



## How to Respond to Victims with Autism in a Disaster



### Quick Facts for Medical Situations

Individuals with Autism often have tactile sensory issues. Adhesives, bandages, and certain materials may increase anxiety and aggression

Perform triage distal to proximal and move slowly if possible

Time permitting, explain in advance what the person can expect while assessing them

Expect the unexpected – Autistic children especially may ingest something or tamper with something unsafe without hesitation

Inspect for less obvious injuries

If an Autistic person cannot speak, do not assume they cannot understand you

Use any means of communication that may be familiar to them

An Autistic child may become attached to a random object that appears to comfort them

Do not try to reason with behavior outbursts, they are most likely occurring from the inability to process sensory input, especially in chaos; use redirection

Once out of immediate harm, give an Autistic person a task - this will keep their focus on a job and out of danger

To get an Autistic child to follow directions, attempt to make it a contest or game if conditions allow (I'll race you to the "safe" area)

