

WHAT AUTISM TAUGHT ME

and how you can be supportive at the workplace

TAKE AN INTEREST AND PROMOTE KINDNESS



Be aware of any rituals/routines the individual may have, which also include continuously talking about the same topics. Be accepting. It is not that different from constantly talking about your favourite sports team/TV show.

BE CLEAR ON



RULES & EXPECTATIONS

There are many unwritten rules and the use of jargon is common in society: These can be confusing. Speak by saying what you mean directly and you can also help by explaining any unwritten rules (ex: being expected to bring a cake when it's your birthday).

BE AWARE OF SENSORY SENSITIVITIES AND SEE IF YOU CAN PROVIDE ANY ADJUSTMENTS



Sometimes the simplest changes can make the biggest impact. It is beneficial for workplaces to consider having their employees attend sensitivity training.



STICK TO **SCHEDULES** AND GIVE PRIOR NOTICE FOR ANY CHANGES THAT MAY OCCUR

Some other things to consider would perhaps be – let the person sit at the same desk, send meeting agenda well in advance, organise and structure the office, etc.

SHOW SOLIDARITY

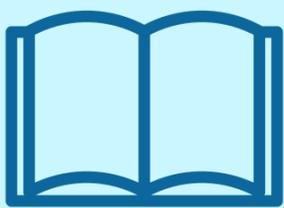


If an individual becomes upset, try to understand why. Give extra space and time when they are stressed and anxious. Also allow any possible reasonable adjustments such as working different hours, having a quiet space they can go to, making the environment less stimulating, or delegating tasks to them that they can complete successfully. Also, one can allow for the possibility to wear noise-cancelling headphones, swapping desks due to light sensitivity, having a specific time set when they can have lunch (routine), working from home, etc.

READ UP ON AUTISM



ASK FOR ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDED



Over the internet, you can find first-hand accounts and articles written by autistic people and/or family members which are a good read and can help you gain more insight when it comes to understanding and assisting your colleague.

Do not be afraid to ask questions to the individual with autism. Your questions allow connection and give space to their perspective, which matters!