

Northern Iowa Therapy: Autism Spectrum Holiday Events

The holiday season is upon us and while many happily anticipate this festive time of year, individuals on the Autism Spectrum and their families also understand that special preparations are often helpful to support less stressful and memorable holiday experiences. Northern Iowa Therapy is known for its commitment to people of all abilities and has been serving individuals on the Autism Spectrum (and related conditions) and their families for over twenty years. As a part of this continued commitment, Northern Iowa Therapy is joining a growing number of other communities across the state in creating *Autism and Sensory Friendly* events for families who would otherwise not be able to enjoy holiday/community events. The Center for Disease Control estimates that 1 in 68 children has an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Holiday staples like parties, presents and decorations can be overwhelming for some individuals on the Autism Spectrum. In addition, special challenges may occur when schedules are disrupted, and routines broken. Northern Iowa Therapy is planning two events to assist in lessening the stress of the holiday season and make it a more enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

The first event is **for parents/families/caretakers of children and youth on the ASD spectrum, adults on the Autism Spectrum, and concerned community members** - "***Autism Spectrum: Preparing for the Holidays and other Special Events***" will be held on **November 30, 2017 from 6:30-8:00pm at Northern Iowa Therapy** in Waverly Iowa. The event will feature tips, resources and discussions related to preparing for the winter holiday season. Additionally, attendees will have the opportunity to complete a future planning survey as the agency looks to expand on-going Autism Spectrum opportunities in the region. Participants will also gain updates on the wide array of therapeutic services offered at Northern Iowa Therapy.

The second event, on **December 13, 2017 from 6:00pm-7:30pm will be *Holiday Autism Spectrum/Sensory Friendly* event hosted at Northern Iowa Therapy center in Waverly as the community prepares for *Waverly's Christmas Greetings on Main* on December 14, 2017.** The ***Holiday Autism Spectrum/Sensory Friendly* event** will offer an alternative for those children/families who can be overwhelmed by crowds, loud noises and unpredictable holiday activities. This event will offer structured holiday games and activities, reduced waiting time, a sensory friendly environment and quiet zones to support the needs of children and youth on the Autism Spectrum and their families. The event will be facilitated by the friendly and experienced Northern Iowa Therapy team.

Northern Iowa Therapy is dedicated to increasing the understanding and acceptance of individuals on the Autism Spectrum and fostering an inclusive community.