



Blood Work

Rehearsal Guide

to prepare people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to have blood work successfully completed

INTRODUCTION FOR CAREGIVERS

A rehearsal guide contains realistic pictures, concrete ideas, and clear, brief instructions for guiding a person through what can be expected in a specific situation. It includes helpful suggestions for caregivers to follow to make the experience meaningful for the person and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. This approach is beneficial when supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who are anxious about situations such as doctors' appointments, hospitalizations, and medical testing.

A rehearsal guide provides opportunities for the caregiver to assist the person to learn about a specific situation. It contains information on what is needed and why and explains exactly what can be expected. Such a guide is most effective when it is person-centered and used in conjunction with discussion to allow exploration of specific areas of concern. It can be a powerful tool when used as intended.

The expected result is that the person will then experience the situation in a way that supports health and well-being by being prepared and knowing what to expect. The guide can be used at all stages of the situation to facilitate a positive end result.

Thank you for taking the time to use this tool to work with self advocates to improve their health outcomes.

HOW TO USE THIS REHEARSAL GUIDE

For best results, begin to review this rehearsal guide with the person prior to the day of the appointment. Sometimes it will help to review this material with an individual several days or weeks before an appointment; other times, it may be better to wait to review this material until just before the procedure, perhaps the day before the procedure. It is up to the caregiver to determine which will best suit the individual's needs and abilities in understanding the information provided; however, it is important not to wait until 5 minutes before a procedure to introduce this guide to an individual. Give the individual enough time in advance to become familiar with the procedure based on the pictures and information contained on each page and on the individual's abilities.

It is best to review this guide slowly and to focus on one idea/page at a time, allowing the person to talk and/or ask questions after each idea/page is presented. Consider health literacy. Answer the question asked but, do not elaborate on the answer, unless the individual has further questions. Simple, concrete answers are best. A caregiver may want to share experiences in regards to having this procedure done personally, but be sure to do so in a simple, basic positive manner.

For best practices:

- Allot time to review this material when the individual is alert and interested in doing so.
- Ensure that the setting is free from distraction. Based on the individual's attention span, it may be best to review one page at a time, rather than reviewing an entire guide in one sitting.
- Explain each picture and practice the suggested exercises with the individual, such as deep breathing, as they appear throughout the guide.
- On the day of the procedure, take this guide along to continue rehearsing the various steps involved in the procedure. Review each page step by step.
- Remain positive, calm, and upbeat.
- Remember to offer positive reinforcement and praise throughout the procedure, especially after the individual has successfully completed the procedure.

INTRODUCING THE PROCESS

(Name of individual), you are going to have blood work done on *(Insert date here)*.

The doctor ordered this for you to help keep you healthy.

(Name of caregiver) will go with you and stay with you while you have a small amount of your blood collected.

This test will take place at *(name of location)*.



Note to Caregiver: You may want to discuss your own personal experiences regarding having blood work done. If so, keep the discussion upbeat and positive.

IN THE WAITING ROOM

When you first get to your appointment, you will have to wait until someone calls your name to have your blood work done.

(Name of caregiver) will stay in the waiting room with you.

Would you like to take a favorite book along to read or some of your favorite music to listen to on your headset while you wait?



WHEN YOUR NAME IS CALLED

When your name is called, you will be taken to a room with a special chair with an armrest. There will be a medical staff called a technician or lab technician there who will help you. He or she will take the samples of your blood when you are ready.



TOOLS FOR BLOOD WORK

Here are the tools that will be used to get blood from your arm.

There is a tube or tubes to collect the blood.

The stretchy band (tourniquet) is shown here in blue. It is similar to a large flat rubber band. This band will be wrapped around your upper arm. This helps the technician see your veins.

A small needle will be used to get the blood from your arm.



BLOOD WORK PREPARATION

The technician will put the stretchy band (tourniquet) on your upper arm. It will feel a little tight and may pinch you but it will only be on your arm for a minute or two.



BLOOD WORK PREPARATION

The technician will clean the inner part of your elbow with an alcohol pad.

This may feel a little cold, but it will not hurt.



COLLECTING THE BLOOD

Now the technician will insert the needle into your arm. This may hurt a little. It may feel like a big “pinch,” but it is important to hold still.

The pinch should only hurt for a second or two. It may be helpful to look away. Slow deep breathing may also help.



Note to caregiver: Show the individual how to “pinch” their own skin on the arm to feel like the “pinch” of the needle. Emphasize the feeling of the “pinch” goes away quickly. Or, practice deep breathing with the individual as outlined on the next page.

BREATHING EXERCISE

Sometimes you may need to breathe slowly and deeply to help you hold very still.

Breathing slowly and deeply for just a short time while having the blood work completed can help.

Let's practice breathing slowly.



Note to caregiver: Practice breathing slowly and deeply with the individual. Encourage the individual to breathe slowly and deeply with you when the time comes during the blood work. It may also be helpful to show the person how to look away from the procedure, by looking up or closing their eyes. Assure the individual you will remind them to look away.

YOU'RE DOING GREAT SO FAR!

When there is enough blood in the tube or tubes, the technician will take off the stretchy band and then take the needle out of your arm.



The technician will then put a small bandage on your arm.



See? It's that simple!
I know you can do it! You always do a great job!



***Note to Caregiver:** Offer the individual praise and encouragement as you continue to explain the following steps.*

GREAT JOB!

As long as you're feeling okay, you will be able to leave. Make sure to tell the technician or the caregiver if you are feeling dizzy. Some people sit for a few minutes before getting up to leave.



Note to caregiver: Sometimes people get dizzy after blood draws. Be observant for signs of dizziness and have the person sit down if unsteady.

This is a good place to assess how well the person understood what was presented. Ask some very brief questions such as, "Do you know what will happen when you have blood work done?"

Revisit the story as often as needed to ensure the person understands and is prepared when the day of the test arrives.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The Public Health England Learning Disabilities Observatory (PHELDO). (2017, September). Blood tests for people with learning disabilities: making reasonable adjustments at https://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/Blood_tests_for_people_with_learning_disabilities.pdf
- The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Center for Autism Research. (n.d.). PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR A BLOOD DRAW at <https://www.carautismroadmap.org/blood-draw/?print=pdf>



For additional information regarding this guide or
any of our physical or behavioral health trainings,

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