



Tips on Becoming an *Autism Friendly Business*

People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) experience challenges with communications, social skills and sensory information. With appropriate accommodations, many people with ASD can manage public settings well.

As a member of the business community, it is simple to become a sensory friendly space:

1. Provide a quiet area as a place for a person to compose themselves if they are becoming too overwhelmed in a public area.
2. Once a week, hold a “sensory friendly” shopping hour or morning. Turn the loudspeaker down or off and do not play any background music. Try dimming the lights a bit to create a less stimulating environment.
3. Develop a priority queueing system. With this system, families who are impacted by autism could register with the store and access a special check-out line to reduce waiting. This will also reduce anxiety and sensory overload, allowing the family to have a more successful shopping experience.
4. Support staff awareness. Host an autism awareness presentation. Increased awareness by your staff helps create a more inclusive environment for your clientele.
5. Prepare some online visuals – pictures of different areas in your premises – that families could use to create visual supports or social narratives for their family member with ASD. This helps the family and the individual prepare for a visit to your establishment and to be more comfortable when they arrive.
6. Post Autism Nova Scotia’s Autism Awareness & Acceptance Month poster in your window. Use hashtags #ShineBlueNS & #WearRedNS throughout the month of April.

For more info contact

Vicki Harvey - Community Outreach Coordinator

902.446.4995 x 26 | vharvey@autismns.ca

