

# How to support employees who are neurodivergent

Research indicates that at least one in eight Australians are neurodivergent. This means most workplaces have people with neurological differences, such as autism, ADHD or dyslexia. Neurodiversity brings attention to detail, problem-solving ability and out-of-the-box thinking to the table, so it's of benefit to a business these employees have a work environment where they can thrive.

Here's a step-by-step guide to create a welcoming workplace where neurodivergent employees feel appreciated and empowered – and organisations can capitalise on their unique talents.

## Encourage awareness and acceptance

- ✓ **Educate everyone:** Hold training sessions so all employees understand neurodiversity and the benefits of different thinking styles – this will reduce stigma and promote a more inclusive culture.
- ✓ **Lead by example:** Senior leaders should champion the needs of neurodivergent employees and, if they are neurodivergent themselves, ideally be open about it, if they are comfortable doing so.

## Make accommodations

- ✓ **Offer flexibility:** Consider hybrid working, flexible hours or reasonable workspace adjustments to suit the employee's needs.
- ✓ **ASP (Ask the Person):** Ask the neurodivergent employee what they need to succeed in the job. That might include noise-cancelling headphones, desk dividers or changes to communication styles. Many changes could be low or no cost.
- ✓ **Offer coaching:** Coaches who specialise in neurodivergence can help an employee navigate their job and teach the employee's manager how best to support them.

## Recruit in an inclusive way

- ✓ **Write clear, jargon-free jobs ads:** Attract neurodiverse candidates by focusing on essential skills and avoiding unnecessary requirements that may exclude them.
- ✓ **Try alternative interview formats:** Allow for different communication styles and offer options such as informal conversations or task-based assessments.
- ✓ **Seek out neurodivergent candidates:** Collaborate with organisations that specialise in neurodiverse employment to identify and support this untapped talent pool.
- ✓ **Set clear expectations:** In the onboarding process, make sure the employee understands the role and has the support to do it well.

## Foster open communication

- ✓ **Check in regularly:** An understanding manager is imperative – to discuss employees' needs and any challenges they are facing.
- ✓ **Create a safe space:** Encourage honest feedback from all employees and take action to address any concerns.

## Make the most of neurodiversity

- ✓ **Value diverse thinking styles:** Don't limit career growth and promotional opportunities for neurodivergent employees.
- ✓ **Harness creativity:** Provide chances for neurodivergent employees to contribute their talents, fresh insights and innovative ideas.

Creating a neuro-inclusive workplace requires genuine, ongoing commitment, but by fostering a culture of understanding and acceptance, organisations can reap the benefits.

Jobsbank can help you create a diverse and inclusive workplace at your business/organisation.

Contact us on [info@jobsbank.org.au](mailto:info@jobsbank.org.au)



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*"I love the acronym ATP. It means ask the person. The skill is [a manager] being able to communicate well and not being afraid to say, 'What is it that you need to succeed? What is it that you need to thrive? How can I support you to do your job?' Because it's not necessarily about knowing everybody's circumstances or what they're going through or needing a label. It's just about good management."*

Vicki Little, Chief Operating Officer, Specialisterne