



Aspect Autism-Friendly Employment

A Guide to the Workplace
for Autistic individuals.

Getting a job and feeling comfortable at work can be hard.

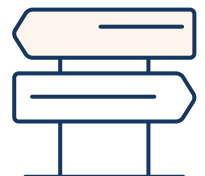
For Autistic adults, there can be extra challenges. These challenges can make it harder to find a job that feels right and a workplace where you can be yourself.

Workplaces need to change so they respect your strengths, interests, and support needs. Some workplaces are learning how to be more inclusive for Autistic employees, but there is still more to do.

This guide has helpful information for you. It includes tips and tools to help you feel more confident and supported. Whether you are looking for a job, starting a new role, or growing in your career, we hope this guide helps.

Workplaces can get more support by emailing
autismfriendly@aspect.org.au

Together
we can create an
autism-friendly
Australia.





1. Speaking Up for Yourself at Work

What is Self-Advocacy?

Self-advocacy means understanding and sharing your needs, rights, and preferences. It helps you succeed at work, in school, in healthcare, and in daily life. For Autistic employees, self-advocacy can help you handle challenges, communicate well, and make sure you are treated fairly.

Know Your Rights

It is important to know your rights at work. In Australia, the **Disability Discrimination Act** protects Autistic employees. This law says employers cannot treat you unfairly because of your disability. It also means:

- You must have a fair chance when applying for jobs.
- You can ask for workplace support to help you do your job.
- You cannot be fired unfairly because of your disability.

The **Fair Work Act** helps employees with disabilities by allowing them to ask for flexible work arrangements.

If you experience discrimination, you can get help from:

- The **Australian Human Rights Commission**
- The **Fair Work Ombudsman**

To learn more, visit the [Australian Human Rights Commission](https://www.humanrights.gov.au)¹ website for helpful information.



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How to Advocate for Yourself

KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS

When you understand what you're good at, you can ask for work that suits you. Think about past tasks where you did well and enjoyed yourself. Ask your manager or colleagues for feedback—they might notice strengths you haven't seen.

Here are a few ways to ask for feedback:

- "Hi [Manager or Colleague Name], I want to understand my strengths better. Can you tell me what you think I do well at work?"
- "Hi [Manager or Colleague Name], I'd like to know what tasks I do best. Can you share what you think my strengths are?"
- "Hi [Manager or Colleague Name], I enjoyed working on [task/project]. What do you think I did well? Is there anything I can improve?"

KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

Some things can make work easier for you. Employers **must** provide reasonable support for employees with disabilities. This could include:

- Flexible work hours
- A quiet space to work
- Clear instructions (written or visual)



EXAMPLES OF THINGS YOU CAN ASK FOR:

- "I need to wear noise cancelling headphones to reduce distraction and help me focus"
- "I need somewhere quieter I can work"
- "I need to be able to take a short break somewhere quiet so I can manage sensory stress"
- "I need to be able to fidget and move in longer meetings"
- "I need a work uniform option that is more sensory friendly"
- "I can't go to the afterwork social event"
- "I need a written checklist of familiar tasks to do for the day"

FIND WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS

Handling stress at work is important. You can use tools that help with sensory needs, take quiet breaks, or ask for clear and structured meetings. These things can help you feel less anxious and stay focused.

BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK

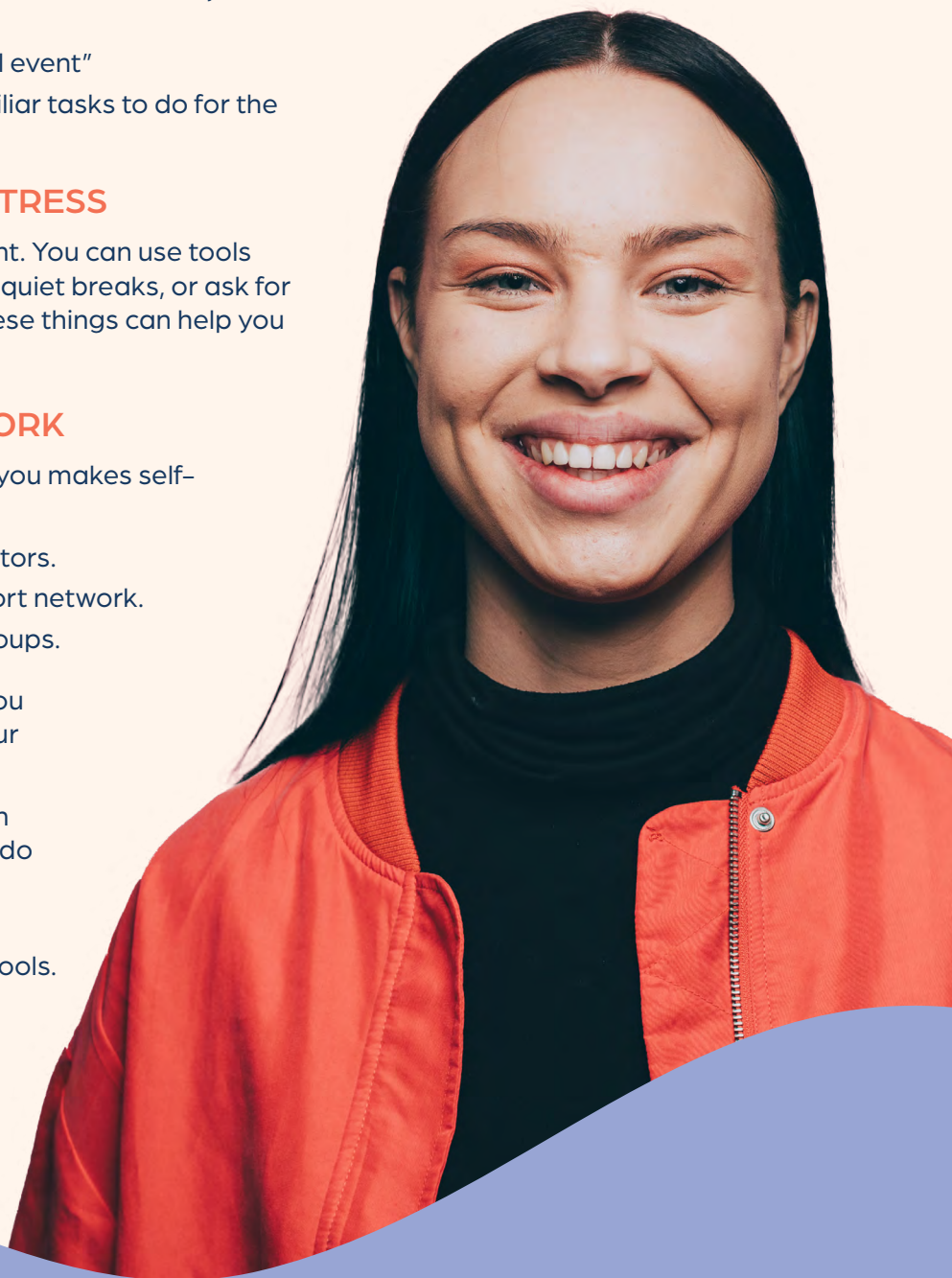
Having supportive people around you makes self-advocacy easier. You can:

- Talk to helpful colleagues or mentors.
- Join a workplace disability support network.
- Connect with outside support groups.

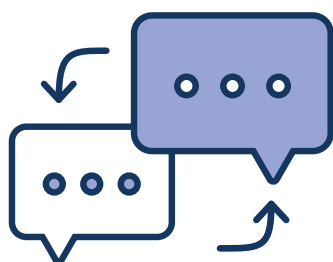
Speaking up for yourself is a skill you can use for life. When you know your rights, find helpful strategies,

and ask for what you need, you can create a workplace that helps you do your best.

For more tips, check out [Self-Advocacy@Work](#)² for advice and tools.



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2. Sharing Your Autism Diagnosis at Work

Talking about your autism at work is a personal choice.

It can help you get support, explain your needs, and ask for workplace adjustments. However, not everyone understands autism well, and sharing your diagnosis may not always be helpful. It's important to decide if, when, and how to share in a way that feels right for you.

Things to Think About Before Sharing

- **Why You Want to Share** – Do you want workplace support, better relationships, or to help others understand autism?
- **Feeling Safe and Comfortable** – If you're unsure how people will react, talk to someone you trust first.
- **Emotional Energy** – Sharing can take a lot of energy. Make sure you feel ready to handle different responses.
- **Possible Reactions** – Some people will be supportive, while others may not understand. Having helpful resources to share can make it easier.

Ways to Share Your Diagnosis

- **Direct Sharing** – Telling people clearly that you are Autistic in a conversation, email, or meeting.
- **Soft Sharing** – Talking about your needs without mentioning autism (e.g., asking for a quiet workspace because of sensory sensitivities).
- **Gradual Sharing** – Sharing little by little as you build trust with colleagues or managers.

Deciding whether to share your diagnosis is up to you. Choose what feels best and helps you succeed at work.

To find out more look at **Aspect's Autism Disclosure – A Guide for Autistic People** [here](#)³. There is also an Easy English Guide available [here](#)⁴.



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3. Making Work More Inclusive

A workplace should support and value everyone. One way to do this is by talking about inclusion and introducing an Inclusion Statement.

An **Inclusion Statement** is a promise to make work welcoming for both Autistic and non-Autistic employees. It encourages people to work in ways that suit them, like:

- Walking around during meetings
- Using fidget tools
- Turning off cameras in online meetings

The statement can be read at the start of meetings and displayed in the workplace to remind everyone about inclusion.

How to Share This Idea at Work

- **Start the Conversation** – Talk to your manager, HR team, or colleagues about why inclusion is important. Explain how different work styles help people do their best.
- **Share the Inclusion Statement** – Give a copy or link to Aspect's Inclusion Statement and explain how it supports employees. You can find it [here](#)⁵.

- **Lead by Example** – If you feel comfortable, show inclusive practices, like using tools that help you focus or adjusting meetings to support different needs.
- **Encourage Workplace Adoption** – Suggest putting the Inclusion Statement in common areas, sharing it with new employees, or discussing it in meetings.
- **Ask for Feedback** – Inclusion is always improving. Encourage leaders and colleagues to find new ways to support everyone.

By introducing an Inclusion Statement, workplaces can respect different needs and working styles. This helps Autistic employees feel comfortable, contribute fully, and succeed at work.



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You Deserve Support at Work

We hope this guide gives you helpful ideas and tools to feel confident at work. Whether you are speaking up for yourself, deciding if you want to share your autism diagnosis, or helping make your workplace more inclusive, you deserve to feel supported and valued.

Workplaces are changing, but change takes time. The best progress happens when employees and employers work together. By knowing your rights, using your strengths, and trying the strategies in this guide, we hope you feel ready to create a work experience that helps you succeed.