



Using Visual Supports with Individuals with ASD Discussion Questions

1. What are visual supports?

Answer: Visual supports refer to a picture, graphic representation, or word used to cue or prompt an individual to do something he or she needs to do. They are a tool that enables an individual to keep track of the day's events and activities and at the same time help him or her develop an understanding of time frame and appreciation of environmental sequences. (Diane Twachtman-Cullen, 1995.)

2. What are some things that can be considered as visual supports?

Answer: Visual supports can include pictures, written words, gestures, schedules, scripts, maps, labels, timelines, objects within the environment, arrangement of furniture and visual boundaries.

3. What are some examples of visual supports we all use in our everyday lives?

Answer: Some visual supports that we commonly use in our everyday lives include calendars, road signs, signs on restrooms in public places, room and floor directories in buildings, shopping lists, house numbers, street signs.

4. Why are using visual supports a valuable strategy for teaching individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD)?

Answer: Research and experience have shown that many people with ASD demonstrate a strength in visual learning. Visual supports make information available for as long as we need it, whereas, telling someone something makes that information available only for a moment.

5. What benefit can the use of visual supports have with individuals with ASD?

Answer: The use of visual supports can: help individuals with ASD complete more tasks by themselves, learn more rapidly, demonstrate decreased levels of frustration, anxiety, and aggression, adjust more readily to changes in their environment.

6. Where should visual supports be used?

Answer: Visual supports can be used anywhere including in the home, school, at work and in the community.



7. How do you know when a visual support might be appropriate?

Answer: When you find yourself saying the same thing over and over to an individual and when an individual asks the same question over and over. These can be good indications that making the information visual, so the individual can hold it and see it whenever he or she needs it to help guide their understanding of what is expected.

8. Name three points that are important to remember about using visual supports effectively.

Possible answers:

- a. Individuals need to be taught to use the visual supports in their environment
- b. Only by using visual supports will individuals attach meaning to them
- c. Results may not be immediate
- d. Visual supports should be age appropriate
- e. The size and portability of the visual support is important to consider
- f. To help teach the meaning and use of the visual support, pair its use with spoken language, using key words and phrases that match the object, picture or action
- g. The more stressful the situation, the greater the need for visual supports
- h. Visual support provide a means of communication and give a sense of order and control for individuals with ASD

9. If your child uses visual supports, discuss how and when you began incorporating visual supports.

Answers will vary.

10. Discuss how your child currently uses visual supports within their various environments (ex. Home, school or community).

Answers will vary.

11. How do these visual supports benefit your child and your family as a whole?

Answers will vary.