



Tip Sheet



Communication Strategies to Support Employees

Neurodiversity-affirming communication strategies recognise and respect that neurological differences are a natural part of human diversity. The goal is not to change the communication style of neurodivergent individuals, but to create a universally accessible communication environment that benefits everyone by embracing clear, direct, and flexible methods. This approach fosters a culture of mutual respect, reduces misunderstandings, and enables all employees to thrive.

Written communication:



1. **Be clear, concise, and direct** in your language. Avoid ambiguity, metaphors, and idioms that might be confusing.
2. **Use simple and straightforward sentence structures** (e.g. "Please email your questions to the project lead. The meeting will start at 10am.")
3. **Break down complex information** into smaller, manageable chunks.
4. **Use bullet points**, numbered lists, and headings.
5. **Provide information in multiple formats** where possible (e.g. text, audio, visual).
6. **Consider presenting information visually**, for example diagrams, flowcharts, or mind maps to supplement written information.
7. **Use consistent formatting and layout**, improving readability and visual clutter.
8. **Highlight key information** using bold text or other formatting.
9. **Avoid large blocks of text.**
10. **Offer to clarify** any written communication and encourage questions.
11. **Provide advance notice** for important information or changes.

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Verbal communication:

1. **Speak clearly** and at a moderate pace. Avoid speaking too quickly or mumbling.
2. **Be mindful of your tone of voice.** Aim for a calm, clear and professional tone that supports understanding and reduces the risk of misinterpretation.
3. **Avoid sarcasm or humour** that might be misinterpreted.
4. **Be direct in your requests** and instructions.
5. **Allow sufficient time for processing** information and formulating responses. Be patient with pauses.
6. **Repeat or rephrase information** if needed.
7. **Minimise background noise** and distractions during verbal conversations.
8. **Offer the option for verbal information to be presented visually** as well. Be mindful of eye contact expectations. Some neurodivergent individuals may find direct eye contact uncomfortable.

General communication practices:

1. **Establish clear and predictable communication channels.**
2. **Be open to different communication preferences.** Ask employees how they prefer to receive information and provide feedback.
3. **Provide regular and constructive feedback** in a clear and specific manner. Focus on outcomes rather than personality.
4. **Be patient and understanding.** Recognise that communication styles and processing speeds can vary.
5. **Build trust and psychological safety** so employees feel comfortable asking for clarification or adjustments. This can include:
 - Being approachable and open to questions.
 - Responding calmly and respectfully to requests for clarification.
 - Allowing time for processing information and follow up questions.
 - Being flexible where possible in how work is discussed or completed.
 - Reinforcing that feedback and questions are welcomed and supported.
6. **Offer training and resources** to all employees on neurodiversity awareness and inclusive communication.
7. **Regularly review and adapt communication strategies** based on feedback around preferences and experience.
8. **Ask employees about their communication preferences.** Every person is different and communication preferences will vary, irrespective of neurotype.
9. **Promote a culture of empathy and respect** for individual differences.



Sensory & environmental considerations and communication:

1. **Be mindful of varied sensory experiences** and how different environments may impact communication, such as lighting, loud noises, movement or strong smells. Where possible, ask employees about what environments support their focus and comfort, recognising that preferences will vary between individuals and situations.
2. **When using video conferencing, give participants the option to turn off their cameras** if it helps them focus on the conversation. The use of closed captions can also be helpful. This can reduce overwhelm as well as social pressure related to visibility and eye contact.
3. **Offer the option for a walking meeting or a meeting in a less formal setting.** Some individuals process information more effectively when in motion or in a different type of environment.

Implementation of these communication strategies is a key step toward creating a workplace where every employee feels understood, respected, and able to contribute their best work.



Scan QR code for more resources from the Neurodiversity Works toolkit, designed to create inclusive workplaces.

**Autism Queensland is here to help—
get in touch to learn more:**

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