

Wandering Resource Guide



Dear Recipient:

Our **Safety on the Spectrum™ Wandering Resource Guide** is provided to support families, caregivers, and communities who support individuals who may wander. This guide provides valuable information that can prevent water and wandering-related incidents and deaths in the Autism community.

According to a study conducted by the Kennedy Krieger Institute, **approximately 49% of individuals with Autism have been known to wander**. And tragically, **accidental drownings of those who have wandered account for 91% of deaths in children with Autism under the age of 14**. The Autism Society is committed to increasing education and training across the Autism community to decrease the tragic loss of life caused by wandering-related accidents.

This guide includes critical resources to increase safety at home and in the community. We hope that the resources can help you, your family, and other trusted caregivers have open discussions about safety and find solutions that meet your family's needs.

Together, we can create a safer world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it.

With Gratitude,
Autism Society of America

Audience: The intended audience for this resource is parents and caregivers.

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Section 1: Wandering

Wandering Introduction

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines wandering (sometimes referred to as elopement or bolting) as a person leaving a safe area or responsible caregiver. **Almost 50% of people with Autism have wandered or will wander, making wandering a critical safety concern for the Autism community.**

People with Autism may wander from home, school, the movies, a store, a car, a park, or any other location. Wandering can happen within seconds, under any kind of supervision, and in any circumstance. Wandering might occur during times of transition, or when things are different or chaotic (more people in the home, moving in or moving out, a phone call). This places a considerable amount of stress on caregivers and families as they're in a consistent state of heightened alert to keep their loved one with Autism safe.

Examples of when wandering can occur include:

- Dad switches the laundry.
- Grandma leaves the room to lay out clothes for bedtime.
- A maintenance person or technician leaves a gate open.
- Mom goes to the bathroom.

People with Autism who wander are commonly found in or near water, in or near traffic, in wooded areas, at another residence, preferred stores, restaurants, or attractions. People who wander often seek small, enclosed spaces, places of special interest, or water (pools, canals, oceans, ponds, lakes, etc.)

Why do People with Autism Wander?

Individuals with Autism can wander for many reasons, but **wandering is often a form of communication and can be an indication of an unmet need and/or inability to communicate the need.**

Examples of reasons why people wander include:

- **Biological factors:** People may wander to find a restroom or to find something to eat or drink. Wandering and movement may also be a way of coping with the physical discomfort of internal feelings of hunger, thirst, etc.
- **Curiosity:** Wandering might occur when a person is drawn to something, motivating them to explore.
- **Dysregulation (Flight Stress Response):** When a person is dysregulated and their brain perceives something as threatening, their body might react with a stress response. There are multiple versions of stress responses, but those in the flight stress response will try to escape or avoid the threat, which may result in wandering.
- **Other personal wants or needs:** People may wander to fulfill other personal needs or wants.
- **Seeking familiar environments / routines:** Some people wander to return to familiar spaces, objects, or routines.
- **Sensory overload:** Wandering may be a way of coping with sensory overload. Sensory overload happens when sensory stimuli overwhelms a person's ability to cope. This can be triggered by a single event, like an unexpected loud noise, or it can build up over time due to the effort it takes to cope with sensory sensitivities in daily life.
- **Sensory seeking:** Some Autistic people might wander to seek sensory stimulation and engage with a variety of sensory inputs, sights, sounds, textures, temperatures, which can be calming or stimulating.

Why is Wandering Dangerous?

Neuroception is how the brain determines, subconsciously, what is safe and unsafe as it relates to people, situations, and settings. **When a person with Autism has wandered, they may be in a heightened state of arousal, altering their ability to determine what is safe or unsafe.** This means that the individual could unknowingly put themselves in a dangerous situation, especially when wandering towards the water. Those who wander are at increased risk of accidents, injuries, or drowning.

Those who wander might not be able to assess situations like:

- Air temperature
- Currents
- Depth of water
- Swimming skills
- Type or source of water (brackish, murky water)
- Water temperature
- Wildlife

Why do People with Autism Wander Towards Water?

Those who wander are commonly found in or near water. Tragically, accidental drowning after wandering accounts for 91% of deaths in children with Autism under the age of 14.

People with Autism might seek water for the following reasons:

- Calming
- Deep pressure—under water
- Enclosed
- Enjoyment—socially and physically
- Feeling
- Gentle
- Hidden
- Other sensory input
- Quiet
- Sound
- Visual—reflective patterns

The scientific principles of water can provide sensory input or feedback:

- **Buoyancy** reduces the effects of gravity and weight bearing, making the body feel light and free.
- **Hydrostatic pressure** makes the water feel like a hug or a weighted blanket, the deeper the water the more pressure someone will feel.
- **Resistance** works against a swimmer in every plane and provides sensory stimulation.

Section 2: Wandering Prevention Strategies

Identifying Wandering Triggers

Being able to identify the reasons why someone wanders, or their common triggers, may help reduce the incidence of wandering. A wandering trigger is something that elicits a reactive wandering response. The trigger is not always negative or distressing. Triggers can be sensory related, based on past experiences, fear based, tangible, etc.

Examples of triggers:

- Lighting (too dark or too bright)
- Not having a need met
- Seeing an appealing toy
- Social overwhelm (too many people)
- Specific lights (like fluorescent lights)
- Too much noise
- Unpredictable situation

Observing a person's patterns of behavior or changes in behavior can help identify wandering triggers. A [Wandering History Log](#) may help identify patterns, provide insight into the reason why your loved one is wandering, and predict when they're most likely to wander in the future.

To identify triggers, consider the circumstances and situations when:

- It looks like they're seeking sensory input, like a hug or deep pressure.
- They are searching for a tangible item.
- They cover their eyes, signaling that something might be too bright.
- They look nervous or move in an anxious way.
- They put hands/ fingers over or in their ears signaling something is too loud.
- They seem anxious about not knowing what's next or what to expect.
- They seem distressed.

Assessing Wandering Risks

A risk is something that can contribute to an increased likelihood of wandering and/or a potential danger. Risks are external to the person who wanders and include environmental considerations.

Examples of risks:

- Events with a lot of people
- Events with open water
- High traffic areas
- Wooded areas

To identify potential risks, consider your loved one's triggers and assess your common environments for things that could pose a danger to your loved one's safety.

Examples of environments:

- Arcade
- Canal
- An easily opened or climbable fence
- Grocery store
- High traffic area
- Home
- Neighbor's pool
- Open space without a fence
- Pool
- Retention pond
- School
- Woods

Considerations of Triggers and Risks

Identifying triggers and risks is the first step towards identifying individualized wandering prevention strategies. **Once a trigger is identified, caregivers can implement a range of safeguarding and support strategies to minimize risk.**

For each trigger identified, consider:

- Is the trigger or risk avoidable or unavoidable?
- Is this something that will be encountered throughout their life?

If a trigger is something that cannot be avoided, consider how you can implement support strategies (examples below) to support your loved one.

Trigger	Examples of Support Strategies
Anxiety about not knowing what to expect	Increasing predictability using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First / Then visual • Foreshadow transitions • Social narrative • Visual schedule
Other anxiety or dysregulation	Breathing techniques A hug Feelings board to help communicate and express emotions Personal comfort / safety items
Sensitivity to light	Sunglasses
Sensitivity to noise and sensory overwhelm	Noise-cancelling headphones
Sensory overwhelm	Preferred sensory input Sensory tools Sensory fidgets Weighted blankets / lap pads
Social overwhelm	Ability to request and take break, pre-planned way for person to request to leave

***Seek to understand the individual so that support can be given effectively and adequately.**

Other Safety Considerations

If your loved one wanders there are a few other action items to consider that may help keep everyone safe.

- **Consider carrying identification.** It may be beneficial to have your loved one carry an ID card or medical bracelet that provides basic information, medical diagnosis, and emergency contact numbers. There are many free resources online to find such ID cards and you can also contact your local law enforcement agency or Autism Society affiliate.
- **Consider locative technology** that could help identify the location of your loved one in case of an emergency.
- **Consider what disclosure looks like for your family.** You and your family should determine if disclosing your loved one's disability is appropriate for your circumstance. If so, consider registering with your local law enforcement agency - [Emergency Identification Sheet](#). This information is generally added to an agency's dispatch office, so officers will be prepared with this information if called to your home.
- Develop an emergency plan (more below).
- **Engage with and get to know local law enforcement and first responders.** Bridging the gap between you, your loved one, and first responders will help de-escalate a crisis and hopefully increase the likeliness of a safe encounter in the event of an emergency.
- Help your loved one practice a method for communicating personal information such as name, address, and phone number.
- If your loved one is non-speaking, assist them in adding their contact information to their communication device, or practice writing onto paper, or typing their information into a laptop, tablet, or electronic device.
- **Utilize a [Wandering History Log](#).** A history log may help identify patterns, triggers, and common instances your loved one wanders. This information can inform how to support your loved one to prevent wandering.

Safeguarding

In the Home and In the Community

Adding layers of protection both in the home and within the community will help keep loved ones safe. The safeguards should act as a method of prevention.

The following are examples of safeguards to consider:

- **Door and window alarms / chimes:** Alarms and chimes serve as an auditory notification that someone or something has opened a door or window. Some systems can send a push alert to mobile devices. These can be part of a smart house feature or battery operated and range in price point from hi-tech to low-tech options.
- **Fences and physical barriers:** Fences and physical barriers can help enclose a yard space or serve as a physical reminder to loved ones of where it is safe for them to be.
- **Identify all bodies of water near the home:** Identifying the bodies of water can help in assessing potential risks, identifying pieces of an emergency plan, and can direct caregivers in how to support a loved one's safety.

Examples of bodies of water include:

- Canals, retention ponds, lakes, neighbor's pool, family pool, community pool, ocean, docks, etc.
- **Locks:** Locks to exterior doors can be used (make sure to be in accordance with the fire marshal) to keep loved ones safe. They can be as complex or simple as necessary.

Examples of locks include:

- Electronic / smart locks
- Knob locks
- Deadbolts
- Lever locks
- Door chain or latch
- Padlocks
- Hook and eye lock
- Sliding glass door lock

- **Pool alarms:** Pool alarms alert the homeowner of movement or entrance into the pool. This can be very helpful in case someone breaches the boundary and into the water.
- **Self-latching pool fences:** Self-latching pool fences and pool fences are a great way to keep loved ones safe at their home if there is a backyard pool or other environmental risk. The benefit of a self-latching fence is that it closes behind you and does not need to be fastened if people are moving quickly. They also require the opener to pull a lever and pull the door simultaneously making it a bit more difficult for someone to open if they shouldn't be.
- **Social narratives:** Social narratives provide visuals and words to describe an event or circumstance with expectations. These can be very helpful for loved ones to understand what they can expect and what is expected of them in a situation.

Examples can include:

- Going to the doctor
 - Going grocery shopping
 - Going to the movies
 - Going to the pool
 - Going to school
- **Visuals:** Placing visual stop signs on doors or windows may help alert loved ones that they stop before opening them.

Preventing Wandering in Community Settings

When leaving home, preparing your loved one for what to expect is a wandering prevention strategy. This can be done by preparing the individual ahead of time with details about:

- How long will they be there?
- Rules or guidelines
- Schedule of event
- Support strategies for feelings of sensory or social overwhelm
- Ways to communicate needs and wants
- Where they are going?
- Who will be there?

Caregivers should also prepare support strategies for supporting a loved one's common triggers. These strategies should be communicated to others who may be able to provide support during an outing.

Example #1

Mom and her daughter Maria (7 years old) are going to the store together. Mom has observed that in the past when they go to the store, Maria runs to the toy section by herself and without notice. Mom worries about her safety when she does this. How can Mom support Maria and get what she needs, too?

Possible support strategies might include:

- Celebrate and provide reinforcement for staying with Mom.
- Help Maria **practice asking for permission** to go to the toy section. Also practice yes or no responses. **Use a First / Then statement:** First shop for X, then go to toy section.
- Mom can talk to Maria: we are going to the store to get X. If you stay with mom while we shop, then we can go to the toy section.
- **Use a social narrative** before going to the store to help Maria understand what to expect while she is there.
- **Use a visual schedule to represent the series of events** inside the store, including when in the schedule Maria will go to the toy section.

Example #2

This time, Mom and Maria are going to the store with Grandma. How does having Grandma involved affect the support strategies?

- Mom should communicate the pattern of running to the toy section with Grandma ahead of time.
- If Grandma can accompany Maria to the toy section while Mom shops, Maria can practice requesting permission to go to the toy section with Grandma ahead of time.

If Grandma is not available to go with Maria to the toy section, Mom can share the support strategies in the first example with Grandma so she can continue to support both Mom and Maria, ensuring that Maria stays safe.

General support strategies to support Autistic neurology include:

- Communication boards
- Feelings / Emotion [communication board](#)
- First / Then statements or visuals
- Social narratives
- Positive reinforcement
- Visual schedules and visuals

Water Safety Strategies

There are many water safety strategies that can be incorporated into situations when near the water.

Examples of some strategies include:

- **Designate Water Watchers**

When you're near a body of water, it is recommended to have someone designated to watch it. This should be done in shifts to reduce distractibility and fatigue, with the best practice to be no more than 30-minute windows at a time if possible. A Water Watcher should have something to distinguish that they are the current water watcher. Examples include a special hat, lanyard, whistle, or something else so that everyone knows who is supervising the water. A whistle is ideal in case of an emergency, and you need to get people's attention rapidly.

- **Locate pool pumps and learn how to turn these off in the case of an emergency**

Jacuzzis, hot tubs, and whirlpools might have high suction jets and drains if they have not been updated recently. It's possible for hair, clothing, and jewelry to get caught and pull someone beneath the water, increasing the risk of drowning. Knowing where the pump is and how to turn it off will help you respond quickly in an emergency. Ensure drain covers are up to date and code – in compliance with VGB (Virginia Graeme Baker) Pool and Spa Safety Act and that they are complete and not broken.

- **Swim lessons**

Swimming lessons will help your loved one learn to swim, increasing the likelihood of a positive outcome if they do enter the water without supervision. It's important to find an appropriate and effective swim instructor who meets the needs of the learner.

- **Swim safety**

- Do not use air inflated flotation devices or puddle jumpers as they can pop and provide a false sense of security in the water. If a flotation device is to be used in the water, it needs to be a [United States Coast Guard approved lifejacket](#).
- Never swim alone.
- **Safety checklists for caregivers and individuals** ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))
- **Staying Safe Near Water social narratives** ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))
- Swim in a guarded area.
- Use a United States Coast Guard approved lifejacket.
 - Make sure the lifejacket fits appropriately.
 - Does the lifejacket fit test?
 1. Put the lifejacket on.
 2. Zip and buckle all straps so that it fits/ tight; if it will not buckle or zip then the lifejacket is too small.
 3. Place arms over the head.
 4. Tug upward on the shoulder portion of the lifejacket.
 5. The lifejacket (when tugged on) should not go above the ears.
 6. If the lifejacket elevates above the wearer's ears it is too big.

- **Water entry routine**

A water entry routine provides rules and guidelines for individuals to enter the water. These should be individualized to make sense for each person and should be enforced and reinforced by caregivers every time they enter the water. Having a routine will increase safety around water. **This routine should be practiced every time a person enters the water.**

Examples of water entry routines:

- Asking for permission to enter the water from a caregiver.
- Sitting on the side and waiting to be told that it is safe to go in the water.
- Wearing specific attire for the water.
 - *Example:* a swim shirt and bathing suit only for the pool.
 - The idea is that the person will be less inclined to enter water in a wandering occurrence if they are not wearing the designated appropriate attire.

Technology Considerations

Ranging from low tech to high tech, technology serves multiple purposes in keeping loved ones safe. The decision to use technology will be a highly individualized process, with different options in different geographical areas.

Examples of each include:

- **Low tech**
 - Battery operated door chimes
 - Fences
 - Gates
 - Locks
- **Mid tech**
 - Threshold alarms
- **High tech:** Locative technologies
 - **Geofencing:** Geofencing is a technology that sets up virtual boundaries around physical locations using GPS or other positioning methods. When someone or something enters or exits these boundaries, predefined actions are triggered, such as sending alerts or notifications.
 - **Global Positioning Systems (GPS):** GPS provides accurate tracking, often within 3 meters horizontally and 5 meters vertically. However, it has drawbacks like high battery demand and the need for a clear path to

satellites, making tracking indoors challenging. Environmental obstacles, like buildings and dense foliage, can affect accuracy.

- **Radio Frequency (RF) trackers:** RF technology is often used by law enforcement and caregivers to find people who may wander. It involves a transmitter worn by the person and an antenna that receives signals. RF technology is accurate and has a strong signal that isn't greatly affected by obstacles or weather. Both ground and air assets can detect the signal.

Section 3: Creating an Emergency Safety Plan

An Emergency Safety Plan

An emergency safety plan is created with key stakeholders (caregivers and trusted people) with the needs of your loved one in mind in case they wander. **The safety plan is a detailed plan about who should do what if an emergency takes place and your loved one is missing.** It is an evolving plan that should be revisited and practiced regularly to increase the likeliness of a safe recovery for all.

The development of a safety plan includes 4 key concepts:

1. Identify and Assess

- Identify
 - **Identify places of special interest,** where someone would likely wander to. Examples might include the movie theater, the neighbor's pool, an open field, or a crowded event.
 - **Identify the triggers that increase the likelihood of wandering.** Examples of this may be a loud noise or a large crowd.
 - **Identify two or more trusted people to assist in the case of an emergency.** The loved one should know or feel comfortable around the trusted people since they will be assisting in search and rescue efforts. Examples of a trusted person can include mom, dad, grandma, and a neighbor.

- Assess
 - **Assess all risks close to the home and frequently visited areas.** Examples of this include the pool at the neighbor's house, the canal behind the home, and a high traffic street close to the home.

2. Make a Plan

- **Develop action steps that can be activated in an emergency.** A plan should include key stakeholders and their roles. The first action steps listed should be:
 1. **Call 9-1-1** – identify who will call.
 2. **Search water sources first** – identify who will search which water sources.

Example:

1. Grandma stays at home and calls 9-1-1.
 2. Mom searches the canal behind the home.
 3. Dad searches the high traffic street.
 4. The neighbor searches and then continues to monitor their pool.
 - If neighbor is not home dad will go to the neighbor's pool instead of the high traffic street (with permission from the neighbor).
 5. Continue to search water sources, follow the plan, and assist law enforcement and first responders.
- **Other factors to consider when developing a plan are:**
 1. Add a backup plan in case people are not home or out of town during an emergency.
 2. Get to know local law enforcement officers and first responders prior to an emergency, which may make the individual more comfortable should they interact with them during search and rescue.
 3. If there is not more than one person to assist during an emergency plan, that person can call 9-1-1 while checking water sources close to the where the person went missing.

3. Practice and Implement

- **Practice the emergency safety plan.**
- Practice special and individualized methods to elicit a response from your loved one in case they are in an enclosed space – for example, play their favorite song or favorite tv show character’s voice. Build these practiced methods into the search action steps.
- Consider using positive reinforcement (examples include favorite food, special activity, hugs, or anything else that is comforting and enjoyable) to encourage a response both during practice and during an emergency.
- **Implement the plan as designed and practiced.**

4. Adjust and Modify

- **Adjust and modify the plan as the individual’s interests and needs change when needed.** For example, if you move, if a new neighbor moves in next door, or if there is now a fence where there once was not. It is most beneficial when the plan is kept up to date and current.

Section 4: Creating a Trusted Network of Support

It can be very difficult to decide to bring someone into your network of support. Other people don’t always understand Autism and the stigma of wandering can be very isolating for caregivers and individuals. When deciding whether to incorporate someone into the emergency plan, allow your loved one with Autism to show you. The people they are at ease with and comfortable with may be a good place to start. Also consider people in your life that genuinely know and care for your loved one.

Examples of people in an emergency plan include:

- Family friends
- Family members
- Neighbors
- Teachers / school personnel

School, Daycares, and Other Community Settings

If your loved one is in school, daycare, or another community setting during the day, making sure that the teachers, staff, and administration know and understand the dangers of wandering can be vital in maintaining the safety of your loved one while at school. It is imperative that if the classroom staff does not have a zoning plan that they create one for all centers, areas, and places the class goes. This helps ensure the responsibility and supervision of all students. Additionally, wandering prevention strategies and other related accommodations should be made during an IEP or a team meeting. Consider sharing this [IEP Considerations](#) resource, your emergency safety plan, places of interest, and reinforcement strategies with teachers and the IEP team so that your loved one can be as successful and safe as possible.

Neighbors

Developing trusting relationships with those in your neighborhood can be helpful as you consider strategies for keeping your loved one with Autism safe. Trusted neighbors, familiar with neighborhood routines and close by in emergencies, serve as valuable resources to help create a sense of community and safety for those with Autism and their caregivers.

After you've identified which neighbors to include in your safety plan, consider talking to the neighbor, sharing your safety concerns, and asking for their help in your safety plan. Be specific about how you'd like them to help. If a neighbor agrees to help, introduce your loved one to the neighbors and facilitate a familiar relationship as much as possible. If you live in a neighborhood with a homeowner's association (HOA), it can be beneficial to take the time to get to know the president and others on the board so that they can enact neighborhood-wide live alerts during an emergency.

How Neighbors Can Help in a Safety Plan

- Act as a safe place an individual can go in emergencies.
- Help search for an individual if they are missing.
- Watch for loved ones leaving their home without a guardian.

Details the neighbor you might consider sharing include:

- Consider sharing a completed [Emergency Identification Sheet](#) or [Wandering Letter](#).
- Likes and dislikes
- Sensory information – what is comforting and what is triggering?
- Tendencies or what is typical for them
- Ways to interact with or approach them
- Who to call if the neighbor sees something concerning or if they see the individual alone without a guardian, or with someone they haven't seen before

Section 5: During an Emergency

We supported our loved one to the best of our ability, but they still wandered.

Now what?

1. Activate your emergency plan.

REMINDER:

- Call 9-1-1
- Check all water sources within a close range of where the individual was last seen.

2. Try not to panic, take a deep breath, and lean into the emergency plan.

What information should I provide to 9-1-1 or law enforcement?

Prior to an emergency, you can consider filling out an identification sheet to register with the local police department. If you feel it is appropriate for your family and loved one to be registered with the police department an [Emergency Identification Sheet](#) can be filled out.

During an emergency, here is a list of information to include when calling law enforcement:

- Name: (First name, Last name)
- Time last seen
- Location last seen
- Description of attire they were last seen wearing
- Age
- Identifying marks or scars
- Do they wear a locative device? ID bracelets? If so, provide some information:
- Physical description (i.e., 5'10, 150 lbs., brown hair, green eyes, etc.)
- 2 or 3 Emergency Contacts including phone numbers and addresses
- Identify places the individual is likely to go (be specific: water, pool, lake, ocean, movies, gas station, train station, etc.)
- Describe what an escalation looks like (crying, running, rocking, aggression, etc.)
- Best way to approach the individual
- Identify likes (favorite toys, characters, songs, tv shows)
- Identify dislikes / triggers
- De-escalation techniques
- Sensitivities or fears (noises, lights, helicopters)
- Allergies or dietary restrictions
- Medical needs or medications
- A safe word or any identifiers to indicate to the individual that you are a safe person
- Communication style and preference (speaking, non-speaking, visuals, sign language)

What Else Should I Consider If My Loved One Has Wandered?

The following are examples of questions to consider if a loved one has wandered that may lead to their safe recovery. These questions might help you think about where the person might go to help locate them. Considering these questions and their answers may help support loved ones in the present and future.

- Are they drawn to water?
- Are they sick?
- Are they hungry?
- Do they have medical needs that could pose an additional risk to their overall health and safety?
- Do they have a locative device?
- Has this happened before?
- If so, where have they wandered in the past?

Wandering Safety Support Checklist

Safe Environment

- Door locks
- Door and window chimes
- Fencing around the home
- Identified key bodies of water close to the home
- Identified risks or places of special interest
- Pool fence

Identification

- Can the individual identify themselves in case of an emergency?
- Do they carry identification in case of an emergency?
- Do they know who to contact and how to contact them if they are lost?

Documentation

- Are they registered with the local police department?
- Do you have a wandering history log?

Routine

- Known expectations
- Predictable schedules

Change in routine can increase anxiety and the likeliness that someone will wander. The following can be of assistance if there is a schedule change or something new.

- Visuals
- Social narratives
- Cues

Communication

- AAC device
- Communication board
- Gestures
- Method of communication in case of an emergency
- Spoken words

Safety Education

- Aquatic safety tips
- Lifejacket safety and usage
- Swim lessons

Needs

- Sensory needs met
- Opportunities to move and exercise freely
- Proprioceptive input
- Access to sensory friendly fidgets, tools, and toys

Technology

- Geo-fencing
- Location devices

Supervision

- Clear ways to designate who is supervising
- Identified caregivers

Emergency Plan

- Identify and assess
- Make a plan
- Implement
- Adjust and modify

Transitions

- Auditory or visual cues to indicate a transition
- Have a routine for transitions
- Timers
- Transition pieces

Transition can cause anxiety – predictability and routines can assist with transition.

Community Response

- Check water first
- Family
- Friends
- Get to know law enforcement / first responders in your area
- Trusted neighbors

Monitor

- Check in with your loved one
- Observe for changes in behavior
- Signs of discomfort
- Signs of over / under stimulation

Monitoring can lend an idea of how they might be feeling and help prevent a crisis or incidence of wandering.

Section 6: Contact Information

For more information, visit our **Safety on the Spectrum™** [Water & Wandering webpage](#).

Please reach out with any questions. **We are here to support you!**

Email: safety@autismsociety.org

Get connected: AutismSociety.org

The connection is you.™

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