

HALLOWEEN HINTS AND TIPS

Happy Halloween!

This time of year can be really exciting for many people, but can also be a time filled with new sensory and social experiences that are not part of your usual routine. Here are some tips that may help you plan for your Halloween celebrations!

- 1. Halloween can be a big change in routine. Use visuals to support an autistic people when participating in Halloween events. This may be a travel schedule to show what to expect when traveling to a Halloween party or a schedule to show the activities within parties/events.**
- 2. Give warning in advance about sensory experiences and prepare strategies as needed. For example, bring headphones if attending fireworks displays, or pack individualised snacks for a party if the person has limited foods/snacks they like.**
- 3. If Trick or Treating, a visual map can be useful to show where you are going, or a check list of houses you can tick off as you progress. The individual can then see how long they will be trick or treating for and know what to expect.**
- 4. If dressing up, consider any sensory needs the people may have in regard to clothing textures. If possible, link your dress up to a particular interest that the person may have which can make the process much more enjoyable. Also, bring an easy change of clothes in case it gets uncomfortable.**
- 5. When trick or treating, bring along useful items, such as a torch for safety, ear defenders or headphones to block out noise and a stim/special toy for comfort.**
- 6. If your child is non-verbal or has limited verbal language, you could prepare visual cards that they hand out that say 'Trick or Treat' on one side and 'thank you' on the reverse, helping them to communicate in a way that works best for them!**
- 7. When attending Halloween outings, partner with family and friends that your autistic child is comfortable with. This will help reassure them and reduce anxiety.**

Finally, remember Halloween is meant to be an enjoyable and fun holiday. Participate in the things that work best for your family, and feel free to be creative to individualise the holiday, so it is a positive experience!