

# AUTISM INFO SHEET

## For First Responders



### SIGNS

**a child or person with Autism may demonstrate.**

- May not speak or respond to their name.
- Avoid eye contact.
- Hold ears, rock back and forth, spin in circles, flap arms and hands.
- Yell, scream and display repetitive behaviors.
- Act much younger than their legal age.
- May not respond when asked questions or only answer to yes or no questions.
- Not aware of dangerous situations.
- Exhibit self-harm.
- May not express pain.

### TRIGGERS

**are usually caused by communication obstacles or sensory overload.**

- Loud noises, bright lights.
- Smells, textures.
- Someone in their personal space.
- Too many people or crowds.
- Some children are afraid of animals such as a police dog.
- Not understanding what is being asked or how to communicate their needs which can result in a meltdown.

### TIPS

**to remember when approaching a child or person with Autism.**

- Maintain a calm voice.
- Be mindful of their personal space.
- Speak in short sentences, do not use a lot of words. Yes/no questions.
- Offer a safe space and/or soothing tools/headphones, fidget/sensory toys.
- Be patient, give them time to de-escalate.
- Avoid touching or entering their personal space unless absolutely necessary.
- In the event the situation calls for you to enter their personal space, talk them through each step that is going to happen and show any equipment that is going to be used. If possible, demonstrate first to avoid further anxiety.

