



Hospital Emergency Staff

Hospital emergency staff deals directly with the individual in crisis. This personal interaction makes it essential that these doctors, nurses and hospital staff have the proper knowledge about autism spectrum disorders and are trained to deal with these situations effectively. Everyone from the intake coordinator to the doctors treating the patient will have an impact on the crisis at hand, making their skills critical to the successful and safe resolution of the medical situation. Since each person on a hospital staff is trained to respond to an emergency in a certain way, the additional knowledge about autism spectrum disorders will help them to adjust their responses to best treat the individual at hand.

Quick Facts for Hospital Emergency Staff

- During instances of heightened anxiety or when they do not know what is expected of them, individuals with ASD may also lose some of their abilities more readily. Providing reassurance will assist in alleviating the individual's anxiety and discomfort; however, the characteristics of autism may pose challenges to providing medical care.
- Medical professionals should be aware that most individuals on the autism spectrum have sensory issues that could affect their ability to be treated.
- Many individuals with autism also have either a hyper or hypo tolerance of pain and may not feel typical sensations to heat or cold.
- When providing emergency services to individuals with ASD it is important to establish what is typical behavior and communication for the individual. This is vital and will assist you in monitoring levels of anxiety or stress.
- If there is a need to move or transport persons with ASD , explain what will be happening and use gestures so individuals can follow where they will need to go.
- Presume the person's competence. If they cannot speak, this does not mean they will not understand you and comprehend what you say. Adjust your language level as necessary. If unable to speak, make sure individuals have a method of communication familiar to them, such as a communication device, paper and pen, picture symbols, etc.

Autism Society of America, *Safe and Sound* (2007): www.autism-society.org

Resources for Hospital Emergency Room Staff

Autism Alliance for Local Emergency Responder Training - www.AutismAlert.org

Autism Spectrum Disorders from A to Z - www.asdatoz.com

Autism Risk and Safety Management - www.autismriskmanagement.com

Autism Society of America - [Information for Paramedics and Emergency Room Staff](#) (PDF)
[Disaster Prep](#) - (PDF)

