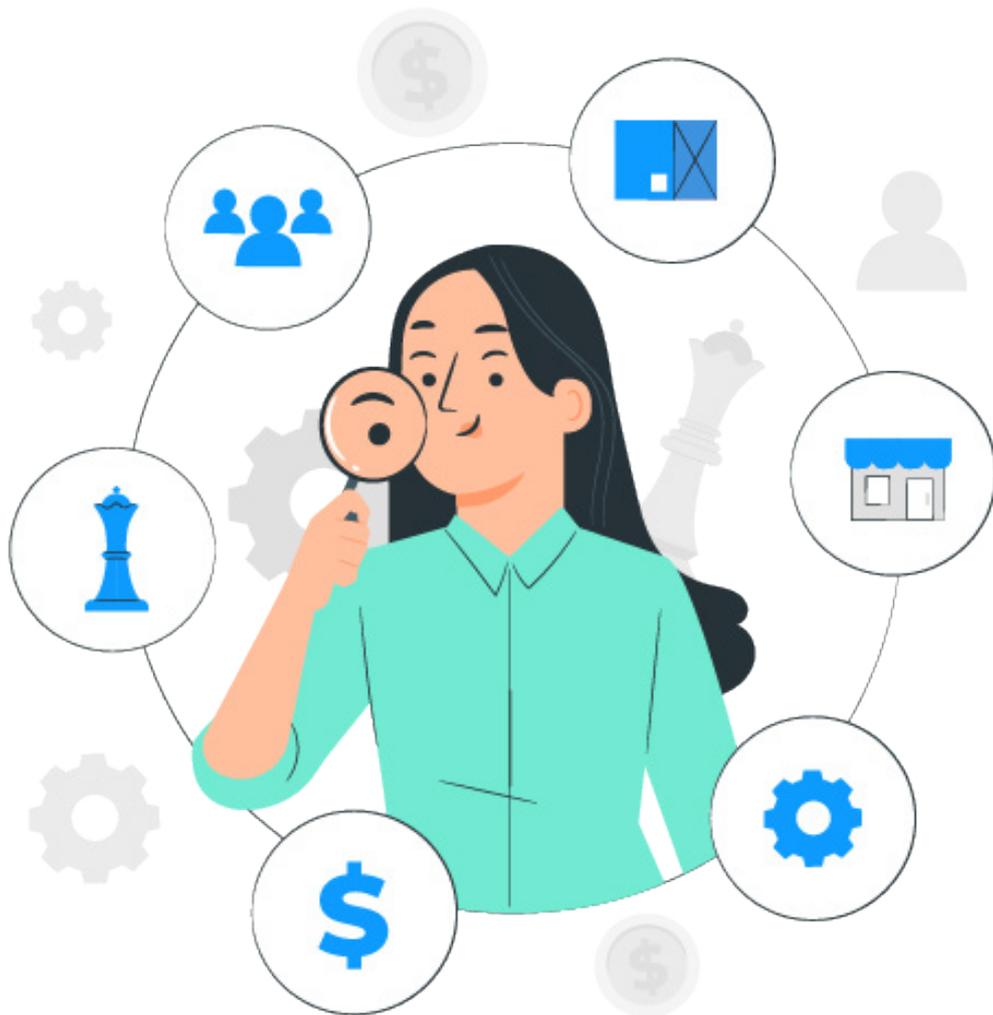




Autism in the workplace

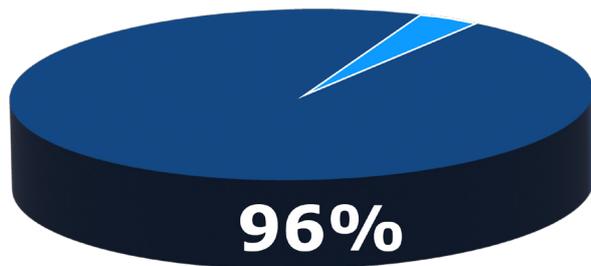
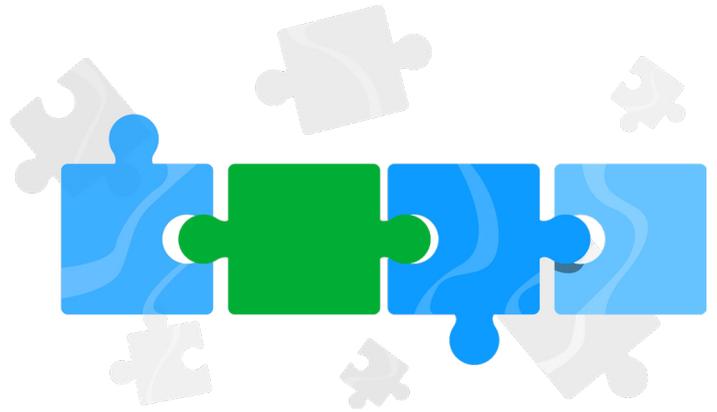


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Autism in the workplace

The process of **searching, finding,** and the day to day environment of **working** in a place which is **not adapted** to neurodiverse individuals can **present** many **challenges** for adults on the **autism spectrum**.



96% of autistic people believe that it would be more **difficult** to **find** the **job they want** in comparison to a neurotypical person. Much of this seems to come down to the recruitment process in the first instance.

8 in 10 autistic people find the company's **recruitment processes not accessible**.

The **autistic community faces** a number of **barriers to the traditional neurotypical workplace**, including a **lack of accommodations**, supports and perceptions of **discrimination** and **bias** towards autistic people.

Job search checklist

- Acknowledge your **strengths**.
- Understand your **weaknesses**.
- Analyse your **preferences**.



Interview Tips

- 1.** Study common interview questions and information about the company to help you to prepare.
- 2.** Practise your interpersonal skills, including body language, through mock interviews beforehand.
- 3.** Ask questions to assess the company culture and understand if they can accommodate your needs.
- 4.** Ask for more time to think about a question and for the question to be repeated, if needed.
- 5.** Highlight your skills and be ready to explain how you can be an asset to the business.
- 6.** Ensure you understand the specific job duties as listed on the job description. Clarify any doubts.

Coping with common challenges at work

- Atypical communication style
- Time management issues
- Sensory issues
- Anxiety
- Desire for a consistent schedule



Tips overcome challenges

Practice communication skills

Listening skills: you can minimise environmental distractions, visualise what the other person is saying, and then ask questions for clarification.

Practice with someone you are comfortable with. After that, start practising your skills in real-world situations.



Don't get too focused on perfection.

Don't feel pressure to build skills or make changes that you feel are unnecessary.

Communication is a two-way street. Your neurotypical peers should also put in effort to better communicate with you.

Adjust your communication methods: use methods that reduce misunderstandings whenever possible.



If you find verbal communication difficult, ask coworkers if you can manage tasks and provide updates through email instead of verbally.

If you have difficulty focusing during big company meetings, ask for one-on-one meetings for instructions and feedback.

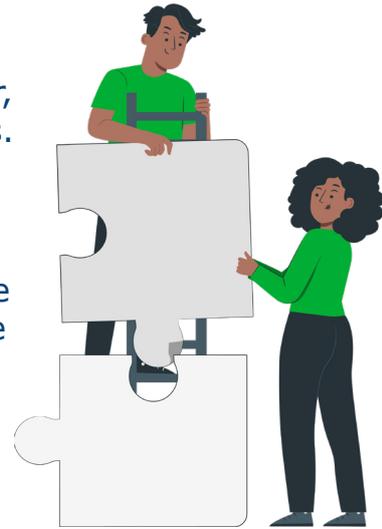
Manage your time better

Use time management tools: use a planner, notebook, or app to create a list of daily tasks. Add estimated time for each task.



Set a timer for each task, when the timer goes off, switch tasks or take a break.

Use a discrete timer, like a phone set to vibrate.



Manage sensory issues

Ask for accommodations: explain what sensations are distracting or uncomfortable for you and request reasonable changes.



Sit far from a blinking overhead light or in a place away from the smells of the breakroom.

Headphones can be useful in managing auditory distractions.

Try mindfulness exercises: if experiencing sensory overload or overwhelming stress, try out mindfulness meditation exercises.



Focus on your deep, slow breathing or listen to one audio meditation.

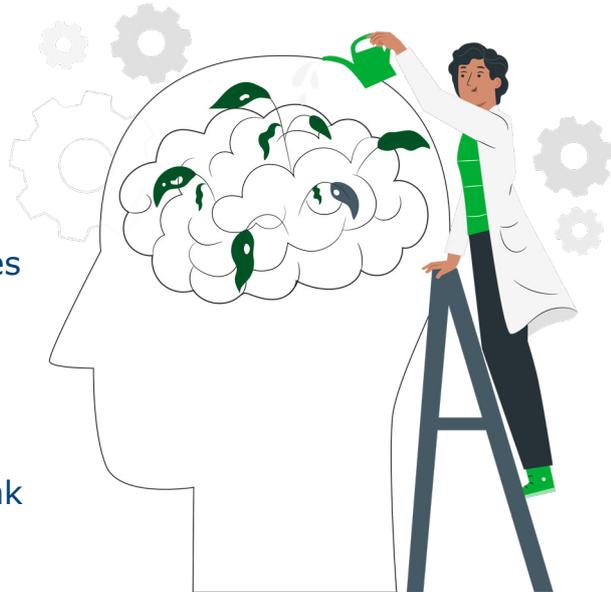
Work with others to have a space where you can take a break and practice mindfulness.

Deal with anxiety

High levels of stress and anxiety can put you at a greater risk for burnout, it can also affect your performance. Your anxiety can make it difficult to form sentences. This can affect your relationships with your co-workers. Excessive stress can lead to lack of motivation, feelings of detachment, headaches, and lowered immunity.

Things you can do to reduce stress and manage anxiety:

- Managing your schedule
- Practice relaxation techniques
- Stay physically active
- Get enough sleep
- Watch what you eat and drink
- Look for professional help



Keep work predictable

Individuals with autism often prefer to stick with predictable routines. Unexpected things can happen but take steps to make your workday more predictable as possible.

Know what's expected of you

If you know the deliverables and specific expectations, you're less likely to encounter surprises while on the job.



Ask for a comprehensive list of job duties before you take on a new position.

Also ask your employer to give you as much of an advanced warning as possible for upcoming schedule and procedure changes.

Handle setbacks at work

Discrimination

The case could have been unintentional and the person apologised and will not repeat. However, you might want to look for HR or legal rights.

Overlooked for promotion



Write your feelings down or talk to a friend. When ready, request a meeting with your manager.

Ask for feedback. Then develop steps to take to improve according to feedback given.

Difficulty fitting in

Don't fit in and want to? You might have to put extra effort.



Consider talking about hobbies, TV shows, games, or trips. Or about work, but try not to touch on negative aspects.



Chronic stress

If every day stress leaves you feeling unhappy and overwhelmed, you should try to identify reasons for stress and take further action.

Remove environmental elements (noises or distractions).

→ Ask for additional accommodations.



Reduce job responsibilities.

→ Ask for tasks to be reduced. Be honest, upfront, and specific about your reasons.

Are factors out of the manager's control?

→ Ask to shift to part-time hours or work from home some days.

More information:

HelpGuide.org: Autism at Work

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/autism-learning-disabilities/autism-at-work.htm>

AsIAm: Autism in the Workplace

<https://asiam.ie/advice-guidance/resource-library>

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neurodiverseworkersnetwork.ie

