One-on-one meetings can be very stressful for students with for students. Consider these tips when meeting with a student to help make your meetings more accessible!

- Start with the environment. Is it over stimulating? What can be changed or modified? (white noise machines, less harsh lighting, covering up certain posters, turning off music in the background).

- Allow 1-2 minutes for quiet transition time at the beginning of the meeting for sensory adjustment and processing. Consider all the sensory stimulation that happens when you walk across a college campus. A person on the Autism Spectrum processes 100% of external stimuli consciously. Provide 1-2 minutes for the student to adjust to the new setting).

  “I’m just going to finish writing this email…”

  “I’m going to refresh my cup of coffee…”
● Have a clock visible (analogue if possible).

● Be clear and communicate the structure of the appointment in a sequential way (“first we're going to___ then ___”).

● Provide concrete meeting lengths and say the length out loud to the student (i.e. “I have us scheduled to meet for an hour which means we would end at ___ o clock.”)
  *Don’t feel that you need to meet for the full length of time you have scheduled. If everything has been covered, explain why you are ending early: i.e. “I know I had us scheduled to go until ___ but we covered x,y,z already. Are there any other questions you have before we end our appointment?”

● **DO NOT BE A SURROGATE FRONTAL LOBE.** Mirror problem solving! We are trying to help all students build resiliency skills. For students with ASD who come to me with a problem, I’ll have them **sequentially** talk me through their plan. If they don’t have a plan yet, we look at what the problem is we are trying to solve and step by step figure it out together.

● Avoid colloquial speech/phrases (i.e. “thanks for letting me be your guinea pig”)

● Use visuals! Have a mini whiteboard for your office or scrap paper available to illustrate your ideas.

● Think about the way you’re sitting in your meetings. Is this too overwhelming for the student? Would sitting side-by-side relieve this pressure.

● Provide access to fidgets or stress balls to help reduce anxiety.

● **ASK** if you need to rephrase your question/explanation if you think the student doesn’t understand (i.e. “does that explanation make sense or should I explain it a different way”)

● Try to speak in a clear and even tone

● Be mindful of your strengths and weaknesses. Adapt when necessary.

● Use your Campus Resources! Reach out if you need some further strategies for supporting a student!

Amelia Wright, Learning Specialist
Student Accessibility Services, Tufts University