



Melt Down & Shutdown Mode

	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE?	WHAT IS HAPPENING?
 Melting Down	Pacing Hitting Screaming Covering ears Risk for “bolting” Tense/overly fidgety Communication difficulties Impulsive/safety awareness decreased	Caused by becoming increasingly overwhelmed Signs become outwardly noticeable Can proceed to shutdown It is a loss of control ***Remember-Not doing it for attention***
 Shutting Down	Stare off into space May go into a fetal position Paralyzed-may be really still No thoughts/everything goes blank Difficulty with, or no, verbal communication	Too much continuous information without a break Think of a computer dying from too much input The purposeful thinking in the brain “turns off” ***Post shut-down- the ability to think and then act on thoughts returns slowly (may appear in a drunken state) ***

How to Help

These are things that might help. Keep in mind what will help is different from person to person.

Shutdown and Meltdown	Meltdown
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-plan to prevent (self-awareness & action plan) 2. Assure a safe environment 3. Go somewhere quiet and with dim lighting 4. Suggest calming/weight bearing sensory strategies 5. Help to initiate sensory strategies (they may not be able to do so themselves.) 6. Limit verbal communication. Instead try using images, writing, texting, etc... 7. Provide a means of deep pressure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Have him or her hold or throw ice 9. Give him/her a specific job to do or make your helper 10. Mindfulness activity using sensory cues (find 5 different things in the room that are blue, 4 different smells, 3 different sounds, etc...) 11. Give items to categorize and sort 12. Provide a time limit as a means of structure when doing a sensory activity to calm down from a meltdown

Environmental Factors to Look Out For

These things may contribute to sensory dysregulation or affect behavior and ability to carry out tasks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Bright lights, especially fluorescent *Visually busy items, or spaces (i.e. posters on the wall...think many colors, shapes, and sizes) *Sounds such as leaf blowers, traffic, blenders, lawn equipment, fans, vacuums, hand dryers, etc *Radio and/or television being on or on too loudly *Wind and water (i.e. wind from outside or a fan blowing and water from a faucet or rain) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Several people talking at once or frequent interruptions in the flow of conversation *Moving people and objects (i.e. cars, other people, insects, flickering lights, etc) *Hums and whirrs (i.e. computers, refrigerators, charger plugs, fluorescent lights, air conditioners, etc) *Scents of cleaning products, foods, perfumes, etc
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Things a Person with Autism Needs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clear and concise expectations -<u>A safe place to regroup</u> -At times-help with self-organization -<u>Extra time</u> to process and execute tasks and words -Allowances to complete things <u>my own way and in my own time</u> -Forewarning of schedule changes -Simple directions (sometimes its better if written) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Adequate time in environments that aren't overstimulating -<u>Acceptance and respect</u> of my stimming behaviors (as long as they are safe) -<u>Knowledge</u> that my stemming is ok to do and that <u>you will not judge me</u> for it -Help with understanding social rules; social coaching -PATIENCE
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When Interacting with an Individual with Autism Remember...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -When teaching a skill show <u>exactly</u> what I need to do -If I do not respond right away <u>give me more time</u> -Give me 2-3 options -Tell me what you want me to do, <u>don't assume</u> I know -Give me visuals -<u>Meet me where I am</u> -Limit distractions-I interact best when in environments that are not overwhelming -<u>Allow me to do what I need to be present</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I can perseverate on actions, thought, or words. I may need help getting unstuck. You can divert my attn, <u>but assure me I can get back to it later</u> if I want -I am literal and I do not read in between the lines -Use various communication methods -Eye contact can be difficult for me -Sometimes I communicate better with writing, texting, pictures, or movements -<u>What I say isn't always what I mean to say</u>
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13 Things an Adult with Autism Wants You to Know -By Kim Clairy

- 1. Everyone is different, yet we are all the same.** I am a person just like you are a person... Autism is not who I am, it's a part of me- like my, brown hair, freckles, love for nature, etc...It's just part of what makes me me!
- 2. Kids with Autism grow up to become adults with Autism.** Autism doesn't go away at 18. Adults with Autism deserve to have access to the accommodations and assistance they need to function and live a fulfilling life.
- 3. I want to be social and to be included** I just might not know how or the environment may be too much for me. Also, my way of socializing may look different than yours; however, that doesn't make it wrong.
- 4. I have feelings.** I know you do too. I may not respond like you, that doesn't mean I don't care. I may say things hurtful things. I don't mean to. I look at situations logically and may not connect a feeling to it. I am very sensitive though especially to those who are "misfits"
- 5. I have a VERY hard time with change and the unexpected.**
- 6. Stimming (flapping, jumping, twirling, rocking, etc) is often a way to regulate myself so that I may engage in my environment.** It is not much different than a neurotypical person twisting their hair when anxious
- 7. Autism is a spectrum. Everyone is different**
- 8. I don't mean to be defiant, rude or disrespectful.** If I yell it doesn't mean I am angry-my words don't always come out right
- 9. My sensory sensitivities are more than just a dislike or a preference;** they are more than something I can tune out or get used to. They are often disorienting, painful, and disabling. They can make it hard to coordinate my body, can isolate me, and can make carrying out daily tasks exhausting and sometimes impossible.
- 10. Sometimes I just can't function.** Pushing me makes it worse. Allow me to reboot I'll come back when I can.
- 11. Don't rush me, give me time to process.** It's difficult to process and organize multiple steps/concepts, especially if they are auditory...Give me 1 direction at a time and write down things with multiple steps.
- 12. I don't do things for attention or to always get my way.** Instead of looking at behaviors as a "way to get attention" look at them as a way to communicate something or as a missing skill set that needs developing.
- 13. With patience, understanding and the right supports I can succeed!!**