

This Resource Has Two Versions



Different ways to access the same support.



GENTLE GUIDE

MORE INFORMATION



More information and deeper explanations.



Great for teens, adults, parents and professionals.



Explores the why behind routines, change and predictability.



CHILD-FRIENDLY GUIDE

SIMPLER & MORE VISUAL



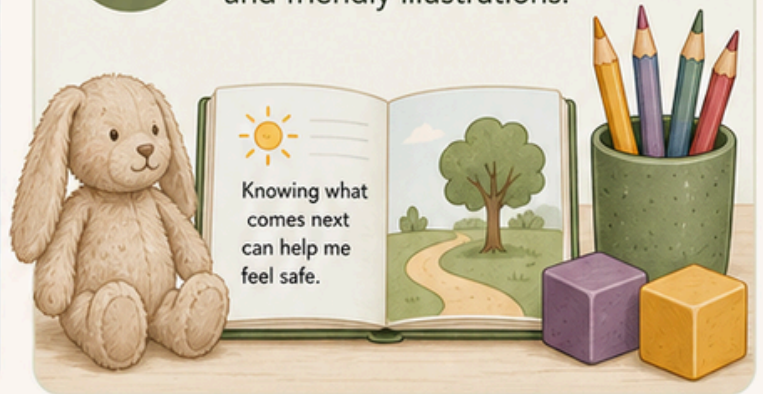
Shorter words, simple explanations and lots of visuals.



Perfect for younger children, visual learners and those who need simpler language.



Includes clear examples and friendly illustrations.



Both versions share the same neuroaffirming message:
You matter. Your needs matter.
Support should feel safe, respectful and understanding.



Everyone is different. What helps one person might be different for you.

It's okay to do what helps YOU. ♥

WHEN CHANGE FEELS BIG

Understanding transitions, uncertainty, and nervous system overwhelm in autism.



Many autistic people experience the world differently. Change and uncertainty can feel **overwhelming** because the brain and nervous system need **more time and information** to process what is happening.

WHY CHANGE CAN FEEL OVERWHELMING



UNCERTAINTY CREATES STRESS
Not knowing what will happen makes the nervous system work harder.



EXTRA PROCESSING DEMANDS
Change requires extra thinking, planning and problem solving.



ENERGY DRAINING
Adjusting to change takes a lot of energy, which can lead to exhaustion.



DISRUPTS SAFETY & COMFORT
Familiar routines create safety. Change can disrupt that sense of security.



TRANSITION FATIGUE
Frequent changes without recovery time can lead to overwhelm and burnout.



It's not about being "difficult" or "stubborn" – it's about the nervous system needing safety and predictability.

CHANGE MIGHT FEEL...



EMOTIONALLY BIG
Feelings can be intense and hard to manage.



EXHAUSTING
Even small changes can take a lot of energy.



DISORIENTATING
It can be hard to know what to expect or what will happen.



PHYSICALLY UNCOMFORTABLE
Change can cause tension, racing heart, tummy aches, or feeling on edge.



ANXIETY PROVOKING
Worry about the unknown can feel overwhelming.



HARD TO PROCESS QUICKLY
The brain may need more time to understand and adjust.



Even changes that seem "small" to others can feel very significant to an autistic nervous system.

THIS CAN HAPPEN WITH...



Cancelled or changed plans



Unexpected visitors or social changes



Changes to routines or schedules



Transitions between activities or places



Changes to food, clothing or preferences



School, work or environment changes



Plans changing suddenly



It's okay to need things to stay the same to feel safe.

HELPFUL SUPPORTS THAT CAN MAKE CHANGE EASIER



PREPARATION
Knowing in advance helps the brain prepare and reduces uncertainty.



VISUAL REMINDERS
Schedules, checklists and visuals help provide clarity and predictability.



TRANSITION WARNINGS
Giving warning before changes helps the nervous system adjust.



REASSURANCE
Kind, calm words and reassurance can help reduce worry and provide safety.



PROCESSING TIME
Extra time to think, adjust and ask questions can make a big difference.



COMFORT & COPING
Comfort items, sensory supports and calming strategies can help regulate.



RECOVERY TIME
After change, time to rest and reset is important for the nervous system.



IMPORTANT REMINDER

Needing predictability does not mean someone is "difficult" or "inflexible".

Support, understanding and flexibility from others help autistic people feel safe, supported and better able to navigate change.



WHEN CHANGE FEELS BIG



Change is a normal part of life.
But it can feel hard, especially for autistic brains. ★



Change can sometimes feel big, worrying or even scary.
That's okay! It just means our brains like things to stay the same.



WHY CHANGE CAN FEEL HARD



Our brains like to know what will happen.



Change can mean new rules, places or people.



It can make our brains work extra hard.



Change can bring big feelings like worry, confusion or frustration.

EXAMPLES OF CHANGE



A new plan



A new place



New people



Different routines



Things not going as planned



Changes in weather

THINGS THAT CAN HELP



Knowing ahead of time



Extra time to get ready



Comfort things



Calm time when needed



Talking to someone I trust



Small steps at a time



Change might feel big, but you are strong.

You can take it one step at a time.
It's okay to take the time you need. ♥



You are allowed to need things to stay the same.
Your feelings matter. You matter. ★