

Stress Reduction Plan

Area of concern	Consider including the following in the daily routine of the child
Difficulty in communicating needs and feelings	
1. Can the child convey needs and anything upsetting him/her?	If not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organise use of appropriate means of communication, such as using gestures/signs or pictures. - Help the child learn to use these means to express needs and feelings. - Teach the child a way of asking for help and make sure that all around the child understand that method -practise it.
2. Does the child understand what others say to him/her?	If not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use gestures and expressions to help the child understand. - Keep your language quite simple. - Use short sentences and divide an instruction in small chunks. - Use signs/gestures and/or pictures.
Sensory difficulties	
Does the child become upset or anxious due to noise, light, touch or crowd?	If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Turn off or cover fluorescent lights when possible - Minimise noise by speaking in a softer voice, turning down the volume for the radio or TV. - Avoid using loud noises, such as shouting, clapping or whistling, to get the child's attention. - If the noise cannot be reduced, consider using earmuffs or headphones to reduce the sound perceived by the child. - Give the child experience of handling and playing with different textures, for example, mixing dough, making sandcastles, counting beans or hand-painting to get used to multiple simultaneous sensations
Fears and anxieties	
Does the child become angry and upset by new things, situations, or people?	If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gradually supported exposure and preparation is the key to reducing the impact of the child's fears and anxieties, for example, in a safe environment, when the child is with the mother or a known carer, first using a picture of the fear generating situation and talking about it. - Introducing the child to the new place, one step at a time, for example, first showing the picture of the place, then just going to see the outside of the area and then going in briefly may help the child overcome the fear. - First showing the child the fear inducing things from a distance and then supporting the child by reassuring. - Using something to distract the child in such situations may help; the distractor must be something that the child likes, like a squeeze ball or a picture book or a toy that the child likes. - Giving child some time and space to get over the stress.
Making change tolerable by increasing predictability	
Does the child get upset or anxious by	If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare your child for any change in the situation by using pictures in a sequence to show the child what to expect

change of situation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating routines so that the situations become predictable for the child - Explaining to the child what is going to happen next or after some time. Using activities such as counting to five or clapping hands to indicate change and practising these activities.
Attention and activity level	
Does the child find it hard to pay attention? Is the child overactive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do regular and varied fun physical activities with the child, such as running, jumping, moving stuff, lifting weight, and playing on swings. - For a child who dislikes physical activities, starting with a brief fun routine of a chasing or ball game, and gradually increasing the time, may help. - For a child who finds it difficult to sit still, start with doing an activity that the child likes initially for a brief period, such as looking at a picture book, keeping the general tone and environment calm. Gradually increase the time; reward and praise the child for every increase of a minute.
General calming measures	
General stress-reducing measure for all children with autism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help the child learn to relax by practising calming routines, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Slowly counting to 10 o Taking five long breaths o Listening to music o Taking short breaks from activities o Lying down and relaxing the whole body - Reduce the impact of stress on the child by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Getting the child to do regular physical exercise for at least 30 minutes a day o Making a calming sleeping routine: avoiding exciting activities before bedtime, avoiding mobiles/TV before falling asleep, reading a book or listening to some calming music