

Reasonable Adjustment Examples

For Autistic Employees

This guide provides practical examples of **reasonable adjustments that can support autistic employees to thrive at work**. It is designed to be used by both employees and managers as a collaborative tool to explore what might be helpful in different situations. Everyone's needs and preferences are unique, so not every adjustment will apply to every individual – but the examples shared here can be adapted and built upon as part of a supportive, ongoing conversation. The goal is to remove barriers, reduce stress, and create a more inclusive workplace environment where all employees can do their best work.

Challenge

Sensory Sensitivities

Many autistic people experience hypersensitivity to sensory input such as noise, lights, smells, or touch. These can cause distress, distraction, or fatigue during the working day.

Reasonable Adjustments

- **Set up a quiet workspace or offer remote working:** Provide a desk in a quieter area of the office or offer hybrid/remote options to reduce sensory overload.
- **Offer noise-cancelling headphones:** Provide headphones for blocking out office noise.
- **Replace fluorescent lights with desk lamps or natural lighting:** Allow use of alternative lighting options to reduce visual discomfort from harsh lighting.
- **Allow use of sunglasses, hats, or tinted lenses indoors:** Permit personal items that help regulate visual input without requiring approval or explanation.
- **Introduce a scent-free policy in shared areas:** Ban strong perfumes, air fresheners, and scented cleaning products to prevent overwhelm.
- **Allow flexible start/end times to avoid peak commute times:** Helps reduce exposure to noisy, crowded environments during travel.

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Communication

Autistic employees may prefer clear, literal language and may find indirect, vague, or fast-paced communication difficult to interpret or respond to.

Reasonable Adjustment

- **Written follow-ups to verbal conversations:** Providing a brief summary after meetings or discussions can support clarity and retention.
- **Advance notice for meetings and topics:** Sharing agendas or questions beforehand allows for preparation and reduces anxiety.
- **Communication preferences form or discussion:** Agreeing how someone prefers to give and receive information (e.g. email over phone calls) can help communication flow more easily.
- **Flexibility in participation during meetings:** Providing the option to contribute in writing or after the meeting may make participation more accessible.
- **Plain language in documents and instructions:** Avoiding jargon, metaphors, and overly complex language helps reduce misinterpretation.
- **Using asynchronous tools (e.g. email or Teams):** Many autistic employees find written, asynchronous communication more manageable than real-time conversations.

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Executive Functioning

Difficulties with planning, prioritising, switching tasks or managing deadlines can impact productivity if the right structure isn't in place.

Navigating Social Dynamics

Social interaction can be draining, confusing or stressful for some autistic employees, especially when workplace norms are unspoken or ambiguous.

Reasonable Adjustment

- **Clear, step-by-step task breakdowns:** Breaking tasks into manageable parts with deadlines or checklists can reduce overwhelm.
 - **Use of task management tools:** Tools like Trello, Asana or Notion can help with visualising progress, organising workload, and staying on track.
 - **Regular planning or check-in meetings:** Scheduled one-to-ones can provide structure and ensure tasks are being prioritised appropriately.
 - **Advance notice for task changes:** Wherever possible, avoid last-minute changes to reduce anxiety and allow for preparation.
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- **Optional participation in social activities:** Employees should be free to opt out of team socials without judgment or pressure.
 - **Identifying a go-to colleague for informal support:** Having someone to clarify workplace norms or ask casual questions can be reassuring.
 - **Structured team-building activities:** Choose activities with a clear purpose or format, and avoid unstructured or high-pressure scenarios.
 - **Introductory guides to workplace culture:** Clear documentation about workplace expectations (e.g. lunch etiquette, dress code) helps navigate hidden rules.
 - **Internal training on neurodiversity:** Raising team awareness can help normalise different communication and social styles.

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Processing Time

Some autistic employees need longer to absorb and respond to information, especially in fast-paced or high-pressure scenarios.

Transitions and Change

Unexpected changes in routine, structure or personnel can be particularly stressful.

Reasonable Adjustment

- **Send information or questions in advance:** Sharing discussion topics or tasks ahead of time supports better processing and preparation.
 - **Allow pauses in meetings and conversations:** Leaving space for reflection avoids rushing someone into responding before they're ready.
 - **Option to respond after meetings in writing:** Written follow-ups can give employees the time to craft responses and contribute in ways that suit them.
 - **Record meetings or provide written summaries:** This ensures nothing is missed and supports review and reflection after the fact.
 - **Share key documents ahead of time:** Providing policies, agendas, or training materials in advance supports more inclusive participation.
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- **Give advance warning of upcoming changes:** Whether it's a new manager, system update, or office move – early notice helps with emotional preparation.
 - **Explain the reason for changes and how they'll work:** Clear explanations reduce uncertainty and help build trust.
 - **Provide visual timelines or schedules for changes:** This helps map out what's happening and when, making change more manageable.
 - **Avoid last-minute changes wherever possible:** If they're unavoidable, provide space for questions and clarification