

## What Does Autism Look Like?

- Sensory sensitivities (e.g., covering ears)
- Unusual eye contact
- Repetitive motor movements (e.g. rocking, hand flapping)
- Atypical speech or lack of speech
- Delayed responses
- Challenges with social interactions
- May not feel cold or pain in a typical manner
- Impaired sense of danger: may wander to water, traffic, etc.
- May not recognize First Responders as helpers

**Remember: Autism is a spectrum and each individual is unique.**

### Sensory Sensitivities

- Turn off sirens
- Speak quietly
- Distract or provide calming items (e.g. videos, fidget toys, etc.)

### Physical Guidance

- Avoid touch if possible
- Move slowly

### Communication

- One person talking at a time
- Calm tone
- Short, simple phrases
- Give time to respond

### Visual Supports

- Use pictures to explain
- Write step-by-step lists



### First-Then

- Use “First-then” to create incentive. E.g. “**First**, go outside, **Then** play a game on my phone.”

### Searching

- Collaborate with caregiver
- Search water first
- May not respond to name
- May hide if frightened
- Call out topics of interest (e.g. character names) or offer preferred items (toys or food)