



## Rehearsal Guide

# EEG

*(electroencephalogram)*

*Preparing people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A)  
to successfully complete an EEG test.*

# Introduction for Caregivers

A rehearsal guide contains realistic pictures, concrete ideas, and clear, brief instructions for guiding a person through what can be expected in a specific situation. It includes helpful suggestions for caregivers to follow to make the experience meaningful for the person and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. This approach is beneficial when supporting people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) who are anxious about situations such as doctors' appointments, hospitalizations, and medical testing.

A rehearsal guide provides opportunities for the caregiver to assist the person to learn about a specific situation. It contains information on what is needed and why and explains exactly what can be expected. Such a guide is most effective when it is person-centered and used in conjunction with discussion to allow exploration of specific areas of concern. It can be a powerful tool when used as intended.

The expected result is that the person will then experience the situation in a way that supports health and well-being by being prepared and knowing what to expect. The guide can be used at all stages of the situation to facilitate a positive end result.

Thank you for taking the time to use this tool to work with self-advocates to improve their health outcomes.

## How to Use This Rehearsal Guide

For best results, begin to review this rehearsal guide with the person prior to the day of the appointment. Sometimes it will help to review this material with an individual several days or weeks before an appointment; other times, it may be better to wait to review this material until just before the procedure is to take place, perhaps the day before or the morning of the procedure. Together with the individual, determine which will best suit the individual's needs and abilities in understanding the information provided; however, it is important not to wait until 5 minutes before a procedure to introduce this guide to an individual. Give the individual enough time in advance to become familiar with the procedure based on the pictures and information contained on each page and with the individual's abilities in mind.

It is best to review this guide slowly and to focus on one idea/page at a time, allowing the person to talk and/or ask questions after each idea/page is presented. A caregiver may want to share personal experiences related to having this procedure done but be sure to do so in a positive manner, depicting a positive outcome.

## For Best Practices

- ✓ Allot time to review this material when the individual is alert and interested in doing so.
- ✓ Ensure that the setting is free from distraction. Based on the individual's attention span, it may be best to review one page at a time, rather than reviewing an entire guide in one sitting.
- ✓ Explain each picture and practice the suggested exercises with the individual, such as deep breathing, as they appear throughout the guide.
- ✓ On the day of the procedure, take this guide along to continue rehearsing the various steps involved in the procedure. Review each page step by step.
- ✓ Remain positive, calm, and upbeat.
- ✓ Remember to offer positive reinforcement throughout the procedure. If the procedure is not able to be completed, focus on positive aspects. If the individual seems upset, talk about it later when they are calm to find out how they felt and what could be changed or improved to have a better outcome the next time.

# Introducing the Process

(Name of individual), you are going to have an EEG on (Insert date here).

The doctor ordered this test for you to find out if you are having seizures. It is important to have this test done so the doctor knows how to help you feel better.

(Name of caregiver) will go with you and be with you during the test.

This test will take place at (name of location).



**Note to Caregiver:** You may want to discuss your personal experiences with an EEG. If so, keep the discussion upbeat and positive.

# The Night Before the Test (At Home)

Avoid drinks and foods that have a lot of caffeine (like coffee, tea, cola, and chocolate) for 8-12 hours before the EEG test.

If you are to sleep during the EEG, do not sleep as much the night before the test as you usually sleep other nights. Maybe do some activities you like to do so you do not fall asleep.

Let's make a list of the activities you might enjoy doing the night before the test to help you stay awake longer.

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## The Morning Before the Test (At Home)



In the morning (or the night) before the EEG, wash your hair with ***shampoo only***.

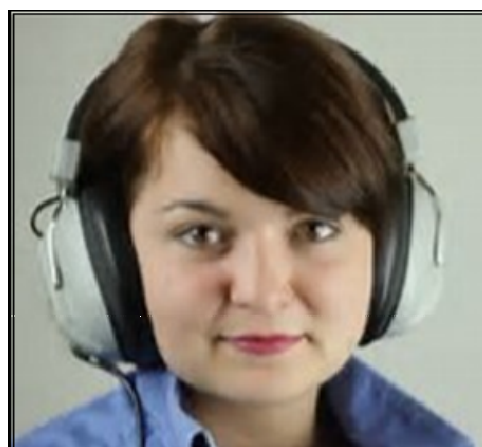
Do not use any other products—conditioner, hairspray, styling creams, or gel—or in your hair the day of the test.

# In the Waiting Room

When you get to the waiting room, you will wait until someone calls your name to have your test.

(Name of caregiver) will stay in the waiting room with you.

You might want to take a favorite book along to read, some of your favorite music to listen to on your headphones, or some other quiet activity to do while you wait.



# When Your Name is Called

When your name is called, you will be taken to a room where the EEG will be done.

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown.

The nurse will use a sticky paste to put wires connected to circles on your head and in your hair. These wires will take pictures so the doctor can see how your brain is working.

The wires and circles will not hurt you.



# The Electrodes

This is how the circles (called electrodes) and wires will look on your head and in your hair.

Usually there are between 16 and 20 circles used.



Paste is used to make them stick!

The sticky paste might smell strange to you, but the smell will go away after the test is finished.

## During the Test

You will lie on a bed or sit in a recliner/lounge chair.

You will be asked to close your eyes, stay very still, and be very quiet.

A doctor or nurse will tell you what to do during the test.

The test should last about 1 hour.

There may be a time when a light is shined into your eyes. This will help the doctor to see what your brain is doing so they can help you.



# Close your Eyes and Remember

Think about things that make you feel comfortable, safe, and relaxed.



Do your very best not to move and not to talk.

The test will be over soon.

**Note to Caregiver:** Prior to the test, encourage the individual to discuss an event, time, or activity they greatly enjoyed by asking, "What would be a good thing to think about to help you relax and stay quiet during the test?" Encourage the individual to remember and think about these things when the time comes on the day of the test.

## After the Test

When the EEG is over, the nurse will remove the wires and circles by rubbing your head to loosen the paste.

All of the paste will be gone after you shampoo your hair a few times.



# You Can Do It!

I know you always do the best you can!



**Note to Caregiver:** Offer the individual praise and encouragement while reviewing this guide and throughout the day of the test.

## Additional Resources

KidsHealth from Nemours. (n.d.). EEG (Electroencephalogram). Retrieved on September 14, 2021 from <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/eeg.html>

Blocka, K. (2018, September 29). EEG (Electroencephalogram). Healthline. Retrieved on September 14, 2021 from <https://www.healthline.com/health/eeg>



For additional information regarding this guide or any of our physical or behavioral health trainings, contact:

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