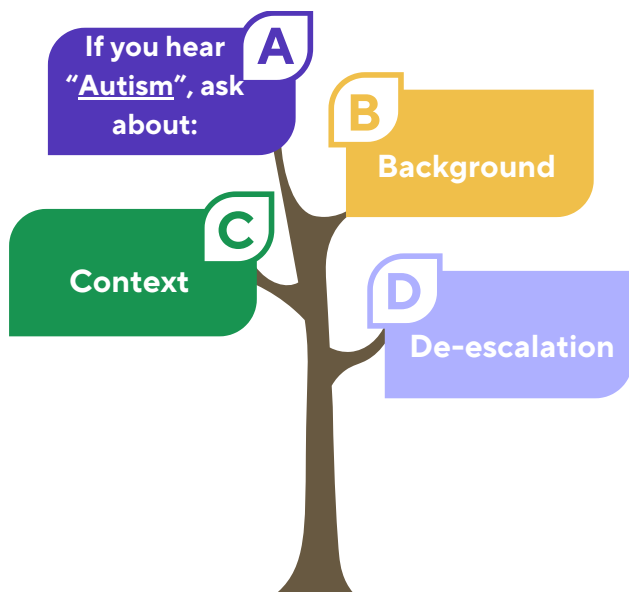


De-Escalation Strategies: For Emergency Response



A = If you hear "Autism", ask about:

B = Background:

Medical Conditions

- Seizures?
- Medications?
- Injuries?

Triggers

- Sensory sensitivities?
- Anxiety?

Communication style

- Speaking person? Echolalia?
- Communication devices?

C = Context:

Location of incident?

- Who was present?
- Is a caregiver available?
- Was it Crowded?

What happened right before?

- Any triggering incidents or sensory experiences?

Preferred interests and/or activities?

- Where would the person go?
- What do they like?

D = De-escalation:

Tips for when taking calls from Autistic people:

- Only ask one question at a time and give extra time for a response
- Narrative responses are not likely, try asking chronological questions and ask follow up as needed
- [If agitated] Utilize the art of distraction – "Hey, why don't you tell me about __ while we wait for help to arrive"?
- Negotiate – "First do this (let the first-responders in), then get to do this (tell me about your favourite video game)"
- Be patient and understand that they are experiencing the world differently than you do



De-Escalation Strategies: Tips for First Responders



No bright or flashing lights or sirens, if possible

- Decrease the number of people in the area
- If possible, put jacket over uniform



Move in slowly, give time and space before entering a situation

- If still upset, give space for 10-20 minutes and then come back and try to establish rapport



Ask who can be contacted for support

- Talk to family / caregivers about triggers



Talk through the situation

- Listen and repeat back questions



Give choice with examples

- For example, "Do you want to sit here or stand over there while we talk?"



Offer sensory supports

- Warn before touching – many do not like being touched or hugged, especially by strangers



Give encouragement

- "Let's take deep breaths together. You are doing great!"



If agitated, utilize the art of distraction

- Ask the person about their preferred interests and/or activities
- "Why don't we watch a YouTube video on my phone?" Or "Let me tell you a funny story about my pet"

