



EASY

Employability for **AutiStic** Youth

GUIDE FOR JOB POSSIBILITIES

Employability for **AutiStic** Youth

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INTRODUCTION



Autistic people face unique challenges starting their careers, Autistic people experience higher rates of unemployment than their neurotypical peers. This subsequently leads to poorer quality of life outcomes in life, as autistic people tend to be more at risk at experiencing unemployment earlier, longer and more frequently. Due to this increased risk of unemployment Autistic people are likely to experience scarring of their skills and are also frequently underemployed. This phenomenon is seen across Europe, in every labour market and every economy.

Due to the heterogeneity of autism, and of autistic people it is difficult to state what exactly causes this problem. What we do know however is that these periods of unemployment and underemployment seem to occur during periods of great change in an individual's life, such as the transition from school to work that most individuals experience during early adulthood. During such transition periods autistic people can become overwhelmed by uncertainty, anxiety, and stress. This can make it difficult to search for jobs, network and engage actively with employment services. Autistic people due to the different way they develop, difficulties they experience generally with new situations, and the inaccessibility of society experience compounding lock in effects, which ultimately translates to poor labour market outcomes.

Due to the specific features of autism, the accessibility of society and of employers, untargeted labour market programs can be ineffective measures to address the unemployment problem. This necessitates the development of targeted employment measures by youth workers and civil society organisations to help autistic people compete on a level footing with neurotypical people in the labour market.



As a youth worker your role helps build a more equitable society by guiding young people in their development. This guidebook is a tool to help you guide autistic young people through their journey in the labour market. It will focus on practical elements of the job search process such as developing cv and cover letters, preparing for interviews and conducting job searches relevant to autistic people. Alongside advise on how you can support the specific needs of autistic people in their job search. Together these will empower you as a youth worker to assist unemployed autistic people obtain the right job for themselves.

The first section of this guide will discuss personal motivation, goal setting and interests. Developed by experts in autism this section will provide you with a understanding of personal motivation and autism. We will explore what inspires autistic people and how they can use this inspiration to build a **career**. This will be done by goal setting, providing you with advice on how to guide autistic people on how they can set goals relevant to their interests. By being equipped to understand their motivations you will be able to encourage young autistic people, maintain their interest and help them through both their successes and failures.

Our second section will discuss something everyone finds difficult, Networking and identifying opportunities for career development. This section will instruct on how to develop autistic people's networking skills in a manner sensitive to their needs. It will give practical advise on how to network, how not to network and explain the importance of it to autistic people.



Our third section will discuss how to create a CV and Cover letter. It will detail how you as a youth worker can support autistic job seekers in creating a relevant CV; and how they can develop a cover letter, and common problems encountered during the application process.

Our fourth section will detail the interview process, and how you as a youth worker can help develop autistic young people's interview skills. It will examine common interview formats, the importance of the interview, common problems and issues with the interview process as well **las** some specific guidance on guiding autistic people through interviews.

Our final section will discuss closing autism in the workplace, the role of reasonable accommodations and non-discrimination legislation. It will highlight the benefits and risks associated with disclosure, going into detail about why someone might not disclose and the importance of respecting their decision. It takes a nuanced approach, carefully examining disclosure from the autistic perspective and how you as a youth worker can support decision making. Fundamentally this chapter, written by autistic people themselves aims to give you a clearer picture of what kind of problems autistic face in formalised professionally contexts, and how you can prepare them.



CHAPTER 1

PERSONAL MOTIVATION, GOALS & INTERESTS



BULLET POINTS

- **The Essence of Personal Motivation:** This section deals with the concept of personal motivation and emphasises its importance for career planning. It includes strategies to help autistic youth figure out what motivates them and capitalise on their unique perspectives and strengths. Visual aids such as motivational wheels can help to draw out their interests and motivations.
- **Goal Setting for Success:** Focuses on teaching young people how to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals. It includes examples tailored to autistic individuals and emphasizes the value of structured routines and clear, achievable goals. Worksheets for goal planning are provided.
- **Navigating Through Interests:** Encourages exploration and identification of personal interests that can lead to career opportunities. It suggests methods such as interest inventories and job shadowing specifically adapted for autistic youth to help them connect their passions with potential career paths.
- **Addressing Challenges in Motivation:** Addresses common motivational obstacles autistic youth may face, such as sensory issues or social anxiety, and offers practical solutions, including environmental adaptations and support networks. Success stories of autistic people are presented for inspiration.
- **Aligning Passions with Professions:** This section guides youth workers in helping autistic youth connect their interests with realistic career goals. Techniques for matching personal interests with labour market demands are covered, including digital tools for career exploration.
- **Sustaining Drive Toward Goals:** Provides strategies for maintaining motivation and resilience in the face of setbacks. Emphasizes the importance of celebrating small successes and setting new goals, and provides tips for youth workers to create a supportive and motivating environment.



PARAGRAPH 1

TITLE: THE ESSENCE OF PERSONAL MOTIVATION

Personal motivation is tied to a person's internal need for goals, development of interests and ambitions. It is surely an important part of the career planning process, especially for autistic people. Performance and desire for professional development can be affected by the presence or lack of personal motivation. Social conditions, discrimination on mental health issues, lack of understanding about autism and the availability of appropriate



support, and poor working conditions further widen the gap between the professional opportunities for autistic people and the current professional reality they often face. Successful integration into the workplace is something that everyone desires in adulthood, yet for autistic people it is not as easy. By developing their motivation, they are able to overcome all the challenges they encounter and focus more determinedly on their career goals. In this direction, it is important to set short and long-term goals, which they must work towards methodically and with dedication to make progress. Therefore, it is necessary to get out of their comfort zone, seek change and grow, which will inevitably bring about professional development. More generally, personal motivation empowers autistic people to seek a better career in which they can utilise their unique talents and feel that they are fulfilling a purpose.



PARAGRAPH 2

TITLE: GOAL SETTING FOR SUCCESS

Setting targets for young people can be quite challenging. All young people have ideas and dreams but may lack the experience of organising a goal step by step so they can achieve it methodically in the future without being driven to frustration.

Goals need to be clearly defined and be understandable and specific. A person with autism, rather than aiming to improve their sociability, is more likely to seek to initiate a conversation with someone during the day.

Inclusion of this makes no sense and makes ableist assumptions.

For the person to be able to monitor their progress, it is best to set measurable criteria, such as completing a project in 30 minutes.

Goal setting needs to be realistic and appropriate to the individual's abilities, so that in the event of failure they are not discouraged. For instance, an individual on the autism spectrum might ask, "what are you doing?" to begin a conversation before advancing to more in-depth exchanges.

Goals should also be connected to the needs and interests of the individual, promoting their growth. For instance, a person with autism should work to enhance their social skills to feel more at ease in social situations.

It is important to have a timeline for goal setting or a deadline to meet each goal, which helps prioritise things such as completing and turning in all assignments for a course in a month.

More generally, as far as autistic people are concerned, structured routines that promote skill development **of the skills** and motivate them to fulfil their goals.

Worksheets for goal planning:

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAGChmxeUz4/CelqoC32YfGPuPaqv2cBAw/edit?>

[utm_content=DAGChmxeUz4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGChmxeUz4/CelqoC32YfGPuPaqv2cBAw/edit?utm_content=DAGChmxeUz4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)



PARAGRAPH 3

TITLE: NAVIGATING THROUGH INTERESTS

Navigating Through Interests aimed at autistic people which seeks to identify their skills and abilities so that they can compete in the future labour market. It is important to consider the personal interests of each job seeker while providing the appropriate level of guidance as a youth worker. Personal interests must be respected with the utmost care. They may, for example, be interested in pursuing an activity, working with the Internet, practising some form of art, hobby, or sport. You should seek ways to enhance and develop the specific skills that are suited to each individual. This is to ensure that the autistic people you guide are put on a path that matches their talents and abilities with a profession.

The interest inventory is an assessment method that aims to identify the strengths and abilities of each individual. The data is collected using various tools such as questionnaires, interviews, different activities and observation methods to ensure reliable and valid data to better understand the participants' interests. As a youth worker, you will need to adapt the interest inventories developed and personalised for the autistic people you work with. One example is the use of sensory assessment methods, as autistic people can be hypersensitive to sensory stimuli. Another technique you could try is designing role plays based on the real career goals of the candidates. This way, they can learn about different areas of work and choose the one they want.

With this practical approach, you will succeed in giving young autistic people the opportunity to explore relevant careers in their way, to understand various roles, and find the right career for them. At this point, your contribution as a youth worker is very important because you need to place young autistic people in the appropriate work context by combining experiential job shadowing with their interest inventories. At the end of this process, your ultimate goal is to enable the young people to make appropriate decisions about their future by recognising their realistic job skills in combination with their aspirations.



PARAGRAPH 4

TITLE: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN MOTIVATION

Many Autistic people are sensitive to sensory stimuli, such as sounds and bright lights, which can lead to social anxiety.

Sensory sensitivities can lead to increased levels of anxiety and stress. At the same time, social anxiety can prevent them from participating in group activities and avoiding social interactions, which reduces their motivation to engage in professional work.

As a youth worker, you need to effectively address the challenges faced autistic people through practical adaptations in the relevant contexts, such as the workplace and creating a safe and supportive environment that is essential for the wellbeing of autistic people.

To help you work more effectively with participants, reduce stress, and increase motivation, the following suggestions for environmental adaptations are provided.- **Provide specially equipped and sensory-friendly rooms.**

- Provide special equipment (headphones to block out outside noise)
- Establishing a fixed schedule of routine and communication with staff
- Use of multidisciplinary staff (teachers, psychologists, therapists, family, etc.)

With these practices in place, you will be able to create an intimate, supportive, and encouraging environment that, by putting the interests and needs of autistic employees at the centre, creates a sense of belonging and fosters the individual's motivation to succeed.

Moreover, presenting stories about young autistic people who have made it to similar situations can be used as motivation and inspiration for participants. They break down stereotypes and show that autism is not a barrier to individual success by sharing their stories of empathy, achievements and contributions in areas such as the arts, academics, sport or entrepreneurship.



PARAGRAPH 5

TITLE: ALIGNING PASSIONS WITH PROFESSIONS

Career development can be difficult for young autistic people and employment opportunities are not very common. However, all people very passionate and have a range of interests and hobbies that can vary greatly, because all of them are unique identities.

Some of the most common interests that young autistic people can often have, are specialised topics such as encyclopedic knowledge of animals, trains, computers, or certain areas of science, that have a strong tie to animals and nature. In addition, many of them are interested in art and creative activities such as dancing, drawing, painting, and writing, which are an alternative way of expressing feelings and emotions. Also, activities with some structure and predictability, examples of which include sports, puzzles or games that have clear rules and patterns, are often preferred by young autistic people. Some people are also drawn to fantasy worlds, whether in books, movies or video games. They may be attracted to these alternate realities because they provide a form of escape and fascination. Many individuals, moreover, are engaged in collecting objects of their choice, such as action figures, stamps, coins or stones and categorising these collections. Finally, many autistic young people have outstanding skills in technology, are enthusiastic about computers, coding, games, and find these areas very attractive.

As a young worker who deals with young autistic young people, you will need to help them connect these interests with career goals.

The primary objective at the outset is to establish a relationship of trust and support with the young autistic person and to provide personalised guidance, recognising that each one is unique and exploring career options that need to be tailored to their specific needs and preferences. Creating a safe and non-judgmental space will help them feel comfortable discussing their interests, goals, and concerns. Their career goals need to be within a realistic range of expectations so that they can be achieved.

A detailed assessment of the individual's strengths, interests, and support



PARAGRAPH 5

TITLE: ALIGNING PASSIONS WITH PROFESSIONS

needs should also be carried out using a variety of assessment tools and techniques such as interviews, self-assessment questionnaires, and observation. The assessment will help and encourage the young person to explore new interests and hobbies by identifying specific topics or areas that are really interesting and exciting to them. It is important at this stage that young people understand that the skills they have acquired in each activity can be linked and applied to different jobs.

Another important element of your role is doing research on current and projected labour market trends. This research can be used to match each person's interests and skills and with opportunities for career development. It would also be helpful if you provide young people with educational materials to help them understand more about different fields, professionals and career options. These materials can be accessed through online courses, informative videos, career exploration websites and relevant literature. Additionally experiential learning events such **as. job shadowing**, internships or volunteering **can practical experience and exposure to different careers**, as well as contact with key professionals to help them make the best choices for themselves. This will enable them to form a professional network in their field of interest. As an advocate for young autistic people, it is your responsibility to provide ongoing guidance and follow-up during and after the job search to manage any concerns that may arise.

There are also many digital tools you should use to help young autistic people explore careers and find employment opportunities that match their interests and strengths. For example:

1. LinkedIn
2. CareerOneStop
3. Career Explorer
4. Glassdoor
5. CareerVillage
6. Kahoot



PARAGRAPH 6

TITLE: SUSTAINING DRIVE TOWARD GOALS

Autistic people face several challenges and difficulties in finding employment, which can make it seem impossible to maintain their motivation and resilience, the foundation for their personal growth and success.

Here are the following strategies to help -autistic young people remain motivated and resilient:

Firstly, SMART goals are important for autistic people. This means that goals have to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. It is more likely that significant, focused objectives will be achieved within a reasonable period by splitting them into smaller parts.

As their advocate, you should emphasise their strengths and encourage them to focus on their talents and abilities. You should be helping them to understand that their personal qualities can be developed through effort and dedication. It is very important to promote feelings of self-compassion, acceptance, and self-care, in a compassionate environment.

In the case of failure or difficulty, acknowledge the initial efforts of the individual to achieve the objectives and encourage reflection, recognising that each failure is a new motivation and opportunity for learning and development. In other words, to gain additional knowledge and discover new options for their next attempt, they should be encouraged to analyse their mistakes.

Developing coping strategies together to cope with stress and frustration, such as deep breathing exercises, meditation techniques, sensory breaks can be very beneficial. Finally, help to create a supportive network of familiar and trustworthy people, who can be used at difficult times by the youth as well as emotionally and physically support.

Therefore, young autistic people will be more resilient and able to cope with any difficulties that may arise in their career path, through the implementation of these strategies.



CHAPTER 2

NETWORKING & SEARCHING FOR OPPORTUNITIES



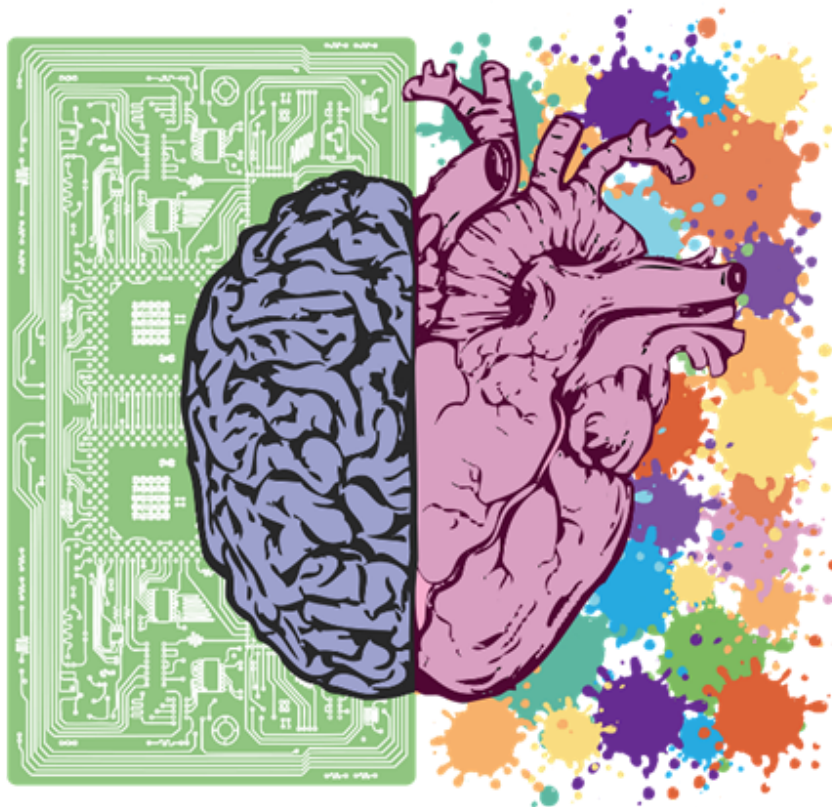
BULLET POINTS

- **Discovering Personal Networking Styles:** This paragraph encourages autistic youth to explore and identify their preferred networking styles and methods that align with their strengths and comfort levels. It emphasises the importance of self-awareness and understanding their unique communication preferences and sensory needs in networking situations.
- **Utilising Technology and Online Platforms:** This paragraph highlights the benefits of utilising technology and online platforms as accessible and comfortable avenues for networking. Additionally, it guides how to effectively use social media, online forums, and professional networking platforms to connect with others, share interests, and explore job opportunities.
- **Practicing Social Skills and Networking Techniques:** This section focuses on practical tips and exercises for practicing social skills and networking techniques in low-pressure settings. It includes role-playing activities, mock networking events, or structured social groups to help young autistic people build confidence and competence in networking interactions.
- **Setting Realistic Goals and Expectations:** In this paragraph, autistic young people are guided in setting realistic goals and expectations for their networking efforts, considering their strengths, interests, and comfort levels. It emphasises the importance of focusing on achievable objectives, such as making a certain number of new connections or attending networking events regularly, to maintain motivation and momentum.
- **Seeking Mentorship and Guidance:** This paragraph highlights the importance of seeking mentorship and guidance from individuals who have experience navigating the professional world or who share similar interests and experiences. Advice on how to approach potential mentors, initiate meaningful conversations, and establish mutually beneficial relationships built on trust and respect is also provided.
- **Embracing Opportunities for Growth and Learning:** This sector aims to foster a growth mindset and encourage autistic youth to view networking as a valuable opportunity for personal and professional growth. Additionally, it encourages them to embrace challenges, learn from setbacks, and continuously refine their networking skills and strategies over time.



PARAGRAPH 1

TITLE: DISCOVERING PERSONAL NETWORKING STYLES



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Networking can be a useful skill in both personal and professional life, facilitating connections, collaborations, and opportunities. It is all about communicating and making connections with other people. Networking might be more challenging for autistic people and traditional ways of communication may not always be effective. Customised communication tactics may help autistic people manage these challenges important.

Effective communication can flourish in an environment where autistic people are recognised and catered to on an individual basis. Communication styles are as diverse as the individuals themselves (Roberson, 2024). From a neurodiversity perspective, autism is seen as a subtle difference and potential strength, rather than as a single-sided flaw or deficit (Brownlow et al., 2013). For this reason, it would be helpful to identify your preferred networking styles and methods that align with your strengths and comfort levels.

According to Roberson (2024) for example, some autistic may thrive in small, structured settings as individuals prefer detail-oriented and focused conversations. They might exhibit a deep interest in specific topics, leading to conversations that are rich in detail and knowledge.



PARAGRAPH 1

TITLE: DISCOVERING PERSONAL NETWORKING STYLES

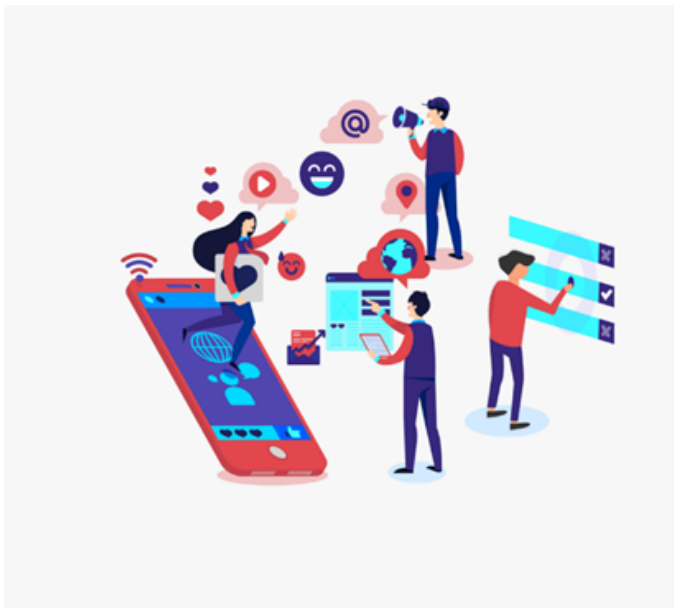
These conversations, while potentially limited in scope, offer a window into the passions and expertise of the individual. On the other hand, some autistic people prefer solitary activities or interactions. Sensory processing should also be taken into consideration, as, loud, and crowded settings might cause overstimulation and affect communication. Discovering personal networking styles is a journey of self-discovery and empowerment so that you can navigate networking situations with confidence and authenticity. By recognising these preferences, you can tailor your networking approach to suit your individual needs.



PARAGRAPH 2

TITLE: UTILISING TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE PLATFORMS

The digital era provides an extensive range of resources for improving communication through technology. It is a tool that can be customized to meet the needs and preferences of each person, as it offers alternative means of expression and communication, from specialised apps to online forums. One could contend that social media and the rest of the "virtual world" have greatly eased the lives of certain autistic persons. Many online networks are intentionally designed to assist people in finding a job. These networks make it simple for autistic professionals and job seekers to engage with one another around shared interests and professional aspirations. You can utilise well-known social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn to connect with people you already know or make new contacts who might be able to help you in your job hunt. Hiring managers and recruiters may find you through posting updates about your job search as well as your skills and abilities. Additionally, Job Boards, such as Glassdoor and Indeed websites,



Source: pixabay.com

which are tailored to industries like technology, healthcare, education, or finance. Using these job boards, you will have the chance to connect with potential employers who may be looking for someone just like you and apply for jobs in your area of expertise. Furthermore, job boards can help you get a better understanding of the local job market and offer insightful information that may facilitate your search.



PARAGRAPH 3

TITLE: PRACTICING SOCIAL SKILLS AND NETWORKING TECHNIQUES

Many young autistic people require assistance in developing social skills in a variety of contexts. They frequently want to socialise, but they might not know how to approach or interact with others, and they can find the thought of doing something new quite



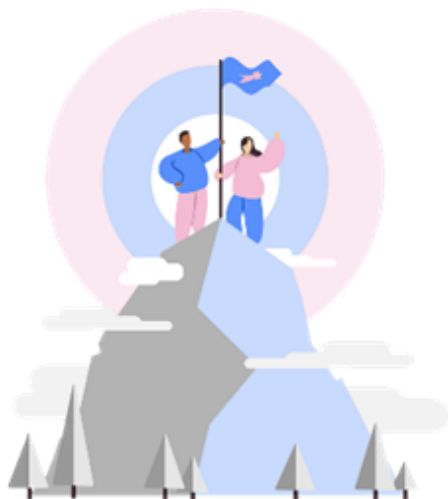
Source: [pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)

overwhelming. The development of social skills in autistic people includes "teachable moments" and clear, straightforward instruction, along with practice in realistic environments. Techniques such as practising conversation scripts or participating in social skills groups can provide safe spaces for autistic people to refine their verbal communication and build confidence and comfort in expressing themselves (Roberson, 2024).



PARAGRAPH 4

TITLE: SETTING REALISTIC GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS



Source: pixabay.com

Setting goals is an essential process to success. However, it is just one step in a process that can lead to achievement; doing so alone does not ensure success. According to Locke et al. (1981), a goal is the intention or aim of an action that a person is attempting to accomplish. It is often

accepted that achieving a goal entails meeting a particular standard of work performance within an acceptable time frame. Setting objectives is essential for organising, carrying out a strategy, maintaining motivation, and, in the end, assessing your progress. This process may be more difficult for autistic people because if they believe that the choice must be made quickly, they might become anxious, especially if it involves interaction with new people and they have trouble with social conversations. They might also have trouble setting goals if they have trouble with ideas that aren't concrete and explicit, as it involves comprehending abstract concepts (McDonald et al., 2020). Their toolkit suggests that the ideal number of goals is 3. It is important to have more than one or two goals, but it is equally important not to overdo it! It is the commitment to the achievement of a goal that is the key to its feasibility. Three goals may be more accomplishable; the important thing is not to overdo it, because then you have many difficult goals to manage. A good goal involves anything you find important. While the goal itself does not have to be necessarily realistic, every step taken to achieve it must be.



PARAGRAPH 4

TITLE: SETTING REALISTIC GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

Once you have assisted the autistic young person in identifying their goals introduce them to the SMART (Smart, Measurable, Action-Oriented, Realistic and Time-Bound) model, to be able to manage them. Goals can be divided into smaller parts preventing individuals from feeling overwhelmed. This helps you achieve smaller goals first and boost their confidence and motivation to continue through the next steps. Keeping goals small, achievable and specific will help keep candidates motivated and engaged with the job search process.



PARAGRAPH 5

TITLE: SEEKING MENTORSHIP AND GUIDANCE

A supportive environment is essential for autistic individuals to ensure their success in their social interactions while building meaningful relationships offers rewarding benefits. Professionals, friends, and family are examples of support networks that are essential to the development of communication skills. Additionally, mentorship is found to be beneficial to autistic young people in reducing social anxiety while boosting social connectivity and well-being



Source: pixabay.com

(Curtin et al., 2015). They provide autistic people with practice opportunities and a secure environment in which to express themselves. These connections are essential to the process of developing successful communication (Roberson, 2024). Joining a professional organisation or attending local events relevant to your field may be helpful for the job seeker and provides excellent methods to develop a support system. They may network with people who can offer employment leads, mentorship, and other beneficial advice through in-person meet-ups. They could use email, social media, or other channels to introduce themselves, experience and their professional interests, to the mentor. To prepare for a mentorship conversation, they should conduct thorough research on their mentor, their work, background, and interests, prepare thoughtful questions, and share your goals, challenges, and expectations. They should consider proposing a schedule, seeking feedback, and following through on agreed actions. **People** seeking **job needs** to keep updated on their progress and achievements. Youth workers have to keep in mind that establishing a mentorship requires respectful, responsive, and proactive



PARAGRAPH 5

TITLE: SEEKING MENTORSHIP AND GUIDANCE

nurturing. Youth workers need to operate so autistic people may learn how to respect mentors' time, boundaries, and preferences, communicate clearly and show a willingness to learn. Proactively seek opportunities to add value, such as sharing insights or resources, to build a lasting, rewarding relationship (Roy et al., 2023). Youth workers may also benefit from autistic people relatives and friends, who could already know someone in the same field, to make personal contacts. Developing a relationship with someone like that could have long-term advantages. It is very important to remember autistic people that whatever is their line of work, the successful of their career depends on having a strong support system of individuals who can relate to them, understanding their requirements, and offering wise counselling (EnnaGlobal, 2023).



PARAGRAPH 6

TITLE: EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND LEARNING



Source: pixabay.com

To get through the job search process, all people, including autistic people, need to be supported in their personal development.

This is an ongoing journey, sometimes marked by obstacles, which provide opportunities to broaden horizons, improve resilience and find one's true potential.

It is necessary to face the challenges of the world of work with an open mind and an attitude of growth. This is the only way to overcome obstacles and transform ourselves into people capable of giving our best.

Continuous learning requires a learning routine, so youth workers supporting autistic people could create a schedule that includes time for specific learning activities.

Tools such as online calendars, task managers and reminder apps can be used to empower these individuals (MercuriUK, 2023).

Stepping out of one's comfort zone and accepting difficulties leads to new experiences, broader perspectives and an improved ability to cope with adversity. In these moments of discouragement, hidden strengths can be discovered and a growth mindset can be developed that allows for continued perseverance and progress. Challenges push people to their limits, encouraging them to try new things, develop new skills and learn more about themselves and the world around them.

Overcoming problems builds confidence and the resilience needed to deal



PARAGRAPH 6

TITLE: EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND LEARNING

with obstacles and disappointments. In addition, challenges often inspire creativity and innovation, as people tend to find different ways to overcome obstacles and achieve goals. This process allows for personal growth; awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses allows one to recognise one's true potential.

Finally, accepting difficulties leads to a change of perspective and an effort to move out of one's comfort zone. Youth workers can help autistic people in this process by providing practical techniques to change perspectives and ensure that problems are not seen as threats to be avoided but as opportunities to learn and develop one's view of problems. Youth workers can help autistic people to realise that obstacles should be approached with curiosity and a desire to try new things, bearing in mind that failure is an essential step in the learning process. Surrounding oneself with people who encourage one's development and offer constructive comments contributes to the growing experience (Harisk, 2023).



CHAPTER 3

CREATING A CV & COVER LETTER



BULLET POINTS

- **Introduction to CV and Cover Letter Writing:** In this paragraph, is going to be highlighted the purpose of creating a CV and cover letter, emphasising the importance of these documents in securing a job opportunity. It is discussed the significance of a well-crafted CV and cover letter in making a positive first impression on potential employers. Additionally, it is emphasised the importance of customising these documents for each job application to highlight relevant skills and experiences.
- **Writing an Effective CV:** This paragraph discusses the essential information that should be included in a CV. It explains how to begin with personal details such as name and contact information, followed by a concise and impactful professional summary. The paragraph further delves into the importance of including relevant educational qualifications, work experience, skills, and keywords for an ATS-friendly CV. The ATS Curriculum Vitae is a suitable resume format and can be sorted by Applicant Tracking System (ATS) software or application. ATS is software used by companies to support the candidate selection and recruitment process. Additionally, it is advised to organise this information in a clear and structured manner to ensure it's readable and easy to understand for potential employers.
- **Crafting a Persuasive Cover Letter:** It is an explanation of the purpose of a cover letter as a supplement to the CV. This section focuses on the key components of a cover letter and how to structure it effectively. It explains how a cover letter is an opportunity to showcase motivation, enthusiasm, and suitability for a specific job role. The paragraph emphasises the importance of addressing the cover letter to the correct person or department, and providing a brief overview of the job position being applied for. Furthermore, it explains how to highlight key skills and experiences that align with the requirements of the job.
- **Choose style and tone:** This paragraph discusses the appropriate writing style and tone to use when creating a CV and cover letter. It describes the need for a professional and formal tone while avoiding excessive jargon or overly complex language. The paragraph further delves into the importance of writing concisely and using specific examples to demonstrate achievements and abilities. Additionally, it advises against using clichés and encourages the use of active verbs to enhance the impact of the CV and cover letter.



6 BULLET POINTS

- **Tailoring to job requirements:** This section focuses on the importance of customizing the CV and cover letter for each job application. It emphasises the need to carefully read the job description and identify the key skills and requirements sought by the employer. The paragraph discusses how to highlight relevant experiences and achievements that align with these requirements, as well as how to address any gaps in skills or experience. It also advises against including excessive information that is not relevant to the specific job application.
- **Proofreading and editing:** In this paragraph, the importance of thoroughly proofreading and editing the CV and cover letter is highlighted. It discusses how errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation can create a negative impression on potential employers. The paragraph offers practical tips on proofreading, such as reading the documents aloud, using online spell-check tools, and seeking feedback from trusted individuals. It emphasises the need for clarity, coherence, and professionalism in the final versions of the CV and cover letter.



PARAGRAPH 1

TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO CV AND COVER LETTER WRITING

Writing a CV and cover letter is an essential step for anyone looking for a new job. In fact, these two tools are the first contact between potential employers and candidates. These documents can make the difference between being considered for an interview or being rejected out of hand. In this chapter, we will focus on the importance of creating an effective CV and cover letter, with practical tips on how to structure them professionally and attract the attention of recruiters.

A CV is a document that clearly and concisely summarises a candidate's work experience, education and skills. Its main purpose is to present a candidate's academic and professional qualifications, personal skills and work experience in a comprehensive and thorough manner so that the employer can quickly assess whether one is a proper fit for the position they are seeking.

To start writing a CV, a candidate needs to make a detailed list of own work and educational experience. This should include previous jobs, academic education, any professional courses or achieved certifications, and any extracurricular activities or volunteer work. It is also important to include information about skills, such as foreign languages, or computer skills. Once they have gathered all this information, candidates can begin to structure their CV in a clear and organised way. Usually, they enter personal details first, such as name and contact information. Then move on to the work experience section, where they should list their previous jobs in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent. The information provided must include the name of the company, the role and key responsibilities undertaken, and the period of employment.

After the 'work experience' section, they should include an 'education' section, where they should list their academic qualifications, such as degrees and diplomas. It is important to include the name of the institution, the course of study, the final grade (if applicable), and the time period of their education. If they have achieved other certifications or have attended additional courses, they can add a separate section for them.



PARAGRAPH 1

TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO CV AND COVER LETTER WRITING

Finally, candidates can complete their CV with a section dedicated to personal skills and abilities. In this section it is possible to list their languages' level, computer knowledges and soft skills, such as the ability to work in a team or manage projects.

However, it is really important that the candidate tailors the CV to the job applied for, highlighting the skills required for the role.

In addition to CV, it is also important to send a cover letter to the employer. Cover letter represents the next important element of the application process. Cover letter provides an opportunity for the candidate to introduce oneself and outline one's motivation for applying for the role.

Writing an effective cover letter, requires the candidate to conduct research about the company to which it is applying to. This will allow to tailor one's own message to the employer.

The cover letter should also highlight key skills and experience and relate them directly to the requirements of the role. The candidate can give a brief history of one's own career and skills to be considered an ideal choice for the role. Remember to be concise, avoid repetition and try to keep the letter to one page.

Finally, ending a cover letter with a professional closing and a request for an interview shows dedication and initiative. Candidates should be encouraged to express their enthusiasm for the opportunity and willingness to meet with the employer for a more in-depth discussion. Remember to thank the recruiter for the opportunity and include contact information for easy communication.

In conclusion, writing a CV and cover letter is an essential step for anyone looking for a new job. As a youth worker it is important to support autistic people in their job search. An excellent place to start is to provide advise on how they can prepare an effective CV and cover letter, by supporting understanding the elements of their CV and training them on how to tailor it to different jobs in order to provide an effective foundation for engaging in job search activities.



PARAGRAPH 2

TITLE: WRITING AN EFFECTIVE CV

Writing an effective CV is essential for presenting candidate's skills, experience and qualities clearly and concisely to potential employers. A well-structured CV is key to attract the attention of recruiters and increasing chances of a candidate being selected for an interview.

The following guidance will help structure CVs effectively.

The CV structure should be divided into clear and well-defined sections. The main parts of a CV include: personal information, career objectives, work experience, education, skills, languages spoken and interests. All information must be presented in a coherent and easy-to-read manner.

Personal information. This part should include the candidate's name, telephone number, email address and home address. It can also include additional information such as LinkedIn profile or a link to a personal website, if relevant.

Career objective. This section should provide a concise overview of the candidate's career aspirations and the role for which is applying for. It is essential to tailor this section to the specific position in question.

Work experience. In this part the candidate needs to list in reverse chronological order relevant work experiences in detail, including the name of the company, the period of work and the duties performed. It is recommended to highlight the results obtained and skills acquired during the different work experiences.

Education. In this section, the candidate should provide a list of academic qualifications, including the qualification obtained, the final grade achieved (if applicable), the institution attended and the year in which the qualification was obtained. It is also important to include any specialisation courses or certifications achieved that are relevant to the position for which the candidate is applying.



PARAGRAPH 2

TITLE: WRITING AN EFFECTIVE CV

Skills. In this section the candidate should provide a list of oneself skills such as IT skills, organisational skills, problem-solving skills, soft skill, etc. It is important to highlight the skills that are most relevant to the position for which the candidate is applying.

Language skills. In this section, the candidate should provide a list of foreign language skills, including writing, speaking and comprehension level. It is important to be honest about language skills to avoid misunderstandings during an interview. Language skills are usually added to CV's using the European Language Common Framework.

Interests. In this part the candidate may include information about hobbies, volunteer activities or other personal interests. This section allows the candidate to present a more comprehensive one's personal characteristics and interests to the prospective employer.

It is important to pay attention to the formatting of the CV, using a simple layout, not too elaborate and easy to read. Use the same verb form throughout the document and give preference to phrasal verbs and the active form of verbs.

It is very relevant for the candidate to use a readable font size and to avoid too many graphics or bright colours.

Then, before they send their CV, it is important to check all the information they have entered carefully for typing and grammatical errors. Encourage the candidate to ask a trusted person to review the CV for further revision. Creating an effective CV takes time, care and attention to details. These guidelines will help to support autistic job seekers in the formatting, structure and information contained on CV, enabling them to engage in the job search more effectively.



PARAGRAPH 3

TITLE: CRAFTING A CONVINCING COVER LETTER

Writing a compelling cover letter is essential to effectively present themselves and stand out in a selection process. A good cover letter allows the candidate to highlight their own skills, experience and motivation in a clear and compelling way. This will attract the employer's attention and encourage them to consider the candidate's profile for the role.

To support an autistic job seeker write a strong cover letter, it is important to structure the document effectively and follow a few key steps that will help make it more persuasive.

It is necessary to start with a strong introduction. The cover letter should begin with a strong and memorable opening sentence that immediately grabs the reader's attention. It is important to show them interest in the position, demonstrating a genuine motivation to be part of the company and a strong interest in contributing to its success.

It is essential to support autistic jobseeker to highlight their own relevant skills and experience in a clear and detailed manner. It is important to link skills and knowledge to the specific requirements of the role that is being applied, demonstrating the candidate's suitability for the job.

Personalising the cover letter and showing enthusiasm and motivation is a helpful element of a cover letter. It is relevant to explain to autistic people how to research information about the company, understand its values and include this information in the cover letter.

Close with a call to action. At the end of the cover letter, it is important to close by asking the employer for a possible interview. Showing willingness and interest in a possible meeting shows determination and a desire to take advantage of the opportunity.

Finally, it is important to remember to pay attention to the formatting and grammatical correctness of the cover letter, ensuring that the text is clear, readable and error-free. A well-structured, compelling and persuasive cover letter can make all the difference in the selection process, helping job seekers to stand out from other candidates.



PARAGRAPH 4

TITLE: WRITING STYLE AND TONE

When writing a CV and a cover letter, it is important to choose an appropriate writing style and tone that will grab the reader's attention and effectively communicate the candidate's skills and experience.

It is important to avoid using clichés and phrases that make the CV and cover letter unoriginal and uninteresting. For example, instead of writing 'team player' or 'excellent communication skills', it is better to use concrete examples that demonstrate these skills, such as 'I have worked successfully with the team to achieve company goals' or 'I have communicated effectively with clients and colleagues, ensuring clear and transparent communication'. It is also important to use active verbs to describe experience and responsibilities. Active verbs add dynamism to the text and convey the idea that the candidate is a proactive and motivated person. For example, instead of writing 'I was responsible for managing the team', the candidate could write 'I successfully managed a team of professionals, ensuring the achievement of set goals'.

The use of active verbs is particularly important in the cover letter, where the candidate describes experience and motivation in more details. By using active verbs, the candidate can convey enthusiasm and commitment attracting the employer's interest and setting apart from other candidates. Finally, it is important to adapt the style and tone of the CV and cover letter to the sector in which the candidate is seeking employment. For example, if a candidate is looking for a job in a creative or artistic sector, may use a more original and creative style, whereas if is looking for a job in a more formal and traditional field, it is advisable to use a more professional and conservative style.



PARAGRAPH 5

TITLE: TAILORING TO JOB REQUIREMENTS

A key aspect of writing an effective CV and cover letter is tailoring it to the specific requirements of the job the candidate is applying for. Tailoring a CV and Cover letter means editing it to outline which skills and qualities the candidate meets as outlined in the job application. Working on a standard application without considering the specific requirements of the employer can be counterproductive and reduce the chances of being selected for an interview.

It is important to read the job description carefully and identify the key skills and requirements. This means not only looking at past experience and qualifications, but also assessing the soft skills, problem-solving skills, teamwork skills and more that the employer may require.

Once the key requirements have been identified, it is important to highlight relevant experience and achievements that demonstrate these skills. This is best done using examples from experience, linking skills the applicant already has with the job requirement listed in the specification.

It is important to focus on the skills the candidate possess and focus on their strengths in the application. If the candidate lacks specific skills you have to help them how they can develop that skill. It is equality important to emphasise to the applicants that they do not need to meet every requirement outlined in the job specification and that gaps in their skills can be resolved through in work training.

Candidates should not include excessive information that is not relevant to the specific application. There is sometimes a tendency to fill the CV with experience and qualifications that may not be relevant to the employer. It is important to focus on the experience and skills that are most relevant to the job requirements and that can demonstrate the value of a candidate.

There are several different CV formats, and the right format must be used in the correct context. If a specific type of CV is required by an employer they will list it in the job description. For example, if an employer requests a CV in a Europass format the candidate should use this format for the relevant application but should not use it if it is not required.



PARAGRAPH 6

TITLE: PROOFREADING AND EDITING

Proofreading and editing your CV and covering letter is a critical element of the application process. Mistakes in spelling, grammar, and punctuation can give a negative impression of professionalism and attention to detail, which can have a negative impact on the candidate's opportunities.

Avoiding such mistakes is important, candidates need to carefully correct and edit their documents.

Candidates can also rely on online spell-check tools to highlight common mistakes and suggest corrections. While online spell check and proofing tools are valuable, human proofreading is always recommended as such tools have their shortcomings.

Seeking feedback from trusted people, such as friends, family, or colleagues, can be extremely helpful for candidates in identifying errors and improving the consistency and clarity of documents. It can be particularly valuable to get the opinion of someone who knows the candidate's field well.

It is important to ensure consistency of tone and style in documents when proofreading and editing. Ensure that the narrative is clear and concise, and that it meets the standards of professionalism required by the industry.

Avoid expressions that are too informal or superfluous and ensure that the content is well structured and easy to understand. As said, an accurate and well-edited CV and cover letter can make all the difference in the selection process.



CHAPTER 4

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS



BULLET POINTS

- **Introduction to the Interview Process:** The interview process serves as a crucial step in the recruitment and hiring process, where employers carefully assess the skills, qualifications and suitability of candidates for a particular position. This first section provides a brief overview of the purpose and importance of the interview process.
- **Types of interviews:** This section explores the different types of interviews that employers may conduct, including traditional face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, video interviews, panel interviews and behavioural interviews. Each type is described in detail, highlighting their unique characteristics and advantages.
- **Preparing for the interview:** This section will focus on the importance of preparation before the interview, understanding the required profile that the company has researched, understanding the job description, and preparing the eventual common interview questions. It will also discuss the importance of dressing appropriately and bringing any necessary documents or materials to the interview.
- **The interview itself:** This section will cover what typically happens during an interview, including introductions, questioning and possible assessment activities. It will explain how candidates need to approach the interviewers, how to better describe their skills, knowledge and qualifications, how to describe any experience they may have and what they want to do, and how to assess their compatibility with the company's values and culture.
- **Common interview questions:** In this section we will discuss some common interview questions that candidates may face, such as questions about their strengths, weaknesses, previous work experience and problem-solving skills. We will also provide tips on how to answer these questions effectively, emphasising the importance of providing specific examples and demonstrating relevant skills.



6 BULLET POINTS

- **After the interview:** The final section will focus on the post-interview process, including any comments and suggestions received, and preparing for any further rounds of interviews or reference checks. It will also address the anxiety and uncertainty that a candidate may experience during the waiting period and provide suggestions for managing these emotions.



PARAGRAPH 1

TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

In contemporary workplaces, the interview represents a pivotal stage in the recruitment process, whereby potential candidates for a specific role are evaluated. It is a pivotal juncture wherein the prospective employer can gain deeper insight into the candidate's competencies, background, and drive. Concurrently, the candidate has the opportunity to exemplify their competencies and substantiate their suitability for the position.

The format of the interview process may vary considerably depending on the specific company and the nature of the position being sought. Nevertheless, there are certain common stages that are typical of the majority of interviews, irrespective of the context. This section will examine the various stages of the interview process and provide practical guidance on how to effectively navigate them.

The initial stage of the interview process is that of preparation. Prior to the interview, it is essential to conduct thorough research on the company and the position for which you are applying. It is beneficial to conduct research into the company's historical background, the products or services it offers, and its core values and organisational culture. Furthermore, it is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the responsibilities and competencies required for the position in question.

Additionally, it is advisable to practise responding to typical interview questions during the preparation phase. For instance, it would be prudent to prepare responses to questions pertaining to one's previous professional experience, the motivation behind one's desire to join the company, and one's personal attributes. Additionally, it is useful to practise communicating in a clear and concise manner, and to avoid digression or speaking at length. Once the candidate has prepared, it is also important that you take care of your appearance. You should dress in a manner that is appropriate for the business context. Well-groomed and professional clothing can create a favourable impression on the employer and demonstrate interest in the position.



PARAGRAPH 1

TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

It is important that the candidate is prepared for challenging questions and unexpected situations. Youth workers may give a guidance to autistic people on how to respond if things go wrong, this will help them on manage the stress and anxiety of the interview.

The interview process represents a pivotal stage in the selection of candidates for a specific position. It is essential that youth workers prepare autistic people meticulously to how present themselves in a genuine and authentic way, and how provide responses that are clear, compelling, and aligned with the expectations of the interviewer. By adhering to these guidelines, autistic people can enhance their prospects of success and secure the desired employment opportunity.



PARAGRAPH 2

TITLE: TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Interviews are an essential part of the recruitment process as they allow employers to assess the skills, qualifications and personality of candidates. There are different types of interview that can be used in the recruitment process, each of them with its own characteristics.

The traditional face-to-face interview is the most common type of interview and takes place in a formal setting where the employer and the candidate meet face-to-face. This type of interview allows the employer to assess both the technical and personal skills of the candidate and provides an opportunity to build a relationship with the candidate. This type of interview can be stressful for autistic people, both because of the context of the situation and because of the “unknowns” associated with taking part in the interview. Simple things like travelling to new and unfamiliar places can be stressful, as can waking up on time, arriving on time and dressing appropriately. Fortunately, there are many ways to help autistic people manage this stress and anxiety by helping them to identify the problem and develop solutions to address it.

Another common type of interview is the telephone interview, where the employer has a telephone conversation with the candidate. This type of interview is often used to make an initial assessment of candidates and to screen them for aptitude. It usually involves direct questions about the candidate's application and how their previous experience matches the job requirements. Usually these interviews are conducted by a recruiter who will then decide whether the candidate will be shortlisted for further interviews. As a youth worker, you could train autistic people in telephone etiquette and prepare mock interviews for them. This will help them to perform well in this type of interview. It is also important to remember that a telephone interview is usually the first of several interviews. Candidates should prepare for these next interviews.



PARAGRAPH 2

TITLE: TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Video interviewing is an increasingly popular type of interview where the employer and candidate meet via video call. This interview offers the convenience of being conducted remotely, reducing travel costs for both parties. Video interviews can also assess both technical and personal skills. However, they can present challenges in terms of internet connectivity and audio and video quality. As a youth worker, you can instruct autistic people on how to set up an appropriate environment for the interview and ensure that they have all the relevant software on their device. You can also provide guidance on other technical aspects of the interview, such as ensuring that the candidate has earphones/headphones for the interview.

Panel interviews involve several interviewers conducting the interview at the same time. This type of interview allows employers to get different perspectives on candidates and better assess their skills and qualifications. However, panel interviews can be stressful for autistic people and require more coordination between interviewers. They can also be conducted remotely, so you should prepare the candidate appropriately depending on the context.

In addition, behavioural interviews focus on the candidate's past experiences and ability to solve problems and handle difficult situations. This type of interview is based on the idea that past behaviour is a reliable indicator of future behaviour and allows employers to assess candidates' ability to cope with challenges in the workplace. However, behavioural interviews require detailed preparation by both candidates and employers to be effective. Youth workers should prepare autistic people to respond to mock questions based on their past experiences and give them guidance on how to apply in a relevant context.

In conclusion, it is important for autistic people to be well prepared for the type of interview they have been invited to.



PARAGRAPH 3

TITLE: PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

The interview process is a crucial step in the job search process as it is an opportunity for the candidates to present themselves to the potential employer and demonstrate their skills and abilities. Preparing for an interview is therefore a crucial step in ensuring the success of the meeting and the possibility of landing the desired job.

At this stage it is important that youth workers teach autistic people how to search information about the job and the company so that they can show interest and motivation for the role on offer.

Before the interview, it is a good idea to prepare a list of mock questions they might be asked so that autistic people are prepared to answer them fully and convincingly. It is also useful to make them thinking about their past experiences that may be helpful in demonstrating their skills and abilities.

During the interview it is important to appear confident and calm, to be open and receptive to dialogue and to try to establish a positive relationship with the recruiter. Youth workers should prepare autistic people on how ask questions and show interest in the company and the team to demonstrate their motivation and determination.

It is also important that autistic people demonstrate communication and personal skills, showing that they can handle conflict or stressful situations in a professional and competent manner. It is also a good idea to prepare them to talk about their experience and skills in a clear and convincing way, highlighting achievements and challenges they have overcome.

Finally, youth workers should explain autistic people how to end the interview by thanking the recruiter for the opportunity and expressing their interest in the position. At this stage it is possible to ask about the next steps in the selection process and the expected timing of results.

In conclusion, to make a good impression on the employer, to ensure the success of the interview and the possibility of obtaining the desired job it is crucial to prepare properly the interview, and appear professional, motivated and ready to demonstrate your skills and abilities.



PARAGRAPH 4

TITLE: THE INTERVIEW ITSELF

The interview process is a crucial moment in the search for a new job. During this phase, the candidates can present their skills and qualifications to the interviewers, demonstrating why they are the best choice for the vacant position.

The job interview typically starts with a presentation phase, in which you introduces yourself and gives a summary of your work experience and skills. This is an opportunity to make a positive first impression on the interviewers and bring out your distinctive qualities.

The interviewers may ask a series of questions to assess the candidate's preparation and suitability for the position. These questions may concern both the specific technical skills required for the role and more general aspects such as soft skills and adaptability to the corporate culture.

As said youth workers should prepare autistic people to describe during the interview their past experiences in detail, highlighting successes achieved and skills acquired. It is important to explain them how to communicate their strengths clearly and convincingly, and in addition how to demonstrate that these their qualities can be useful for the company offering the job.

In addition, autistic people should be prepared to ask the interviewers questions, demonstrating interest in the company and the role offered.

Asking intelligent and relevant questions can show that they have done research on the company and that they are genuinely interested in joining the team.

Finally, is necessary to prepare autistic people to be subjected to additional assessments, such as personality tests, practice tests or group exercises. These activities may help the interviewers to assess the candidates' skills and suitability in more depth.



PARAGRAPH 5

TITLE: COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviews are used to assess a candidate's skills and experience to establish if they meet the requirements of the role. Therefore, before the interview the candidate should be prepared to answer several questions usually asked in interviews. These questions will relate to the candidates' skills and experience and how they meet the requirements of the role. Providing guidance on how to answer these questions, and how to manage ambiguously worded questions will be invaluable for autistic candidates. Another aspect to prepare for are questions relating to a specific skill, knowledge or experience they may lack. For such questions they should have been prepared to be honest about shortcomings, to explain to the employer that they do not have the specific trait, and to explain how their strengths will help them obtain this trait or how it might provide value in a different way. The autistic candidate should be prepared to focus on strengths throughout the interview not weaknesses. For autistic candidate preparation, we have identified the following as common questions and have provided ways to answer them as below:

Tell me about yourself. This is one of the most common questions asked during an interview and is an opportunity for the autistic candidates to introduce themselves to the recruiter. The candidates should prepare information about their education, work experience and personal qualities that make them suitable for the role.

What are your strengths and weaknesses? This question is designed to assess their self-awareness and personal characteristics. When talking about their strengths they should focus on what specific skills make them a strong candidate for the role. When talking about their weaknesses, they have to be honest explaining how their strengths are used to overcome these weaknesses.

Why are you interested in this role and this company? The purpose of this question is to assess how much research the candidates have done about the company and the role. The candidates should be careful and avoid providing generic answers that are irrelevant to the company.



PARAGRAPH 5

TITLE: COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Can you describe a situation in which you successfully overcame a problem at work? In these situations, the candidates are being asked to show how they can deal with challenges rationally and creatively, demonstrating problem-solving and analytical skills. To answer this type of question effectively the candidates should provide concrete examples of how they successfully solved a problem, highlighting the strategies they used and the results they achieved.

What is your greatest professional success? With this question, the recruiter is trying to assess the candidates professional priorities and what they focus on to achieve their goals. When asked such questions the candidates should provide an example that demonstrates their commitment and professional skills.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time? This question is designed to understand the candidates ambitions and long-term career goals. It is used to identify the candidates long-term interests within the company and how they plan to support the company.

Why did you leave your previous job? With this question the recruiter is trying to understand the reasons behind the candidates career choices. The candidates should be honest but avoid criticising their previous employer. The autistic candidates should be prepared to answer these questions honestly, demonstrating their skills and suitability for the role. Giving specific examples and demonstrating relevant skills is crucial to impressing recruiters and increasing their chances of being hired.



PARAGRAPH 6

TITLE: AFTER THE INTERVIEW

After the interview, it is important to evaluate the performance and progress of the interview. There are several aspects to consider in order to understand whether the interview was effective and whether the candidates managed to communicate their skills and qualities in a clear and convincing way.

After the interview, it can be beneficial for autistic candidates to be assessed on how well they've done, but this needs to be done in a way that's sensitive to their needs. Interviews are a stressful experience for everyone, and often come with a lot of anxiety. It is common for autistic people to experience heightened levels of anxiety when compared to their neurotypical peers. Stress and anxiety can make it difficult for any individual to process and apply feedback after interviews. Therefore, candidates should be trained on different relaxation and meditation techniques and encouraged to engage in their special interests post interview. The invitation to and the attendance of the interview regardless of the outcome are successes. When candidates have been given the opportunity to recover from the interview youth workers can provide them guidance on how they can evaluate their performance.

Identifying a method of evaluation should be based upon the individual candidate's needs, strengths and wants. It is very important to focus on where the candidates performed well during the interview. Focusing on their strengths rather than their weaknesses will allow the candidates to grow their confidence post interview and sell themselves better in the next one. In evaluating their interview performance, the autistic candidates should be guided on how they can better articulate their strengths and express their interest to the employer. If the candidates found a specific aspect of the interview process challenging and requests support on a specific issue which emerged from the interview, provide them with practical sensitive advice. Job searching is an emotionally draining process, filled with stress and anxiety, these can be hurdles in their own rights and prevent the candidates from continuing their job search.



PARAGRAPH 6

TITLE: AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Therefore, learning from the candidates themselves, how they express their needs and career ambitions, and how they feel about their own performance is an important element of supporting autistic people.

Another useful method of evaluation is for candidates to ask the interviewer for feedback. This can provide the candidates with useful information on how they performed in the interview and where the interviewer feels the candidate can improve. The best way to do this is for the candidates to request feedback from either the recruiter or the interviewer by email.

Normally they can provide timely feedback on the interview and can organise an appointment to meet with the candidate to discuss the interview.

Candidates can become discouraged and focused on their failings, therefore you as a youth worker should remind them of where they did well and what they can improve. The candidate should be empowered to decide how to apply the feedback themselves and supported in their decisions.

Another aspect to be consider by young workers is how to prepare autistic people to a selection process. You should ask them whether they have thoroughly researched the company and the role on offer, whether they have been able to answer the questions asked in detail, and whether they have been able to demonstrate that they are interested and motivated by the job opportunity.

Remember to train autistic people for the selection process which can be lengthy, and may cause anxiety. Remember to repeat them that they can do their best at the interview and that they have what it takes to get the job they want. Train them to stay positive and confident in their abilities and remember them that even if they don't get the job, there will always be other opportunities.

It is also important to assess autistic people demeanour during the interview, trying to maintain a respectful and courteous professional attitude towards the interviewer throughout the selection process, whether they were able to handle any tense or difficult moments in a professional manner, and whether they were able to show enthusiasm and motivation for the role on offer.



PARAGRAPH 6

TITLE: AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Even if they are not selected for the role, it is important to leave a good impression for future job opportunities. **Remember** them to thank the interviewer for the opportunity and ask for any feedback that can help them improve in the future.

After the interview, it is useful to take some time to reflect on their performance and any areas for improvement. It is also important to send an email thanking the interviewer for the opportunity and time spent on the interview.

Finally, it is important to maintain a positive attitude and keep looking for job opportunities, even if the interview did not go as hoped. Every interview is an opportunity to learn and grow, and every experience can be useful in increasing their presentation and communication skills.

In conclusion, the time they have to wait after the interview can be stressful, but it is important to stay positive and focus on activities that will help them relax and manage stress. Prepare them for the next steps in the selection process and continue to work on their skills to improve their chances of success. With determination and commitment, autistic people will succeed in getting the job opportunity they want.



CHAPTER 5

DISCLOSING AUTISM



BULLET POINTS

- **Why disclose?** Main reason for telling employer to allow making changes to meet needs
 - Benefits
 - No need for masking
 - Reasonable accommodations
 - Understanding
 - Risks
 - Lack of understanding
 - Prejudices from employers
- **Making decision to disclose:**
 - Lack of understanding
 - Prejudices from employers
- **When to disclose? (during recruitment phase):**
 - If you choose to disclose, decide when to do so:
 - You can tell at any point:
 - In application,
 - In advance of an interview/assessment,
 - During interview
- **When to disclose? (on the job)**
 - After receiving job offer
 - After starting new job
 - When issue arise
 - How to disclose?
- **Confidentiality**
 - Be able to decide who knows about disclosure
 - Discuss confidentiality when you make disclosure
- **Bullying in the workplace:**
 - Legal situation about bullying
 - What to do if bullied
 - How to prevent it



PARAGRAPH 1

TITLE: WHY DISCLOSE?

Autistic people have diverse needs and strengths, every autistic person is different and requires varying levels of support. Likewise, not every autistic person wants to disclose their autism. Therefore it is important to empower young people to make a decision whether or not to disclose their disability. There are several benefits from disclosing a disability, most notably legal protections in the form of anti-discrimination measures and reasonable accommodations in the workplace. These benefits are contrasted by some potential risks, misunderstanding, workplace bullying, and discrimination are still prevalent in many societies. As a youth worker your role is to guide autistic young people in how they can make this decision for themselves empowering them and their engagement with the workplace.

This section will enlighten the benefits and risks of disclosure below:

- Benefits

Among the more obvious benefits of disclosure for autistic people is that they will not need mask or camouflage their autistic traits in the workplace. Masking is a conscious or subconscious practice of suppressing autistic traits compensate for difficulties in social interaction, and hide their autism. It is considered a coping strategy used by some autistic people.

- An example of autistic masking is suppressing stimming. Stimming or self-stimulating behaviour is the repetition of physical movements, sounds, moving objects and other repetitive behaviour as a response to overstimulation or to relieve anxiety. Usually stims include hand flapping, clapping, rocking, blinking, pacing, head banging, repeating noises or words, snapping fingers, and spinning objects.
- Another form of masking is suppressing reaction to sensory sensitivities. These can be caused by overstimulation due to urbanisation, crowding, noise, mass media, and technology. A coping strategy is also to compensate for difficulties in social interaction with non-autistic work colleagues by engaging in eye contact despite discomfort or mirror body languages and tone of voice of neurotypical colleagues.



PARAGRAPH 1

TITLE: WHY DISCLOSE?

Masking can have negative effects on autistic people. It can lead to autistic burnout, mental health issues like stress, anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts. Masking is more common in autistic girls, women and LGBTI people on the autism spectrum. When masking is internalised discontinuing masking is usually referred to as unmasking. In short, unmasking is a huge benefit of disclosing autism.

Receiving proper, tailor-made reasonable accommodation at the workplace is another important benefit. Reasonable accommodation refers a range of adjustments to accommodate people with disabilities based on their needs. It is defined in Article 2 of the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Article 2 of the UNCRPD defines reasonable accommodation as making fair and needed changes, without too much difficulty or cost, so that people with disabilities can fully enjoy the same rights and freedoms as everyone else.

Reasonable accommodations are not the same for everyone. Reasonable accommodation must be tailored to the needs of each individual person. Common examples of reasonable accommodation at the workplace for autistic employees include a sensory-friendly and assigned working station (in a quiet area, without bright light and irritating textures.), a separate quiet room for break outs or pauses, ear defenders, exemptions from attending social events.

Disclosing autism can also lead to a culture of understanding of diversity in the workplace among colleagues. It can have positive impact upon workplace climate, overall inclusion and a feeling of belonging. This may have a positive impact on job performance and productivity of autistic employees.



PARAGRAPH 1

TITLE: WHY DISCLOSE?

- Risks

Unfortunately disclosing autism can lead to misunderstanding or lack of understanding than choosing not to disclose. Even worse: outright prejudices can arise from the side of the employer or colleagues at the workplace when autistic employees disclose their disability. Moreover, workplace bullying can be the result of disclosing autism .

Usually, such prejudices are based on false or stereotyped beliefs and misunderstandings about autism. This in turn is due to a lack of proper training and/or education on how to interact with autistic employees.

Therefore, disclosing autism can be a risk as well as a benefit. Ultimately, individual autistic employees have to make the decision to disclose autism themselves. The following paragraph will list some suggestions on how to make the decision to disclose autism.



PARAGRAPH 2

TITLE: MAKING THE DECISION TO DISCLOSE

Decision-making can be particularly difficult for many autistic people. This is because for autistic people decision-making can come with anxiety, exhaustion and even difficulties with the of decision-making process itself. One way you can support autistic people is to assist them to make a list of the general benefits and risks of disclosing their disability. A second suggestion is for autistic people to ask someone they trust (a family member, friend, partner, etc.) to help them make this decision.

Autistic people could also ask professionals for support in making this decision. Trained employment agents, specialised social or youth workers or even the employer's equality body staff can help support the autistic person understand the benefits and risks of disclosure. For example, a strong benefit of disclosure are the legal protections against discrimination it provides. Autistic people, however, might be very concerned about being discriminated against which could prevent them from disclosing their diagnosis. Social stigma however might be a concern to the autistic person because of bullying which can still happen despite employment protections. The autism professional could discuss such protections and sources of information on availing of such protections but also recognise the concerns of the autistic person. In tying both risks and benefits together in this way will allow the autism professional to understand the lived realities of the autistic person in the workplace and tailor their support accordingly,



PARAGRAPH 3

TITLE: WHEN TO DISCLOSE? (DURING RECRUITMENT PHASE)

If an autistic person decides to disclose, the next question to consider is when to do so. It can be particularly challenging for autistic jobseekers. They could choose to do so during the recruitment process or once they have started.

- Disclosing their autism in a job application can give the employers time, if they are willing, to understand the advantages autistic people bring to the workplace. With this information, the employer can tailor both the recruitment process as well as the job to the needs of the autistic employee. Another indicator for making a workplace a safe space to disclose autism is when employers either talk about being inclusive in the job advert or other people with (invisible) disabilities already work there. A concern remain employers who favour inclusion of people with disabilities but do not live up to it in practice. On the other hand, the risk of disclosure and the lack of understanding can lead to the rejection of the application.
- Disclosing autism before an interview or assessment for a job can give the autistic job candidates the opportunity to request reasonable accommodation and for their potential employer to put these in place. Typically, reasonable accommodation for a job interview for autistic people can include allowing a visit to the venue of the interview before it takes place, changing the in-person interview to an online one, requesting the interview questions in advance and allowing for answers to be submitted in writing, or bringing a support person. The risk here again is that the employer is not welcoming to the autistic candidates' requests, rejects them and will not consider them for the position anymore.



PARAGRAPH 3

TITLE: WHEN TO DISCLOSE? (DURING RECRUITMENT PHASE)

- The final possibility of disclosing autism during the recruitment phase is during the interview or assessment itself. The advantages for doing so at this point is that autistic job candidates may be able to explain what being autistic means for them in the workplace, describe their strengths and ask for reasonable accommodation. Disclosure at this stage of the recruitment phase might be too unexpected for the employers might reject the candidate. Therefore, disclosing autism at an earlier stage can be a better option. In order to have a coherent message and presentation of autistic people in public life, it makes sense to disclose autism during the recruitment phase when it says so on the autistic persons' social media accounts. This is because some employers and recruiters search for candidates' professional and private social media accounts (if not restricted). If autistic people wish not to disclose their diagnosis they should set all social media they have into private mode.

Another option is to disclose autism on the job. This will be explored further in the next section.



PARAGRAPH 4

TITLE: WHEN TO DISCLOSE? (ON THE JOB)

When disclosing autism on the job there are also several possibilities and options at what point in time to do so. The first option is disclosing autism after the autistic employees have accepted the job offer. The benefits of disclosing autism at this point is that it allows the autistic employees to discuss the reasonable accommodation needed and the employer will have time to put it in place. A potential risk could be that the employer might consider that he didn't receive all the necessary information from the autistic employees if they only disclose their autism after getting hired. The next logical point at which disclosing autism is an option is after autistic employees started their job. The benefit of this is that the autistic employee will be able to prove what they are able to do before they ask for any reasonable accommodation. The downside of disclosing autism at this point only is that the accommodation might not be able to be put in place right away.

Finally, there is the option of disclosing autism when issues arise. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, there is no obligation to disclose autism. If autistic employees are able to accommodate themselves there is no need to tell their employers. However, if there is a point where it's needed then disclosing autism is useful. What remains important is that the autistic employee should be able to disclose their autism if and once they feel comfortable on the job.



PARAGRAPH 5

TITLE: CONFIDENTIALITY

Another important issue in relation to disclosing autism is to whom autism is disclosed. As mentioned at the beginning, autistic employees should be able to decide for themselves if they want to disclose autism. However, autistic people should be able to have agency over who knows they are autistic. This is where confidentiality policies take effect. In practice this could mean that in a larger company/association maybe not all employees or departments might need to know who of their colleagues is autistic or not. It should be emphasised that a disability or a medical diagnosis is first and foremost a private matter between a person with and their diagnostician and general practitioner. Any health related issue including an autism diagnosis falls under the General Data Protection Rules (GDPR). GDPR are regulated on a European Union and EU member states level and have direct effect for all parties involved, this included the autistic employees and their employers. Confidentiality rules are also especially in place as a form of mitigating discrimination against the individual. This means that the autistic person would be discriminated against if confidentiality rules are not put in place. This in turn would heavily violate workplace antidiscrimination rules that help to foster an inclusive and understanding climate at any employer. So confidentiality rules are not only helping the autistic individual but are also a vital incentive for the employer.



PARAGRAPH 6

TITLE: BULLYING AT THE WORKPLACE

As explained previously the risks of disclosing autism are linked to a lack of understanding and outright prejudices against autistic people. This can potentially lead to autistic employees being bullied by colleagues or worse by their employers. Bullying occurs when an individual or a collective purposefully inflicts harm upon others and conducts themselves in a manner intentionally hurtful and disrespectful towards them.

Work colleagues might engage in bullying autistic employees verbally (e.g., verbal harassment), as well as physical (e.g., physical assault). Moreover, work colleagues might exhibit bullying tendencies through subtler means, such as coercing or manipulating autistic employees, excluding them from activities, or making disparaging remarks about their autistic colleagues.

Bullying autistic employees can typically manifest in two primary forms: direct and indirect. While direct bullying may seem more overt, its interpretation can still pose challenges. Examples of direct bullying encompass various behaviours such as making rude remarks, belittling jokes or comments regarding the autistic employees' disability, insulting remarks or behaviours, misusing power or authority, making unwelcome sexual advances or exerting public humiliation or physical abuse.

Conversely, indirect bullying, often subtle and covert, presents a greater challenge in detection. This form includes actions like withholding opportunities for training or advancement for autistic employees, persistent criticism of performance, setting unattainable tasks or deadlines, exclusion from social events, spreading malicious rumours, and making unjust comments about job security.

Moreover, bullying autistic employees can extend beyond face-to-face interactions, manifesting in written communications, phone calls, or through personal messaging platforms.

No autistic employees should endure bullying in the workplace. Instead, everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Bullying or harassment must not be tolerated.



PARAGRAPH 6

TITLE: BULLYING AT THE WORKPLACE

It is the responsibility of employers to prevent bullying and harassing behaviours. They should implement measures to deter bullying and establish grievance procedures to offer assistance and support to autistic employees experiencing bullying.

If autistic employees suspect they are being bullied, they should confide in a trusted individual, either within or outside of work. Discussing the situation and providing examples to someone else can help clarify whether the behaviour constitutes bullying.

Autistic employees should talk to trusted colleagues to see if they've experienced or witnessed bullying. The bullied autistic employee should seek support. They should keep a detailed diary of bullying incidents, noting what happened, when, who was present, others' actions or words, and their own feelings. Autistic employees bullied should consider reaching out to their work safety representative for confidential advice and assistance. Specialist employment organisations offer helplines for support. In certain cases, legal action could be required.



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