

Facts and Helpful Tips Autism in the Workplace

The skills and abilities of autistic folks vary as widely as those without an autism diagnosis.

Best-suited roles for any autistic person depend on the individual's interests and capabilities.

FACT

Autism Spectrum Disorder has the highest unemployment rate of any other disability.

Autistic people can be up to 140% more productive than neurotypicals.

It has been found that autistic people have superior problem-solving abilities.

Folks with Autism may have unusual or unique body language.

Autism is a neurological difference.

MYTH

All jobs for autistic people must be repetitive with structured tasks.

Autistic people pose a safety risk to the employer.

All people with Autism require accommodations and modifications to the job.

Autistic people don't like socializing and can't handle client-facing work.

Autism is a mental health or intellectual impairment.

STRENGTHS

- Talent for detail
 - Focused concentration
 - Perseverance & tenacity
 - Honest
 - Loyal
 - Heightened pattern recognition
 - Ability to spot deviances
 - Out-of-the-box thinking
 - Results driven
 - Will follow the rules
 - Willing and able to learn in-depth information
-

CONTINUED ...

WHAT YOU MAY OBSERVE

- Avoids direct eye contact while in conversation with you. Because they may need to use one sensory channel at a time, they are choosing to listen to you rather than look at you.
- Does not initiate conversations or favours specific topics.
- Does not engage in small talk.
- Does not understand intonation, irony, sarcasm, and jokes.
- Does not “read between the lines”.
- Lacks non-verbal response; facial expression remains the same although their internal emotional experience is in the same range of response as non-autistic individuals.
- Difficulty observing and following non-visible rules and team behaviours which can result in their feeling embarrassed, awkward, and anxious.
- Takes longer to respond due to complex neurological processing of verbal communications.
- Avoids social activities even when they desire to participate.
- Does not intuit other people’s feelings, but when the other person’s feelings are explained the person on the spectrum will experience the full range of emotional response others feel.
- Unaware of the impact of their behaviour on others, but when explained they feel the same range of emotions as non-autistic individuals.
- Anxious due to overwhelming sensory input, social situations, or performance expectations. The autistic person may be very aware of their challenging social interactions and may avoid situations as a result.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Communicate directly and respectfully to get the best results.
- Provide performance feedback often.
- Communicate prioritization of given tasks.
- Provide as much advance notice of change as you can.
- Be curious and ask yourself why someone may be acting a certain way rather than drawing conclusions that may, in fact, be wrong and reflect your bias.
- Allow for compensatory behaviours when overwhelmed (a quiet place to regroup, something to fidget with, a walk around the block, the need to bring in support).
- Ensure they know they are welcome to participate in social opportunities, such as going for coffee and group events, without applying pressure on them.
- Tap into your local employment service providers for assistance when hiring, onboarding and retaining autistic talent.

BE CURIOUS | QUESTION YOUR ASSUMPTIONS & BIASES | ACTIVELY LISTEN, ASSIMILATE & LEARN |
STEP OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE
ENJOY THE JOURNEY | YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID