

*Embracing
Autism*



Employment support for those with a diagnosis of Autism

Aspiration Workshop



Objective of the Workshop

By the end of the workshop, you should have an understanding of:

- The Equality Act 2010 and Autism
- Tools that may help you in your search for employment
- Telling people about your diagnosis at work
 - Positives and negatives
 - Things to consider
- Reasonable adjustments at work
 - Communication
 - Sensory challenges
 - Well-being



Equality Act 2010 and Autism



- The Equality Act 2010 is the law that protects you from discrimination and gives you the right to challenge it. You are protected by the Equality Act if you have certain protected characteristics¹
- Under the Equality Act 2010, autism and Asperger's Syndrome are defined as disabilities, and employers have a responsibility under this Act to make any reasonable adjustments to remove disadvantage faced due to disability².



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Tools that may help you in your search for employment



Preparing your CV



- A CV, which stands for curriculum vitae, is a document used when applying for jobs. It allows you to summarise your education, skills and experience enabling you to successfully sell your abilities to potential employers.
- CVs are used to explain to employers what you can do and what you have done, so a good CV looks forwards as well as accounts for what you did in the past.
- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cv>



Other Documents that may be Useful



- Sensory Profile
 - Begin to explore where your sensory sensitivities are
 - Do you find loud noises difficult to manage?
- Autism Disclosure Statement
 - Begin to explore your own autistic profile and create a document which illustrates your individual differences



Time to Pause...

- Any questions?
- Any comments?
- Time to share



Where to find work?



There are different ways to find work.

You can:

- Register your CV on a job website e.g. Reed employment agency <https://www.reed.co.uk/>
- Search for jobs on a job website such as Indeed <https://www.indeed.co.uk/>
- Seek support from Oxfordshire Employment – they offer individual support
- Visit the website of places you would like to work to see what vacancies they have
- Word of mouth – ask friends and people you know whether there are any vacancies in the places where they work.



Online Applications



- When completing online applications, please be prepared to do lots of typing, so leave yourself plenty of time to complete it (some of them, you can't save part way through).
- You will need your CV to hand so you can copy some of the information from it – you will normally have to type out any qualifications, training and employment individually, which can be time consuming.
- It is likely that some questions will be scenario-based – these can be questions like 'tell me about a time when you needed to use your initiative'. Take your time answering these sort of questions. You should use an example, explain what the result was, and if you can, think of ways you could have tried something different which would have resulted in a more positive outcome.



Prepare for Interviews



AUTISM AT
KINGWOOD

- Do your research - Try to do some research on the Company and the job you are applying for
- Practice your answers - Try to prepare answers to some of the most common interview questions – think about your strengths, disclosure of diagnosis
- Look the part - Clean and smart, could check with family/friends
- Stay calm - Good preparation is the key to staying in control. Plan your route, allowing extra time for any unexpected delays and get everything you need to take with you ready the night before.
- Ask questions - This helps to shows interest



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Telling People about your Diagnosis at Work



Disclosing your diagnosis at work



You may be thinking about whether your employer and colleagues will understand and react to your disclosure in a positive way.

Let's consider the benefits and drawbacks



Benefits of Disclosure at Work



- You won't have to try and mask the fact that you are autistic
- Your employers and colleagues may better understand you and your needs
- Employers are legally obliged to support you and make reasonable adjustments.



Drawbacks of Disclosure at Work



- You may be worried that you will:
 - Be viewed as different
 - Experience prejudice from colleagues and/or employers
 - That colleagues and/or employers may think that you are stupid
 - That you will struggle to fit in in your workplace
 - Be met with a lack of understanding and adjustments



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Reasonable adjustments at work



The Workplace



- The workplace can be a difficult place at times, especially if you have autism.
- There are lots of unwritten rules and office politics that may not be clear
- The National Autistic Society has advice on how to cope with interaction at work:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/adult-life/work.aspx>



Communication



- Regular meetings with Line Manager
- Written instructions/expectations rather than verbal
- Clarity surrounding deadlines
- Regular meetings to discuss progress
- Specific role defined within team meetings



Sensory Challenges



Consider the following:

- Position of your work station in relation to windows, machinery, colleagues, and access pathways
- Use of ear defenders or headphones
- Regular rest breaks
- An agreed quiet space
- Lighting
- Food preparation areas e.g. cooking smells
- Arriving/leaving earlier or later than your colleagues



Wellbeing



Consider the following:

- Work patterns/shifts
- Working hours
- Rest breaks
- An agreed quiet space
- Work mentor
- A back-up plan for when you become anxious

Remember – at break times, you might need quiet – colleagues may need this explained



Reasonable adjustments in the workplace



National Autistic Society video
<https://youtu.be/bcMMW8Yjod8>



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Advice for Employers

A guide has been produced by The National Autistic Society that aims to-

- Raise awareness of autism among employers
- Outline the benefits of employing someone with autism
- Help employers understand the adjustments that someone with autism may need in the workplace
- Inform employers about their duties to people with autism under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)
- Provide information about the support programmes available to both employers and people with autism
- Signpost employers to further information and advice on autism.
- Link to guide: <https://www.autism.org.uk/~media/nas/documents/get-involved/campaign%20for%20change/employing%20people%20with%20autism-northern-ireland.ashx?la=en-gb>



Further information

- Oxfordshire Employment Service, Oxford County Council - Autism Employment Support - Tel: 01865 815809
Email: Deborah.montgomery@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- <https://www.autism.org.uk/>
- <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/adult-life/work.aspx>
- Autism A very short Introduction Uta Frith OUP
- The facts: Autism and Asperger Syndrome Simon Baron-Cohen OUP
- Developing Talents: Careers for Individuals and Asperger Syndrome and High functioning Autism Temple Grandin and Kate Duffy APC
- Asperger Syndrome and Employment Sarah Hendrickx Jessica Kingsley

