

CLINIC GUIDE

A calmer visit for *every patient*

For many autistic children and adults, a clinic visit is hard before it begins: the noise, the bright lights, the waiting, the unfamiliar touch. Small changes make care possible, and your work easier.



WHY IT MATTERS

A patient who is overwhelmed can't tell you what's wrong, sit still for an examination, or come back for follow-up.

WHAT HELPS

Predictability, less noise and light, more time, and clear, literal communication.

WHO BENEFITS

Everyone: anxious children, older patients, people with dementia – and your staff.



Before the visit

- ☐ Offer the first or last appointment of the day, when the clinic is quietest.
- ☐ Book a longer slot, so nobody has to rush.
- ☐ Ask the family what helps and what to avoid: triggers, comfort items, how the person communicates.
- ☐ With consent, note these adjustments on the patient's record so every visit starts right.
- ☐ Share the visit picture cards from this kit, so the patient knows what will happen.



In the waiting area

- ☐ Offer a quieter place to wait: a side room, or outside or in the car, with a call or message when it's time.
- ☐ Turn off televisions and radios, and replace flickering lights.
- ☐ Keep the wait short. Call the patient in when you are actually ready.
- ☐ Allow headphones, fidget items, comfort objects and moving around.
- ☐ Put up the waiting-room poster from this kit, so families know they can ask.



After the visit

- ☐ End clearly: "We are finished."
- ☐ Write down any instructions, one step at a time, and give them to the family.
- ☐ Ask what worked and what didn't, and add it to the record for next time.



During the appointment

- ☐ Speak calmly, in short and literal sentences. Avoid figures of speech like “hop up here”.
- ☐ Speak to the patient, not only to the parent or carer, however much they speak.
- ☐ Explain each step before you do it, and show instruments before they touch the body.
- ☐ Ask before you touch, and say how long each step will take: “I’ll count to five.”
- ☐ Give extra time to answer. Silence isn’t refusal.
- ☐ Don’t insist on eye contact or sitting still if the patient is coping another way.
- ☐ If distress builds, pause. Reduce noise and people in the room, and let the patient recover before going on.

WHEN A PARENT IS WORRIED

Take developmental concerns seriously

Early assessment opens the door to early support. If a parent raises concerns about how their child communicates, plays or responds, listen, assess or refer, and give them the **Early signs leaflet** in this kit.

A child who loses words or social skills they used to have, at any age, needs prompt assessment.

WORK WITH THE ALLIANCE

Three ways your practice *can help*

Get listed

Families use our Health specialists directory to find clinicians experienced in autism. Contact us to be listed.



Contact us
africaautismalliance.org/contact-us

Join as a professional

Become a member for updates, training opportunities, seminars and a network that understands.



Become a member
africaautismalliance.org/the-alliance/become-a-member

Certify your clinic

Train your team, have your spaces assessed, and earn the Autism-Inclusive Organisation badge.



Join the Alliance
africaautismalliance.org/the-alliance/join