic sensitivities or aversions?

#### What does this tell you?

* The person may use terms like “multiple chemical sensitivity” or “environmental illness.” If the person provides any kind of affirmative answer to this question, that means that exposure to chemical or electronic triggers probably causes physical symptoms.
* The person may describe fragrances or scents as aversions. This means that any living environment needs to be fragrance-free. Fragrances can also mean “natural” scents or chemicals that are not artificially scented.
* The person may describe hypersensitivity to electronic signals, like radio waves. This means that the person may need a separate living space.
* If the person answers affirmatively to this question, the person probably already knows what works best for them.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Are there specific cleaning products that are okay to be used in your living, school, or work space?
* Are there specific electronic devices that are okay to be used in your living, school, or work space?
* What strategies do you use to cope with chemical or electronic triggers?
* Have you flown on an airplane previously and how did you find the air quality? Some planes may spray for insects or have jet fuel fumes enter the cabin space. How would you prepare for this?
* Is there anything the exchange program or other could do to assist or improve the conditions? (e.g. ‘fragrance free’ policy for the program)

## Do you have any touch, texture, or tactile sensitivities or aversions (that are not food)? (This includes physical contact with other people like handshakes, hugging, unexpected touch, or accidental touch. It also includes fabrics, flooring, and street pavement types.)

#### What does this tell you?

* The person may describe fabrics and types of clothing as unbearable, painful, or impossible to wear. This probably will not have anything to do with your program unless participants must wear uniforms of any kind.
* It is extremely common for autistic people to startle badly and experience actual physical pain if someone else touches them unexpectedly or non-consensually.
* Certain contexts might be worse or less tolerable for the same kind of touch. For example, some autistic people will be happy to hug close friends, intimate partners, or family if they are approached from the front, but a hug from an acquaintance or that is offered unexpectedly would be physically painful or overwhelming.
* The person may describe aversion to certain textures, like walking barefoot on sand, getting sticky substances on their skin, or the feel of washing dishes by hand.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* How can we make sure that the uniform you will have to wear works for you?
* Are there specific contexts in which certain things are uncomfortable or painful?
* What is the best way to get your attention without touching you unexpectedly?
* If you are required to attend a crowded event (assembly, party, reception, etc.), what conditions, if any, would make this possible for you?

# Communication and Social Interactions

## Do you speak using voice? Frequently, Sometimes or Never?

### If you speak, in what language(s) do you speak? And how fluent are you?

## Do you use sign language? Frequently, Sometimes or Never?

### If you use sign language, what language(s) do you use? And how fluent are you?

## Do you use text or pictures to communicate? Frequently, Sometimes or Never?

### If you use text, in what language(s)? How fluent are you?

### Do you write by hand, type on a screen, or use text-to-speech software or other alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices?

### If you use pictures, do you use an application on a smartphone, tablet, or computer device, or do you use a non-electronic picture board?

### Do you use a facilitator or support person to type or point?

## Do you use real time captioning or other speech-to-text transcription services (e.g. a person types what is being said on to a screen for you to read)? Frequently, Sometimes or Never?

### If you use real time captioning or other speech-to-text transcription services, please describe in which situations you find it preferable.

## **Do you use face-to-face instant text or video messaging? Frequently, Sometimes or** Never?

### If yes, please describe in which situations you find it preferable.

### Please describe which instant messaging systems/equipment you are familiar with using for face-to-face communication.

#### What does this tell you?

* Many autistic people do not speak using their voices. Some autistic people can speak using their voices, but only sometimes. Autistic people who do not speak at all or sometimes will often use different methods of communicating.
* The person may indicate that they use many different methods of communicating.
* If the person says they use a facilitator or support person to type or point, that means that someone else provides physical support (often by touching their shoulder or arm, but sometimes by standing or sitting beside them) to help them focus on typing or pointing.
* If the person says they use real time captioning or other speech-to-text transcription services, this probably means they have auditory processing difficulties and do better with reading.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* What is your primary method of communicating?
* What is your preferred method of communicating?
* If your preferred method of communicating isn’t available, what do you do?
* How long have you been using AAC and how did you learn to use it?
* If you can speak sometimes but at other times lose the ability to speak, how do you communicate best?
* If real time captioning isn’t available, how do you adapt to the situation?
* How long have you been using sign language and how did you learn to use it?
* If you use sometimes, would you use sign language more often if sign language interpreters were available or some other situation?
* Are there certain environments that are more difficult for you to use sign language? For example, lighting, distance, distractions, etc. What percentage of conversation can you follow in these situations?
* Do you feel you have adequate skills in the sign language of the country you are traveling to for understanding?
* What would you use for communication if your sign language was not understandable to the local people or if you could not readily understand theirs?
* If available, would you be interested in sign language courses in the local language or using other communication tools?

## Please describe how you prefer to communicate. (Instant messenger, writing, text-to-speech, signed language, voiced speech, phone, or other method)

#### What does this tell you?

* If the person says that normally they prefer one method but in other situations they prefer another, you may need to ask further questions. For example, the person might say that face-to-face verbal conversation is normally okay, but for conflict, they prefer to communicate over email or text message.
* The person may also say that when stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed, they prefer to communicate in a different way than they normally do.
* The person may have already answered this question earlier.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Is this always your preferred method of communication?
* Are there any circumstances or situations when your preferred method of communication is different?
* How do you prefer for us to communicate with you?

## If for any reason someone needs to give you constructive criticism or tell you that you have made a mistake or crossed a boundary, what would be the most helpful way to do this?

#### What does this tell you?

* Many autistic people have great difficulties understanding implied meanings when other people are talking to them. This doesn’t mean that you should talk to the person as though they have less education or are younger than their peers in the program.
* It is often better for many autistic people to receive criticism in their preferred communication method so that they can process the words and their meaning most effectively. For many autistic people, this means in a text-based medium (text message, email, or letter), which will place less pressure on them to reply immediately.
* Delivering constructive criticism or setting boundaries may be more difficult with an autistic participant who may be receiving conflicting messages – on one hand that the autistic person is not understanding what is being said (when it’s being said in a more subtle or implicit way) and on the other hand that the autistic person takes it more personally than it was intended.
* A good guideline to consider: Be specific, clear, and explicit, but also be respectful, honest, and treat the person with the same dignity as anyone else. For example, if the autistic participant is talking too loudly and more than anyone else in a group discussion to the point where others feel uncomfortable, a good way to handle the situation would be to take the autistic participant aside in private. Then, you should explain that while the person might not have intended to talk more than everyone else, other people may be feeling uncomfortable and excluded in the conversation, and instead, the autistic person should consider taking fewer turns for the rest of this conversation.
* You should never give the person criticism unless you either have suggestions for solutions or improvement, or you are prepared to talk about possible solutions or strategies with the person. To use the same example, it would be a poor approach to simply say that the person is taking up too much of the conversation.
* Keep in mind that like with anyone else, the autistic person’s behavior or actions may stem from benign intentions or naïve intentions. The autistic person may also have personal needs during the situation.
* For some people on the autism spectrum, it might be most effective to have a full conversation in private about what caused the behavior, what happened, what effects it had, and what everyone involved can do to avoid it in the future. This is different from only telling someone not to do something.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Is it better to tell you if you are doing something at the moment it’s happening or to tell you after it’s happened?
* Do you prefer to have a full conversation immediately when you’re given a criticism, or is it better to give you extra time to respond?

## How comfortable do you feel with reading nonverbal social cues and implicit speech in a conversation? (This means facial expressions, body language, and when people don’t outright say what they mean.)

#### What does this tell you?

* Context matters. An autistic person might understand implicit language and metaphors very well in written texts and fiction, but have significant difficulties understanding implicit language when another person is talking to them.
* A person who is already overwhelmed or overstimulated will usually have less ability to interpret nonverbal cues than they ordinarily would have.
* Some autistic people do better with nonverbal social cues and implicit speech in a conversation than other autistic people.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Are there better ways to communicate with you in a stressful situation?

## How comfortable are you in group or social settings?

### Are there specific conditions that make group settings more manageable?

### What strategies do you use to adapt to uncomfortable group settings?

#### What does this tell you?

* Many autistic people do not work well in groups. There are many reasons for this. Some of them are social dynamics and others are sensory and auditory processing. Some are anxiety or trauma related to past bad experiences, which are common for many people on the autism spectrum.
* Many autistic people are either deliberately excluded when participants are asked to form groups on their own, or else end up doing the majority or all of the work intended for the group.
* If the person is not comfortable working in groups, consider giving options for assignments that allow people to choose to work in groups or individually.
* If you absolutely have to assign group work, program staff should make attempts to predetermine the groups and roles within the groups.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* What is your preferred or ideal role within a group, so we can minimize unnecessary and stressful social interaction?

# Other Accommodations

## Do you prefer sitting in a particular seat (in front, near speaker, etc.) or other arrangements in a group setting?

### If yes, please describe where you prefer to sit or other arrangements in a group setting, and in which situations you find it helpful:

## Do you use a person to take notes for you?

### If you use a human notetaker, please describe in which situations you find it preferable.

#### What does this tell you?

* If the person uses a human notetaker, the person may have trouble with cognitively processing information, deciding which information is important, auditory processing in general, or background noise in particular. The person might also have difficulty with handwriting or typing.
* If the person prefers to sit in a particular seat, the person may have trouble with auditory processing or may feel overwhelmed by having too many people close by.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* If you can’t sit in your preferred seat, how do you adapt to the situation?
* If a notetaker isn’t available, do you have other strategies for getting the information?

## Do you use a support person or aide?

### If you use a support person or aide, please describe what tasks the support person or aide helps you with. (This could mean things like helping you get dressed, helping you bathe or shower, helping you pay bills, helping you navigate places with lots of people and noise, or helping you stay on task.)

### If you use a support person or aide, please describe what situations and places you use them to help with. (This could mean daily in school, daily in an office, for special occasions like field trips or outings, or specific places like restaurants or public transit.)

### Will you need a support person or aide on the program?

#### What does this tell you?

* The person may need assistance to do daily living tasks (like eating, dressing, bathing, or cleaning), focus on work, interpret and respond to social situations, or communicate to other people.
* The person may already have a trusting relationship with a particular person or people, and may want or need to bring that specific person.
* Culturally the person may prefer or be used to having a person providing assistance, and who that is may also be culturally defined.
* The level of assistance needed may vary greatly in type of tasks and hours needed.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* If you do not use a support person, is this because you do not have access to someone, choose not to use someone, cannot afford someone, and/or do not need someone?
* Would the time needed and activities you use a support person for be different in a completely new environment?
* If you have someone to assist you, does this person get paid by you, a government, a foundation, or other source; or does the person volunteer their time?
* Will funding from home for the support person continue while overseas? What will the amount cover considering the exchange rates?
* How will other expenses be covered if a support person comes from the home country, such as health insurance, passport fees, housing, flight for the support person?
* Could a local support person be hired and trained so that only one support person comes from the home country or the support people only stay for the beginning of the program until the local support people can take over?
* If you will be finding a support person in the country you are traveling to, then what qualifications would you require of them? For example, gender, previous experience, language skills, availability, costs, etc.
* How would a support person be paid if hired in the country where you are traveling?
* Do you feel you have adequate skills in your host country’s language to work with a local support person who speaks that language?

## Do you use a service animal?

### If yes, please describe what kind of animal and how many you use, what the animal does for you, and in what situations you use them:

### Will you bring these on the program?

## Do you use an emotional support animal?

### If yes, please describe what kind of animal and how many you use, what the animal does for you, and in what situations you use them:

### Will you bring these on the program?

#### What does this tell you?

* If the person uses a service animal, the person has been trained in some way in working with that service animal.
* If the person uses an emotional support animal, the person may have some level of training to work with that animal or none.
* The person may need other accommodations to care for an animal.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* How long have you worked with your animal? If the animal is newer, is there additional training that is needed to be ready to travel with you? If the animal is closer to retirement, will it have the stamina and health for your international travel?
* What type of training did you receive to work with your animal, if any?
* Do you use your animal in public places or only in your home? If you use your animal in public spaces, how often do you have your animal with you?
* What would you need for traveling with your animal? In what situations have you traveled with the animal before?
* Have you read what is required by customs in the country you are traveling? Are there restrictions or required vaccinations, micro-chips, or documentation?
* If needed, how would you adapt if your animal wasn’t available?

## Describe the level of structure and routine that works best for you in a school or office setting.

### Do you use any kind of planner, calendar, or scheduler to organize your assignments, classes, meetings, or other things you have to do?

### Do you use alarms or reminder apps of any kind to keep on track with things you have to do?

### Do you use charts, hanging posters, sticky notes, or other visual aids or reminders to keep on track with things you have to do?

### Do you receive informal or formal help from a friend, family member, or support person to keep on track with things you have to do?

### Do you work better on multiple tasks at once or only one thing at a time?

### What kinds of deadlines are most helpful for you? (This might mean flexible vs. strict, or far in the future vs. closer to now.)

#### What does this tell you?

* Many autistic people work best when they have a lot of structure, including specific information about the details of a project or assignment. Some autistic people dislike having a lot of structure and find it cumbersome to their work process. It is important to ask about this so that the person has the right amount of structure to function best.
* If the person needs external structure, that means the person needs someone else to help devise a timeline, plan, rules, or boundaries for a project or assignment.
* The person may mention needing to have a predictable schedule or series of tasks to help keep the person on track and prevent being overwhelmed.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* What can we do to help create a structure or routine that works for you?

## Please describe how comfortable you are advocating for yourself to a teacher, boss, or other authority figure.

#### What does this tell you?

* Different autistic people have had different access to self-advocacy support or leadership skills training. Some autistic people might have a very strong background and high confidence in their ability to advocate for themselves. Other autistic people might have anxiety, inexperience, past trauma, or other reasons that they are not comfortable or feel actively unsafe in a situation where they could be perceived as confronting an authority figure.
* Autistic people from different cultural and religious backgrounds may not have had much experience advocating for themselves or may feel uncomfortable doing so due to social stigmas around non-apparent disabilities.
* If the person mentions feeling uncomfortable with self-advocating or doesn’t understand what this means, you or someone else in your program may need to provide support to the person or take the lead if a situation comes up with host families, professors, external chaperones, or work-site supervisors.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Have you ever had to advocate for yourself in the past?
* Have you advocated for your own accommodations before?
* Have you had someone help or support you when you need to advocate for yourself? What kind of support did they give?
* Are there any kinds of situations where you would want us to step in because you wouldn’t feel comfortable or you wouldn’t be able to speak up on your own? If so, what would you want us to do?

## What medications are you currently taking, if any? Will you bring your medications with you on the exchange program?

#### What does this tell you?

* Many autistic people have other disabilities, mental illnesses, or chronic illnesses. Some autistic people take medications to deal with specific difficulties that they have.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* Are there generic versions of your medications that still work for you?
* Do you need to arrange doctor or psychiatrist appointments while abroad?

## What situations cause you stress or anxiety?

### What do you do when you experience stress or anxiety?

### What coping mechanisms or tools do you use to manage or decrease the stress or anxiety?

### What do you do to cope when you feel afraid, angry, or frustrated?

### What should program staff do if you are showing signs of being overwhelmed by stress or anxiety?

#### What does this tell you?

* Many autistic people have much lower tolerance levels for stress, anxiety, frustration, or fear than people who are not autistic.
* Some common causes of stress or anxiety are vagueness, uncertainty, open-ended questions or assignments, social stressors, and sensory overstimulation.
* The person may mention needing the ability to leave or retreat to a quiet and safe space upon becoming overwhelmed.
* The person might talk about stimming (self-stimulatory behaviors), which can mean body movements like rocking, flapping, or spinning; or verbal tics like humming, singing, or repeating certain phrases or words.
* The person might mention needing to watch certain videos or listen to certain music to calm down.

#### What follow-up questions could you ask?

* If you are overwhelmed by stress or anxiety, should staff try to talk to you?
* If you don’t have a quiet or separate area to go to, what other ways can you deal with stress or anxiety?

## Please describe other tools or services you use to improve accessibility that were not mentioned above.

## Please tell us anything else that we need to know about how you do things, how you adapt to accessibility barriers, or your access needs.

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