



# Self-Advocacy Toolkit for Autistic Adults

Scripts, Worksheets, and Practical Strategies

Comprehensive Step-by-Step Educational Handbook & Printable Toolkit.

Created by AutismHearts | Autism Resource Directory

Notice: Educational guide — not legal or medical advice.

## Disclaimer & Clinical Notice

**Informational Notice**

Authored for informational self-advocacy and empowerment. It is not medical, psychological, or legal counsel.

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## Chapter 1: Why This Toolkit Exists

Self-advocacy is understanding your personal needs and communicating them clearly. It is not asking for special favors; it is securing conditions where you can live and work sustainably.

# The Reality of Masking & Burnout

**Core Affirmation**

"My sensory limits are not character flaws; they are biological realities. Asking for what I need is a valid act of self-preservation."

## Chapter 2: Knowing Yourself and Your Needs

- Sensory Profile: How lighting, background din, scents, and fabrics affect your energy.
- Communication Style: Written vs. spoken, advance agendas, 1-on-1 vs. groups.
- Internal Battery: Identifying tasks that deplete vs. recharge your nervous system.

## Mapping Your Internal Battery

1. Environments that deplete my battery within 30 minutes:

2. Sensory inputs that trigger physical discomfort:

3. Restorative practices that recharge my nervous system:

## Chapter 3: Speaking Up in Healthcare Settings

- Write down top 3 concerns in order of priority before appointments.
- Ask to wait in your car or a quiet side office until the doctor is ready.
- Carry a printed Medical Accommodations Summary Card during clinical intake.

## Clinical Access Checklist

### Healthcare Accommodations

Exam room lights dimmed ☐ | Step-by-step advance explanation before physical exam ☐ | 10-15s processing wait time ☐ | Written after-visit instructions requested ☐

## Ready-to-Use Scripts for Healthcare

### Exam Script

"It takes me extra time to process spoken clinical information. Please give me a moment to think after you ask a question, and could you write down diagnostic steps for me?"

## Chapter 4: Work, Accommodations & Structure

- Sensory: Noise-canceling headphones, desk lamp, low-traffic workstation.
- Communication: Written task briefs, meeting agendas provided 24 hours in advance.
- Executive Function: Predictable milestones, designated uninterrupted focus blocks.

## Navigating Workplace Disclosure

### Disclosure Principles

Focus on productivity and functional accuracy rather than diagnostic labels. Keep written copies of all HR accommodation agreements.

## Ready-to-Use Scripts for Work

### Work Script

"I produce my most accurate work when instructions are documented in writing rather than verbal hallway check-ins. Could we trial emailing action items after meetings?"

## Chapter 5: Everyday Boundaries & Energy Support

- Time Limits: "I would love to come for 45 minutes, then will head out to rest."
- Sensory Compromises: Agreeing on volume caps or quiet zones at family gatherings.
- Processing Pauses: "I heard what you said; I need 15 minutes to process before answering."

## Everyday Boundary Scripts

### Social Battery Script

"I value our friendship and want to be fully present. Right now my sensory battery is drained, so I need an hour of quiet downtime before we chat."

## Worksheet A: Healthcare Visit Planner

Provider Name / Appointment Date:

Top 3 Symptoms or Concerns to Address:

Accommodations Needed (dim lights, quiet room, written notes):

## Worksheet B: Workplace Accommodations Planner

Work Tasks That Demand the Most Sensory / Executive Energy:

Proposed Environmental Adjustments (lighting, seating, headphones):

Proposed Structural Adjustments (written lists, meeting agendas):

## Worksheet C: Self-Knowledge Reflection

1. My Core Strengths, Hyper-Focus Passions & Unique Skills:

2. Environmental Triggers That Cause Sensory Overload:

## Worksheet D: Printable Autism Medical Info Card

**Cut & Laminate for Wallet****AUTISM SELF-ADVOCACY MEDICAL CARD**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosis: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Sensory Needs: Sensitive to loud sound &amp; fluorescent lights. Please dim lights.

Communication: Needs 10-15s processing time. Please provide written instructions.

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Taking Next Steps with AutismHearts

Locate adult autism diagnostic clinicians, find affirming therapists, and connect with neurodivergent peer discussion groups at [autismhearts.com](https://autismhearts.com).

## AutismHearts Adult Directory Notice

**Professional Disclaimer**

Authored for educational self-advocacy purposes. Consult qualified medical, psychological, and legal professionals for individualized guidance.