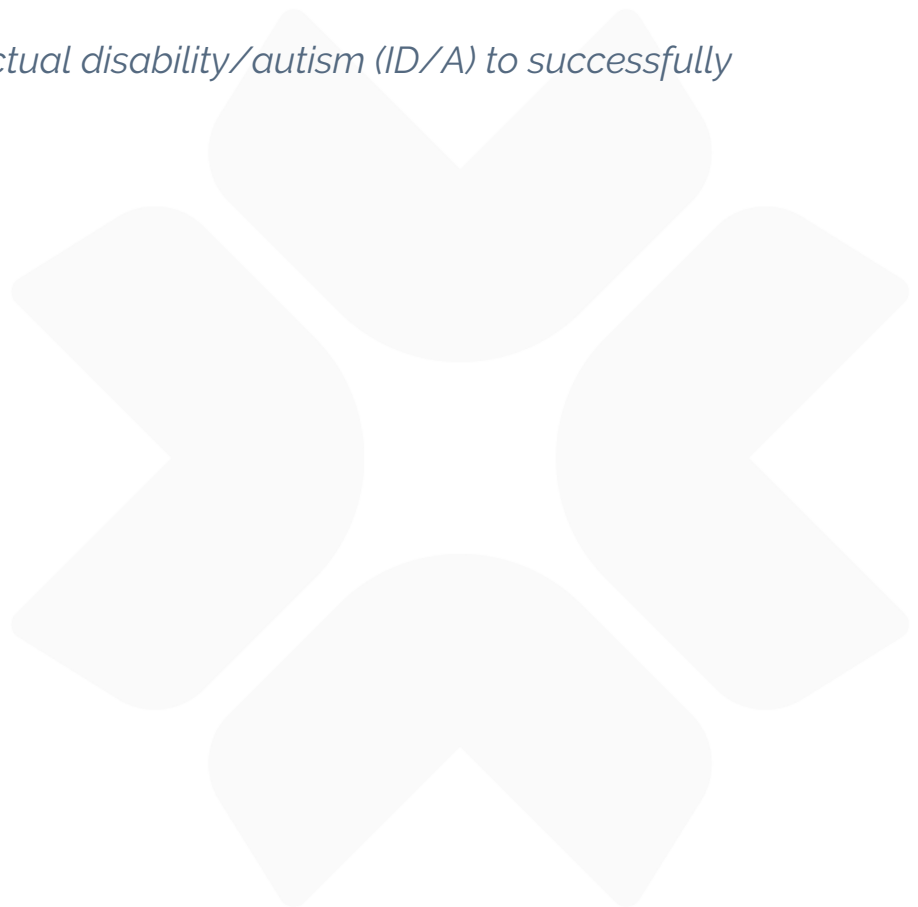


## Rehearsal Guide

# Wearing a Mask

*Preparing people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) to successfully wear masks around others.*



## Introduction for Caregivers

A rehearsal guide contains realistic pictures, concrete ideas, and clear, brief instructions for guiding a person through what can be expected in a specific situation. It includes helpful suggestions for caregivers to follow to make the experience meaningful for the person and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. This approach is beneficial when supporting people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) who are anxious about situations such as doctors' appointments, hospitalizations, and medical testing.

A rehearsal guide provides opportunities for the caregiver to assist the person to learn about a specific situation. It contains information on what is needed and why and explains exactly what can be expected. Such a guide is most effective when it is person-centered and used in conjunction with discussion to allow exploration of specific areas of concern. It can be a powerful tool when used as intended.

The expected result is that the person will then experience the situation in a way that supports health and well-being by being prepared and knowing what to expect. The guide can be used at all stages of the situation to facilitate a positive end result.

Thank you for taking the time to use this tool to work with self-advocates to improve their health outcomes.

## How to Use This Rehearsal Guide

For best results, begin to review this rehearsal guide with the person prior to the day of the appointment. Sometimes it will help to review this material with an individual several days or weeks before an appointment; other times, it may be better to wait to review this material until just before the procedure is to take place, perhaps the day before or the morning of the procedure. Together with the individual, determine which will best suit the individual's needs and abilities in understanding the information provided; however, it is important not to wait until 5 minutes before a procedure to introduce this guide to an individual. Give the individual enough time in advance to become familiar with the procedure based on the pictures and information contained on each page and with the individual's abilities in mind.

It is best to review this guide slowly and to focus on one idea/page at a time, allowing the person to talk and/or ask questions after each idea/page is presented. A caregiver may want to share personal experiences related to having this procedure done but be sure to do so in a positive manner, depicting a positive outcome.

## For Best Practices

- ✓ Allot time to review this material when the individual is alert and interested in doing so.
- ✓ Ensure that the setting is free from distraction. Based on the individual's attention span, it may be best to review one page at a time, rather than reviewing an entire guide in one sitting.
- ✓ Explain each picture and practice the suggested exercises with the individual, such as deep breathing, as they appear throughout the guide.
- ✓ On the day of the procedure, take this guide along to continue rehearsing the various steps involved in the procedure.
- ✓ Remain positive, calm, and upbeat.
- ✓ Remember to offer positive reinforcement throughout the procedure. If the procedure is not able to be completed, focus on positive aspects. If the individual seems upset, talk about it later when they are calm to find out how they felt and what could be changed or improved to have a better outcome the next time.

# Wearing a Mask

(Name of individual), you are going out to (Name of activity)

on (Insert date here).

For your protection and safety, staying up to date on vaccines and choosing to wear a mask can help prevent you from getting severe illness.

When you are sick, wearing a mask may also help to protect people around you from germs that you may have and helps the community stay safe and healthy.

(Name of caregiver) will help you put the mask on and make sure it fits you properly and comfortably.



**Note to Caregiver:** It may be helpful to know mask wearing guidelines in healthcare facilities. This can be done by calling ahead to the place where the individual will be going.



# In the Community

When you are away from home, you may choose to wear a mask. Remember choosing to wear a mask helps protect people around you from getting sick and stops germs from spreading.



**Note to Caregiver:** Explain to the individual that by wearing a mask when a person is sick helps to protect everyone around the person and in the community from germs that can spread if the individual coughs, sneezes or even talks without wearing a mask.

# Germs

Germs are all around us. Germs are on everything we touch – things like tables, doorknobs and even cellphones.

Think about all the things that your hands touch.



**Note to Caregiver:** Explain to the individual that germs are on everything we touch, not limited to the items shown on the pictures.

# How Germs Spread

Germs are spread when we cough or sneeze without covering our mouth and nose.



When you do not cover your mouth or nose when you sneeze or cough, other people can get very sick!



# In the Community

When you go into the community, you may see people wearing masks.



**Note to Caregiver:** Explain that in the community people may choose to wear a mask. People around the individual wearing masks are protecting the individual from getting sick. Follow recommendations in the local community settings as well as CDC current guidelines regarding mask wearing.



# Where to Wear a Mask

You may choose to wear a mask in community settings. You may be asked to wear a mask in hospital settings. Wear a mask that best fits your face, is comfortable, and provides the best protection.



**Note to Caregiver:** It is important to determine mask wearing guidelines in the local community settings, as well as in healthcare facilities. This can be done by calling ahead to the place where the individual will be going.

# How to Wear a Mask

Before putting on your mask, clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer. Try to avoid touching your mask once it is in place on your face.

Your mask should fit snugly on your face and cover your nose and mouth.



# Wearing a Mask

Wearing a mask can sometimes feel uncomfortable. Tell [\(Caregiver's name\)](#) if the mask does not fit right on your face.

There are many different types of masks. Not everyone will be wearing the same type of mask you wear.



**Note to Caregiver:** Explain to the individual that not everyone will have the same mask.

# Taking Off Your Mask

You may take off your mask when you get home.

Try to touch only the sides of the mask. Do your best not to touch the part that covers your nose and mouth.



**Note to Caregiver:** Practice proper method for putting on and removing the mask.



# Where to Put Used Masks

Put a cloth mask in the washer or in a proper storage place until it can be washed. Put a paper mask in the garbage can. Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.

**It is important not to leave the used mask on a clean surface and to wash cloth masks before wearing it again.**



**Note to Caregiver:** Instruct the individual about where to put masks upon returning home, according to your agency's procedures.

# Great Job! I Know You Can Do It!

When you are away from home, you may choose to wear a mask. In some settings you may be asked to wear a mask. Remember your mask helps protect people around you from getting sick and stops germs from spreading.



## References

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (CDC). (2022, January 31). Important Steps to Choosing a Mask. Retrieved on August 9, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/communication/print-resources/Important-Steps-to-Choosing-Mask.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2023, May 11). *Use and Care of Masks*. Retrieved August 9, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html#:~:text=CDC%20recommends%20universal%20indoor%20masking,layered%20prevention%20strategies%20in%20place>



For additional information regarding this guide or any of our physical or behavioral health trainings, contact:

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