

COVID Practice	Why is this a challenge for people with autism?	What can a business do to accommodate?
New procedures (rules) to ensure social distancing	Things that are unfamiliar or changes to usual routines can cause extreme anxiety.	Ensure rules or procedures are clearly written and posted. Ensure rules are stated in a concise manner. Ensure rules are current (remove outdated postings). Consider posting rules in pictorial form. Offer a social story about social distancing rules used in the business ( <b>Anderson Center Consulting can help with that!</b> ).
Masks required	Some people with autism have sensory sensitivities that cause them to have increased aversions to certain textures, smells, sounds which can lead to increased anxiety. They may have reduced tolerance for masks that cause discomfort behind ears or warm air on face. Those of us who wear masks are relying more heavily on gaining non-verbal communication from others' eyes. People with autism often find eye contact difficult so they may not engage in this form of non-verbal communication.	Be understanding Be kind Offer a social story about wearing masks in your business. (Anderson Center Consulting can help with that!) Model wearing a mask (e.g. I'm wearing my mask, too!") Upon exiting, thank the person for wearing a mask. Don't be offended if a person does not make or makes only fleeting eye contact with you.

COVID Practice	Why is this a challenge for people with autism?	What can a business do to accommodate?
Use of hand sanitizer	Some people with autism have sensory sensitivities that cause them to have increased aversions to certain textures, smells, sounds which can lead to increased anxiety.	Be understanding Be kind Consider posting a sign that hand sanitizer is available or may be used in the environment.
Increased cleaning practices causing smell/odor (e.g., bleach smell)	Some people with autism have sensory sensitivities that cause them to have increased aversions to certain textures, smells, sounds which can lead to increased anxiety. Certain cleaning products may leave an odor that a person with autism finds unpleasant.	Be understanding Be kind Consider posting a sign that you are using cleaning/disinfectant products in the environment.
Increased wait times due to social distancing procedures	Waiting can be difficult for some people with autism which may lead to feelings of anxiety or upset.	Be understanding Be kind Consider a "fast track" system for customers who have difficulty waiting on line.

Provided courtesy of Village of Rhinebeck  
Autism Supportive Community Committee and  
Anderson Center for Autism