



Rehearsal Guide

Getting an X-Ray

Preparing people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) to successfully complete an X-ray

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 outcomes.

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 an X-ray.

The doctor ordered this X-ray to see the bone(s) in your

_____.
(arm, leg, foot, hand, etc.)

(Name of caregiver) will take you to your appointment.

This test will take place at *(name of location)*.



Note to Caregiver: Rehearse this by referring to the correct bone which is to be x-rayed.

What Is an X-ray?

An x-ray is a picture taken by a special machine that shows the inside of your body.

Having an x-ray does not hurt at all.



Note to Caregiver: You may ask the person. Do you know what this picture is? This is a picture of a person's foot. You can see the bones of the foot!

Why Am I Getting an X-ray?

Your doctor ordered an x-ray because something is hurting inside of you.

An x-ray can help the doctor to see what is hurting so he or she can help you to start to feel better.



Note to Caregiver: An x-ray itself is painless. However, if the person already has pain or discomfort from a suspected injury, discuss with the doctor the use of pain medication prior to the x-ray. Follow all doctor orders as to how to safely support the affected area prior to the x-ray.

What To Wear

When you get an x-ray, it is best to wear comfortable clothes that are easy to take off and put on.

For the x-ray, you might be asked to change into a patient gown.



Leave Jewelry Safely at Home

Because you can't wear earrings, necklaces, rings, bracelets, or watches during an x-ray, it is best to leave your jewelry at home.

That way you won't accidentally lose anything when you get the x-ray.



In the Waiting Room

When you first get to your appointment, you may have to wait until someone calls your name to have your x-ray.

(Name of caregiver) will stay in the waiting room 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?



The X-ray Machine

This is a picture of what an x-ray machine can look like.

There are different types of x-ray machines.



Someone Will Help You

The person who will be taking the x-ray is called a technician.

The technician will help you get ready to have your x-ray.

(Name of caregiver) will be waiting for you outside of the x-ray room the whole time.



Laying Down for an X-ray



You may need to lay down on a table for your x-ray.

The technician helping you will tell you how to lie down. He or she will move your (leg, arm, foot, ankle, etc.) just the way it needs to be so that the best picture can be taken.

The technician may also use special pillows to help you stay in the right place and not move during the x-ray.

It's important to stay right where the technician tells you and not to move.

Standing Up for an X-ray



You might need to stand up for your x-ray.

The technician helping you will tell you where to stand.

He or she will move your (leg, arm, foot, ankle, etc.) just the way it needs to be so that the best picture can be taken.

It's important to stay right where the technician tells you and not to move.

Breathing Exercise - *as needed*

Sometimes you may need to hold your breath to get the best x-ray picture. The person helping may ask you to hold your breath for just a short time during the x-ray.

Let's practice holding our breath.



Note to Caregiver: Practice holding your breath for a few seconds with the individual.

Time to Take the X-ray

The technician will tell you to hold very still and not to move.

It is important to stand or lie very still to get a good x-ray picture.

The technician will go to a little room to take the x-ray picture. You won't be able to see him or her for a few seconds, but remember, (name of caregiver) will be close by so you can relax and stay still.



If More Pictures Are Needed

Sometimes the doctor will need more than one x-ray picture of what is hurting you.

The technician will tell you if he/she has to take more pictures.

Remember to stay where the technician told you to and to hold very still.

X-rays don't hurt at all, so this will be easy to do!



Great Job! I know You Can Do It!

When the technician is done taking x-rays, he or she will help you up from the table.

(Name of caregiver) will be there to help you get dressed, and then you will be ready to go home.

Great job!

I know you can do this! You always do the best you can!



Note to Caregiver: *This is a good place to assess how well the person understood what was presented. Ask some very brief questions such as, “Do you know what will happen when you go to have this x-ray done?” Revisit the story as often as needed to ensure the person understands and is prepared for the x-ray.*

Resources

- Bay Imaging Consultants Medical Group. (2017, March 17). How To Prepare Your Child For An X-Ray. Retrieved from <https://www.bicrad.com/blog/2017/3/17/how-to-prepare-your-child-for-an-xray>
- Mayo Clinic. (2018, March 28). X-ray. Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/x-ray/about/pac-20395303>



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

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