
Supporting People with Down Syndrome in Living a Healthy Lifestyle

Adult Down Syndrome Center

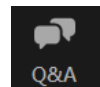
May 12, 2021 | Katie Frank, PhD, OTR/L and Laura Chicoine, BA



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Reminders

- This webinar is being recorded.
 - Available within two weeks in our Resource Library (and emailed to attendees).
 - <https://adscresources.advocatehealth.com>
- Q&A
 - Please submit questions using the Q&A option.



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Adult Down Syndrome Center



Park Ridge, IL

Our mission is to enhance the well-being of people with Down syndrome who are 12 and older by using a team approach to provide comprehensive, holistic, community-based health care services.

Disclaimer

This information is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to serve as a substitute for a medical, psychiatric, mental health, or behavioral evaluation, diagnosis, or treatment plan by a qualified professional.

Objectives

- Explain **why** it is important for individuals with Down syndrome to learn how to live a healthy lifestyle
- Identify **what** skills need to be learned
- Describe **how** we can help individuals with Down syndrome learn how to live a healthy lifestyle

Why is it important for individuals with Down syndrome to learn how to live a healthy lifestyle?

Why

- Good health
 - Physical
 - Mental
 - Social
- Safety
- Achieve goals
- Greater independence

What skills need to be learned?

What

- Eating a healthy diet
- Drinking enough water
- Being physically active
- Getting good sleep
- Managing stress and emotions
- Completing self-care tasks
- Using appropriate social skills

How can we help?

It depends on the individual's...

- Preferences
- Abilities
- Motivating factors/goals
- Living situation
- Learning style
- and more...

What works for most?

- Visuals and videos
- Modeling
- Repetition
- Practice
- Social support
- Being as concrete as possible
- Establishing a routine

Healthy eating



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Common challenges

- Inability to feel full / portion control
- Preference for foods that are not as healthy as others
- Picky eaters
- Abstract concept



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Identify healthy choices

- Simple tips
 - Choose grilled instead of fried
 - Fill half your plate with fruits and veggies
 - Drink water instead of sweetened beverages

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Identify healthy choices

- Stoplight
 - “Red light” foods – rarely eat, special treat
 - “Yellow light” foods – sometimes eat
 - “Green light” foods – eat daily

[Example from Intermountain Healthcare](#)



ANYTIME CHOICES (GO)

- Healthiest within each food group
- Lowest in fat, sugar and calories
- Highest in healthy nutrients-like vitamins, minerals & fiber
- Enjoy 2 or more* from each food group, daily
- *up to recommended amount

SOMETIMES CHOICES (SLOW)

- Higher in fat, sugar and calories
- Lower in healthy nutrients
- Aim for 0-1 serving from each food group, daily

RARELY CHOICES (WHOA)

- Highest in fat, sugar and calories
- Lowest in healthy nutrients
- Save for special times; 1 or 2 from each food group, weekly

[Example from East Carolina University](#)



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Availability & choices

- Keep mostly healthy options (“green light” foods) in the home
 - Buy fewer “yellow light” foods
 - Save “red light” foods for special occasions
 - Look for alternatives
 - E.g., Zucchini noodles instead of spaghetti, lettuce wraps instead of bread, cauliflower (mashed potatoes, pizza crust, rice, etc.)
- Label foods
- Involve the person in shopping for/preparing foods

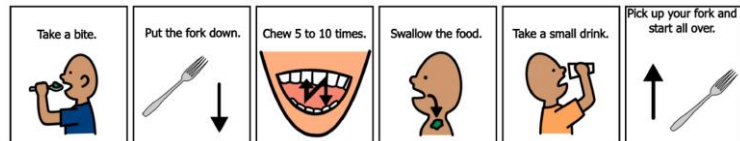


Portion control & satiation

- Pre-portion snacks
- Use measuring cups
- Serve food in stages
 - E.g., vegetable/fruit first, protein second, grains third
- If a person wants seconds...
 - Start with a smaller serving
 - Choose foods that you can have seconds of (e.g., vegetables)
 - Wait until everyone is done with their first plate
- Weekly dessert/treat allotment
 - Basket, calendar

Portion control & satiation

- Serve food from the counter/stove
- Encourage a slower pace of eating
- Use smaller plates, a portion plate, or a divided plate
- Dining out – split meals, bring home leftovers



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Healthy Pace for Eating
[Video](#) & [Handout](#)

Healthy
Snack Ideas
[Handout](#)



Tips for Eating Healthy
Meals [Handout](#)



Fruits and Vegetables
[Video](#) & [Handout](#)

[ALL RESOURCES](#)
on Nutrition &
Healthy Eating

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Hydration



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Common challenges

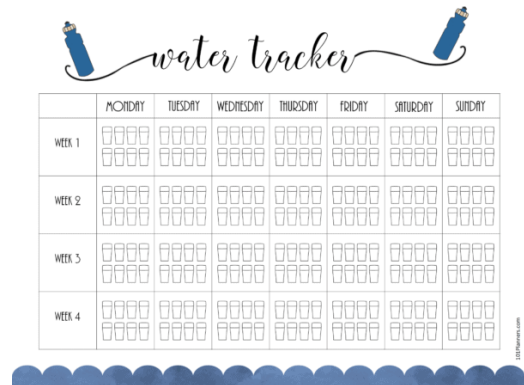
- Inadequate fluid intake
- Taste
- Pop/soda



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Hydration

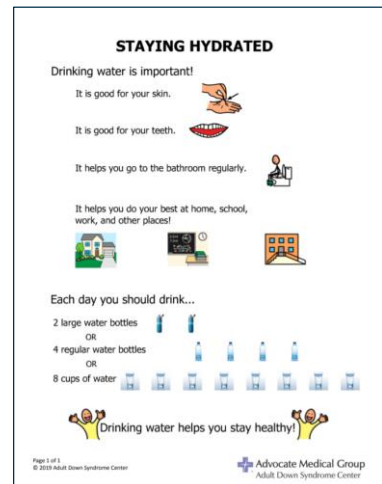
- Inadequate fluid intake
 - Schedule, calendar, visual
 - Choose container to drink out of
- Taste
 - Flavor with fruit
 - Try carbonated water
 - Low-calorie packets?
- Pop/soda
 - For every pop they have, they need to drink X glasses of water
 - Visual reminder



Keeping Hydrated
[Video](#) & [Handout](#)



What to Drink Instead of
Pop/Soda [Handout](#)



Staying Hydrated
[Handout](#)

Physical activity



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Common challenges

- Physical limitations
 - Low muscle tone
 - Joint laxity
 - Obesity
 - Endurance
- Time
- Opportunity
- Do not enjoy it
- Aging out of school



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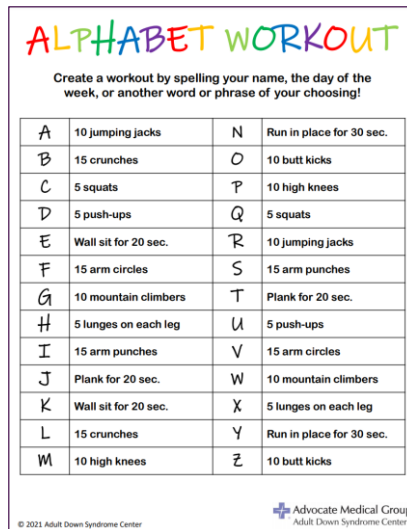
Physical activity

- Build it into the schedule/calendar
- Break it into shorter periods throughout the day
- Explore at-home options
 - Videos, dancing, chores
- Make it social
 - Zoom
 - Family activities
- Rewards
 - Stickers, new exercise clothes, tablet time, etc.

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Ways to be Active
[Handout](#)



Alphabet Workout
[Handout](#)



Special Olympics
[School of Strength](#) and [Fit5](#)

Resources

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Sleep



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Common challenges

- Going to bed too late
- Sleeping all day
- Reverse sleep/wake cycles
- Not going to bed until everyone in house is asleep
- Unable to fall asleep without someone nearby
- Waking in the middle of the night and going into parents' room
- Sleep apnea



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Establish a sleep routine

Go to bed at the same time every night.



Wake up at the same time each morning.



Get 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.



Make a good sleep space.



Have a healthy bedtime routine.

Hygiene



brush teeth



wash face



go to bathroom

Relaxation



write in journal



pray



read



take deep breaths



stretch

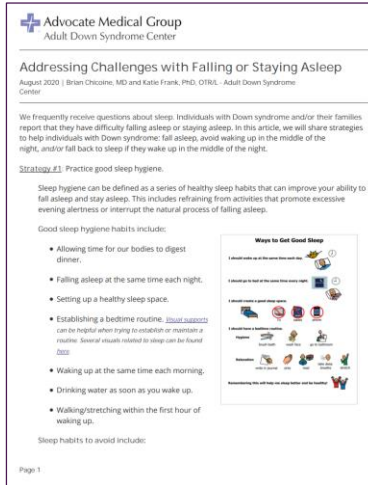
Establish a sleep routine

- Use visual supports and schedules
- Set alarms
 - When it is time to turn off TV, start bedtime routine, go to bed, wake up in the morning
- Include choice in the bedtime routine
- Create a morning routine to avoid lingering in bed



Sleep Webinar [Recording](#) & [Slides](#)

Ways to Get Good Sleep [Handout](#)



Addressing Challenges with Falling or Staying Asleep [Article](#)



How to Use a CPAP Machine [Video](#)

[ALL RESOURCES](#) on Sleep

Resources



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Stress & emotions



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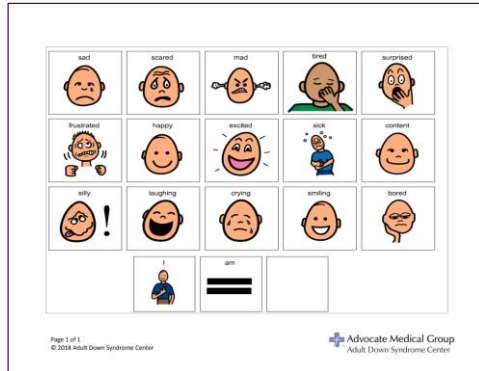
Common challenges

- Identifying stress and emotions
- Effectively communicating about their stress and emotions
- Using healthy ways of managing stress and emotions

Stress & emotions

- Practice identifying emotions
 - Look at pictures, act it out
 - Good and fine are not emotions!
- Separate emotions from behaviors
 - It is ok to feel all of our emotions, but it is not ok to use bad behaviors.
- Identify stressors
- Identify strategies to manage stress and emotions
- Create a plan

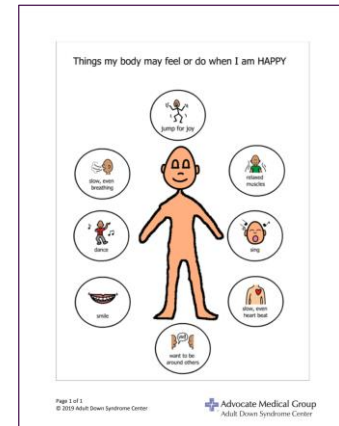
Identify emotions



Emotions [Handout](#)



Body Changes (Anxious, Angry, Stressed) [Handout](#)



Body Changes (Happy) [Handout](#)

Resources

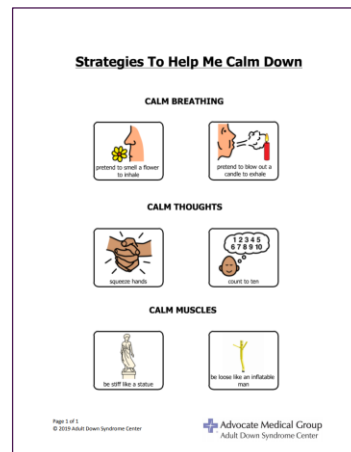


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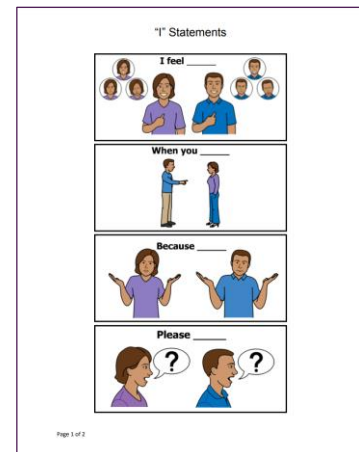
Strategies



Strategies to Control My Anger [Handout](#)



Strategies To Help Me Calm Down [Handout](#)



"I" Statements [Handout](#)

Resources



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Strategies



Tips for Dealing with Stress
[Video](#)



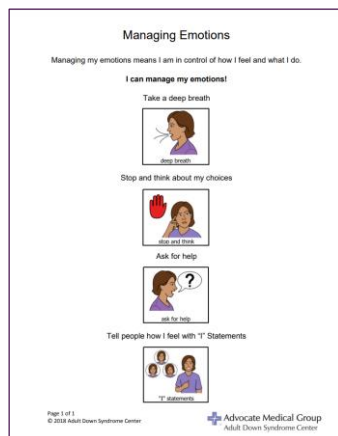
What to Do When You Get Stressed
[Handout](#)

Resources



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Make a plan



Managing Emotions Handout
[Female](#) and [Male](#)



Plan for When I'm Angry
[Handout](#)

Resources



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Self-care

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Common challenges

- Lack fine motor and coordination skills
- Takes too long
- Do not know the steps
- Not thorough
- Easy access to help
- Sensory

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Self-care

- Time and space to do on their own
 - Practice on weekends, choosing times of day to work on it (e.g., morning or evening)
- Task analysis, breaking down into steps
- Prepare the night before
 - Lay out clothes, make lunch, pack bag, etc.
- Make modifications to increase independence
- Create reminders
- Visuals
- Sensory techniques

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Advocate Medical Group
Adult Down Syndrome Center

Bathing and Showering Tips

March 2021 | Natalie Rivera, OTS and Katie Frank, PhD, OT/SL - Occupational therapy student and occupational therapist

Bathing and showering may be difficult for some individuals with Down syndrome for many reasons. Below are a variety of adaptive strategies and equipment to promote safety and independence with this self-care task.

A long handled sponge or a washcloth with handles can help individuals clean all areas of their body independently, including those that are hard to reach or not visible.



Placing laminated "hot" and "cold" labels inside your shower can allow individuals to adjust the water temperature with ease and increased safety.



Nail polish or tape can be used to indicate where to turn the shower knob to in order to reach an ideal temperature.

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Bathing & Showering Tips
[Article](#)

Advocate Medical Group
Adult Down Syndrome Center

Tips for Washing and Rinsing Hair in the Shower

February 2021 | Adult Down Syndrome Center

Some families have shared with us that washing and rinsing hair can be a challenging task for their loved ones with Down syndrome. We have compiled a list of suggestions from families and shared them below. There are strategies that address the whole process as well as strategies that address certain steps that may be difficult.

- Use visuals:
 - Create a visual that shows the steps of washing and rinsing hair.
 - Create a visual that shows how much shampoo/conditioner should be used.
 - Create a visual that identifies all the spots on the head that should be washed and rinsed.
- Play a song or part of a song that is the amount of time that should be spent washing or rinsing.
- Put a mirror in the shower.
- Use bottles with pumps to limit the amount of shampoo/conditioner dispensed.
- Use baby/children's tear-free shampoo. Some people find it helpful to put the shampoo in a bottle without a label or a bottle that is seen as more "adult."
- Explain what rinsed hair feels like ("squeaky clean").
- Encourage your loved one to brush/comb their hair in the shower. This can help get the shampoo/conditioner out and increase rinsing time.
- Laminate a photo of a highly motivating superstar, crush, friend, or athlete. Tape it to the spot on the ceiling at which they should look when they rinse their hair. Encourage them to "talk" to the person while they run their fingers through their hair ten times.
- If possible, use a handheld shower head. It may help the individual have greater control over the direction of the water.
- Put a plastic cup in the shower. Pouring water over the head can help rinse hair more thoroughly and quickly.
- Use a shower visor to keep water off of the face during shampooing.

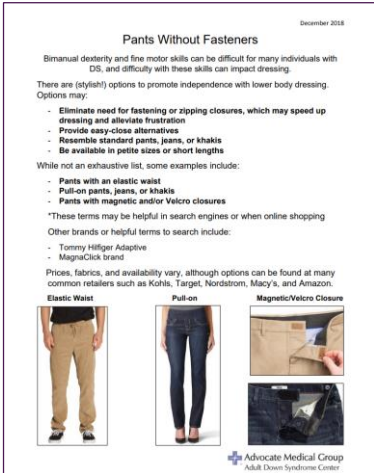
Page 1

Tips for Dealing with Dry
Skin [Video](#) & Lotion
Options [Handout](#)

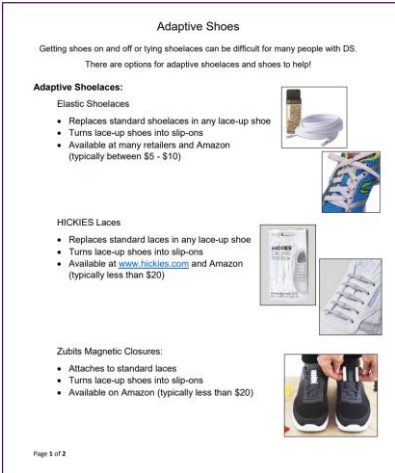
Tips for Washing & Rinsing Hair
[Article](#)

Resources

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Pants Without Fasteners
[Article](#)



Adaptive Shoes
[Article](#)

[ALL RESOURCES](#) on Self-Care and Hygiene

Social skills

AdvocateAuroraHealth

Common challenges

- Abstract concept
 - Literal thinking
- Social filtering
- Difficulty generalizing skills across different environments
 - Use of inappropriate social skills can be unintentional
- Slower auditory processing
- Scripted speech
- "Manipulation"

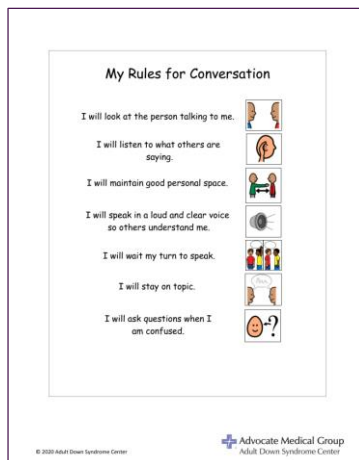
Topics to address

- Social boundaries
 - Public vs. private
 - Appropriate vs. inappropriate
- Conversation skills
- Etiquette
- Managing emotions
- Appropriate use of social media, phone, and internet
- Skills for healthy relationships
 - Conflict resolution, compromise, crushes, dating skills, consent, sharing touch and affection

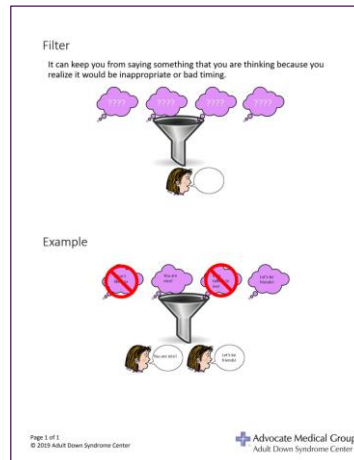
Social skills

- Social skills should be taught and re-taught
- Learning, modeling, practicing
 - Watch videos
 - Role play
 - In-the-moment reinforcement
- Repetition

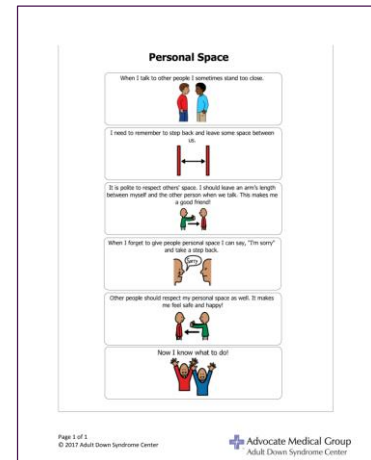
Conversations



Conversation Rules
[Handout](#)

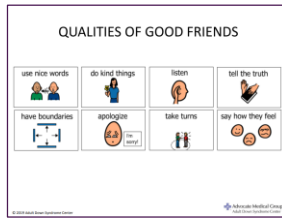


Social Filtering
[Handout](#)



Personal Space
[Handout](#)

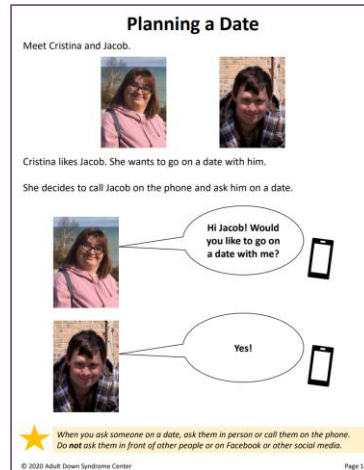
Relationships



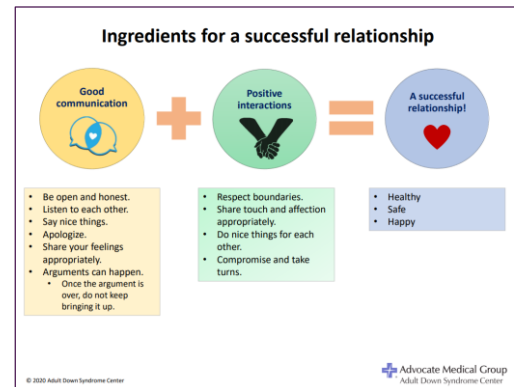
Qualities of Good Friends
[Handout](#)



Compromise [Handout](#)



How to Plan a Date
[Handout](#)



Ingredients for a Successful Relationship
[Handout](#)



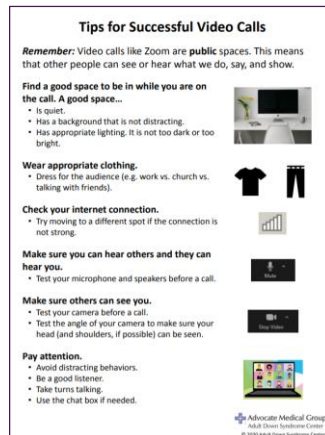
Resources

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Phone & Internet Safety

[ALL RESOURCES](#) on Social Skills



Tips for Successful Video Calls
[Handout](#)

Rules for Phone Safety [Handout](#)



Rules for Social Media Safety [Handout](#)



Resources

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Questions?



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Resources: adscresources.advocatehealth.com

Facebook:
facebook.com/adultdownsyndromecenter

Email Newsletter:
eepurl.com/c7uV1v



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