

**Tips for Using the Visual Schedule**

**What is a Visual Schedule**

* People appreciate knowing what is going to happen next. A visual schedule operates much like a calendar app or a to-do list, and provides predictability around what to expect.
* A visual schedule uses pictures and words to **better communicate the order of activities** that will happen.

**Who Should Use a Visual Schedule**

* Visual schedules can help clinicians and staff **communicate** with **patients with Autism Spectrum Disorders,** regardless of verbal abilities
* **Ask** the patient and/or caregiver if a visual schedule would be helpful

**Why to Use the Visual Schedule**

* It provides **structure and predictability** in the form of a routine.
* It helps patients **better understand expectations**.
* It **reinforces verbal instructions** and **uses the patient’s visual strengths**, which may be especially helpful for those with communication challenges.
* It can **reduce anxiety** and help patients **remain calm**.
* It gives patients a tangible way to **keep track of tasks**.
* It is a **visual reminder** and cue of what to do and what will happen next.
* It **eases transitions** between activities.
* It presents the abstract concept of time in a more **concrete and manageable form**.

**How to Use the Visual Schedule**

* Show the patient the visual schedule.
* Prompt the patient to look at or point to the first activity.
* Complete the first activity.
* Have the patient move the activity picture to the “Finished” column to indicate the activity is complete.
* Prompt the patient to look at or point to the second activity.
* Repeat in the same manner until finished with all activities.