

Tip Sheet

Creating Neurodiversity-Affirming Meetings

Neurodiversity-affirming meetings recognise that people process information, communicate, and participate in different ways. By increasing predictability, reducing barriers, and providing options for engagement, meetings can become more accessible and effective for everyone.

Before the meeting:

- Clearly define the purpose of the meeting.
- Send the agenda in writing and, where possible, a business day in advance.
- Offer staff the option to provide feedback on agenda items before the meeting.
- Schedule meetings at consistent and predictable times whenever possible.
- Clearly communicate whether attendance is required or optional.
- If someone cannot attend, provide a clear process for notifying the organiser.
- Clearly state what's expected from attendees in the meeting (e.g. if active participation and answering questions or listening to presentations etc).
- Share the main discussion topics in advance for preparation where possible.
- If using a presentation (e.g. a PowerPoint slide), distribute it in advance.

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During the meeting:

General accessibility & communication:

- Keep written communication concise and focused.
- Allow time for people to process information and respond before moving on to the next question or topic.
- Use visual supports where possible (e.g. diagrams, written summaries, flowcharts, or shared notes).
- Be mindful of jargon and technical terms and explain any necessary specialised language.
- Offer different ways for people to participate beyond verbal contributions (e.g. polls, whiteboards, chat features, breakout groups).
- Provide breaks in longer meetings.
- Summarise key discussion points and decisions at the end of the meeting.

Face-to-face meeting considerations:

- Consider offering options for seating arrangements based on comfort.
- Foster a culture where all feedback and contributions are welcomed and valued through active listening and respectful acknowledgement.
- Offer staff the choice to provide feedback verbally during the meeting or in writing afterward.
- Be aware of the physical environment (lighting, noise, temperature etc).
- Ensure the meeting space is accessible to everyone (physical and sensory considerations).
- Clearly signal transitions between topics (e.g. "*Before we move on to the next agenda item, does anyone have any final comments or questions?*")

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Virtual/online meeting considerations:

- Clearly communicate expectations regarding camera usage (on or off) before the meeting. Consider the purpose and whether it is essential.
- Inform the team they can contribute to the discussion via the virtual meeting's 'chat' feature (e.g. typing comments and questions).
- Explain how to use the 'raise hand' feature in virtual meetings and encourage its use when wishing to speak verbally.
- Encourage the use of headphones to minimise distractions.
- If screen sharing, describe visual content for those who may not be able to see it clearly or are listening in.
- When asking for verbal contributions, clearly indicate who you are addressing.

After the meeting:

- Follow up in writing with key discussion points, decisions, action items, and assigned responsibilities.
- Clearly outline any next steps and timeframes.

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:

Email: css@autismqld.com.au

Phone: (07) 3273 0000

Website: autismqld.com.au

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