



# FIRST RESPONDERS SHOULD KNOW



Individuals diagnosed with an Intellectual/Developmental Disability (IDD) or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and I might display unique behaviors in these areas:

**COMMUNICATIONS-** Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication, Expressing Themselves, Understanding Commands & Orders, Holding Eye Contact, Understanding Gestures, tend to interpret statements literally, speak too Loud or Soft or Too Afraid to Talk/Blank Stare.

**SOCIAL SKILLS-** Interacting with the First Responder, Responding to Instructions, Identifying Non-Verbal Cues.

**BEHAVIOR-** Resisting change, Focusing on Special Interest, Repeating Words, Repeating Noises, Repeating Movements, or Could be attracted to shiny things like guns.

**SENSORY SENSITIVITY-** Handling Sensations, Sensitivity to Lights, Sensitivity to Smells, Sensitivity to Touch, Might Naturally Pull Away if Touched, Yelling could cause Panic.

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**FOR BEST RESULTS, COMMUNICATION AND TO HELP THIS INDIVIDUAL MAKE IT HOME SAFE, CONTACT ONE OF THE EMERGENCY CONTACTS.**

## **TIPS & BEST PRACTICES**

- 1. CLEARLY IDENTIFY YOURSELF AS AN OFFICER/FIRST RESPONDER AND BE PATIENT.**
- 2. KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE AND TRY NOT TO CROWD THE INDIVIDUAL.**
- 3. AVOID TOUCHING AND RESTRAINING AS PULLING AWAY COULD BE A RESPONSE.**
- 4. SPEAK IN A NORMAL, CALM AND NON-CONFRONTATIONAL TONE AND MANNER.**
- 5. TALK TO HIM/HER IN A CLEAR, SIMPLE, AND IN “STEP BY STEP” LANGUAGE.**
- 6. IF THEY ARE HOLDING AN ITEM THAT SEEMS TO KEEP THEM CALM ALLOW IT.**
- 7. IN A “MELTDOWN” THE BRAIN ENTERS THE PRIMAL RESPONSES OF FIGHT OR FLIGHT.**
- 8. DURING MELTDOWN AVOID MAKING DEMANDS, DON'T YELL OR GET TOO CLOSE.**
- 9. EVALUATE THE SITUATION, BE READY TO RETREAT, IF NECESSARY TO DE-ESCALATE.**
- 10. FIND OUT WHAT TRIGGERS HIM/HER FROM CAREGIVERS AND REMOVE STIMULUS.**
- 11. EXPLAIN WHY YOU ARE SEARCHING AND EXPLAIN PAT FRISK AS YOU PERFORM IT.**
- 12. A SIMPLE ORDER AS “PUT YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK” COULD CONFUSE THEM.**

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING  
BOTH OF US GET HOME SAFE!**



# SAFETY DISCLOSURE CARD

KEEP THIS CARD IN YOUR CAR



**To: A Law Enforcement Officer or other First Responder  
I have been diagnosed with an Intellectual/Developmental  
Disability (IDD).**

**MY NAME IS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **D.O.B.** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Some behaviors with my social/communication disability may be mistaken for a suspicious or an inappropriate act. This behavior is NOT a refusal to cooperate or resisting. When nervous, I might avoid eye contact. When I'm touched or restrained it could cause a meltdown. I've been trained by IDD SAFE to remain CALM, COMMUNICATE and COMPLY. If I have challenges, please read entire card to help me through this contact.**

**In case of emergency, or to assist us in communicating and resolving this situation, please contact one of my Emergency Contacts listed below:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT I NEED TO REMEMBER

**DURING A TRAFFIC STOP I MUST: 1. Pull car to right curb when safe. 2. Place gear in PARK 3. Roll down window(s) 4. Turn off radio 5. Put hands on steering wheel 6. Be polite 7. Let officer know "I have a safety card" 8. Answer all questions 9. Wait for Officer's instructions 10. Ask permission to get Driver's License before you move 11. Slowly move to retrieve License and Safety Card 12. Place hands back on steering wheel 13. Comply with ALL Orders.**

- 1. DISCLOSURE IS THE FIRST STEP FOR ME TO MAKE IT HOME SAFE**
- 2. DON'T BE AFRAID – THIS PERSON IS HERE TO HELP ME**
- 3. STAY CALM – BEING NERVOUS AND ANXIOUS IS NATURAL**
- 4. COMMUNICATE HOW I FEEL AND WHAT I MIGHT NEED**
- 5. COMPLY WITH COMMANDS AND ORDERS – ANSWER QUESTIONS**
- 6. LET FIRST RESPONDER KNOW IF I HAVE THINGS THAT TRIGGER ME**
- 7. ASK FOR THEM TO TALK SLOW AND REPEAT IF I'M CONFUSED**
- 8. LET THEM KNOW IF LOUD NOISES OR LIGHTS BOTHER ME**
- 9. DO NOT PULL ANYTHING OUT OF MY POCKETS AND EMPTY HANDS**
- 10. LET THEM KNOW I MAY SHUT DOWN OR ESCALATE IF I AM STRESSED**
- 11. LET THEM KNOW IF I DON'T LIKE BEING TOUCHED OR RESTRAINED**
- 12. EXPLAIN MY SELF-STIMULATORY BEHAVIOR OR COMFORT ITEMS**