

Scottish autism

WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE
ARE VALUED

Maintaining Routines

What is a routine?

A routine can be defined as a sequence of actions regularly followed by an individual. A routine could be a daily occurrence for some, a weekly occurrence for others or specific routines for specific times or events; the routines will be completed consistently at the same time in the same way to give consistency.

What is the importance of a routine for an autistic individual?

A routine can be imperative for some autistic individuals as it can provide consistency, reassurance and reliability. A routine helps minimise unpredictability which can be daunting for some individuals. A routine can also help with self-regulation as well as promote positive wellbeing as it can minimise stress and anxiety. Routines can promote independence through practice and can help boost people's confidence as they become settled and used to the routines, which may result in the person learning their routines and carrying out certain tasks with less support. Routines can also help everyone within a family unit as it can make days more organised and relaxed, which will positively affect people's health and wellbeing.

Different routines for specific reasons e.g. different time of day, events etc

An individual does not have to have one routine only. Routines can be specific and individualised depending on a number of factors; the time of day i.e. a morning routine (waking up, having breakfast, getting ready and leaving the house) will be different to an evening routine (having dinner, having a shower, brushing teeth and going to sleep), events such as Christmas, birthdays, holidays etc and also unexpected events such as closures, accidents etc.

How to create/implement a routine?

Routines are best created by following an individual's interests, skills and needs; this way the chances of a routine being successful will be much higher. A routine has to be personalised to the person and may need to be revisited until the routine is serving as a benefit for the individual. Please remember that routines take time, patience and practice. It may be useful to use resources to reinforce routines such as visual aids, objects of reference

(for example showing a towel for the queue to go in the shower), a timetable, a social story etc.

How to maintain a routine?

A routine can be maintained once it has been established. They can be maintained by continuing the routine on a regular basis, supporting the routine with additional tools such as the ones listed above If needed and by ensuring the routine works for the individual and they seem happy and content with this.

Remember that each person is different, and specific tips may not apply to all.

Helpful Resources

[Additional information on routine and changes](#)

[How to support if changes need to be made to routines](#)

[Visual aids and other resources to reinforce routines](#)