

Be Prepared When Behaviors Become Unsafe at Home

Students with ASD as well as other developmental disabilities and conditions can experience learning and self-regulation challenges that may be accompanied by periods of unsafe and even dangerous behaviors. Teaching appropriate safe behavior takes time and can be complicated by hormonal changes, co-morbid medical and mental conditions. At the onset of periods of extremely challenging behavior, it is often helpful to think through potential scenarios, tap into available resources, and develop response plans.



Concerns

For children who have a history of:

Leaving the house or running away



Aggressive behavior with potential of causing harm to themselves or others



Having straight-forward conversation with your family ahead of time helps you be prepared should you find yourself in crisis.



Possible Solutions

- Install an alarm on all doors and windows. (Available at most home improvement stores.)
- Obtain a GPS tracking device that your child would wear and register the device with law enforcement.
- Contact your local law enforcement office and share your child's history and reason for concern. Provide identifying information, emergency contacts and strategies for best ways to communicate and interact with your child.
- Create a flyer ahead of time with your child's picture, identifying features, ways to communicate and who to contact if found. Educate neighbors using the flyer.
- Purchase an identification bracelet with emergency contact information that your child wears.
- Reduce clutter or items in your home that are sharp or would be unsafe if thrown during times of elevation. (Examples: scissors, sharp objects, glass items)
- Develop a back-up plan for seeking extra support through neighbors, friends, and family.
- Program emergency numbers into your phone for quick reference.
- Contact your local law enforcement office and share your reason for concern and child's history. Provide identifying information, emergency contacts and strategies for best ways to communicate and interact with your child.
- Talk with your family and identify when you would contact your back-up supports; when you would call law enforcement; when you might seek medical assistance through the emergency room or call 911.
- Evaluate your home:
 - Make designated areas or rooms safer for the child with aggression while waiting for help to arrive.
 - Make designated areas or rooms safer for your other children or yourself while waiting for help to arrive.

Community Resources

- **Local Community Mental Health Agency**
- **Child Protective Services**
- **Department of Human Services**
- **Local Law Enforcement Agencies**
- **Local School District**
- **Physician and local hospitals**

Project Lifesaver and GPS tracking devices can be accessed locally through Grand Traverse Sherriff's Department. For more information call 231-995-5016.

Taglione Memorial Global Position System Program

The Autism Alliance of Michigan initiative, Taglione Memorial Global Positioning System (GPS) Program in association with Autism Speaks promotes the acquisition of GPS tracking devices for safety purposes for individuals with ASD. Scholarship applications are available. Call 877-463-AAOM or visit their website at autismallianceofmichigan.org