

# Being Safe in the Community: How to Prepare for Independence & Community Participation

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# Introductions



**Community Resource/Crime  
Prevention Specialist  
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Darrell Prewitt**



**Regional Autism Advisory  
Council Coordinator  
  
Anne Tapia, MSW, LISW**

# Regional Autism Advisory Council of Southwest Ohio

## Know More. Grow More. Together

### Member Organizations

Collaboration of public and private sector

### Partners

Linking local, state, and national resources



### Task Force Facilitation

Across the region  
Across the spectrum  
Across the lifespan

### Training

Identifying gaps  
Building capacity  
Adaptable to audience



# Objectives

Connect

1

Recognize the importance of being engaged with first responders/law enforcement, direct support staff and school personnel in proactive safety planning so that youth and adults with IDD can successfully navigate their communities

Engage

2

Learn ideas on how to engage local first responders/law enforcement to ensure safety in crisis situations

Plan

3

Grain proactive strategies to support individuals with disabilities to stay safe in the community.



A male athlete is captured in a starting crouch on a red running track. He is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, black shorts with a white pattern, white socks with a black pattern, and white sneakers. He is looking forward with a focused expression. The background shows a green field and a clear sky. A semi-transparent dark grey banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text 'CONNECT | Getting started' in white.

# CONNECT | Getting started

# Identifying Yourself



## Ohio House Bill 115

- Ohio Communication Disability Law
- Voluntary system
- Verification

Form: <https://ood.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ood/laws-rules-and-policies/forms/verification-form>

## Smart 911

- National Program purchased by department
- Voluntary system
- [www.smart911.com](http://www.smart911.com)

## Self-Disclosure Cards



# Smart911.com

## How It Works



**Sign Up for Smart911**  
and create a secure Safety  
Profile for your household.



**If you ever call 9-1-1,**  
the call taker can see the  
emergency information you  
want them to see.



**Emergency Responders**  
can then use this key  
information to help you  
faster and more efficiently.

## Security and Privacy



**You Decide What to Include**  
Provide as much or as little information  
as you want. Smart911 only asks for  
information that is relevant to aid  
emergency response.



**Only Seen If You Call 9-1-1**  
Your information is only available to  
9-1-1 call takers and first responders  
if you have an emergency.



**Industry Leading Security**  
Your information is housed in top-tier  
secure facilities complete with 24/7  
physical security, video surveillance,  
and alarms. We utilize the same SSL  
certificate authority and encryption  
technologies used by leading  
financial institutions.



## Keep Your Loved Ones Safe.

Smart911 is the only way to provide  
lifesaving information directly to 9-1-1  
and first responders in an emergency.

Smart911 is free, private, secure, and  
protects **over 31 million people** nationwide.

## As Seen On...



**Smart911.com™**

Because every second counts. Sign up today.



**Smart911.com™**

Because every second counts. Sign up today.

# Key Points for Smart 911

- One account covers the entire household.
- Provides critical information to 911 dispatch and First Responders.
- Smart911 is a national service.
- Your Safety Profile travels with you and is visible to any participating 911 call center nationwide.
- When you call 911, your Safety Profile displays on the 911 screen.
- 911 call takers have access to all the information in your Safety Profile like, address, home information, medical information and medical conditions, descriptions of pets and vehicles, and emergency contacts.
- You can provide as much or as little information as you wish.
- Your information is only available to 911 call takers if you call 911.
- Smart911 has the same Secure Sockets Layers (SSL) Certificate authority and encryption technologies used by leading financial institutions so your information is secure.
- Endorsed by thousands of public safety agencies nationwide along with Autism Speaks Chicagoland Chapter.
- Smart911 will not sell your email address or spam you. You and only you are responsible for keeping your account up to date.
- Best of all, Smart911 is a FREE service. Services are paid for by public agencies ensuring free and equal access to all citizens of the community at no cost to them.
- Go to [Smart911.com](https://Smart911.com) Today and create your Safety Profile.

“

Up to 40% of people on the Autism spectrum do not speak. This is important information for emergency responders to know and Smart911 makes it possible.

Empty text

”

**Scott Schuelke**

The Autism Alliance of Michigan



# Key Points for Text 911

- First check with your local Public safety Services to see if “TEXT 911” is available in your area.
- If you have an emergency, remember, an actual voice call is always preferred. But you may not be able to make an actual phone call or it may not be safe to make a phone call.
- Start by composing your message. Keep it brief and to the point. Also avoid using slang, as this puts you at risk of having your message misunderstood.
- Include which service is needed, where you need the service, and why.
- Once you’ve composed your message, type 911, in the address line and send.
- Keep your phone handy and be ready to respond to requests for additional information.
- You CANNOT send photos, video or other media to 911 via text. Only letters and numbers in your message.
- You must have a “Wireless Data Plan”.



# Self-disclosure

Important to TEACH a person how to self-disclose a disability!

## Autism Society

*Helpful hints for interacting with someone who has autism:*

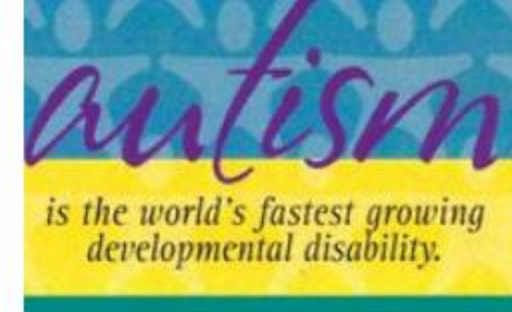
- ✓ Speak slowly and use simple language
- ✓ Use concrete terms
- ✓ Repeat simple questions
- ✓ Allow time for responses
- ✓ Give lots of praise
- ✓ Do not attempt to physically block self-stimulating behavior
- ✓ Remember that each individual with autism is unique and may act differently than others



## How to HELP me

- ☐ Use **CALMING TECHNIQUES** to help me keep my cool:
  - ✓ Use a **CALM** voice.
  - ✓ **AVOID** physical contact if possible to reduce flight or fight response.
  - ✓ **REDUCE INPUT** like noise and lights to calm my senses.
  - ✓ **ALLOW** me to calm myself with movement like rocking or flapping.
- ☐ Be **CLEAR**. Use simple words. Give one instruction at a time.
- ☐ **WAIT**, be patient. I need time to think, and respond.
- ☐ **CALL** someone who knows me and ask them to help.

**WARNING: DANGER of SUFFOCATION.**  
**DO NOT** hold in face-down position.



*People on the autism spectrum may:*

- ✓ not understand what you say
- ✓ appear deaf
- ✓ be unable to speak or speak with difficulty
- ✓ engage in repetitive behaviors
- ✓ act upset for no apparent reason
- ✓ appear insensitive to pain
- ✓ appear anxious or nervous
- ✓ dart away from you unexpectedly
- ✓ engage in self-stimulating behaviors (i.e., hand flapping or rocking)

*For law enforcement or medical emergency personnel: This individual may not understand the law, know right from wrong, or know the consequences of his or her actions.*



## I HAVE AUTISM

Autism affects my



- Communication-** Speaking, expressing myself, understanding you, using eye contact/gestures.
- Social Skills-** Interacting with you, responding to instructions or cues.
- Behavior-** Resisting change, focusing on special interests, repeating words, noises, or movement.
- Sensory Sensitivity-** Handling sensations like sounds, lights, smells and touch.
- I may shut down or escalate when stressed.

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

I need help in an emergency or criminal situation.

Please get in touch with my Emergency Contact right away:

Name 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
I live at \_\_\_\_\_



## Resources: Community and First Responders

- Window Clings
- Temporary Tattoos
- Help Belts
- ID Cards
- GPS
- Medical IDs
- Alarms



# AUTISM:

## MAY NOT RESPOND TO

### SAFETY ALERT i have autism.

my name:

call:

*Back*

Autism is a medical condition that:

- impairs a person's ability to understand danger or consequence
- impairs a person's ability to speak, communicate, answer questions
- impairs a person's ability to socialize, understand social cues, make friends
- affects brain function, motor skills, eye contact
- affects a person's behavior
- varies from mild to severe (no two people with autism are alike)

Learn more at [NationalAutismAssociation.org](http://NationalAutismAssociation.org)

**N**ATIONAL  
AUTISM  
ASSOCIATION





## ABOUT AUTISM: Tips for First Responders

A Resource Provided by  
the National Autism Association



## Links for safety resources:

1. <http://nationalautismassociation.org/>
2. <https://widgit-health.com/downloads/for-professionals.htm>
3. <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/autism-talk-a-visual-communication-tool/id1249022465?mt=8>



## AUTISM & WANDERING: Tips for Prevention & Response

A Resource Provided by  
the National Autism Association



# Training = Learning



## Listened to the Need

Expertise is relative

"Teaching is useless unless you can learn from your students."

Martin Dansky

## Learned a few lessons

Identified myths and misunderstanding



# Be Proactive

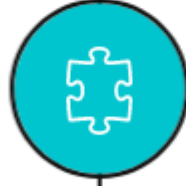
## To Do List



**First responders want to know what to do and who you are**



**Know what to expect when you call 911**



**Have information ready before you are in an emergency**



**Systemic Limitations and expectations**



A person wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt is shown from the chest down. Their hands are clasped together in front of them. They are wearing a purple wristband and a blue beaded bracelet on their left wrist. A black rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the word "Engage" in white serif font.

Engage



## The Introduction

1

Find out the best way to meet

Phone call  
(Virtual) Tour  
House Call

2

Ask About First Responders

Learn about the role  
Learn about the tools

3

Introduce Yourself

Interests  
Communication  
Favorite Places

One Page Summary

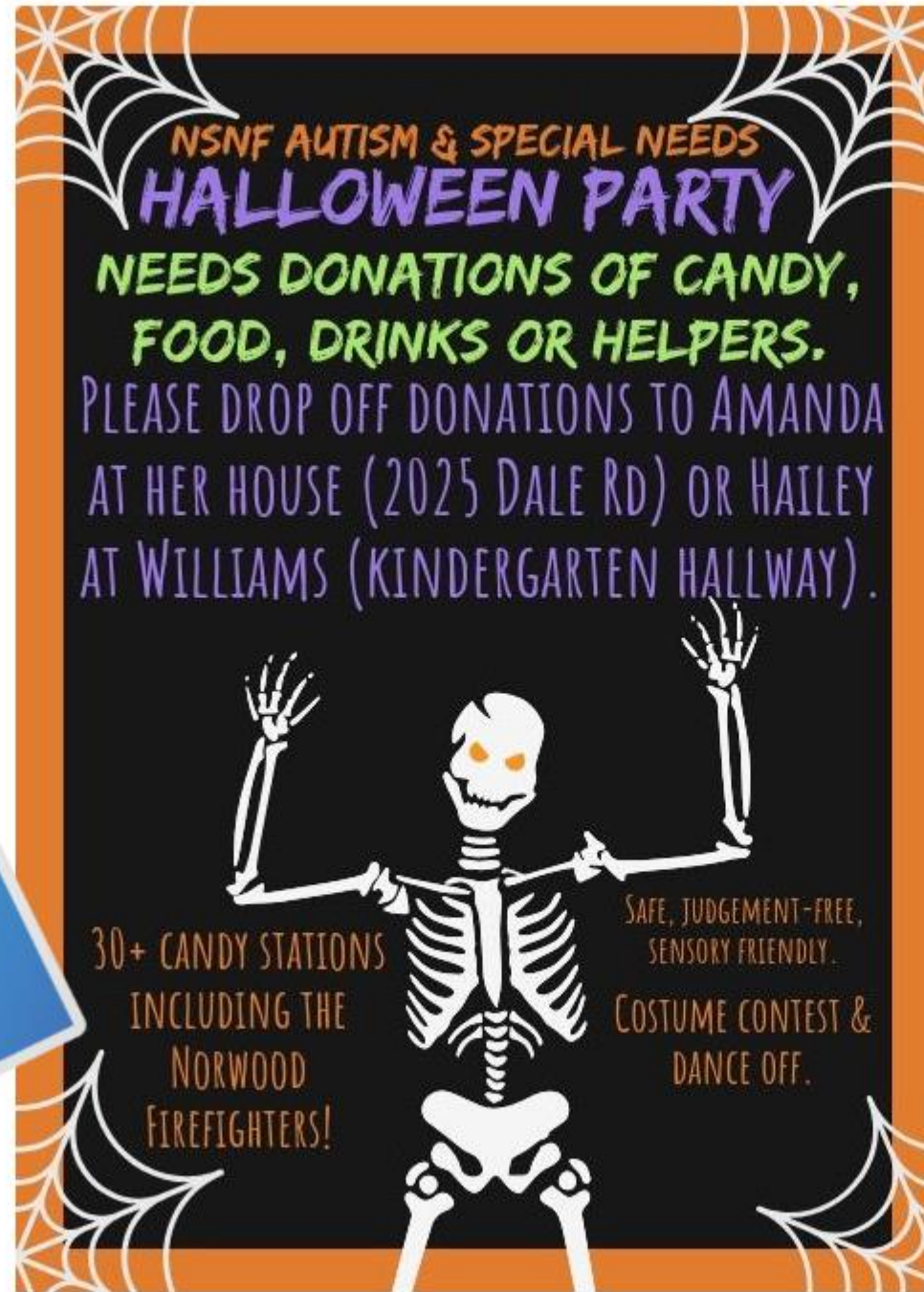
4

Repeat

Find additional opportunities for exposure



# Attend the Events





"I never realized how critical SAFETY is for our kids AT EACH AGE & STAGE. As a mom, I guess I initially considered it like eating or breathing---intangible, something you don't teach. But now I'm all in-----strategies, devices, resources, protocols----it all can be presented to families and MUST BE presented to families."

~Tammi, mother of a 19 year old with autism

# Safety Committee

Gathering resources. Sharing resources. Identifying and filling gaps.



A hub of safety  
resources



## Family members and Professionals

- Initial goal: Identify key safety resources
- Learning community
- Momentum



## Carry it forward

- Identifying mission
- Adding team members
- Surveying the community



## Enhance Safety

- Prioritizing community need
- Identifying resources
- Planning

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# Call to Action for Self-Advocates regarding Abuse



Abuse of People with Disabilities: A Silent Epidemic



Watch later



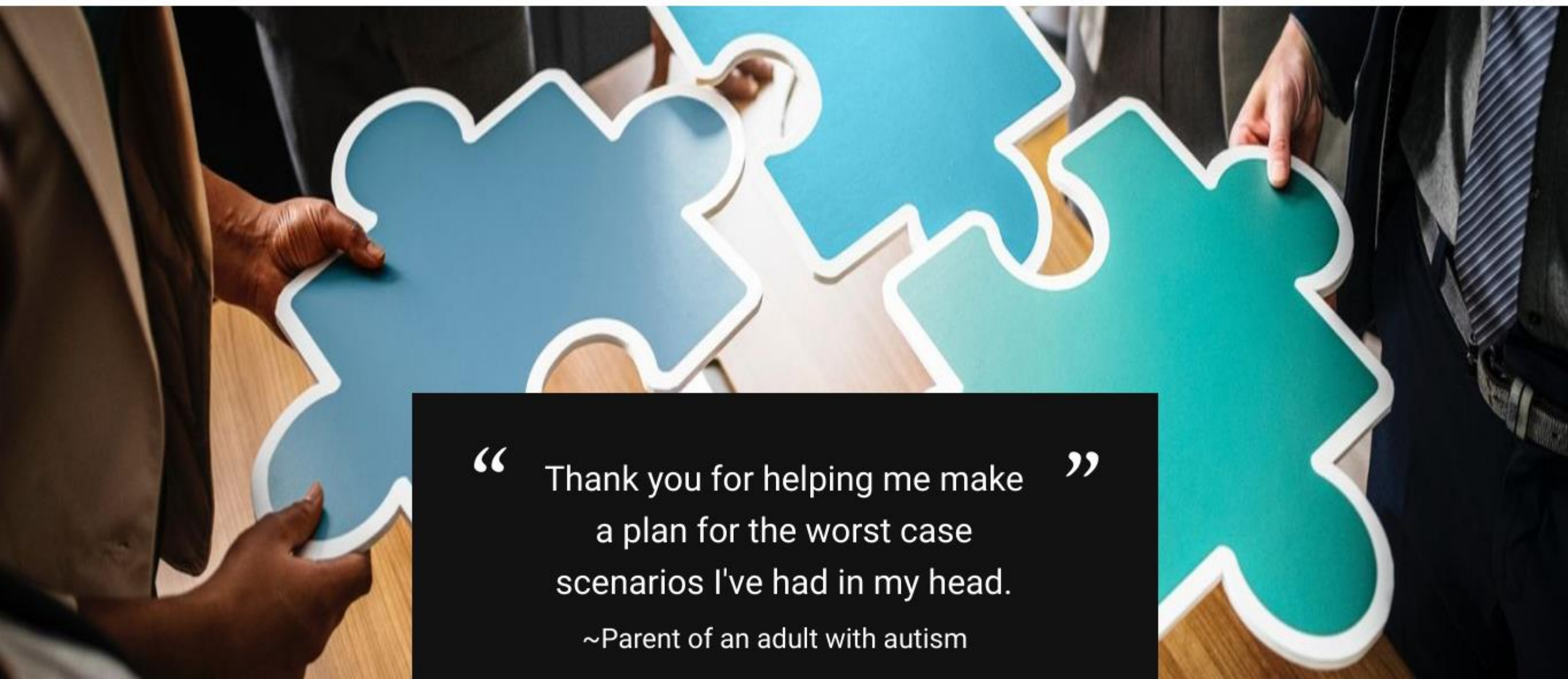
Share



Writing, emailing, educating state legislators

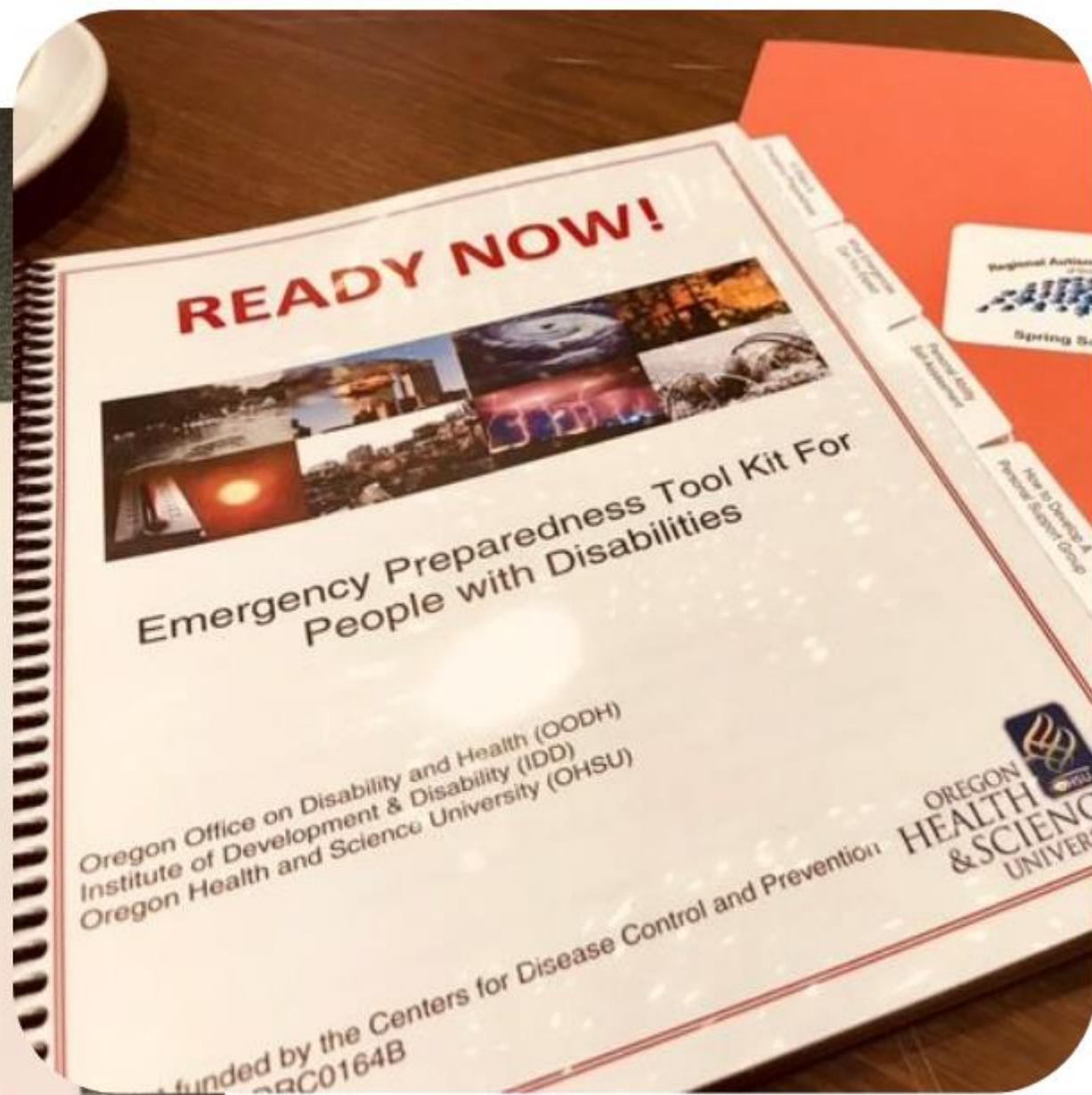
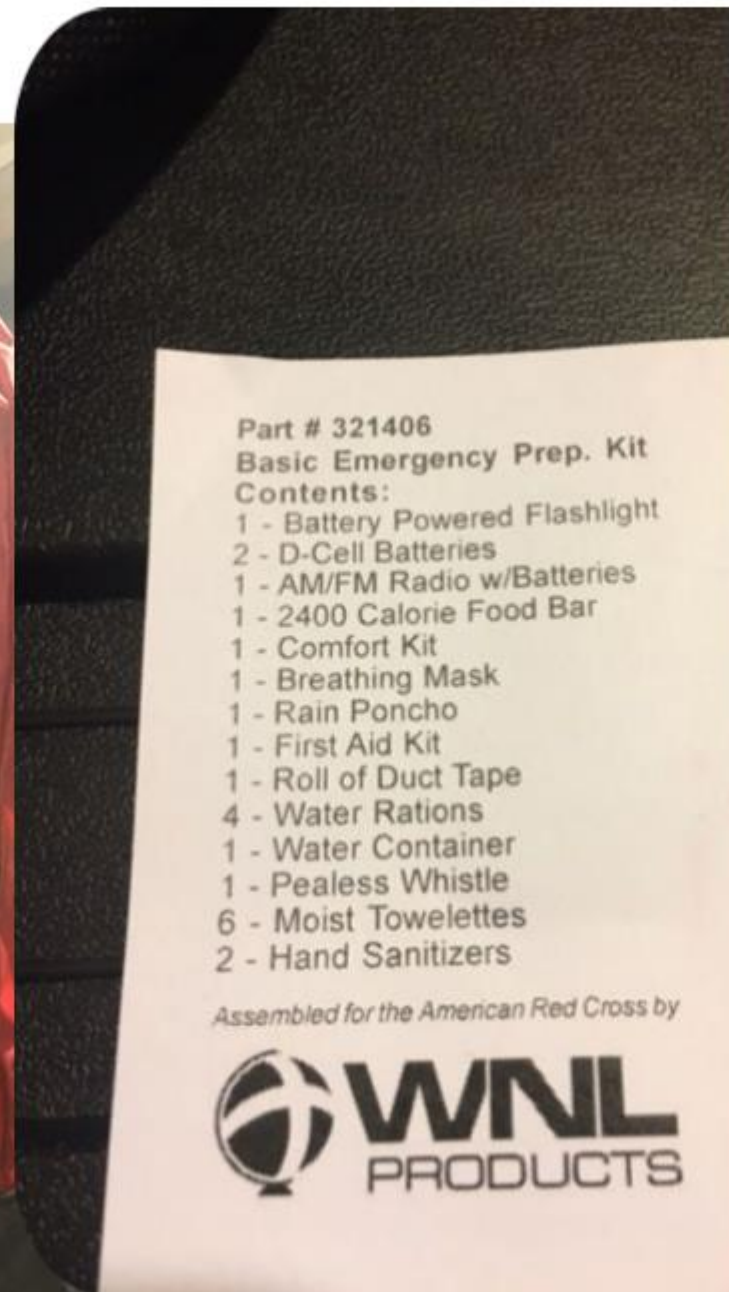
# Plan





“ Thank you for helping me make  
a plan for the worst case  
scenarios I've had in my head.  
~Parent of an adult with autism ”





[ucucedd.org](http://ucucedd.org)



Keep it simple.



# Crime Prevention

Be Proactive



**Personal Safety**



**ATM Safety**



**Home Security**



# Personal Safety

- Wherever you are, stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.
- Send the message that you are calm and confident.
- Be realistic about your limitations. Avoid places or situations that put you at risk. Try to go out with a friend or in a group.
- Always carry medical information in case of an emergency. This should include your name, address, a contact person (close friend or relative), your doctors name and phone number, and any current medications. Remember this document will need to speak for you if you are unable to.
- If something or someone makes you feel uneasy, get away from that situation as quickly as possible. Try to get to an area where several other persons are present or a store associate if you are in or near a business establishment.
- Stick to well lit, well traveled streets and areas. Avoid wooded areas and alleyways.
- Carry your purse close to your body. Put a wallet in an inside pocket of a coat or your front pants pocket, not your back pocket.
- Have your car or house key in hand and ready before you get to the door.
- Avoid parking in isolated areas. Stay alert in parking lots and garages.
- While driving keep your doors locked.
- Do not pick up hitchhikers or strangers.



# ATM Safety

- Try to avoid using an ATM after dark. Only use an ATM that is in a well lit area and that is visible to others.
- Have your card ready and be observant of the surroundings.
- Do not approach the machine if you are uneasy about other people that are standing around nearby.
- If you are on foot, stand close to the machine and use your hand to shield others from seeing your password or code.
- Take your transaction receipts with you. Do not discard them on the ground.
- If you withdraw cash put it away immediately. Do not stand there and count it.
- Never accept help from strangers at an ATM.
- Never tell your access code to others you do not trust.
- If you lose your ATM card, notify your bank Immediately.



# Home Safety

- Almost half of all residential burglaries are committed by thieves simply entering through unlocked doors or windows.
- Keep your doors and windows locked anytime you are away from home.
- Make sure entry doors have good locks. Deadbolts are best.
- The most secure doors have no glass windows in them. The next best would be doors with only small windows at the top.
- Instead of hiding keys on the outside of the house, give an extra key to someone you trust; a neighbor or family member.
- All outside entry doors should be of solid wood or metal.
- Having a peephole installed in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door is a good idea.
- Make sure all points of entry are well lit. Keep lights on all night. Thieves hate bright lights.
- Keep your yard cleaned up. Make sure shrubbery doesn't hide doors or windows that would hide someone making entry to your house.
- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the roadway so that emergency personnel who may respond can easily find your home.
- If you will be away from home for several days make sure to stop your mail and/or newspaper. Mail and newspapers piling up is a sure sign you are away. Also ask a trusted neighbor to keep an eye on things for you.







# What Are Your Next Steps?

Safety is a universal language.



**Goal 1**



**Goal 2**



**Goal 3**



Contact  
Us



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# Thank You!

## QUESTIONS?

What else are you wondering?