Information Sheet

Questions to Ask Service Providers

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People on the autism spectrum and their families often access many different service providers. They might work with allied health or medical professionals such as occupational therapists, psychologists, speech pathologists, psychiatrists or dieticians to help them develop skills or address concerns associated with their autism.

People on the autism spectrum also need to access many of the same 'mainstream' services as anyone else in the community. These might include dentists, hairdressers, bus drivers, optometrists, doctors, or swimming instructors.

This resource gives you some tips for questions to ask a prospective service provider. The answers they give with assist you in choosing which service provider might be a good fit for you and your family.

Some questions to ask

Here are some questions you may like to consider when contacting a service provider for the first time

- What training and/or experience do you have in working with people on the autism spectrum?
- Can you give an example of strategies you might use with a person on the autism spectrum (are they different than the ones you might use with someone not on the autism spectrum)?
- Attending an appointment might be challenging for a person with autism for a number of reasons. What are some of the things you do to make this easier?
- What is the cost? Is there a fee charged if we can't attend the appointment at the last minute?
- Could we come and visit you and your place of work before our appointment to prepare for it?
- Is there any information you would like to know about the person on the autism spectrum before we meet?
- Would you like me to send you some further information about autism before our appointment?

Information you might share

Sometimes it can be helpful to share the following information with a service provider

- Information about the person's personality and strengths.
- A list of things that are motivating for them (e.g. toys, iPad, praise).
- Anything that might alarm or frighten them (i.e. loud noises, bright lights).
- The strategies that can be used to calm them when they are upset.
- Anything else you think might be useful for them to know (e.g. what their communication skills are like, whether they are taking any medications, whether they might try to run away).

These ideas are just a starting point. You can tailor the types of questions you ask to suit the

individual needs of your situation. For more information sheets like this one, visit www.amaze.org.au/resources.

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