

Tip Sheet

Supporting a Safe Environment

for Employees to Share Diagnosis

For neurodivergent employees, choosing whether to share a diagnosis or support need is a personal decision. Some employees may choose to share information to access support, explain challenges they are experiencing, or help others understand how they work best. Others may choose not to share. Both approaches are valid.

Managers play an important role in creating an environment where employees feel safe to have these conversations. Psychological safety is strengthened when workplaces consistently demonstrate respect, confidentiality, understanding and a genuine commitment to support.

What is disclosure?

In this resource, the terms '*sharing a diagnosis*' and '*sharing support needs*' are used in preference to ***disclosure***. This reflects an understanding that **employees have choice and agency in what they share, when they share it, and with whom.**

The guidance in this resource outlines practical ways managers can create conditions for neurodivergent employees to feel safe sharing a diagnosis or support needs, should they choose to do so.

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Educate yourself & your team:

Understanding neurodivergence can help reduce misconceptions, promote inclusive practices, and contribute to a workplace where employees feel safe being themselves. Learning about autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other forms of neurodivergence can help build understanding, reduce misconceptions and promote more inclusive practices.

Encourage **ongoing learning** and conversations about neurodiversity to help foster a culture of understanding and respect.

Create a culture of psychological safety:

Employees are more likely to share information when they trust that it will be met with understanding and respect. This can be supported by:

- Encouraging open conversations about different ways of working and individual support needs.
- Demonstrating inclusive behaviours through everyday interactions.
- Responding respectfully when employees raise concerns, challenges or requests for support.
- Creating an environment where employees feel comfortable asking questions and seeking assistance.

Make support visible & accessible:

Employees should know that support is available without needing to navigate complex processes or repeatedly explain their needs. This may include:

- Making workplace supports and adjustment processes easy to understand and access.
- Ensuring employees know who they can approach for support.
- Providing information in accessible formats.
- Promoting flexibility and inclusion as part of normal workplace practice.
- Clearly communicate that employees can discuss support needs with or without sharing a diagnosis.

When support is visible and accessible, employees are more likely to feel confident that **their needs will be understood and considered**.

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Respect privacy & confidentiality:

Employees need confidence that personal information will be handled appropriately. Managers should:

- Respect an employee's choice about what they share and do not pressure an employee to share more information than they are comfortable with.
- Explain how information will be managed or who it may be shared with (if anyone).
- Seek consent before sharing information with others.
- Avoid discussing an employee's diagnosis or support needs unnecessarily.

A strong **commitment to confidentiality helps build trust** and encourages open communication.

Respond supportively when someone chooses to share:

The way a manager responds when someone shares can strengthen trust and psychological safety. Acknowledge the person's willingness to share, listen respectfully and focus on understanding rather than making assumptions. Where appropriate, discuss next steps and available supports.

Employees are more likely to share when they feel their experiences will be heard, respected, and responded to constructively.

Listen to & learn from lived experience:

Creating inclusive workplaces requires ongoing listening and learning. Where individuals are comfortable sharing, lived experience perspectives, personal stories and case studies can provide valuable insights into workplace barriers and effective supports.

Learning from lived experience can help managers better understand the practical actions that contribute to a workplace where neurodivergent employees feel safe, valued and included.

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Key takeaways

- Demonstrate trust, respect and confidentiality through everyday interactions to help create psychological safety.
- Make support visible and accessible, and ensure employees know they can discuss support needs regardless of whether they choose to share a diagnosis.
- Focus on creating the conditions for open conversations rather than expecting employees to disclose personal information.



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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