



## Rehearsal Guide

# Blood Work

*To prepare people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) to have blood work successfully completed.*

## Introduction for Caregivers

A rehearsal guide contains realistic pictures, concrete ideas, and clear, brief instructions for guiding a person through what can be expected in a specific situation. It includes helpful suggestions for caregivers to follow to make the experience meaningful for the person and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. This approach is beneficial when supporting people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) who are anxious about situations such as doctors' appointments, hospitalizations, and medical testing.

A rehearsal guide provides opportunities for the caregiver to assist the person to learn about a specific situation. It contains information on what is needed and why and explains exactly what can be expected. Such a guide is most effective when it is person-centered and used in conjunction with discussion to allow exploration of specific areas of concern. It can be a powerful tool when used as intended.

The expected result is that the person will then experience the situation in a way that supports health and well-being by being prepared and knowing what to expect. The guide can be used at all stages of the situation to facilitate a positive end result.

Thank you for taking the time to use this tool to work with self-advocates to improve their health out-comes.

## How to Use This Rehearsal Guide

For best results, begin to review this rehearsal guide with the person prior to the day of the appointment. Sometimes it will help to review this material with an individual several days or weeks before an appointment; other times, it may be better to wait to review this material until just before the procedure is to take place, perhaps the day before or the morning of the procedure. Together with the individual, determine which will best suit the individual's needs and abilities in understanding the information provided; however, it is important not to wait until 5 minutes before a procedure to introduce this guide to an individual. Give the individual enough time in advance to become familiar with the procedure based on the pictures and information contained on each page and with the individual's abilities in mind.

It is best to review this guide slowly and to focus on one idea/page at a time, allowing the person to talk and/or ask questions after each idea/page is presented. A caregiver may want to share personal experiences related to having this procedure done but be sure to do so in a positive manner, depicting a positive outcome.

## For Best Practices

- ✓ Allot time to review this material when the individual is alert and interested in doing so.
- ✓ Ensure that the setting is free from distraction. Based on the individual's attention span, it may be best to review one page at a time, rather than reviewing an entire guide in one sitting.
- ✓ Explain each picture and practice the suggested exercises with the individual, such as deep breathing, as they appear throughout the guide.
- ✓ On the day of the procedure, take this guide along to continue rehearsing the various steps involved in the procedure. Review each page step-by-step.
- ✓ Remain positive, calm, and upbeat.
- ✓ Remember to offer positive reinforcement throughout the procedure. If the procedure is not able to be completed, focus on positive aspects. If the individual seems upset, talk about it later when they are calm to find out how they felt and what could be changed or improved to have a better outcome the next time.

# Introducing the Process

*(Name of individual)*, you are going to have blood work done on *(insert date here)*. This test will take place at *(insert name of location)*.

This blood work helps the doctor know how to take care of you.

*(Name of caregiver)* will go with you and stay with you while you have a small amount of your blood collected.



**Note to Caregiver:** You may want to discuss your own personal experiences regarding having blood work done. If so, keep the discussion upbeat and positive. If the individual needs to fast, let them know in advance.

## In the Waiting Area

When you first get to your appointment, you will have to wait until someone calls your name to have your blood work done.

*(Name of caregiver)* will stay in the waiting area with you.

Would you like to take a favorite book along to read or some of your favorite music to listen to on your headset while you wait?



# When Your Name is Called

When your name is called, you will be taken to a room with a special chair with an armrest. There will be a medical staff called a technician or lab technician there who will help you. He or she will take the samples of your blood when you are ready.



# Tools For Blood Work

Here are the tools that will be used to get blood from your arm.

There is a tube or tubes to collect the blood.

The stretchy band (tourniquet) is shown here in blue. It is similar to a large flat rubber band. This band will be wrapped around your upper arm. This helps the technician see your veins.

A small needle will be used to get the blood from your arm.



# Blood Work Preparation

The technician will put the stretchy band (tourniquet) on your upper arm. It will feel a little tight and may pinch you but it will only be on your arm for a minute or two.





# Blood Work Preparation

The technician will clean the inner part of your elbow with an alcohol pad. This may feel a little cold, but it will not hurt. They will hold your arm steady and then gently put the needle in your arm to collect the blood. You may feel a little pinch, but it will be only for a few seconds.



# Breathing Exercise

You may want to breathe slowly and deeply to help you hold very still.

Let's practice breathing slowly and deeply together.



**Note to Caregiver:** Practice breathing slowly and deeply with the individual. Encourage the individual to breathe slowly and deeply with you when the time comes during the blood work. It may also be helpful to show the person how to look away from the procedure, by looking up or closing their eyes. Assure the individual you will remind them to look away.

## You're Doing Great So Far

When there is enough blood in the tube or tubes, the technician will take off the stretchy band and then take the needle out of your arm.



The technician will then put a small bandage on your arm.



# Great Job! I Know You Can Do It!

See? It's that simple!

I know you can do it! You always do a great job!



**Note to Caregiver:** Offer the individual encouragement and positive reinforcement as you continue to explain the following steps.

## Great Job!

As long as you're feeling okay, you will be able to leave. Make sure to tell the technician or *(Name of caregiver)* if you are feeling dizzy. Some people sit for a few minutes before getting up to leave.



**Note to Caregiver:** Sometimes people get dizzy after blood draws. Be observant for signs of dizziness and have the person sit down if unsteady.

This is a good place to see how well the person understood what was presented. Ask some very brief questions such as, "Do you know what will happen when you have blood work done?"

Revisit the story as often as needed to ensure the person understands and is prepared when the day of the test arrives.

## Additional Resources

- Medline Plus. How to Prepare Your Child for a Lab Test. (2021, February 25). Retrieved on November 29, 2022, from <https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/how-to-prepare-your-child-for-a-lab-test/>
- The Public Health England Learning Disabilities Observatory (PHELD0). *Blood tests for people with learning disabilities: making reasonable adjustments*. (2017, September). Retrieved on November 29, 2022, from [https://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/Blood\\_tests\\_for\\_people\\_with\\_learning\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/Blood_tests_for_people_with_learning_disabilities.pdf)



For additional information regarding this guide or any of our physical or behavioral health trainings, contact:

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