



**NeuroDiversity Power Handbook: methodologies, techniques, and tools for  
Managing Neurodiversity at Workplace**

[neurodiversitypower.eu](https://neurodiversitypower.eu)

NeuroDiversity Power Handbook  
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## Project Partners

	<p>The Weber Foundation (created under the umbrella of Weber Economy and Health SL) is a non-profit organization, based in Madrid, specialized in applied social and economic research.</p> <p>Its expertise lies mainly in the field of Health Economics.</p> <p>Its clients and funders are both private companies, mainly from the healthcare sector, and governmental institutions within Spain.</p> <p>Its main objective is to help improving efficiency in decision-making processes in the National Health System.</p>
	<p>The European Center ACTA aims to develop people’s professional and social skills in order to adapt and integrate effectively in a dynamic society. ACTA Center is a bridge between training and the labor market and our staff has experience in educational activities and is motivated by innovative perspectives and interdisciplinary approaches in education. The common feature of our projects and programs is to find new and quality solutions that we adapt to the needs of the target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>professional and social integration of people in order to offer equal opportunities to the most disadvantaged groups</li> <li>expanding and strengthening collaboration between schools, NGOs and other beneficiaries within the community</li> <li>economic and civic growth of people through lifelong learning.</li> </ul>
	<p>INNOWA is a non-profit association created in July 2020, whose objectives are to promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations (UN). The staff is made up of 3 technicians, each with more than 20 years of experience in Innovation and Training projects and services.</p> <p>The association has a mission to develop and support the use of non-formal education, encourage entrepreneurship, boost creativity, support environmental awareness, and develop solidarity and tolerance among young people and adults, including workers, NEETs, retirees.</p> <p>The Association works in the fields of Technology and Social Innovation, especially in the sectors of Entrepreneurship, Inclusion, Women and Business. We plan to help all kinds of entities to be part of the UN strategy to create a better planet, and that is why we want to work on non-formal training, design and carry out workshops related to the topics that interest us so that our students can acquire new skills.</p>



	<p>Buyuk Ortadogu Saglik Ve Egitim Vakfi (BOSEV, Research Foundation) from Ankara/Turkey was founded as an umbrella structure in 2009 by a group of professionals working in the medical field, additionally from other sectors like education, sports, business world, and ICT. BOSEV aims to support research developments in the medical and in the education sector with its rich staff capacity and high profile background. In regards to this aim, BOSEV hosts medical publications with periodical medical magazines; has 50 management board professionals and 100 members providing ongoing, varied voluntary support; and transfers experience and capacity of over 1000 staff working in BOSEV hospitals, medical centers, clinics and in a media company. BOSEV R&amp;D Team focuses on developing and introducing solutions for systemic social, education and economic problems. These solutions are developed through various layers of interaction with stakeholders. We believe that quality of life improves when the process of social innovation is leveraged to attain social justice, solve systemic problems and develop solutions that may provide opportunities for individuals and organizations.</p>
	<p>In the globalising economy, human resources management is becoming a cross-border task, incorporating both: inter-disciplinary and international aspects. With offices in the emerging markets of Central and Eastern Europe, CATRO is prepared to be your partner in every challenge that your organisation faces concerning your human capital.</p> <p>CATRO Bulgaria is part of the leading Austrian consultancy group – CATRO Personalberatung, dieBerater® and MAKAM Research, providing cutting-edge know-how in all areas related to human resources management and development. We are able to draw on the skills and knowledge of specialists with international experience and to offer our clients strong expertise in recruiting new talents, developing employees’ potential, providing HR consultancy, and supporting social causes through CSR activities. We take into account local market and culture specifics, strongly believing we are the most helpful to our clients by combining both the advantages of the global and the local experience and know-how.</p>



## Introduction

### NeuroDiversity Power Project

The Neurodiversity Power project aims to raise awareness and understanding of Neurodivergent at work, to visualize an increasing collective of people with another way of brain performance to ensure their work is included in the best way.

### NeuroDiversity Power Handbook

The NeuroDiversity Power Handbook was designed to provide a comprehensive guide for managers, HR personnel, and VET trainers to better understand and manage neurodiversity in the workplace. This guide outlines the strategies, techniques, and tools required to create an inclusive environment for employees who identify as neurodiverse.

This handbook was designed to provide employers with practical guidance on creating a more inclusive and supportive workplace for neurodivergent individuals. It covers a range of topics related to neurodiversity respect in the workplace, including understanding the different types of brains, cultural background, disability at work, developing an inclusive workplace, regulations and supporting entities, and questions and answers.

### Main Points:

- **Understanding the different types of brains:** This section provides an overview of the different types of neurodivergent conditions, their unique strengths and challenges, and practical strategies for accommodating and supporting employees with these conditions.
- **Disability at work:** This section explores the legal and ethical responsibilities of employers in providing accommodations and support for employees with disabilities, including neurodivergent individuals.
- **Developing an inclusive workplace:** This section provides practical guidance on creating a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture, including strategies for recruitment, retention, and promotion of neurodivergent employees.





- **Regulations and supporting entities:** This section provides an overview of relevant regulations and laws related to disability and neurodiversity in the workplace, as well as a list of supporting entities that can provide guidance and support.
- **Questions and answers:** This section provides answers to frequently asked questions about neurodiversity.

## Methodology:

The creation of the NeuroDiversity Power Handbook required a collaborative effort between the HR team, management, and neurodiverse employees. This ensured that the guide is inclusive and covers all aspects of the workplace experience for neurodiverse individuals.

**Defining the Scope:** The first step in creating the NeuroPower Handbook was to share the scope of the NeuroDiversity Power project. Identification of the target audience, determining the topics to be covered, and setting clear objectives for the guide.

**Neurodiversity Management with conducting Research:** In order to create a comprehensive guide, it's essential to conduct research to gather information and insights from a variety of sources. How to manage the consulting with neurodiverse employees, reviewing relevant literature and research studies, and gathering input from subject matter experts.

**Collaborating with Stakeholders:** Collaboration with stakeholders was also crucial to ensuring that the NeuroDiversity Power Handbook is inclusive and reflects the needs and experiences of neurodiverse individuals in the workplace. Stakeholders may include HR personnel, managers, neurodiverse employees, and other relevant parties.

**Developing the Content:** Once the scope, research, and stakeholder input have been gathered, the next step was to develop the content for the guide. How to create an outline, draft the content, and revise and edit to ensure that the guide is clear, concise, and accessible to all audiences.

**Review and Feedback:** It was one of the crucial parts to review and gather feedback from stakeholders and subject matter experts to ensure that the guide is accurate,



inclusive, and effective. All the review and feedback was used to make any necessary revisions or updates to the guide before it is published.

**Dissemination and Implementation:** Finally, the guide was disseminated and implemented in a way that is accessible and effective for all audiences. The handbook will be distributed through all related parties like HR personnel, managers, and other relevant parties, as well as ongoing support and resources to ensure that the guidance in the guide is effectively implemented in the workplace.

We as the members of the NeuroDiversity Project, managed a research phase before forming the NeuroDiversity Handbook;

- IO1.A1: Developing and collecting 50 interviews with stakeholders per country (250 in total) with the leadership of INNOWA. Each partner translated into their home language the questionnaire which was uploaded online via Google Docs.
- IO1.A2: 5 National analysis report and 1 transnational report (gathering the stakeholders' interviews results) was composed with the leadership of INNOWA.
- IO1.A3: Neurodiversity Power Handbook was structured as a skills assessment tool and methodology to better map the Neurodiverse people Skill necessities with the leadership of BOSEV.

**The topics studied in the NeuroDiversity Handbook and the distributions of the tasks as follows;**

### **Understanding Neurodiversity:**

The first section of the handbook provides an overview of neurodiversity and the various conditions that fall under this umbrella term. The guide explain the common characteristics of neurodiverse individuals and provide examples of how these conditions can impact workplace performance.

### **Recruitment and Job Interview Process:**

The recruitment and job interview process is also a daunting experience for neurodiverse candidates. The handbook provide guidance on how to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all candidates. The guide has tips on how to structure interviews to ensure that candidates with neurodiverse conditions are not unfairly disadvantaged.



### **Incorporation at Work:**

The handbook include guidance on how to incorporate neurodiverse individuals into the workplace. This section outline the importance of a comprehensive onboarding process and provide strategies to support neurodiverse individuals during their first few weeks on the job.

### **Interaction with Workmates:**

Interacting with colleagues can be a significant source of stress for neurodiverse individuals. The handbook provide guidance on how to create a workplace culture that is inclusive and respectful. This section also provide tips on how to communicate effectively with neurodiverse colleagues and how to address any conflicts that may arise.

### **Techniques and Tools:**

The handbook will provide a comprehensive list of techniques and tools that can be used to support neurodiverse individuals in the workplace. This section will cover areas such as communication, task management, and stress reduction.

### **Conclusion:**

The NeuroDiversity Power Handbook is a valuable resource for any organization looking to create an inclusive workplace for neurodiverse individuals. By following the guidance outlined in this guide, managers, HR personnel, and VET trainers can create an environment that supports the success of all employees, regardless of their neurodiverse condition.

The handbook offers valuable insights on establishing a work culture that is both inclusive and respectful. Its purpose is to assist employees and managers in recognizing the advantages of a diverse and inclusive workplace, while also acknowledging the potential difficulties and possibilities that may arise. It provides practical advice and approaches for nurturing a positive and respectful work atmosphere, where all individuals are appreciated and given support. It is important to note that the handbook is not an exhaustive or authoritative resource, but rather serves as a foundation for learning and initiating discussions.



## Why is an inclusive workplace culture important?

An inclusive workplace culture holds significance due to its commitment to acknowledging and appreciating all employees, regardless of their socio-economic background or personal identities. Apart from being a moral responsibility towards your workforce, fostering an inclusive workplace culture offers numerous benefits.

**According to a Deloitte study, companies that prioritize inclusivity in their workforce experience several advantages:**

- They are twice as likely to surpass financial performance targets.
- They are three times more likely to achieve high performance.
- They are six times more likely to demonstrate innovation and agility.
- They are eight times more likely to attain positive business outcomes.

Furthermore, employees who work in an inclusive company are less inclined to seek alternative job opportunities if they feel valued by their employer. This fosters employee loyalty, contributing to the long-term success of the business. When the work culture appreciates and embraces individuals for who they are, it promotes an environment where employees feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions without the fear of embarrassment or retaliation. This, in turn, encourages active participation and engagement during meetings and interactions with team members, as employees are confident in how they will be perceived.

## Creating an inclusive workplace culture

- **Embrace diverse leadership:** Your organization's founders and executive team should actively strive to build a diverse organizational culture that includes individuals of various nationalities, ethnicities, genders, religions, sexual orientations, and identities.
- **Foster open communication:** Establishing an open channel of communication between senior leaders and all employees is crucial. Prioritize team-building activities and initiatives that enhance overall employee satisfaction, recognizing and celebrating the diversity of your workforce and what makes each individual unique.
- **Acknowledge and reward performance:** Regularly recognizing and appreciating your employees' contributions enhances job satisfaction and productivity. It also



demonstrates your values and positions you as an employer of choice. Instead of solely focusing on exceptional achievements, ensure that you acknowledge and reward performance on various scales, demonstrating that you value and care about your employees consistently.

- Create safe spaces: Inclusive companies prioritize the safety and comfort of all employees, particularly those belonging to marginalized groups. This can include providing private and secure spaces such as lactation rooms for new mothers, prayer spaces, and quiet work areas for individuals who may be overstimulated by open floor plans or identify as introverted.
- Embed inclusion in company values: Make inclusivity an integral part of your company's core values. To gain buy-in and ensure comprehensive strategies, actively seek suggestions and feedback from your employees, especially if your senior leadership and HR teams lack diversity. Incorporating different perspectives can help identify any blind spots and ensure your inclusion strategies are thorough and inclusive.

There are numerous resources and manuals available to help foster a more inclusive and respectful workplace culture. One such resource is a handbook titled "Diversity and Inclusion at Work: Tackling the Business Case," published by the European Commission. This handbook offers valuable guidance on the following:

- Recognizing the advantages of diversity and inclusion for both your organization and its employees.
- Evaluating the current state of diversity and inclusion within your organization and identifying areas that require improvement.
- Creating a comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan aligned with your organization's objectives and values.
- Implementing effective practices related to diversity and inclusion, including recruitment, training, mentoring, networking, communication, and evaluation.
- Monitoring and assessing the impact of your diversity and inclusion initiatives while celebrating the accomplishments you achieve.

An additional valuable resource is a report published by the Harvard Business Review. This report provides actionable recommendations on:





- Highlighting the business benefits of diversity and inclusion to gain support from senior management.
- Facilitating open and constructive dialogue and feedback channels between diverse employees and managers.
- Acknowledging and valuing the contributions and potential of all employees, while providing avenues for their professional growth.
- Establishing safe spaces and supportive networks where employees can openly share their experiences and address challenges they encounter.

Neurodiverse colleagues encompass individuals with various thinking, learning, and information processing styles, such as those with autism, dyslexia, ADHD, or other neurodevelopmental conditions. Effectively communicating with neurodiverse colleagues is essential for cultivating an inclusive and respectful work culture, fostering collaboration, and promoting innovation. While working with neurodiverse colleagues can be rewarding, it may require adjustments and adaptations to ensure successful communication and collaboration. Here are some tips on effective communication and conflict resolution:

- **Be clear and direct:** Neurodiverse individuals often prefer communication that is straightforward and unambiguous. Avoid sarcasm, metaphors, or expressions that may be misinterpreted. Provide specific instructions and expectations, avoiding ambiguity or assumptions. For instance, instead of saying "Can you finish this by tomorrow," say "Please complete this task by 5 p.m. tomorrow." Similarly, instead of saying "You did a good job on this project," say "You have met all the objectives and delivered high-quality work on this project."
- **Show respect and empathy:** Respect different communication styles and preferences. Neurodiverse individuals may have distinct ways of expressing themselves, such as reduced eye contact, gestures, or facial expressions. They might also prefer written communication over verbal. Respect their preferences and avoid judging them based on neurotypical norms. Recognize their diverse needs, strengths, and communication styles. For example, they may require additional time to process information, breaks to prevent sensory overload, or structured routines to maintain focus. Instead of saying "Why are you always so quiet?" or "Why are you always interrupting me?" say "I appreciate your input" or "I'd like to hear your opinion after I finish speaking."



- Be flexible and understanding: Neurodiverse individuals may face unique challenges in the workplace, such as difficulties with social skills, organization, time management, or multitasking. Offer flexibility and support to help them overcome these challenges. Instead of saying "You need to work faster" or "You need to be more organized," ask "How can I assist you in prioritizing your tasks?" or "What tools or strategies do you use to manage your workload?"
- Be proactive and constructive: Neurodiverse individuals may offer different perspectives, ideas, or solutions. They may also have distinct learning styles or feedback preferences. Encourage their contributions by showing interest and asking for explanations. Instead of saying "That's not how we do things here" or "That's not what I asked for," say "That's an interesting approach" or "Could you explain your thought process?" Similarly, provide constructive feedback by highlighting strengths and suggesting areas for improvement. Instead of saying "You did it wrong" or "You need to improve this," say "Here's what you did well" or "Here's how you can enhance it next time."
- Provide multiple modes of communication: Neurodiverse colleagues may benefit from various communication and information formats, such as visual aids, diagrams, bullet points, summaries, or recordings. Offering multiple modes of communication helps them access, comprehend, and retain information more effectively.
- Create a safe and supportive environment: Neurodiverse colleagues may encounter workplace challenges like sensory overload, anxiety, stress, or discrimination. Establish a safe and supportive environment by providing reasonable accommodations, such as flexible working hours, quiet spaces, noise-cancelling headsets, or assistive technology. Additionally, offer positive reinforcement, recognition, and encouragement for their contributions and achievements.

Address conflicts constructively and respectfully: Conflicts can arise due to misunderstandings, miscommunication, or differing perspectives. Approach conflicts in a constructive and respectful manner by actively listening, acknowledging feelings, clarifying issues, seeking solutions, and offering apologies if necessary. Avoid blaming, criticizing, or dismissing the other person's viewpoint. Seek mediation or assistance from a third party if required.



## Conclusion:

The NeuroDiversity Power Handbook is a valuable resource for any organization looking to create an inclusive workplace for neurodiverse individuals. By following the guidance outlined in this guide, managers, HR personnel, and VET trainers may create an environment that supports the success of all employees, regardless of their neurodiverse condition.

## Definition of Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is a concept that recognizes and celebrates the natural variations of the human brain. It acknowledges that individuals may have different neurological profiles and ways of processing information, which can result in unique strengths and challenges. In recent years, the term neurodiversity has gained attention in the workplace, as more employers are recognizing the value of diversity and inclusion initiatives.

The concept of neurodiversity originated in the community but has since expanded to include a wide range of neurological conditions, such as ADHD, dyslexia, and Tourette syndrome, etc.

Neurodiversity emphasizes the value of different ways of thinking and processing information, and challenges the notion of a "normal" or "typical" brain.

Neurodiversity encourages society to move away from a deficit-based approach to understanding neurological differences, and towards a more strengths-based approach that recognizes and celebrates diversity.

By embracing the concept of neurodiversity, we can create a more inclusive and accepting society that values the unique contributions of individuals with different neurological profiles. In the workplace, this means recognizing the strengths and talents of neurodivergent individuals and providing support and accommodations to enable them to succeed.

Respecting neurodiversity in the workplace is not only a matter of ethical and social responsibility, but also has significant benefits for businesses. A more inclusive and



diverse workforce can lead to increased creativity, innovation, and productivity, as well as a stronger reputation and customer base.

Neurodivergent individuals bring unique perspectives and ways of thinking to the workplace, which can lead to new ideas and solutions.

Providing accommodations and support for neurodivergent employees can increase job satisfaction, retention, and overall well-being.

A culture of respect and inclusion for neurodiversity can improve workplace morale, reduce stigma and discrimination, and promote a positive image for the company.

By respecting neurodiversity in the workplace, we can create a more productive and supportive environment for all employees. By recognizing and valuing the strengths and talents of neurodivergent individuals, we can build a stronger and more diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of society as a whole.

### **Recruitment and Job Interview Process:**

As the recruitment process and job interview can often be daunting experiences for neurodiverse candidates, the handbook provides guidance on how to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all candidates. The guide also contains tips on how to structure interviews to ensure that candidates with neurodiverse conditions are not unfairly disadvantaged. We have selected and present below the advice of specialists in the field, representatives of NGOs, recruitment companies or other institutions with competence in the field of employment of neurodivergent people.

Starting from the conviction that it is vital that recruitment processes become more inclusive and neurodiverse-friendly, here are **few simple ways to modify the recruitment process** (according Chartered Institute of Fundraising, the membership body for UK fundraising):

***Job advertisements.*** Should clearly state that the organisation encourages applications from all candidates with the right experience and qualifications, make it known that the organisation has neurodiversity policies and training in place, and give assurances of a supportive and inclusive workplace.



***Work trials and skills testing.*** Some employers find that informal interviews combined with a work trial or skills testing are a better way of assessing a candidate's compatibility than a formal interview.

***Interviews – before, during, and after.*** Making reasonable adjustments during an interview could be essential to allow candidates with neurodevelopmental conditions to portray their skills and competencies to their full potential. Few simple and reasonable adjustments, noncomplicated and nonexpensive, can make a huge difference. There are some things to consider before and during the interview.

**Tips for a smart approach of neurodiversity**, starting with the design stage of a recruitment and selection process (according to CIPD, a professional body for HR and people development, in collaboration with Uptimize, a leading global expert in neuroinclusion):

***Employer brand.*** Neurodiversity is highlighted as part of the organisation's employer brand, for example within the diversity and recruitment areas of the organisation's website. Could list the employee resource groups available relating to disability or neurodiversity and, also, case studies of how neurodivergent employees have been supported and successful within the organisation, these kinds of stories encouraging other neurodivergent people to apply.

***Role descriptions.*** Ensuring role descriptions are as clear and concise as possible, with the core skills for the role and including a diversity and inclusion statement in the job description, that means that candidates with different identities and thinking styles are welcome.

***Candidate filtering and selection.*** Consider candidate filtering tools that focus on removing unconscious bias: avoid penalising neurodivergent applicants for patchy educational or work history, because they may never have previously had a supportive working environment; don't tough critique a spelling error may mean you unintentionally screen out talented people with dyslexia; reviewing previous work can provide a clear indication of an applicant's capabilities.



**Disclosure.** Offer to the candidates, throughout the hiring process, the opportunity to disclose as neurodivergent or disclose any other private information they see fit, because this can have the benefit of facilitating a discussion on potential accommodations, such as bringing a supporter to an interview, interviewing via telephone or video chat, or additional time to take work assessments. For example, asking all interviewees if they require reasonable adjustments for the interview process, may result in a positive discussion of needs.

**Interviews.** A conventional interview can put some neurodivergent people at a disadvantage, making it harder for them to demonstrate the skills and aptitudes required for the job role in question. Some tips, general good people management practice:

- provide the candidate in advance with clear communication about how to get to the interview venue (preferably with visual clues) and what to expect in the interview – including who they will meet, the length and format of the interview – and choose a suitable, quiet space free from distractions
- be aware of the bias of ‘first impressions’ and avoid penalising unconventional body language or an apparent lack of social interaction skills
- ask direct, specific questions rather than questions based on conjecture
- avoid rapid fire questions from multiple interviewers as this can cause stress and anxiety, be off-putting and hard to follow
- give time to absorb interview questions
- be prepared to facilitate the interview if necessary; for example, for too long answers, gently cut them off and say ‘thank you, you have told us enough about that now – I’d like to ask you a different question now’...

**Alternative assessments.** Consider alternative assessment methods beyond interviews, for example work trials, practical assessments, either in person or remote, and mini apprenticeships, all these having the benefit of focusing on the applicant’s ability to perform the job role.

**Ways To Recruit Neurodivergent Talent** (according Forbes, by citing advices of some recruitment experts and voices of the Neurodiversity community):



- ***Make job ads inclusive***, with the information needed, but that doesn't represent the first hurdle in an application process for the neurodivergent people. Make it available in readable fonts with wide spacing; eliminate language such as 'team player' or 'excellent communication skills'.
- ***Consider restructuring the interview process***. In return for an interview back to front or a brief and unstructured telephone interview, can be used to the advantage of neurodivergent people: an interview process extremely flexible and varies from candidate to candidate and job to job; a strengths-based approach to every applicant, meeting people where they're at in as many ways as possible; offering the interview questions ahead of time to reduce anxiety; doing online interviews instead of in-person; reducing the number of interviewers, and providing breaks.
- ***Use 'work sample' tests***. These involve asking candidates to complete role-specific tasks designed to test their skill set for the role in question, for example, putting them to demonstrate their skills by diagramming a solution on a whiteboard, preparing a presentation, or having them show how they would perform specific job tasks.
- ***Make the interview process inclusive***. As there are different ways in which people want to be assessed and interviewed, the most suitable options should be found in the recruitment process and alternatives offered whenever possible.
- ***Ask for feedback***. To improve and make the recruitment process more comprehensive, collect feedback from the existing workforce and new candidates.

**Top five considerations for an interview process to suit a candidate's neurodiversity** (according Randstad, a world's leader in HR services):

- ***The interview environment*** - the ideal interview environment for neurodiverse candidates. Whether it is a virtual interview or a face-to-face interview, ensure that you find a place that can help them focus on the interview by choosing a quiet location with no clutter and a place that has natural light and no strong odors and at times would suit them.
- ***Less is more*** - breaking up the interview for neurodiverse candidates. How a neurodiverse candidate can find some elements of social interaction challenging, if the



job interview needs to be held with several stakeholders, is better to break up the sessions by scheduling sequential interviews, rather than one panel interview, thus helping them not become overwhelmed.

- ***Be patient and direct with your questions*** - the best way to ask questions for neurodiverse candidates. Neurodiverse candidates might need extra time to consider how best to answer your questions, so be patient before jumping in or prompting. Choose your questions carefully and be direct. Closed questions that focus on the candidate's actual experiences, skills and processes needed for the job will be more successful than open-ended, vague and even hypothetical questions that could cause confusion.

- ***It's all about the skills*** - how to focus on skills during an interview with a neurodiverse candidate. When interviewing a neurodiverse candidate, changing the standard interview process to focus on skills-based methods, questions and tasks will help to understand how the candidate can perform and deliver on specific tasks that are required in the role they are applying for. A great way to get a deeper understanding is to ask the candidate to bring in past work samples that relate to the job they are interviewing for.

- ***Let's talk social*** - how to interact with a neurodiverse candidate during an interview. Candidates with neurodiversity may not be able to follow social norms and could find themselves in the position where they are unable to make eye contact, can be fidgety, or exhibit physical tics during the interview process. Be considerate and don't let their social mishaps interfere with your final hiring decision.

The best thing that can be done for a neurodiverse candidate is to ask them “*what can we do to make you more comfortable at your upcoming interview?*”



The same advices are also found in **How to Conduct Interviews with Neurodiverse Candidates** (according Glassdoor for Employers, a leader in employer branding):

- *Consider the environment*
- *Avoid large groups*
- *Be direct*
- *Limit hypothetical or abstract questions*
- *Focus on skills*
- *Check your social expectations*
- *Don't interrupt*, because neurodiverse candidates may take longer to consider how to answer questions, so be patient before jumping in to clarify or prompt.



## NeuroDiversity Power Curriculum topics

These topics were studied in the following result, R2;

### **Topic 1: Understanding the different types of Brains**

This module was developed by **BOSEV** and it contains an explanation of the different conditions of Neurodiverse people, emphasizing their capabilities and the richness of other way of thinking in an Organization.

#### **Understanding the Different Types of Brains**

Neurodiversity is a concept that recognizes the natural variation in human brains and minds. It encompasses a range of neurological differences, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, multicultural background, and other conditions. While these differences have historically been viewed as a negative or a deficit, the neurodiversity paradigm celebrates them as a normal part of human diversity. In this topic, we explore the different types of brains and the strengths and challenges associated with each.

Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in human brains and minds. This includes individuals with neurological differences such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other conditions. Neurodiversity recognizes that these differences are a normal part of human diversity and should be celebrated and accommodated.

Neurodiversity is important in the workplace because it allows for a diverse range of perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. Employees with different neurological profiles may have unique strengths and abilities that can contribute to the success of a team or organization.

#### **Employers can create an inclusive workplace for neurodiverse employees by:**

- Providing accommodations such as quiet workspaces or flexible work schedules
- Encouraging open communication and feedback
- Providing clear expectations and instructions
- Recognizing and valuing the unique strengths and abilities of neurodiverse employees
- Providing training and support for managers and coworkers on how to work effectively with neurodiverse employees





## **Some common misconceptions about neurodiversity in the workplace include:**

- That neurodiverse employees are less capable or less productive than neurotypical employees
- That accommodations for neurodiverse employees are too costly or burdensome
- That neurodiverse employees require special treatment or preferential treatment
- That neurodiverse employees do not want to participate in social or team-building activities

## **There are many myths and misconceptions about neurodiversity that can contribute to stigma and discrimination. For example:**

- Myth: Neurodivergent individuals are not intelligent.
- Fact: Neurodivergent individuals can have average or above-average intelligence.
- Myth: Neurodivergent individuals are not capable of holding down a job.
- Fact: Neurodivergent individuals can be highly skilled and successful in the workplace with appropriate accommodations and support.
- Myth: Neurodivergent individuals are not interested in social interaction.
- Fact: Neurodivergent individuals may struggle with social interactions but can still benefit from social connections and relationships.

## **Employers can overcome these misconceptions and create a more inclusive workplace for neurodiverse employees by:**

- Providing education and training on neurodiversity and the benefits of inclusive hiring practices
- Providing data and evidence on the benefits of accommodating neurodiverse employees
- Encouraging open communication and feedback from all employees, including neurodiverse employees
- Recognizing and valuing the unique strengths and abilities of neurodiverse employees
- Celebrating and promoting the success of neurodiverse employees within the organization

## **Benefits to hiring neurodivergent individuals. These can include:**

- Diverse perspectives and problem-solving approaches
- Attention to detail and accuracy
- Creative thinking and innovation
- Strong memory and recall abilities
- High level of loyalty and commitment to their work





**Neurodivergent individuals often have unique skills and strengths that can be valuable in the workplace, such as:**

- Attention to detail
- Strong pattern recognition abilities
- Creativity and innovation
- Ability to hyperfocus on tasks of interest
- Exceptional memory skills

By creating an inclusive workplace that values neurodiversity, employers can tap into the unique strengths of neurodivergent individuals and improve their overall productivity and success.

Neurodiversity is important in the workplace because it allows for a diverse range of perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. Employees with different neurological profiles may have unique strengths and abilities that can contribute to the success of a team or organization.

**Neurotypical Brain** The term "neurotypical" refers to individuals who have a brain that functions in typical or expected ways. This includes individuals who do not have a diagnosis of autism, ADHD, dyslexia, or other neurological differences. While the neurotypical brain is often seen as the "default" or "normal" brain, it is important to recognize that there is a wide range of variation within the neurotypical population.

## **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, creating an inclusive workplace for neurodiverse employees is essential for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion and for maximizing the potential of all employees. By understanding and embracing neurodiversity, employers can create a workplace culture that values and supports all employees, regardless of their neurological profile.

## **Different types of Brains;**

### **Autistic Brain;**

The autistic brain is characterized by differences in social communication and interaction, as well as restricted interests and repetitive behaviors. Autistic individuals may struggle with nonverbal communication, such as facial expressions and tone of voice, and may have difficulty understanding social cues. However, autistic individuals often have unique strengths, such as attention to detail, strong pattern recognition skills, and the ability to think outside the box.



**ADHD Brain;**

The ADHD brain is characterized by difficulties with attention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Individuals with ADHD may struggle with focus and may be easily distracted. They may also struggle with organization and planning, and may act impulsively without considering the consequences. However, individuals with ADHD may have strengths such as creativity, high energy levels, and the ability to multitask.

**Dyslexic Brain;**

The dyslexic brain is characterized by difficulties with reading and language processing. Individuals with dyslexia may struggle with decoding words, recognizing sight words, and understanding the structure of language. However, dyslexic individuals often have strengths such as strong visual and spatial skills, creativity, and the ability to think outside the box.

**Sensory Processing Differences;**

Many individuals with neurodivergent brains also have differences in sensory processing. This can include hyper- or hypo-sensitivity to touch, sound, light, and other sensory stimuli. These sensory differences can impact an individual's ability to function in different environments and may require accommodations such as noise-cancelling headphones or sensory-friendly lighting.

**Strengths and Challenges of Neurodivergent Brains;**

It is important to recognize that individuals with neurodivergent brains have both strengths and challenges associated with their differences. By understanding and embracing these differences, we can create more inclusive and supportive environments that allow individuals to thrive. For example, an individual with autism may struggle with social communication but may have exceptional attention to detail that could be valuable in a research or data analysis role.

**Embracing Neurodiversity in the Workplace;**

Employers can benefit from embracing neurodiversity in the workplace by creating a more diverse and creative workforce. This can lead to new perspectives and approaches to problem-solving, and can improve the overall productivity and success of the organization. In order to create a more inclusive workplace for neurodivergent individuals, employers can provide accommodations such as flexible work schedules, quiet workspaces, and clear instructions and expectations.



**Promoting Neurodiversity Acceptance;**

Promoting neurodiversity acceptance can begin with education and awareness. Employers can provide training and resources to employees on neurodiversity, including the different types of brains and the strengths and challenges associated with each. This can help to break down stereotypes and reduce stigma surrounding neurological differences. Additionally, employers can create employee resource groups or affinity networks for neurodivergent individuals, providing a space for community, support, and advocacy within the organization.

**Conclusion;**

In conclusion, understanding the different types of brains and how they function is essential for creating a more inclusive and supportive workplace for neurodivergent individuals. By recognizing that neurodiversity is a natural variation of the human brain, we can work towards creating an environment that values different perspectives and ways of thinking.

We have discussed the various types of brains, including autism, dyslexia, ADHD, and Tourette syndrome, and their unique strengths and challenges. It is important to remember that individuals with these conditions have a lot to offer, and can excel in the right environment with the appropriate support.

Employers can take steps to create a more inclusive workplace by providing accommodations and support, such as flexible work hours, sensory-friendly environments, and clear communication. It is also important to foster a culture of acceptance and respect for neurodiversity, by educating employees and promoting diversity and inclusion initiatives.

In conclusion, embracing neurodiversity in the workplace is not only the right thing to do, but it also has significant benefits for businesses, including increased creativity, innovation, and productivity. By creating a more inclusive and supportive workplace for neurodivergent individuals, we can build a stronger and more diverse workforce for the future.



## Topic 2: Disability at work

This section explores the legal and ethical responsibilities of employers in providing accommodations and support for employees with disabilities, including neurodivergent individuals.

**ACTA** has developed this module and it explains what are the challenges of being disabled, not only those visible but also the invisible ones, stereotypes, and risks of bullying. This module wants to create the environment to start understanding and empathizing with neurodivergent, explaining daily examples of simple things that neurotypical do but neurodiverse have difficulties with or they simply cannot.

### Overview of disability rights and accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) states that *people with disabilities have the same rights as people without disabilities*, prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities in everyday life, including jobs.

EU legislation also protects people on the grounds of their race, age, sex, sexual orientation, and religion. The *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*, proclaimed in December 2000, and later incorporated into EU primary law, sets out rights and principles, contains specific provisions on equality before the law, non-discrimination and the integration of persons with disabilities. At European level, currently it is in force the *European Disability Strategy of the European Union 2021-2030*, which advances the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishes a general framework for *equal treatment in employment and occupation*, the employers being obliged to provide *reasonable accommodation*, by taking measures to adapt the work place for the employees with disabilities.

Employees are entitled to *equal treatment in recruitment, working conditions, promotion, pay, access to vocational training, occupational pensions and dismissal*.

*Reasonable accommodation* is any change to a job or a work environment that is needed to enable a person with a disability to apply, perform and advance in job functions, or undertake training. Reasonable accommodation, along with positive action measures, facilitates the integration of people with disabilities into the open labour



market and they are key features of both the Employment Equality Directive and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

### **Types of reasonable accommodation and examples**

- **Technical solutions:** provide a reserved parking spot; install elevators or ramps; office furniture such as adjustable desks or ergonomic chairs; computer screen magnifiers; Braille terminals
- **Working arrangements:** flexible working hours; teleworking; relocation; breaks for taking medication
- **Training measures**
- **Awareness-raising measures:** creation of an inclusive working culture, so that a person can perform their job regardless of their disability.

The identification of the potential reasonable adjustments can be suggested by an appropriately qualified and experienced person, such as an Occupational Health specialist.

### **Examples of reasonable accommodation for neurodivergent workers**

The practical examples of reasonable adjustments that may be done to help neurodivergent workers to boost their performances, are generally related to focus, attentiveness and distraction and presume:

- enable them to work from distance, from home, at least partially, if it is possible
- provide them a special space, free from noise, commotion or distraction
- allow them to take more shorter breaks throughout the working day
- support them for social interaction in the workplace.

All support should be considered, assessed and offered on a case-by-case basis, for each neurodivergent worker, depending on the circumstances of each case.

Other some **examples of potential reasonable adjustments** for neurodivergent workers, according GMB Union guide - A thinking differently at work:

- ★ structuring breaks into long meetings for a worker with ADHD
- ★ providing a second computer screen for a dyslexic worker
- ★ agreeing a later start and finish time for an autistic worker to avoid the rush hour
- ★ varying a dress code for a dyspraxic worker
- ★ providing noise-canceling headphones to workers who are hypersensitive to sound





- ★ varying role responsibilities or agreeing a transfer to a similar post, where appropriate
- ★ providing coaching or a mentor system
- ★ funding the purchase of, and training in, assistive technology (such as time management or speech-to-text software).

## Types of workplace discrimination

- **Direct discrimination** - when an employer mistreats, refuses to hire or promote someone based on a disability or belonging to a minority.
- **Indirect discrimination** - when a practice, policy or rule applying to everyone has a negative effect on a particular group.
- **Harassment** – bullying or other unwanted behaviour leading to a hostile working environment.
- **Instruction to discriminate** - when someone incites other to discriminate against someone else.
- **Victimization** - when supervisors or colleagues retaliate in reaction to a discrimination complaint.

## Common barriers for neurodiversity in the workplace

- o requirements for experience
- o inappropriate environmental barriers: office setting, equipment
- o inappropriate attitudinal barriers
- o inappropriate communication styles
- o lack or insufficiency of breaks
- o working practices
- o lack of training on policies.

## Examples of simple things that neurotypical do but neurodiverse have difficulties with or they simply cannot

- certain common fonts for text are difficult for dyslexic people to read
- some common office setting, like noise, movement, light, smells can lead to concentrating problem for neurodivergent people





- computer screens too bright or lack of applications to support neurodivergent employees
- desks with lack of equipment or items needed for personal organization
- insufficient breaks could lead to a concentrating problem, some neurodivergent people need for more frequent breaks
- common working practices versus special or unique working practices for some neurodivergent employees.

## **Strategies for accommodating neurodivergent individuals**

Mentra, an organization dedicated to matching neurodivergent workers with the companies, after a research conducted on the most commonly requested accommodations by the neurodiverse community, elaborated a *Top Ten Accommodations for Neurodivergent Employees*:

1. Noise cancelling headphones
2. Written, concise instructions
3. Uninterrupted work time
4. Interviewer experienced with neurodiversity
5. Flexible schedule
6. Email/Calendar organization
7. Extra time
8. Job coaching or mentorship
9. Allowance of fidgeting devices
10. Closed captioning and recorded meetings.

## ***Ways for employers to protect and support neurodivergent person***

- raise awareness
- think carefully about hiring practices
- recognize and embrace differences
- talk to the individual about their needs





- give time and options
- offers flexibility and autonomy in organizing work and working hours
- offer alternative and different work models
- offer enough resources, as technical, professional and supportive, including medical ones
- arrange training and write up guides for typical workers and managers, for knowing neurodiversity and accepting neurodivergent workmates.

According to Harvard Medical School, employers can integrate neurodiverse employees into the workplace by making their *workplaces more neurodiverse-friendly* by:

- ❖ using a clear communication style
- ❖ informing people about workplace/social etiquette
- ❖ trying to give advance notice if plans are changing, and providing a reason for the change
- ❖ asking a person's individual preferences, needs, and goals, without making assumptions
- ❖ being kind and patient.

One Mind at Work, a coalition of leading employers collaborating across sectors, industries, and national boundaries, in order to transform workplace approaches to mental health, after a collaborative research of some experts in the field, developed a set of reports, intending to motivate leaders to offer their own initiatives and do effort to promote mental health among various businesses, sectors, and workforces. The CHRO Insights Series reports represent resources for employers seeking to better understand how they can leverage a neurodiversity strategy in their organization, offering a set of Employer Best Practices for Neurodiversity.

## Conclusion

For the employers, in addition to a willingness to work with neurodivergent people, communication is the key to effectively working with neurodivergent people, to discover their neurodiverse talents, their needs and expectations at a workplace in order to implement the necessary changes and reasonable accommodation.

It is important for neurodivergent persons to talk openly with their employers about their needs, in order to ensure that they receive reasonable accommodations and avoid any potential discrimination due to their condition, for a better understanding and proper working relationships.



### **Topic 3: Developing an inclusive workplace**

**INNOWA** has developed this module. They explained the key procedures to create the optimum environment at work for Neurodiverse people, starting from recruitment to how to speak with them, how to order tasks, how to tackle acknowledges and failures, and also about light, noise, or even furniture conditions.

When it comes to neurodiversity and a neurodiverse workforce, in addition to the potential benefits they can bring, the challenges associated with it must also be considered. When talking about neurodivergent recruitment, employment, training and development, we need to start with the understanding that everyone is different and may therefore need different workplace adaptations, creating an optimum environment for neurodiverse individuals requires understanding their specific needs.

There are several key procedures to create an optimum environment at work for neurodiverse people. These include providing clear communication, minimizing distractions, offering flexibility, and providing accommodations to support neurodiverse individuals in the workplace. By implementing these procedures, organizations can create an inclusive workplace that embraces diversity and enables neurodiverse individuals to thrive in their roles.

Neurodiverse individuals often struggle with understanding abstract language or nonverbal cues. Therefore, providing clear and concise instructions can make a significant difference in their ability to perform their job effectively.

Another important factor to consider is minimizing distractions. Neurodiverse individuals are often highly sensitive to their environment, which can be overwhelming and distracting.

Offering flexibility is another crucial component in creating an optimum work environment for neurodiverse individuals. They may require different work



arrangements to be successful in their roles. Accommodations are also important, they help level the playing field for neurodiverse individuals and allow them to perform their work at the same level as their neurotypical counterparts.

Organizations can create an inclusive workplace that embraces diversity and enables neurodiverse individuals to thrive in their roles. Such an environment benefits not only neurodiverse individuals but also the organization as a whole by unlocking the full potential of all employees.

- **Recruitment Process:**

The first difficulty that neurodiverse people face in the workplace is the recruitment process, they often face significant challenges, which can hinder their ability to secure employment. These difficulties may include the way in which job postings are worded, the interview process, and the general lack of understanding and accommodations for neurodivergent individuals in the workplace.

There is often an emphasis on face-to-face interviews and social competence rather than on how well a candidate can do a job. Many neurodivergent individuals can struggle to get through the application process, even when they would be the best candidate for the job. Difficulties might arise when deciphering job adverts, filling in application forms, attending interviews or at other stages during the process. The traditional face-to-face job interview is usually a test involving "social skills", and this type of assessment can be harmful to neurodivergent individuals, making it harder for them to showcase their skills and effectively shut them out of the roles they can play. An example of this situation is that a candidate with Asperger's syndrome may have some difficulties looking the interviewer directly in the eye, many autistic people have unusual intonation or special rhythms and all of these kinds of gestures can be misunderstood if you are not familiar with them.

Some neurodivergent individuals can be unintentionally discriminated against because recruitment processes fail to take into account their strengths and skills. If employers



tend to be too rigid in homogenizing the descriptions of competency-based places of work, there is the risk of excluding neurodivergent applicants which can excel in certain fields, but who show low performance in others. Because of this, it is essential in the recruitment process that companies ensure descriptions as clear and concise as possible of the roles to fulfil, ensuring a clear demarcation between skills and experience the applicant should possess or would be preferable to possess, facilitating easy identification of the basic competences the job requires.

Some of the difficulties encountered even before starting the job search process may include the following:

- Difficulties knowing what the employer expects on an application form, curriculum vitae (CV) or at an interview
- Lacking the self-confidence to apply for jobs, possibly due to prior negative experiences
- Feeling their condition means they do not fulfil the essential or desirable criteria for a position
- Fear that employers or colleagues will not be understanding or accepting of neurodiversity
- Uncertainty of whether or not to disclose their differences and when to ask for reasonable adjustments
- Feeling uncomfortable with eye contact or using less varied facial expressions and tones of voice might mean some neurodivergent individuals do not appear to ‘perform’ as well as others at interview
- Less typical or uncoordinated body movements, which means their body language might appear unusual at interviews
- Difficulties with the ‘social’ aspects of interviews, such as informal group tasks or socialising during a lunch break
- Needing longer to process information, either written or spoken



- Finding too many verbal instructions difficult to follow
- Requiring longer to formulate a response
- Difficulties completing written tasks within a time limit
- Being overwhelmed by sensory input in the interview environment, meaning they are unable to think clearly and show themselves at their best
- Differences with memory or concentration affecting the interview process.

There are different ways of dealing with these difficulties that may arise in the recruitment process, one of them being, rethinking this process.

### **1) Rethinking recruitment**

The first step is that the company states that it accepts diverse styles of thinking through statements about inclusion and diversity in the job description, which would state that the company is open to making some adjustments to the position. Another way to rethink the process is to change the way to meet the candidates, instead of conducting interviews, a useful and ingenious way to meet the candidates and see if they are suitable for the job would be to conduct a series of workshops, where different tasks related to the function of the company would be performed.

This process allows the company to sell the way in which potential candidates initiate, solve problems and communicate in the job's context. Hiring managers are not present during recruitment workshops, which allows applicants to spend a day working on a project without any pressure, but at the end of a workshop, they are handed over a profile for each candidate before meeting any of the applicants.

### **2) Raising awareness**

An effective way to prevent performance-related problems could be ensuring awareness is raised about this state, since the key to success is securing a work environment where employees are accepted and given the opportunity to assert their strengths. Employers should be proactive, by providing information about neurodiversity to both employees with neurological conditions and those without. In this way, managers would need



training sessions, in order to know the support sources to neurodivergent employees, helping them recognize, facilitate and show their strengths in order to achieve greater individual productivity. Also, internal communication in the company would be very helpful to employees, it would make them more understanding of what to expect from new colleagues.

### **3) Securing adjustments and a supportive environment**

Employers must provide reasonable adjustments in the workplace to people with disabilities; however, having in mind that securing a flexible workplace to allow each employee to assert their strengths, these adjustments would be needed for all employees, regardless of disability or neurodiversity status.

Once a neurodivergent person has been hired, organizations have to think about how work duties are assigned. Clear communication is essential and it has to concentrate both on the employee's strengths, and on their neuralgic areas. Also, it is relevant the fact that not everybody works best in the same conditions, the company may learn a great deal about an employee by observing them where they would rather work.

### **4) Customize career development opportunities**

Like other employees, neurodivergent workers need long-term career paths and organizations need to ensure equal opportunities for development for everyone. To ensure this, an ongoing method of evaluation and development is required to account for specific circumstances and be objectively aware of all the benefits and employee restrictions.

- **Neurodiverse environments**

Our physical environment makes a huge difference to our concentration, focus and wellbeing, and it has a significant effect on our concentration, focus, attitude and wellbeing. Some neurodivergent



individuals process sensory inputs in different ways and can be even more severely affected by milder inputs. Sensory discomfort may not only be off-putting for them, but can also be uncomfortable, overwhelming or even painful.

### **1) Sensory overload:**

Individuals might be hyper-sensitive (over-sensitive) to:

- **Lights:** particularly brightly lit rooms with fluorescent strip lighting
- **Visual stimulus:** especially ‘busy’ patterns, lots of clutter, untidiness or notice boards containing too much information
- **Noise.** Some individuals can find it difficult to eliminate background noise and to concentrate on a conversation. Background noise might appear to be the same volume as the conversation, making it hard to ignore. Other individuals might feel that noise is amplified, so somebody who is talking in a loud voice seems to be shouting, or quiet background music sounds intrusive
- **Touch:** Some individuals might find it uncomfortable to touch certain materials or find that clothing feels ‘itchy’ or ‘scratchy’. Some can be sensitive to touch from other people. A gentle tap on the arm might feel painful, and a hug might not feel comforting but suffocating.
- **Taste and smell:** Some individuals might be over-sensitive to certain tastes or smells
- **Personal space:** Some individuals have a need for considerable personal space due to difficulties with proprioception (understanding where their body is in space). This can mean that people ‘feel’ uncomfortably close to them. Some might also have difficulty in maintaining balance and sensing distance and proximity. These people might appear ‘clumsy’, frequently trip over objects or might need to hold on to objects in order to feel grounded.

Other individuals can be hypo-sensitive (under-sensitive) to sensory input. Everybody has sensory preferences and dislikes, but for those who are over-sensitive, sensory input becomes not only uncomfortable but also painful. The input can be overwhelming,



making concentration and focus on other things impossible. Some individuals find that they become withdrawn and quiet (going into shutdown), while others might find they cannot control their behaviour and start to scream, cry or rock (going into meltdown). Individuals will be affected in different ways. Some might find their productivity decreases, others might feel anxiety rising or that their ability to communicate diminishes.

## **2) Inclusive environments**

Many small changes can be made to workplace environments that support neurodivergent individuals, but, again, which also benefit many others and do not disadvantage anybody. Most of these are inexpensive and easy to put into place.

- Natural light is often more comfortable to work in. Try opening blinds and turning off electric lights when possible. This will also save money on electricity bills and is better for the environment! If possible, use lighting systems that allow a degree of control (e.g., lights that can be dimmed or turned on in just one part of a room).
- Turn off office equipment when it is not in use. The ‘hum’ of a projector or of a computer can appear amplified and distracting to some. Once again, turning off unused equipment also saves electricity and the environment!
- When investing in new equipment, look for quieter, more efficient models that are less distracting.
- Try to eliminate as much background noise as possible. Closing a door or window might help. Turn telephones and mobile phones to a lower volume or place them on vibrate or flashing modes instead.
- Ask employees to turn personal mobiles and devices to silent if these are not required for work. Doors that are constantly banging can be a distraction – using a doorstop can be a simple but effective measure. Encourage colleagues not to put callers on speakerphone and to use headphones when they are listening to





something. Position noisy equipment such as photocopiers in a separate room if possible, or as far away from desks as possible.

- Consider carefully whether background music will be played or not. This can be distracting for some. A compromise is to allow employees to listen to music through headphones while they work if they wish to, so that everybody is catered for.
- Consider creating some small workstations that have an element of privacy or even a 'quiet room' where anybody can work when they require silence and wish to be free from distractions.
- Look for unused space in the environment – infrequently used conference rooms, for example – and suggest that employees make use of these.
- Ensure that useful equipment and resources (such as anti-glare screens or microphones for use with voice-text software) are easily accessible and available to all.
- Keep the office environment clear and uncluttered. Have designated lockers or spaces for employees to keep personal belongings. Dispose of broken and unused equipment. Keep resources and equipment in set places. Ensure that there is sufficient storage space on or under desks. Keep walkways clear. This has the added advantage of saving space and ensuring quick exits in the event of an emergency.
- Consider the walls and notice boards. Keep these clear and uncluttered. Remove any out-of-date, irrelevant or unnecessary information. Once again, this will benefit all employees. If walls are kept clear, colleagues are more likely to notice and read important information that is displayed.
- Consider spacing and layout of an open-plan office. Different people have different senses of personal space and can feel uncomfortable if chairs and desks are too close together. Consider placing employees who need to make frequent



phone calls at one end of the office and those who engage with quieter tasks at the other end. Position colleagues with particularly loud voices strategically to avoid distracting others. Strategies for individuals with sensory sensitivities. The strategies above can help everybody. Many individuals find they can work much more effectively once these small changes have been put into place. However, some individuals might have specific needs and might require a more individual approach. Some possible strategies could include:

- The use of headphones or ear defenders to block out background noise. Some individuals might prefer to use a white noise/ambient noise app
- The use of tinted lenses or glasses to reduce glare and visual sensitivities
- Adapted office equipment or chairs that will support motor difficulties.
- A strategically positioned desk in a quieter area with fewer distractions – for example, not in the middle of a walkway with people constantly passing behind
- A workstation screen to block out distractions
- Allow flexi-time – some employees might prefer to come in earlier or stay later when the office is quieter. Another option might be the opportunity to spend some time working from home.

It is not only the physical environment of the workplace that can cause difficulties for some individuals but also the employment environment itself – the expectations and atmosphere within the workplace and of how the work is expected to be completed.

Some differences that some neurodivergent individuals might experience can include:

- Coping with change and unexpected events
- Time management, particularly during longer projects
- Organizational skills
- Shifting attention and focus – some might find it difficult to sustain attention on a single task for extended periods, while others might find it impossible to shift attention quickly from one task to another.



Be aware that an individual's ability to cope may vary from day to day, or even from hour to hour. An individual might find it harder, for example, to cope with change when feeling overstimulated by sensory information compared to if the same change was introduced when they were feeling more relaxed and comfortable.

Many general strategies can be put into place across the workplace and will not stigmatize or draw attention to individuals with different ways of working.

- Do not expect constant multi-tasking or instant replies to emails. Some employees will work better if they focus on one task at a time, and then dedicate a set time, perhaps at the beginning or end of the working day, to responding to emails.
- Inform employees in good time of any upcoming changes or unexpected events
- Encourage employees to use personal organization strategies, such as displaying a flow chart or timetable next to their desk. Ensure that all employees have access to electronic calendars and/or paper diaries
- Encourage movement and stretching breaks for anybody who needs them. Although these are particularly useful for individuals who are of a hyperactive nature, all employees will benefit. Long periods sitting at a desk have been shown to have a detrimental effect on posture, breathing and musculoskeletal problems.
- Colour-coding files, paperwork and emails can support organization and efficiency for all.
- Ensure that all employees are clear about deadlines for set projects and tasks.

Strategies for individual employees



## Topic 4: Regulations and Supporting Entities

**WEBER** was in charge of compiling EU regulations related to Neurodiverse Inclusion and will provide a list of EU entities working with Neurodiverse.

### **1.- Overview of relevant laws and regulations related to disability and the rights of persons with disabilities and adaptations in the workplace.**

The European Union (EU) has implemented numerous regulations and directives concerning the inclusion of neurodiverse individuals across education, employment, health, and social protection. The primary objective of these legal measures is to prevent discrimination and promote equitable access to opportunities and services for individuals with neurodivergent conditions, such as autism, dyslexia, ADHD, and Tourette's syndrome. Here are a few notable regulations and directives in this regard:

- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union encompasses provisions that prohibit any form of discrimination based on disability and guarantees the right to education, as well as participation in the cultural, economic, and social aspects of the Union.
- The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 outlines the EU's vision and initiatives aimed at empowering individuals with disabilities and fostering their inclusion in society. The strategy addresses various areas, including accessibility, participation, education and training, employment, social protection, and health.
- The Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) prohibits disability-based discrimination in the workplace and requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.
- The Directive on the accessibility of public sector websites and mobile applications (2016/2102/EU) mandates that public sector organizations make their websites and mobile applications accessible to individuals with disabilities, including those with neurodivergent conditions.
- The European Accessibility Act (2019/882/EU) seeks to enhance the functioning of the internal market and strengthen the rights of people with disabilities by addressing common accessibility elements such as computers, smartphones, e-books, banking services, and transport services.
- The European Pillar of Rights encompasses 20 principles that address equal opportunities, education and lifelong learning, active support for employment, social protection, and inclusion.



The European Union (EU) utilizes a range of indicators and measures to evaluate the various dimensions of disability, rather than relying on a single scale. These indicators serve the purpose of identifying individuals with disabilities and monitoring their access to rights, services, and opportunities.

In terms of employment, the rate of individuals with disabilities (aged 20-64) stands at 50.8%, while the rate for those without disabilities is 75%.

The EU is strongly committed to promoting and safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which has been ratified by the EU and all its Member States.

To advance the inclusion and active participation of people with disabilities across all spheres of life, the EU has implemented various policies and initiatives. Examples include the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the recently introduced Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.

Furthermore, the EU provides support for the establishment and implementation of standardized norms and tools for assessing disability. Noteworthy examples include the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and the European Disability Card.

Several initiatives have been implemented at the EU level to advance the rights and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. These initiatives include:

- The Equality Act 2010, which provides protection against discrimination based on disability in various areas such as employment, education, and access to goods and services.
- The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which strives to empower individuals with disabilities and foster their inclusion in society and the labor market.
- The European Accessibility Act, which ensures enhanced accessibility of products and services, including smartphones, tablets, ATMs, and e-books, for people with disabilities.
- The European Disability Card, which facilitates the mutual recognition of disabilities in select EU countries and enables easier access to cultural, sporting, and leisure activities. Each country sets its own criteria and procedures for determining eligibility and the required degree of disability. The European Commission plans to expand the card's availability to all EU countries by 2031. Until then, the card is only valid for use in participating countries. When traveling





to non-participating EU countries, cardholders may not be able to utilize the card or access the same benefits as disabled individuals from that specific country.

The benefits offered by the European Disability Card may vary depending on the specific country being visited and the type of activity one wishes to engage in. Some potential benefits include:

- Discounts or free entry to museums, cultural sites, sports facilities, and other attractions.
- Improved accessibility to public transportation, parking spaces, and other mobility services.
- Recognition of disability status, even if it is not visibly apparent.
- Equal access to cultural, leisure, sports, and transportation opportunities under the same conditions as citizens with disabilities in the host country.
- It is important to note that the European Disability Card does not replace any national disability card or entitlement. Instead, it provides additional benefits exclusively when traveling to other participating countries.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) covers a wide range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, such as:

- The right to equality and non-discrimination
- The right to accessibility
- The right to education
- The right to health
- Right to work and employment
- Right to participate in political and public life
- Right to live independently and to be included in the community
- Right to respect for private and family life

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) oversees the adherence to and execution of the Convention by the countries that have ratified it. The Committee has the authority to receive and examine individual complaints and to initiate investigations into severe or systemic breaches of the Convention.

To begin with, it is crucial to establish a clear understanding of disability, including the various degrees and certifications that can assist individuals in finding and retaining employment. This understanding is also relevant for acquiring a disability card, which can grant access to specific benefits such as tax and employment advantages.

In Italy, the eligibility criteria for obtaining the European Disability Card varies based on the specific benefits one intends to access. According to the official website of the



Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, there are three main categories of benefits:

1. Benefits for individuals with disabilities who experience a permanent reduction in work capacity of more than one-third (33%).
2. Benefits for individuals with disabilities who face a permanent reduction in autonomy regarding activities of daily living. These benefits include personal assistance allowances, civil disability pensions, healthcare services, and exemptions from healthcare fees.
3. Benefits for individuals with disabilities who require continuous assistance due to severe disabilities. These benefits encompass assistance allowances, specialized education, social inclusion initiatives, and free public transportation.

It is important to note that the specific requirements and benefits associated with the European Disability Card may vary between different countries, as each member state has its own regulations and guidelines in place.

To access these benefits, individuals must undergo a medical evaluation conducted by a commission from the public health service. This assessment determines the degree of disability and results in the issuance of a certificate. This certificate can then be used to apply for the European Disability Card, either through the local council or online. The European Disability Card provides access to various discounts and benefits related to culture, leisure, sports, and transportation in Italy, as well as in other participating countries such as Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, and Estonia.

In Spain, the Council of Ministers, upon the proposal of the Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030, has approved a Royal Decree that establishes a new procedure for recognizing, declaring, and assessing the degree of disability. This updated disability assessment scale replaces the previous one, which had been in effect since 1999, and aligns with the social model outlined in the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This reformulation reflects the demand for updates from individuals with disabilities, who constitute a group of 4.38 million people in Spain according to data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE). This figure is derived from those who meet the minimum requirement of a 33% or higher degree of disability, which is currently synonymous with being eligible for social and tax benefits. Thus, the number of people with disabilities in Spain represents nearly 10% of the population, totaling approximately 4.38 million people. However, when including individuals with neurodivergent conditions such as ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, autism, dyspraxia, and others, the figure more than doubles, reaching almost 9 million people.



In order to determine the classification or extent of disability, a comprehensive assessment test needs to be conducted. Based on the application of various criteria, the individual will be assigned their Final Degree of Disability (GFD), which is expressed as a percentage and falls within one of the five specified classes. A minimum percentage of 33% or higher is currently required to be eligible for social and tax benefits.

As stated in Law 3/2023, dated February 28, on Employment, published in BOE no. 51, on March 1, 2023, particularly in its Second Final Provision titled "Persons with disabilities seeking employment services," it amends sections 1 and 2 of Article 4 of the consolidated text of the General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their Social Inclusion, approved by Royal Legislative Decree 1/2013, dated November 29. The revised text reads as follows:

- Persons with disabilities refer to individuals who have permanent physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, in conjunction with various barriers, may hinder their complete and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
- The regulatory provisions of public authorities and administrations must use the terms "person with disabilities" or "persons with disabilities" when referring to this group.
- Furthermore, for the purposes of this law, individuals recognized as having a disability degree equal to or greater than 33% shall be considered as persons with disabilities, in addition to the provisions mentioned in the previous section.

Disability, from an administrative perspective, serves as a public protective mechanism aimed at providing support, benefits, and social advantages to individuals who experience limitations and restrictions in certain activities due to a congenital, hereditary, or acquired health condition.

Neurodivergent individuals, in general, do not meet the threshold of a 33% disability degree. As a result, they are not covered by the legislation being developed to unify criteria across countries and provide equal rights and protection against social exclusion. It is important to note that neurodivergent individuals who do not reach the 33% threshold face significant challenges, such as academic difficulties, school dropout, depression, unemployment, delinquency, addiction, and even suicide. These individuals, who do not meet the minimum disability degree to benefit from job protections, tax benefits, or reasonable accommodations, are left without any options. This is a key demand of the neurodivergent community—to have their needs acknowledged and addressed.



For instance, in Spain, protocols have been implemented to support school-age children with neurodivergent conditions, allowing them to request specific adaptations, such as seating preferences or additional time for exams.

In March 2023, the Supreme Court rectified the previous law that excluded children with ADHD who did not meet the 33% disability threshold. The court now allows students with ADHD to access scholarships without the requirement of proving a 33% disability degree, marking a step towards recognizing the needs of these neurominorities.

The European Union has established a comprehensive framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, which includes the obligation for employers to provide reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities, unless it imposes a disproportionate burden on them.

Reasonable accommodation refers to appropriate measures aimed at enabling individuals with disabilities to access employment, participate in employment opportunities, advance in their careers, or receive training. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) defines reasonable accommodation as necessary and suitable modifications that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden, ensuring individuals with disabilities can enjoy the same human rights and fundamental freedoms as others. Both the EU and its Member States are legally obligated to respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of individuals with disabilities in the realm of employment and occupation, including the provision of reasonable accommodations to eliminate barriers and ensure equal participation. Reasonable accommodation encompasses any necessary changes in job functions or work environments that enable individuals with disabilities to apply for, perform, and progress in their roles or receive training. This right extends to all work-related activities covered by EU law, spanning from the job application process to dismissal.

5 steps to facilitate accommodations negotiation between employers and applicant:

1. Evaluation: Assess the potential impact of the disability and identify any limitations in carrying out essential job functions. The person with the disability should be involved as they possess valuable insights into how their disability may or may not affect their work.
2. Determine Adaptation Needs:
  - Involve the employee with the disability in every step of the process.



- Exploring ways to provide workplace adaptations.
  - Use role descriptions and essential functions.
  - Consult with the individual to determine the precise functional limitations related to the job and how these can be overcome with potential adaptations.
  - Decide whether and how co-workers who may be affected by any of the proposed adaptations will be informed.
  - Consult with rehabilitation professionals when necessary.
3. Select and implement the most reasonable and effective accommodations that are also the most appropriate for the employee and the employer.
- Remember: the selected adaptations must be effective, reliable, easy to use and readily available to the employee who needs the adaptation.
4. Ongoing Review: Regularly assess the implemented accommodations with the employee. The employee should inform their immediate supervisor of any changes or adjustments that may be required.
5. Follow-Up: It is important to note that employers are generally not obligated to provide employees with items they would typically provide for themselves, such as reading glasses or hearing aids.

By following these steps, employers can effectively navigate the negotiation process for workplace accommodations, fostering an inclusive environment that supports employees with disabilities.

#### Types of reasonable accommodation:

- Training measures
- Technical solutions
  - provide a reserved parking space
  - installing lifts or ramps
  - office furniture such as adjustable desks or ergonomic chairs
  - computer screen magnifiers
  - braille terminals
- Working arrangements
  - Flexible working hours



- Telework
- Relocation
- medicine breaks
- Awareness-raising measures
  - creating an inclusive work culture, so that a person can perform his or her job regardless of his or her disability

#### Other reasonable adjustments:

- Adjust or modify tests and training materials.
- Accept that there may be alternative ways of achieving a given task or objective that were not considered during the preparation of the job description or selection criteria.
- Provide company information in appropriate formats and assist in communication where necessary, e.g. staff handbooks, health and safety notices, etc.
- Organise the distribution of work tasks in a team so that hearing-impaired staff members are not expected to take minutes.

#### Types of discrimination:

As an employer, you are prohibited by law from discriminating against employees on the basis of their sex:

- Gender (examples: parental leave, promotion, pay)
- Racial or ethnic origin
- Religion or belief
- Disability
- Age
- Sexual orientation

#### Types of discrimination in the workplace:

- Direct discrimination occurs when an employer mistreats someone on any of the 6 grounds listed above.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when a practice, policy or rule that applies to all has a negative effect on a particular group. For example, the application of



unfavourable rules for part-time workers may indirectly discriminate against women, since the majority of part-time workers are women.

- Harassment is unwanted conduct, intimidation or other behaviour that leads to a hostile work environment.
- Instruction to discriminate occurs when one person encourages another person to discriminate against another person. For example, if an employer asks a temporary employment agency to look only for workers under the age of 40.
- Victimization occurs when supervisors or colleagues retaliate in reaction to a complaint of discrimination. For example, if someone has been dismissed or refused a promotion because they made a complaint of discrimination against their boss.

However, there are situations in which different treatment based on one of the following grounds prohibited may be justified under strict conditions. For example, it may be possible to justify age discrimination to promote the employment of young workers if a national rule requires workers to retire after a certain age.

If you have a disability, you have the same employment rights as other employees:

- Minimum wage
- Maximum working hours per day (working day)
- Statement of terms and conditions (employment contract)
- Pay statement (payroll)
- Breaks during the working day
- Right to disconnect outside working hours
- Leaving work (annual leave and public holidays)
- Equal treatment in the workplace (you must be treated equally regardless of your gender, marital status, family, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, religious beliefs). Discrimination on any of these grounds during the selection process, recruitment or in the workplace is illegal.
- Privacy and data protection
- Part-time employees, zero hours contracts and work permits (A part-time employee cannot be treated less favourably than a comparable full-time employee) If you are a full-time employee you have no legal right to switch to another type of part-time contract, but your employer must consider your request.





- Minimum notice periods for dismissal or change of employment due to personal decision.
- Employees who are dismissed for cause have certain rights.
- If you have a complaint about your employment rights, you should first talk to your employer.

## **2.- Overview of support organizations such as disability employment services and advocacy organizations.**

- When individuals with disabilities are seeking employment, whether it's their first job or returning after a period of illness, they should consider their abilities and how their disability may impact the type of job they are applying for.
- It is important to be aware of your rights and the obligations that potential employers have towards you under equality legislation.
- The decision of whether to disclose your disability to potential employers is yours to make, especially if your disability is not immediately apparent, such as a chronic illness or mental health condition.
- Support programs are available to assist you in finding employment and to provide training or employment programs to help you prepare for the workforce.
- Training opportunities for employed individuals are offered through apprenticeships and on-the-job training within companies

The European Union (EU) is dedicated to enhancing employment opportunities and social inclusion for individuals with disabilities, who account for approximately one in six people aged 15 and above in the EU. The EU has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), a legally binding international treaty that recognizes the right to work and employment as a fundamental right for individuals with disabilities (Article 27).

The primary instrument for implementing the CRPD within the EU is the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which aims to empower individuals with disabilities to fully exercise their rights, participate in society, and have equal access to employment. The EU is currently developing a new ambitious European Disability Strategy for 2021-2030, which will build upon the accomplishments of the previous strategy and address persisting challenges. To support the employment of individuals with disabilities, the



EU has implemented various legal provisions, initiatives, actions, and strategies encompassing areas such as non-discrimination, workplace accommodations, public employment services, accessibility, financial incentives, and EU funding.

Moreover, alongside these EU-level initiatives, numerous support organizations exist at national and local levels that offer disability employment services and advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities. Although people with disabilities encounter numerous barriers to employment, including discrimination, limited accessibility, and low expectations, there are entities that assist them in finding and maintaining meaningful employment, while also advocating for their rights and inclusion.

There are numerous organizations within the EU that provide support and advocacy for people with disabilities. Some examples include:

- The Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC), which prohibits disability discrimination in employment and requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for workers with disabilities.
- The European Accessibility Act (2019/882/EU), which establishes common accessibility requirements for essential products and services necessary for the participation of people with disabilities in the labor market.
- The European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which offer financial support to Member States and regions for projects promoting the social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities, such as training, job placement, and accessibility measures.
- The European Network of Public Employment Services (PES Network), which facilitates the exchange of best practices among national public employment services regarding services for people with disabilities.
- The National Disability Authority (NDA) of Ireland, an independent statutory body that advises the government on disability policy, monitors the implementation of the CRPD, and promotes universal design principles.
- The European Disability Forum (EDF), an umbrella organization representing the interests of 100 million people with disabilities in the EU, advocating for their rights and monitoring the CRPD's implementation.
- The Confederation of Family Organizations in the European Union (COFACE), a network of civil society organizations that promotes family-friendly policies and supports families with members with disabilities.
- Workability Europe (WE), a network of service providers offering supported employment and other work-related services for people with disabilities.





- The European Network for Independent Living (ENIL), an organization that advocates for independent living and the full inclusion of people with disabilities in society.
- The European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities (EASPD), a network of health and social service providers across Europe supporting the rights and participation of people with disabilities.
- The Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED), which produces reports, data, and indicators on disability issues in the EU and its Member States.
- The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE), an independent organization supporting the development of inclusive education systems for learners with special educational needs.
- The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), an independent EU agency providing evidence-based advice on fundamental rights, including those of persons with disabilities.
- The European Foundation Centre (EFC), a network of foundations and corporate funders promoting philanthropy in Europe, including a Disability Thematic Network that supports the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities.
- The European Rehabilitation Platform (EPR), a network of service providers aiming to improve the quality and innovation of rehabilitation services through training, benchmarking, and exchange of good practices.
- The European Union of the Deaf (EUD), an NGO representing the interests of deaf people in Europe, advocating for sign language recognition, accessibility, and equal opportunities.

These organizations contribute to the advancement of disability rights and the promotion of inclusivity across various domains within the EU.

### **3.- List of EU entities working with Neurodiverse People**

These are a few examples of EU entities that collaborate with neurodiverse individuals or promote neurodiversity in the workplace. Neurodiversity is an essential aspect of diversity and inclusion that can bring benefits to both employers and employees.

- The EY UK Neuro-Diverse Centre of Excellence (NCoE) is a program that recruits neurodivergent individuals to work in integrated client teams across the UK. The NCoE provides training, mentoring, and accommodations to support the success of neurodiverse employees. Additionally, the program aims to raise awareness and understanding of neurodiversity among EY's clients and partners.
- Deloitte Neurodiversity Programme is a global initiative that recruits and supports neurodiverse professionals across various service lines and functions



within Deloitte. The program offers a tailored hiring process, onboarding support, training, mentoring, and reasonable accommodations to facilitate the growth and success of neurodiverse employees. Deloitte also fosters a culture of inclusion and respect for neurodiversity among its staff and clients.

- SAP's Autism in the Workplace Programme is a global initiative that hires individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) for diverse roles within the company. The program incorporates a modified hiring process, career guidance, mentoring, and peer support to facilitate the integration and high performance of employees with ASD. SAP benefits from the unique perspectives and skills of these employees, such as attention to detail, logical thinking, and problem-solving abilities.
- Microsoft Neurodiversity Hiring Programme, launched in 2015, provides an alternative interview environment for neurodivergent candidates to showcase their skills to hiring managers.
- Ford Motor Company has partnered with the Autism Alliance of Michigan to establish a pilot program that offers training and employment opportunities for individuals with autism in product development roles.
- Specialisterne's model aims to create value for individuals with autism, Asperger's syndrome, and similar conditions, as well as for companies committed to embracing neurodiversity. The organization promotes the inclusion of neurodiverse individuals and contributes to society as a whole.
- NeurodiverSí focuses on employability and neurodiversity as a business strategy to achieve equal employment opportunities. They raise awareness, provide training to companies, and promote the inclusion of all individuals, with special attention to neurodiversity.
- The Adecco Foundation seeks individuals with neurodiverse profiles to participate in employment projects related to technological innovation in emerging sectors.
- Universal Music UK actively embraces diverse talent, including individuals with neurodivergence, to foster an inclusive work environment.
- Auticon provides a supportive work environment for neurodiverse employees, offering accommodations such as noise-canceling headphones, access to dark rooms, flexible lunch breaks, and alternative communication methods.
- La Casa de Carlota is an advertising agency that employs neurodivergent individuals, including those with Down Syndrome, to foster inclusivity and diversity in the industry.
- Skills Development Scotland recognizes the positive characteristics associated with neurodiversity conditions, which can benefit companies seeking technology talent.





- JPMorgan Chase's Autism at Work program, launched in 2015, has grown to employ over 150 individuals in eight countries, boasting a 99% retention rate.
- IBM introduced the IBM Ignite Autism Spectrum Disorder program in 2017 to support neurodiverse individuals in their careers.
- Genius Within assists neurodivergent individuals in integrating into companies, providing guidance on interviews, CV writing, and job applications. The organization also collaborates with companies to create inclusive work environments.
- GCHQ, the UK spy agency, and BAE Systems, a weapons manufacturer, actively recruit neurodiverse women for cybersecurity roles, recognizing their skills in quick pattern recognition, increased accuracy, and attention to detail.
- Code First Girls, a social enterprise, assists in recruiting neurodiverse women for positions in GCHQ and BAE Systems, highlighting their valuable skills and qualities.
- Direct Line, an insurance company, actively recruits neurodivergent individuals, recognizing the unique perspectives they bring to the workplace.
- Exceptional Individuals offers guidance on interview preparation, CV writing, and applications for neurodiverse individuals. They also collaborate with companies to foster more inclusive work environments.

These examples demonstrate the commitment of various organizations to embrace neurodiversity and create inclusive workplaces that celebrate the strengths and contributions of individuals with diverse neurological profiles.

#### **4. Resources for employers and workers seeking support.**

What types of accommodations can I ask for?

Depending on your specific disability or health condition and any challenges you may face during a selection test, you can request accommodations. It's important to note that the accommodations provided to you may differ from your initial requests after a thorough evaluation.

Examples of potential accommodations:

- Implementing accessibility measures.
- Allowing additional time for testing.
- Providing texts with larger fonts or access to enlargement software.
- Supplying materials in Braille or offering a Braille keyboard.
- Adjusting lighting conditions to meet individual needs.



- Offering height-adjustable tables or desks.
- Providing individual assistance, among other possible adaptations.

There are various resources available to support employers and employees seeking assistance with neurodiversity. Some of these resources include:

- The Job Accommodation Service (JAS), a government service in Canada that offers free support to employers and employees with disabilities, including those with neurological differences. JAS can help identify and implement reasonable accommodations, provide information and guidance on disability-related matters, and facilitate communication and collaboration between employers and employees.
- The Ready, Willing & Able program, which connects employers with job seekers who have intellectual disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This program offers recruitment support, training and coaching, workplace assessments, accommodations, and ongoing follow-up and retention services.
- The Neurodiversity Hub, a global initiative that aims to establish a network of employers, educators, students, and practitioners who advocate for neurodiversity in the workplace. The hub provides resources, tools, best practices, case studies, and events related to neurodiversity issues and solutions.
- The World Economic Forum, an international organization that brings together leaders from various sectors to develop global agendas and promote positive change. The forum offers insights, reports, articles, and platforms that address neurodiversity-related issues and trends.
- The Great Place to Work Institute, a global authority on workplace culture and employee engagement. The institute conducts research, surveys, benchmarks, and certifications to help organizations build and foster inclusive and respectful workplace cultures for everyone.

### **Techniques and Tools :**

The handbook provide a comprehensive list of techniques and tools that can be used to support neurodiverse individuals in the workplace. This section cover areas such as communication, task management, and stress reduction.

Strategies and tools the employer can do to support the neurodivergent employee and candidate?

Specialisterne Foundation spreads its know-how to others and persuade multinationals to start neurodiversity programs. Most companies that have done so have worked with



the foundation to deploy some version of the Specialisterne approach. It has several major elements:

### 1 **Team with “social partners” for expertise you lack.**

Managers know a lot about many things but usually are not experts in autism or other categories of neurodiversity. Also, for many good reasons, companies hesitate to extend their activities into employees’ private lives, where neurodiverse people may need extra help.

To fill these gaps, the companies entered into relationships with “social partners”—government or nonprofit organizations committed to helping people with disabilities obtain jobs. This approach helps companies navigate local employment regulations that apply to people with disabilities, suggest candidates from lists of neurodiverse people seeking employment, assist in prescreening, help arrange public funding for training, sometimes administer training, and provide the mentorship and ongoing support (especially outside work hours) needed to ensure that neurodiverse employees will succeed.

### 2. **Use nontraditional, noninterview-based assessment and training processes.**

To this end, Specialisterne created “hangouts”—comfortable gatherings, usually lasting half a day, in which neurodiverse job candidates can demonstrate their abilities in casual interactions with company managers. At the end of a hangout, some candidates are selected for two to six weeks of further assessment and training (the duration varies by company). During this time they use Lego Mindstorms robotic construction and programming kits to work on assigned projects—first individually and then in groups, with the projects becoming more like actual work as the process continues.

Some companies have additional sessions. SAP, for example, established a “soft skills” module to help candidates who have never worked in a professional environment become familiar with the norms of such a setting. These efforts are typically funded by the government or nonprofits. Trainees are usually paid.

By extending the assessment process, such programs allow time for candidates’ capabilities to surface. There are, of course, other ways to do this. HPE has begun using internships that include similar elements.

### 3. **Train other workers and managers.**

Short (some are just half a day), low-key training sessions help existing employees understand what to expect from their new colleagues—for example, that they might



need accommodations and might seem different. Managers get somewhat more-extensive training to familiarize them with sources of support for program employees.

#### **4. Set up a support ecosystem.**

Companies with neurodiverse programs design and maintain simple support systems for their new employees. For example

- SAP defines two “support circles”—one for the workplace, the other for an employee’s personal life. The workplace support circle includes a team manager, a team buddy, a job and life skills coach, a work mentor, and an “HR business partner,” who oversees a group of program participants. Buddies are staff members on the same team who provide assistance with daily tasks, workload management, and prioritization. Job and life skills coaches are usually from social partner organizations. Other social partner roles include vocational rehab counselor and personal counselor. Usually, families of employees also provide support.

- HPE takes a different approach. It places new neurodiverse employees in “pods” of about 15 people, where they work alongside neurotypical colleagues in a roughly 4:1 ratio while two managers and a consultant are tasked with addressing neurodiversity-related issues.

#### **5. Tailor methods for managing careers.**

Employees hired through these programs need long-term career paths, just as other workers do. This requires serious thought about ongoing assessment and development that will take the special circumstances of neurodiverse employment into account. Fortunately, over time supervisors usually get a good sense of program employees’ talents and limitations.

Participants undergo the same performance evaluations that other employees do, but managers work within those processes to set specific goals. Although some goals may relate to participants’ conditions, no allowances are made for unsatisfactory performance. If anything, neurodiverse employees must satisfy more requirements than others, because they must meet program objectives in addition to the performance objectives expected of anyone in their role.



## 6. **Scale the neurodiversity program in variety of employment areas.**

It's easiest to expand employment in areas, such as software testing, business analytics, and cybersecurity, in which tasks are a good fit with neurodiverse talent. But the practice in SAP and HP proves that employment areas for neurodivergent people could be much broader.

“The original expectation, as I understood it, was that these colleagues would be mostly focused on repetitive work, such as software testing. But in practice they have been able to add value in a much broader range of tasks.”, says manager in SAP. Those include product management, which involves coordinating the development of new SAP offerings; HR service associate, which entails organizing and planning HR activities; associate consultant, which requires helping customers apply SAP solutions to business problems; and customer support, which means working with customers on the phone to help them use SAP software. The latter two defy the assumption that people with autism can't hold jobs that require social skills.

Tips and tools to support neurodivergent colleagues for task management

### **Performance and task Management**

Quite often, neurodivergent individuals face formal capability procedures unnecessarily because the organisations' processes are not neuro-inclusive. Here are three ways you can best support your neurodivergent employees to enhance performance to benefit both the individual and the business:

#### **Tip 1: Identify skills gaps and implement initiatives to close these**

What does 'performance management' mean to your organisation? If it is addressing performance issues and ensuring that employees are meeting individual and organisational goals effectively and efficiently, you could endeavour to anticipate challenges and support needs ahead of time so that you know that everything is in place for employees to reach their potential. This could also include implementing appropriate reasonable adjustments as mentioned earlier and should be considered prior to proceeding with any formal capability measures.

#### **Tip 2: Closely monitor changes in performance**

As you would with all employees, be aware of changes in performance. If performance has changed, try to determine why: has there been a change in the type or volume of work, the staff, location or routine for example? For some neurodivergent individuals, change can be extremely challenging so anticipating this would be helpful. If you notice



changes in performance, do not be afraid to check in and see if there is anything you can do to help get them back on track.

### **Tip 3: Provide regular check-ins and mentorship opportunities**

Regularly checking in to ensure your employees have all they need to be able to thrive and perform at their best is key. Having a consistent, supportive and knowledgeable manager and/or mentor will enable proactive support rather than reactive. Sometimes having the opportunity to seek a second opinion or simply gain reassurance on an idea or course of action can be hugely beneficial, particularly for someone who may be struggling with increased anxiety.

### **Development**

Employee development aims to improve the skills and knowledge of employees and if done correctly can improve retention. It is therefore important to consider whether the development activities and learning opportunities are engaging, motivating and inclusive for neurodivergent colleagues.

### **Tip 1: Set stretching goals and projects with adequate support**

Having a neurodivergent condition does not mean you shouldn't be stretched or take on new opportunities, however, it does require managers to be mindful of how the individual might receive the direction, to ensure they do not feel overwhelmed by the new task. This is all about wrapping the right support around the request and ensuring that the individual feels confident that they have been set up for success.

### **Tip 2: Involve neurodiverse employees in key project teams**

Having neurodiverse employees in your key project teams will not only provide different perspectives, ideas and creativity, but it can also help break the stigma of others perhaps not wishing to speak up. Neurodiverse thinking can generate a totally new way of approaching problem-solving and when others see the concept of all ideas being welcomed, this can be a catalyst for further change and growth within the team/organisational culture. Leaders should role model positive behaviour within any such team sessions, signalling that they are open to new ideas and are not afraid to support innovation and challenge convention.



### **Tip 3: Train for growth by asking employees what they want/need**

You should encourage your neurodivergent employees to tell you what skills and experiences they would like to develop. You cannot assume that they are wanting to take a particular career path, as when you discuss their aspirations, you might be surprised by their responses. Linked to this, your standard toolkit may not meet all their needs or aspirations and may require enhancements as a result. You should ask them which formats they would prefer to learn in and whether there are any additional requirements needed for your workplace to be more inclusive.

### **Retention**

Effective employee retention is key to business success and it is important to recognise that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach here. Here are three things you can do to increase the retention of your neurodiverse talent:

#### **Tip 1: Keep the work environment optimal and stable**

Ensuring you have the right work environment will support the retention of all employees, but especially those who are neurodivergent. Taking time to understand the preferences of neurodivergent employees and trying to accommodate for these will be hugely beneficial. For example, you may want to consider noise levels, lighting and equipment needs that may help them thrive in the workplace. Don’t underestimate the impact that little environmental changes can have on engagement levels!

#### **Tip 2: Understand what engages and motivates neurodiverse employees**

Neurodiverse talent is immense talent - do not lose them! You need to keep them engaged and motivated to increase retention. By taking on board all of the tips in this guide, you are likely to be in a good position already, but make sure you regularly appreciate and recognise employee contributions and strive to keep learning and developing your inclusion strategy. By really understanding how neurodiverse employees like to be recognised (and potentially rewarded) you can ensure any recognition or appreciation initiatives are truly neuro-inclusive and are not simply taken as an ‘off the shelf’ package, created from neurotypical employee feedback.

#### **Tip 3: Ensure that your workplace culture is open, supportive and inclusive**

Having a supportive culture where employees can be themselves without fear of judgement is key to employee wellbeing and satisfaction. Here are our top tips for building an open, supportive and neuro-inclusive culture:





- Publicly declare that you are actively striving to be a neuro-inclusive employer.
- Educate all employees on neurodiversity in the workplace.
- Provide unconscious bias and inclusion training for all employees.
- Introduce 'neurodiversity champions' and/or support groups.
- Train people managers to ensure they understand how the business supports neurodivergent employees and the reasonable adjustments available to them.
- Review your organisation's policies and procedures to ensure they support neurodiverse inclusion.
- Ensure there are open channels of communication for employees to report negative experiences in the workplace, and address their responses.

## Tips and tools to support the communication with neurodiverse colleagues?

While every individual program and situation is different, below are a few advices how to best communicate with our neurodiverse colleagues in the workplace.

- Communicate clearly using straightforward language. Neurodiverse employees are more often likely to take communication at face value. Therefore, avoiding sarcasm and expressions that may be misunderstood or misinterpreted can go a long way. Neurodiverse colleagues will understand you more easily if you state your emotions and ask specific questions rather than open-ended ones.
- Embrace the honesty. Individuals on the autism spectrum typically speak with complete honesty, and their frankness can be sometimes incorrectly mistaken for rudeness. It's important to reflect and understand that these comments often stem from individuals coping with stress of sensory overload. Finding ways to work with and embrace different communication styles can help make certain everyone feels like they have a voice at the table.
- Pace the flow of information. Our neurodiverse colleagues have made invaluable contributions to our organization because of their technologically inclined and detail-oriented abilities, along with their strong skills in analytics, mathematics, pattern recognition and information processes. However, when others communicate facts, data and other information, it should be done so in a logical and ordered sequence to avoid information overload. Also, remember the power of the pause — allow for rest and



recovery time in between sharing information — to give your team members more time to process what has been said.

Tips and tools for inclusive meetings and conferences for neurodivergent individuals at work

Conferences and meetings are a normal part of the working world and the stress and anxiety surrounded by these events for neurodivergent individuals are often taken for granted.

These spaces can be loud, crowded and highly stressful for individuals who struggle with social communication, meeting new people, sensory processing, and information processing. However, there are simple ways that neurodivergent colleagues, employees and friends can be easily accommodated.

As the saying goes, if you know one autistic person, you know one autistic person. The same applies to neurodivergent individuals. Below are general guidelines that can be helpful for neurodivergent individuals but is by no means a complete picture.

If you want to know how to best support a neurodivergent individual, speak to them about what they need.

## **Conferences**

- Provide strong instructional material to attendees before the conference to show the layout of the event and timetable of events. Some organisations even provide pictures of specific areas to provide some reassurance ahead of time.
- A map or booklet detailing the order of events on the day could be helpful.
- Description of speakers including the backgrounds and topics of interest.
- Opportunities for neurodivergent individuals to give feedback about their experience on the day.
- An optional quiet space for individuals who struggle with noisy environments.
- Support staff around the venue who can answer questions and direct individuals to different displays as needed.
- Consider that loud music playing in common areas might be a lot for a neurodivergent individual to deal with. They may struggle to focus on displays and stands with loud music playing. Also favour a more neutral or muted colour palette and avoid strong fragrances to minimise sensory overstimulation.



- Where possible, run events or meetings in a hybrid format giving people the choice of attending in person, or online.

## **Meetings**

- For those who struggle with information processing, meeting material and case studies that may be the subject of the meeting should be provided ahead of time to allow neurodivergent individuals extra time to go through the document and prepare questions.
- Find out about your employee, are they anxious about speaking up or joining in the conversation? If so, they may benefit from writing down questions or queries they come across from examining the documentation beforehand.
- Always give a neurodivergent individual enough time to process a question and give you, their answer. Avoid answering for them or trying to rush them. They may want to contribute too.
- For a long meeting, breaks might be required for neurodivergent individuals.
- For remote meetings, the opportunity to keep their camera off may be very beneficial if anxious about large meetings.

## **Topic 5: Questions&Answers**

**CATRO** was in charge of different "typical" Q&A that employers and employees may have so as to facilitate their relationship and, of course, their integration. The aim is to provide the NeuroDiversity Power Trainers with the tools to transfer the necessary skills to be able to train other trainers or to implement the acquired knowledge at their organization. The CV will be translated into all the partner's languages

Study after study shows that diverse organizations are more innovative and generate higher profit. While diverse teams can be great at coming up with new ideas, neurodivergent employees, literally, think differently.

It's why firms such as Microsoft, Google and SAP run neurodiversity-at-work initiatives.



## What is neurodiversity?

Per Harvard Medical School, neurodiversity is “*the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one ‘right’ way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.*”

The key here is that neurodivergent professionals aren’t unintelligent or somehow unable to succeed in the workplace. Neurodivergent professionals simply approach and view things differently than their neurotypical colleagues. Neurodiversity refers to the different ways we think. That includes having different interests and motivations – and being naturally better at some things than others.

Most people are neurotypical. In other words, they process information in a similar way and as society expects. With neurodivergent people, the brain functions, learns and processes information differently.

Most people experience neurodivergence along a "spectrum" of characteristics. And these traits vary for each individual.

So, it's important not to stereotype according to characteristics. But it's still helpful to be aware of the common traits of neurodivergence. The following are common terms that many people identify with:

- ***ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder)*** affects an individual's ability to focus. Someone with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) may also be hyperactive and impulsive. People with ADHD are often good at completing urgent tasks and overcoming setbacks.
- ***Autism*** (which includes Asperger's Syndrome) impacts how you perceive the world and interact with others. People on the autistic spectrum may have difficulty "reading" other people and socializing. But they can also be highly knowledgeable in specialized fields.
- ***Dyspraxia (also known as Developmental Coordination Disorder)*** affects physical coordination and the ability to collect thoughts. People with dyspraxia may



have difficulties with tasks that require organization. But they are often more creative and empathic. [6]

Other forms of neurodivergence include dyscalculia, dysgraphia and Tourette's syndrome. Each can present its own difficulties and strengths.

### Why neurodiversity presents opportunities for the organization?

Most managers are familiar with the advantages organizations can gain from diversity in the backgrounds, disciplinary training, gender, culture, and other individual qualities of employees. Benefits from neurodiversity are similar but more direct. **Because neurodiverse people are wired differently from “neurotypical” people, they may bring new perspectives to a company’s efforts to create or recognize value.** For example:

- At HPE, neurodiverse software testers observed that one client’s projects always seemed to go into crisis mode before a launch. Intolerant of disorder, they strenuously questioned the company’s apparent acceptance of the chaos. **This led the client company to realize that it had indeed become too tolerant of these crises and, with the help of the testers, to successfully redesign the launch process.** Over the past two years HPE’s program has placed more than 30 participants in software-testing roles at Australia’s Department of Human Services (DHS). Preliminary results suggest that the **organization’s neurodiverse testing teams are 30% more productive than the others.**
- At SAP, a neurodiverse customer-support analyst spotted an opportunity to let customers help solve a common problem themselves. Thousands of them subsequently used the resources he created.
- The Australian Defense Department is now working with HPE to develop a neurodiversity program in cybersecurity. Participants will apply their superior pattern-detection abilities to tasks such as examining logs and other sources of messy data for signs of intrusion or attack. Using assessment methods borrowed from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), **it has found candidates whose relevant abilities are “off the charts.”** (The IDF’s Special Intelligence Unit 9900, which is responsible



for analyzing aerial and satellite imagery, has a group staffed primarily with people on the autism spectrum. It has proved that they can spot patterns others do not see.)

Companies have experienced a surprising array of benefits from neurodiversity programs. Firms have become more successful at finding and hiring good and even great talent in tough-to-fill skills categories.

- Products, services, and bottom lines have profited from **lower defect rates and higher productivity**. Both SAP and HPE report examples of neurodiverse employees' participating on teams that generated significant innovations (*one, at SAP, helped develop a technical fix worth an estimated \$40 million in savings*).
- The efforts to make corporate communications more direct, in order to account for the difficulties autistic employees have with nuance, irony, and other fine points of language, have **improved communication overall**.
- **Employee engagement** has risen in areas the programs touch: Neurotypical people report that involvement makes their work more meaningful and their morale higher.
- Results from such programs indicate that program employees, appreciative of having been given a chance, **are very loyal and have low rates of turnover**.
- The programs confer **reputational benefits**. The companies that pioneered them are recognized as exemplars of responsible management.

While the past decade has seen Diversity & Inclusion become a critical business priority, organizations that drive neurodiversity inclusion are also able to demonstrate a strong and meaningful commitment to social impact within their communities, providing employment opportunities as well as saving society money by reducing lost productivity and the need for adult care.

### **Why neurodiversity at work will be of benefit for the neurodivergent people?**

The neurodiverse population still remains a largely untapped talent pool. Unemployment runs as high as 80% (this figure includes people with more-severe disorders, who are not candidates for neurodiversity programs). When they are working,



even highly capable neurodiverse people are often underemployed. Program participants told us story after story of how, despite having solid credentials, they had previously had to settle for the kinds of jobs many people leave behind in high school. For example:

- When SAP began its Autism at Work program, applicants included people with master's degrees in electrical engineering, biostatistics, economic statistics, and anthropology and bachelor's degrees in computer science, applied and computational mathematics, electrical engineering, and engineering physics. Some had dual degrees. Many had earned very high grades and graduated with honors or other distinctions. One held a patent.

The case for neurodiverse hiring is especially compelling given the skills shortages that increasingly afflict technology and other industries. For example, the European Union faced a shortage of 800,000 IT workers by 2020, according to a European Commission study. The biggest deficits are expected to be in strategically important and rapidly expanding areas such as data analytics and IT services implementation, whose tasks are a good match with the abilities of some neurodiverse people.

### **What are the challenges for the companies and why they don't tap neurodiverse talent?**

What has kept so many companies from taking on people with the skills they badly need? It comes down to the way they find and recruit talent and decide whom to hire (and promote).

Especially in large companies, HR processes are developed with an eye toward wide application across the organization. **But there is a conflict between scalability and the goal of acquiring neurodiverse talent.** "SAP focuses on having scalable HR processes; however, if we were to use the same processes for everyone, we would miss people with autism," says Anka Wittenberg, the company's chief diversity and inclusion officer.

In addition, the behaviors of many **neurodiverse people run counter to common notions of what makes a good employee**—solid communication skills, being a team



player, emotional intelligence, persuasiveness, salesperson-type personalities, the ability to network, the ability to conform to standard practices without special accommodations, and so on. These criteria systematically screen out neurodiverse people.

But they are not the only way to provide value. In fact, in recent decades the ability to compete on the basis of innovation has become more crucial for many companies. **Innovation calls on firms to add variety to the mix—to include people and ideas from “the edges“.**

You might think that organizations could simply seek more variety in prospective employees while retaining their traditional recruiting, hiring, and development practices. Many have taken that approach: Their managers still work top down from strategies to capabilities needed, translating those into organizational roles, job descriptions, and recruiting checklists. But two big problems cause them to miss neurodiverse talent.

1 The first involves a practice that is almost universal under the traditional approach: interviewing. Although neurodiverse people may excel in important areas, many don't interview well. For example, autistic people often don't make good eye contact, are prone to conversational tangents, and can be overly honest about their weaknesses. Some have confidence problems arising from difficulties they experienced in previous interview situations. **Neurodiverse people more broadly are unlikely to earn higher scores in interviews than less-talented neurotypical candidates.** SAP and HPE have found that it can take weeks or months to discover how good some program participants are (or, equally important, where their limitations lie). Fortunately, as we'll see, interviews are not the only way to assess a candidate's suitability.

2 The second problem, especially common in large companies, derives from the assumption that scalable processes require absolute conformity to standardized approaches. As mentioned, **employees in neurodiversity programs typically need to be allowed to deviate from established practices.** This shifts a manager's orientation from assuring compliance through standardization to adjusting individual work contexts. Most accommodations, such as installing different lighting



and providing noise-canceling headphones, are not very expensive. But **they do require managers to tailor individual work settings more than they otherwise might.**

### Why and how to appreciate neurodivergent talent?

*“Often, real communication isn’t happening. There’s words going back and forth, but there’s not actually a meeting of the minds between what’s being said and what’s being understood.”* TIM GOLDSTEIN, neurodiverse communication specialist

Employers have to Respect differences and avoid stereotypes. While group reference terms such as ‘autistic’ and ‘dyslexic’ are often helpful – and embraced by individuals with these thinking styles – it’s important to note that no two people are alike. Often, an entire neurodivergent demographic is inaccurately stereotyped, with generalisations made across the whole group: for example, that autistic people do not enjoy social interaction, or that ADHDers cannot focus.

*“Growing up with that kind of brain, I didn’t understand the value of it, but now I see it as a superpower. The reason that it’s valuable is because I see things in a different way.”* Chrissy Levett, CEO, Creative Conscience

*“Personally, I actually think dyslexia in the real world can be a big advantage. We have a slightly different wiring to our brains, which enables us to think creatively and differently.”* SIR RICHARD BRANSON in an interview with USA Today, 2018



*“If someone told me you could be normal or you could continue to have your ADHD, I would take ADHD. I’m afraid of taking drugs once, blowing a circuit, and then being like the rest of you.”*, DAVID NEELEMAN, entrepreneur and founder of JetBlue Airways, in an interview with Additude magazin.



## Part A Good Practices

- The Neurodiversity at Work Initiative - This initiative, launched by the Harvard Business School, provides resources and best practices for companies looking to create more inclusive workplaces for neurodivergent employees. Their website includes case studies, toolkits, and other resources for employers.
- The Autistic Self Advocacy Network - This organization provides resources and advocacy for autistic individuals, including those in the workplace. They offer training and consultation services for employers looking to create more inclusive workplaces.
- Neurodiversity Hub - This website provides resources and information on neurodiversity, including articles on the benefits of neurodiversity in the workplace and tips for employers looking to create more inclusive environments.
- The National Autistic Society - This organization, based in the UK, provides resources and support for autistic individuals and their families. They offer training and consulting services for employers, as well as resources on creating inclusive workplaces.
- Job Accommodation Network - This organization provides resources and support for employers looking to accommodate employees with disabilities, including neurodivergent individuals. Their website includes resources on accommodations, workplace culture, and other related topics.



## PART B-ACTIVITIES

The current document is the Part B of the NEURODIVERSITY POWER Toolkit for NeuroPower trainers aiming to work with neurodivergent people. It gathers 10 activities which are aimed at supporting the staff of a company to ease the professional and personal relationship with the neurodiverse people at their incorporation at work in their office and the daily work.

The activities are based on the experience of the partners, part of them to make the staff understand the behavioral differences according to the neuroidentity, part of them to facilitate their work.

The activities, in fact, are associated with the Modules addressed in the Guide:

**Module 1. Understanding the different types of brains**

**Module 2. Disability at Work**

**Module 3. Developing an inclusive workplace**

**Module 4. Regulations and supporting organizations**

**Module 5. Questions&Answers**

The activities will be useful for both the company staff and the neurodiverse staff to support them both along the journey. The activities have been designed in an engaging way that can help their relationship overcome standstills or difficult situations.



## LIST OF ACTIVITIES

### **Module 1. Understanding the different types of brains**

Activity 1. Neurodiversity Bingo (INNOWA)

Activity 2. Neurodiversity Share (INNOWA)

### **Module 2. Disability at Work**

Activity 1. Walk a Mile (BOSEV)

Activity 2. Neurodiversity Support Group (ACTA)

Activity 3. Truth or Dare (ACTA)

### **Module 3. Developing an inclusive workplace**

Activity 1. Inclusive Workplace Simulation: Bridging Differences (BOSEV)

Activity 2. Barrier Breaking Workshop: Creating Inclusive Teams (BOSEV)

### **Module 4. Regulations and supporting organizations.**

Activity 1. Neurodiversity Lunch and Learn (WEBER)

Activity 2. Inclusive Team Building Workshop (WEBER)

### **Module 5. Questions&Answers**

Activity1. Missing letter „k“ (CATRO)



## Module 1. Understanding the different types of brains – developed by INNOWA

### Activity 1: Neurodiversity Bingo

Exercise Name	Neurodiversity Bingo
Specific objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To raise awareness and promote understanding of different types of neurodiversity.</li> <li>● To encourage participants to learn about the unique strengths and challenges associated with various neurodivergent conditions.</li> <li>● To create an inclusive and supportive environment where neurodivergent individuals feel valued and understood.</li> </ul>
Duration	30-40 minutes
Material/room	<p>Bingo cards (pre-made or printed), each containing a grid with different neurodiversity characteristics or traits.</p> <p>Markers or pens for each participant.</p>
Nr of participants	Ideally, at least 10 participants, but the activity can be adapted for larger or smaller groups.
Description	<p>Before the activity starts, prepare bingo cards with various neurodiversity characteristics or traits. Each square on the card should describe a specific neurodivergent condition, trait, or experience. For example, ADHD, dyslexia, autism spectrum, synesthesia, social anxiety, etc.</p> <p>Distribute the bingo cards and markers/pens to the participants.</p> <p>Instruct the participants to move around the room and talk to each other to find individuals who match the descriptions in the bingo squares. When they find</p>



	<p>someone who fits a particular trait, that person signs or initials the corresponding square.</p> <p>The goal is to fill as many squares as possible within the given time frame. Participants should engage in conversations with others to learn about their experiences and perspectives.</p> <p>Once the time is up, gather the participants and conduct a debriefing session.</p>
Methodological advice	<p>Create a safe and non-judgmental environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences or knowledge about neurodiversity.</p> <p>Encourage respectful communication and active listening during conversations between participants.</p> <p>Be sensitive to the fact that some participants might be personally affected by the neurodiversity characteristics discussed. Avoid pressuring anyone to share if they are not comfortable doing so.</p> <p>Emphasize that the purpose of this activity is to promote understanding, empathy, and appreciation for neurodiversity, not to stereotype or stigmatize.</p>
Weblinks, Videos, Pictures, further material	<p>Neurodiversity: What You Need to Know (Video) - <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoY9vzPeG2w">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoY9vzPeG2w</a></p> <p>Understanding Neurodiversity: A Guide for Employers - <a href="https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/neurodiversity-guide">https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/neurodiversity-guide</a></p> <p>"NeuroTribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity" by Steve Silberman (Book)</p>



## Activity 2: Neurodiversity Share

Exercise Name	Neurodiversity Share
Specific objectives	To encourage participants to share a positive experience related to neurodiversity and promote understanding and appreciation for neurodivergent individuals.
Duration	15-20 minutes
Material/room	No specific materials are required for this activity. It can be conducted in any room with enough space for participants to form a circle or sit in a group.
Nr of participants	Ideal for groups of 5 or more participants, but can be adapted for smaller groups.
Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gather all the participants in a circle or in a group sitting arrangement.</li> <li>2. Explain the concept of neurodiversity briefly to the participants. Mention that it encompasses a range of neurological conditions, learning styles, and cognitive abilities.</li> <li>3. Start the activity by sharing a personal positive experience or story related to neurodiversity. For example, you could talk about a time when you witnessed someone's unique strengths due to their neurodivergent condition or an instance of a neurodivergent individual achieving success in a particular area.</li> <li>4. After sharing your story, encourage each participant to take turns sharing their own positive experiences or stories related to neurodiversity. Participants can talk about experiences with neurodivergent family</li> </ol>





	<p>members, friends, colleagues, or even their own experiences if they are comfortable doing so.</p> <p>5. Remind participants to be respectful and non-judgmental while listening to each other's stories.</p>
Methodological advice	<p>Keep the activity focused on positive and uplifting experiences related to neurodiversity to create a supportive atmosphere.</p> <p>If someone prefers not to share, respect their decision. Ensure that participation is entirely voluntary.</p> <p>Avoid any discussion of sensitive or negative experiences related to neurodiversity, as the goal is to foster a positive and inclusive environment.</p>
Weblinks, Videos, Pictures, further material	<p>None</p> <p>Note: The "Neurodiversity Share" activity is meant to be a lighthearted and positive icebreaker to introduce the concept of neurodiversity and promote understanding in a less structured and formal manner. It can be particularly useful for groups where time is limited or when participants might be more reserved about sharing personal experiences.</p>



## Module 2. Disability at Work – developed by BOSEV and ACTA

### Activity 1: Walk a Mile

Exercise Name	Walk a Mile
Specific objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To promote awareness about the behavioral differences related to neurodiversity.</li> <li>● To teach practical skills for enhancing communication and collaboration with neurodiverse colleagues.</li> <li>● To initiate conversations around accommodations and inclusivity.</li> </ul>
Duration	Approximately 60 minutes
Material/room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Projector for video presentations and slides</li> <li>● Printouts of case studies</li> <li>● Whiteboard/Flipchart and markers</li> <li>● A room arranged for both lecture-style presentation and group activities</li> </ul>
Nr of participants	10-20 (can be scaled for larger groups)
Description	<p><b>Introduction (10 mins)</b> Begin by explaining the objectives of the exercise and the importance of neurodiversity in the workplace. Share some basic information on different neurodivergent conditions such as Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, etc.</p> <p><b>Video Presentation (10 mins)</b> Show a brief video about real-life examples of neurodiverse individuals thriving in different job roles. Discuss as a group.</p> <p><b>Case Study Analysis (15 mins)</b> Participants will be divided into small groups and given case studies portraying neurodiverse individuals</p>



	<p>in workplace settings. They will identify challenges and propose solutions.</p> <p><b>Role-Playing Exercise (10 mins)</b> Each group will pick a scenario from their case study to role-play, focusing on how to approach a situation involving a neurodiverse colleague.</p> <p><b>Debrief and Discussion (10 mins)</b> Come back as a whole group to discuss what was learned and how the new insights can be applied in day-to-day work.</p> <p><b>Summary and Further Resources (5 mins)</b> Summarize key takeaways and distribute handouts.</p>
Methodological advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use real-life examples and case studies that participants can relate to.</li> <li>● The role-playing exercise is crucial. Ensure that each group picks different scenarios for a variety of solutions and discussions.</li> <li>● Encourage an open dialogue where participants feel safe to share their experiences and ask questions.</li> </ul>
Weblinks, Videos, Pictures, further material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weblink to TED Talk on neurodiversity: <a href="#">Link</a></li> <li>● Video on the benefits of neurodiversity in the workplace: <a href="#">YouTube Link</a></li> <li>● Infographic on understanding neurodiverse conditions: <a href="#">Link to Infographic</a></li> <li>● List of recommended readings and podcasts: <a href="#">Resource List</a></li> </ul>

## Activity 2: Neurodiversity Support Group

Exercise Name	Neurodiversity Support Group
Specific objectives	This activity aims to put neurodiversity trainers or managers in the situation of preparing and simulating a support group for neurodivergent people, current or future employees.
Duration	Approximately 60 minutes.
Material/room	No specific materials are required for this activity. It can be conducted in a suitable and welcoming room for group activities, allowing participants to sit in a circle or other form of grouping deemed most appropriate.
Nr of participants	As a rule, minimum 5, maximum 10.
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Arranging the participants in a circle or in the group formation considered most suitable.</li> <li>● Opening of the group session, with presentation of the objectives of the session and information about the activities to follow.</li> <li>● Explaining the concept of a support group.</li> <li>● Sharing the participants' opinions on finding the best solutions for organizing support groups for neurodivergent, working or job-seeking adults.</li> <li>● Feedback from participants and a summary of the activity.</li> </ul>
Methodological advice	<p>Never lose sight of the fact that you are simulating a support group for neurodivergent people, current or future employees!</p> <p>A support group is a way to help participants cope with the stress they feel, have a reduced negative mood and positive perceptions, get to know and relate</p>



	<p>to others in the same category with similar stories, and develop a sense of belonging.</p> <p>It takes the form of meetings in a suitable and welcoming environment, where participants are given attention and understanding and are encouraged to engage in empathetic and authentic communication, and to share their fears, experiences and desires.</p> <p>A specialist may be invited to the support group to manage the meeting, facilitate communication and the sharing of participants' experiences, and provide qualified feedback if needed.</p>
Weblinks, Videos, Pictures, further material	<p><a href="https://www.s4nd.org/news/peer-support-groups/">https://www.s4nd.org/news/peer-support-groups/</a> Society for Neurodiversity. Peer support groups.</p> <p><a href="https://sites.uci.edu/neurodiversity/">https://sites.uci.edu/neurodiversity/</a> University of California, Irvine. Neurodiversity Support Group</p> <p><a href="https://opendoorstherapy.com/working-professionals-group/">https://opendoorstherapy.com/working-professionals-group/</a></p>



### Activity 3. Truth or Dare

Exercise Name	Truth or Dare
Specific objectives	Truth or Dare is one of the most popular group games of all time and a great way to know better each other. In this case, the aim of running this activity is to improve the knowledge of the participants, trainers and managers for neurodiversity, by sharing known truths and challenging them to discover new ones, regarding disability at work.
Duration	Approximately 30 minutes.
Material/room	No specific materials are required for this activity. It can be conducted in a suitable and welcoming room for group activities, allowing participants to sit in a circle or other form of grouping deemed most appropriate.
Nr of participants	Minimum 5, but the group can also be much larger, but then it requires more time for all participants to respond.
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Arranging the participants in a circle or in the group formation considered most suitable.</li> <li>● It is decided at group level who starts and the order of participants.</li> <li>● The starter has to choose between answering a question truthfully or making a challenge. He or she then receives the question or task, and after answering the question or fulfilling the task, asks the next participant, "Truth or dare?"</li> <li>● And so the game continues.</li> <li>● Feedback from participants and a summary of the new knowledge founded.</li> </ul>



Methodological advice	<p>Never lose sight of the fact that the questions or challenges must be directly related to the disability at work of neurodivergent people, current or future employees!</p> <p>The key to a good question is to try to find out something new, interesting, real and true, useful for all participants, to enhance their capacity of understanding neurodivergent people and to empathize with them, in order to coach and assess them at work or to help those willing to apply for enter to the labour market.</p> <p>The challenges are meant to put the participants in new situations, to take them out of their comfort zone and make them look for and find the best solutions. Some examples of possible challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- If you were a person with ADHD, in full knowledge of the facts, what would you ask your employer to do?</li><li>- For the job ... which category of neurodivergent people are best suited?</li><li>- How would you set up an office where neurodivergent people, belonging to several types of neurodiversity, work?</li><li>- How would you organise the recruitment process for the job ... so that it is accessible to neurodivergent people?</li></ul>
Weblinks, Videos, Pictures, further material	Maybe a phone or laptop and internet connection to look for possible sources of inspiration to respond to challenges.



### Module 3. Developing an inclusive workplace – developed by BOSEV

#### Activity 1: Barrier Breaking Workshop: Creating Inclusive Teams

Exercise Name	Barrier Breaking Workshop: Creating Inclusive Teams
Specific objectives	<p><b>Highlighting Barriers:</b> To identify and recognize potential barriers that hinder inclusivity within teams and the workplace.</p> <p><b>Team Bonding:</b> To foster team cohesion and empathy among participants, enabling them to work together effectively and inclusively.</p> <p><b>Problem-Solving Skills:</b> To equip participants with problem-solving skills and strategies to overcome barriers related to neurodiversity and diversity in general.</p> <p><b>Practical Solutions:</b> To generate actionable and practical solutions for creating a more inclusive work environment.</p>
Duration	Approximately 90 minutes
Material/room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A room with seating arrangements conducive to group discussions and activities.</li> <li>● Whiteboard or flipchart with markers.</li> <li>● Sticky notes and pens for participants.</li> <li>● Printed handouts with case studies or scenarios.</li> </ul>
Nr of participants	15-30 participants, ideally divided into smaller groups for activities.
Description	<b>1. Introduction (10 mins)</b>





Begin with an introduction that explains the objectives and importance of creating inclusive teams. Discuss the benefits of inclusivity for both employees and the organization.

## **2. Barriers Discussion (15 mins)**

Initiate a group discussion about common barriers to inclusivity within teams and workplaces. Participants share their experiences and insights. The facilitator can list these barriers on a whiteboard.

## **3. Case Studies/Scenarios (15 mins)**

Provide participants with case studies or scenarios related to inclusivity challenges within teams. These scenarios can include issues such as communication difficulties, bias, or accommodating diverse needs. Each group receives a different scenario.

## **4. Team Brainstorming (20 mins)**

In smaller groups, participants brainstorm solutions to the scenarios they received. Encourage creativity and critical thinking. Each group should generate practical solutions for overcoming barriers.

## **5. Role-Playing (20 mins)**

Each group selects one solution they developed and enacts a role-play scenario to demonstrate how this solution could be applied in a real workplace situation. This allows participants to see solutions in action.

## **6. Debrief and Discussion (15 mins)**

After the role-playing activities, bring the groups back together for a debrief. Discuss the role-plays, share insights, and evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed solutions.

## **7. Action Planning (10 mins)**

Conclude the exercise by having participants create action plans. In their teams, they should outline steps they can take in their own roles to promote inclusivity and break down barriers within their teams or the organization



<p>Methodological advice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure that the case studies and scenarios are relevant to the organization's specific needs and inclusivity challenges.</li> <li>● Encourage open dialogue and active participation during the brainstorming and role-playing activities.</li> <li>● Emphasize the practicality and feasibility of proposed solutions.</li> </ul>
<p>Weblinks, Videos, Pictures, further material</p>	<p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jNhhrgczsc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jNhhrgczsc</a> How to break down barriers and not accept limits   TED</p> <p>Additionally a search with “breaking the barriers” on Google, YouTube to reach more TED similar videos</p> <p>Stebleton, Michael &amp; Soria, Krista. (2012). Breaking down barriers: Academic obstacles of first-generation students at research universities. <i>The Learning Assistance Review</i>. 17. 7-19.</p>



## Activity 2: Inclusive Workplace Simulation: Bridging Differences

Exercise Name	Inclusive Workplace Simulation: Bridging Differences
Specific objectives	<p><b>Promote Inclusion Awareness:</b> To raise awareness about the importance of inclusivity in the workplace and how it benefits both neurodiverse and neurotypical employees.</p> <p><b>Enhance Communication Skills:</b> Develop and practice effective communication skills for bridging differences and fostering understanding among diverse team members.</p> <p><b>Empower Problem-Solving:</b> Empower participants to collaboratively address workplace challenges related to inclusivity, accommodation, and team dynamics.</p> <p><b>Encourage Role Reversal:</b> Encourage empathy and understanding by having participants experience different roles within a team, including leadership, communication, and support</p>
Duration	Approximately 90 minutes
Material/room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A room with sufficient space for group activities.</li> <li>● Seating arrangements for small teams.</li> <li>● Flipchart, markers, and sticky notes for group brainstorming.</li> <li>● Timer or stopwatch to manage time.</li> </ul>
Nr of participants	10-30 participants, organized into smaller teams for activities.
Description	<p><b>1. Introduction (10 mins)</b> Begin with an introduction that outlines the objectives and importance of developing an inclusive workplace. Explain the benefits of inclusivity for both employees and the organization.</p>



**2. Inclusive Workplace Video (10 mins)**

Show a video that highlights the significance of inclusivity in the workplace. This video should emphasize the positive impact of diverse teams. Afterward, initiate a brief group discussion about the video.

**3. Team Formation (10 mins)**

Divide participants into smaller teams. Each team will represent a different department within a hypothetical organization.

**4. Role Assignment (15 mins)**

Within each team, assign roles to team members, including a manager, a neurodiverse team member, a neurotypical team member, and a team communicator. These roles will rotate during the exercise.

**5. Workplace Scenario Simulation (30 mins)**

Present a workplace scenario that involves a challenge related to inclusivity, accommodation, or communication. Teams will work together to address the challenge using their assigned roles. The scenario can be customized based on the organization's specific concerns.

**6. Debrief and Discussion (15 mins)**

After the simulation, reconvene as a whole group for a debrief. Each team shares its experiences, solutions, and lessons learned. Encourage a discussion on what worked well and what could be improved.

**7. Brainstorming for an Inclusive Workplace (10 mins)**

Use a flipchart or whiteboard to facilitate a group brainstorming session. Encourage participants to share ideas and strategies for creating a more inclusive workplace. These ideas can be captured on sticky notes and arranged on the board.

**8. Action Planning (10 mins)**

Conclude the exercise by having participants develop action plans. In their teams, they should outline specific steps they can take in their own roles to foster inclusivity within their department or organization.



<p>Methodological advice</p>	<p>Keep the simulation scenario relevant to the organization's specific needs and challenges.</p> <p>Emphasize the importance of open communication, empathy, and problem-solving within diverse teams.</p> <p>Encourage active participation and creative thinking.</p>
<p>Weblinks, Videos, Pictures, further material</p>	<p>For relevant materials, search online for articles, videos, or infographics on creating an inclusive workplace. TED Talks and YouTube can be valuable sources for video content. Additionally, you can create customized materials based on the organization's specific inclusivity goals. In this way it is possible to reach the following and more similar ones;</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOwdIHUVBGE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOwdIHUVBGE</a></p> <p>This exercise is designed to provide participants with a practical and interactive experience in developing an inclusive workplace, allowing them to actively engage with the concepts and strategies discussed during the training. Related search on article repositories will provide to reach also the research links like the one following;</p> <p>Tyson, H., &amp; Wilson-Mitchell, K. (2016). Diversifying the midwifery workforce: Inclusivity, culturally sensitive bridging, and innovation. <i>Journal of Midwifery &amp; Women's Health</i>, 61(6), 752-758.</p>

## Module 4. Regulations and supporting organizations – developed by Weber

### Activity 1: Neurodiversity Lunch and Learn

Exercise Name	30-Minute Neurodiversity Lunch and Learn
Specific objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide a brief but informative session for staff to learn about neurodiversity and its relevance in the workplace</li> </ul>
Duration	30 minutes
Material/room	No particular materials are needed for this activity. It can take place in a suitable and inviting space for group engagements, allowing participants to arrange themselves in a circle or any other grouping that is considered most suitable.
Nr of participants	A minimum of 5 participants is required, although the group can be larger; however, this may necessitate additional time for all participants to provide responses.
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Introduction</b> (5 minutes): Welcome participants and set the agenda for the 30-minute session.</li> <li>- <b>Neurodiversity Overview</b> (10 minutes): Provide a concise explanation of neurodiversity and its significance in the workplace. Share key statistics and facts about the prevalence of neurodiverse conditions.</li> <li>- <b>Common Neurodiverse Behaviors</b> (5 minutes): Highlight a few common neurodiverse behaviors, such as sensory sensitivities, attention differences, and communication challenges.</li> </ul>





	<p>Offer examples of how these behaviors may manifest in the workplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Communication Strategies</b> (5 minutes):</li></ul> <p>Provide quick tips on effective communication with neurodiverse colleagues, emphasizing patience, clarity, and active listening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Q&amp;A and Discussion</b> (5 minutes):</li></ul> <p>Open the floor for questions and brief discussions. Encourage participants to share any personal experiences or concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Actionable Takeaways</b> (5 minutes):</li></ul> <p>Summarize the key points discussed in the session. Ask participants to identify one action item they can implement immediately to better support neurodiverse colleagues.</p>
Methodological advice	The activity should prioritize creating a safe and inclusive environment where participants feel valued and empowered to learn and grow in their understanding and support of neurodiversity.



## Activity 2: Inclusive Team Building Workshop

Exercise Name	60-Minute Inclusive Team Building Workshop
Specific objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To foster teamwork and empathy among staff while focusing on neurodiversity inclusion.</li> </ul>
Duration	60 minutes
Material/room	No particular materials are needed for this activity. It can take place in a suitable and inviting space for group engagements, allowing participants to arrange themselves in a circle or any other grouping that is considered most suitable.
Nr of participants	Ideally, at least 10 participants.
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Introduction and Icebreaker</b> (10 minutes): Start with a quick icebreaker activity to engage participants and create a comfortable atmosphere.</li> <li><b>Neurodiversity in the Workplace</b> (10 minutes): Briefly explain the concept of neurodiversity and why it's important for a diverse and inclusive workplace.</li> <li><b>Simulated Communication Challenge</b> (15 minutes): Divide participants into small teams. Present a simulated communication challenge, such as a puzzle or problem-solving task, with specific communication restrictions. Challenge teams to complete the task while following the given restrictions.</li> <li><b>Debrief and Discussion</b> (10 minutes): Facilitate a discussion about the challenges and frustrations teams faced during the activity.</li> </ul>



	<p>Relate these challenges to the real-life experiences of neurodiverse individuals who may encounter similar obstacles in the workplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Best Practices for Inclusive Communication</b> (10 minutes):</li></ul> <p>Provide tips and best practices for inclusive communication with neurodiverse colleagues. Emphasize the importance of flexibility and empathy in communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Role-Playing Exercise</b> (10 minutes):</li></ul> <p>Have participants engage in a role-playing exercise where they practice using inclusive communication strategies in various workplace scenarios.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Wrap-up and Commitment</b> (5 minutes):</li></ul> <p>Summarize key takeaways from the workshop. Ask participants to commit to implementing at least one inclusive communication strategy in their daily work.</p>
Methodological advice	The activity should prioritize creating a safe and inclusive environment where participants feel valued and empowered to learn and grow in their understanding and support of neurodiversity.



## Module 5 Questions&Answers by CATRO

### Activity 1: Missing letter „k“

Exercise Name	Missing letter „k“
Specific objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To make participants empathise the NDs experience when they have to follow outer social rules that they do not understand;</li> <li>● To make participants aware of the process of masking of NDs (how the NDs masking their differences)</li> </ul>
Duration	Approximately 15 minutes
Material/room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A room arranged for both lecture-style presentation and group activities</li> </ul>
Nr of participants	10-20 (can be scaled for larger groups)
Description	<p>Split the group in pairs - person A and person B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Person A is going to talk for one minute about their summer holiday and the other is just going to listen. [time 2 minutes];</li> <li>2. Reflection questions [time 5 minutes]. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did that feel for both A and B? Easy? Good!;</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Now, the other person is also going to talk about his/her holiday for one minute. BUT you are not allowed to use any words containing the letter ‘k’. [time 2 minutes];</li> </ol>



	<p>4. Reflection questions [time 5 minutes].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did that feel?</li> <li>• Towards speaking partner: Were you able to speak as fluently as your partner? How did that make you feel?</li> <li>• Towards listening partners: How did it feel listening as your partner was struggling to put their thoughts into words? Challenging? Frustrating? Annoying?</li> </ul>
<p>Methodological advice</p>	<p>You can stress out that everybody can experience stress and be overly sensory stimulated, and NDs are more subsumptive to this in their everyday work. We have to take this in mind.</p> <p>You can use also the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Psychological defenses</b> (behaviors based on limiting believes etc) are things our mind does unconsciously to help us deal with stress or anxiety. Everyone creates them throughout their lifespan as a survival responses. Some could be maladaptive. People can change them during their lifetime through awareness and can start transforming them into more adaptive mechanisms.</li> <li>• <b>Neurodivergence</b> means that a person's brain functions differently from the typical brain. It is a condition that lasts during lifetime. Neurodivergent people often cover up/mask through compensatory strategies, and this lead to exhaustion. NDs can experience traumatic sensory overload.</li> </ul>

	<p>We can create more inclusive environment that can facilitate NDs needs.</p>
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 **NEURODIVERSITY  
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TOOLKIT FOR COMPANY'S NEURODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

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