

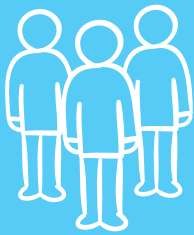
Aspect's top 10 tips for Autism Friendly Environments

Understanding environments and experiences from the perspectives of people on the autism spectrum is critical to creating an inclusive environment or activity.



Here are Aspect's top ten tips on how your organisation can create autism friendly environments.

1



Work in partnership

Work in partnership with Autistic staff, develop internal representative groups, consult members of the public and work together with organisations like Aspect at all levels and stages of initiatives, to ensure they are truly co-developed and co-produced.

Develop a culture of inclusion

When an organisation has a culture of inclusion, all people feel welcome, valued, and that they belong without needing to change who they are to fit in. Developing a culture of inclusion requires organisation-wide collaboration and designated funding, and is supported by policies, procedures and good governance. It should be evident in practice, visually represented and committed to by all staff.

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Conduct an Environmental or Activity Assessment

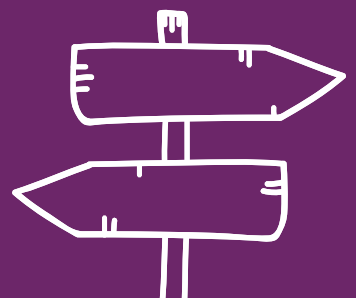
Understanding experiences from the perspectives of people on the autism spectrum is critical to creating an inclusive environment or activity. Assessments should be conducted by paid autistic consultants, like our Autism Friendly team, as well as diverse community groups and families, with feedback reviewed and acted upon regularly.

Make inclusive adaptations to the environment and processes

Based on an environmental assessment and feedback from all stakeholders, organisations should:

- Organise the environment and processes in a visual and intuitive way, so that people are supported to know where to go and what to do, without the need for extra verbal information or having to ask for help.
- Reduce common overwhelming or challenging sensory experiences, and make sensory experiences predictable and controllable so people can choose when and how they interact.
- Provide experiences and resources that are designed to be sensory-friendly, like quiet and sensory spaces, artworks, interactive displays and sensory items (i.e. fidget spinners, slinkies).

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Provide Inclusive events and initiatives

Provide specifically planned events designed for autistic people, their families and carers, where certain components of the event can be more carefully managed to better meet the needs of the autistic community. Common initiatives include Early Access events, Quiet Hour and special booked appointments.

Develop helpful resources

Develop resources that:

- make people feel they are understood, valued and that they belong
- share information prior to visiting about what to expect and what they're expected to do
- help people know where to go and what to do in the moment
- help staff to engage meaningfully with customers

Common resources include Visual Stories, Sensory Maps, Signage and statements, Wayfinding, Quiet Rooms and/or Sensory Rooms and Visual and Communication Supports.

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Provide staff and customer training

One of the main barriers for accessing events and environments is that autistic people are often not understood, or made to feel like they are welcome. This can be because hidden disabilities can be difficult to identify, and often people just don't know how to understand, relate to or support someone on the autism spectrum.

Organisations should provide staff, volunteers and customers with training and information that is co-developed and co-delivered with people on the autism spectrum. This makes sure that information is positive, relevant, practical and respectful.

Continuous improvement

Commitment to continuously improving is the cornerstone of inclusive initiatives succeeding. Stakeholder feedback is important, as it indicates where your services are getting it right and where there may be room for development.

Processes for continuous improvement should be embedded right from the beginning, and organisations should continually engage with customers to show how their feedback has been implemented.

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Spread the word

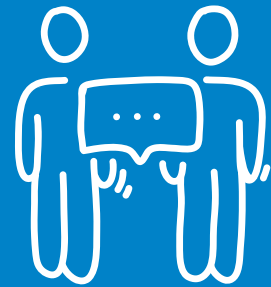
Creating an inclusive environment is undoubtedly a good news story and is worthy of recognition. Organisations should promote employment and access opportunities for people on the autism spectrum. Social and traditional media platforms can be used to reach the broader community.

Be an ambassador for inclusive initiatives

Encourage others to join the inclusion movement by:

- raising awareness of challenges, solutions and benefits of inclusive initiatives
- collaborating with other organisations to develop consistent standards and good practices
- advocating to representative organisations in your industry.

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a different brilliant[®]
understanding, engaging & celebrating the
strengths, interests & aspirations
of people on the autism spectrum

Together, we can create an autism-friendly Australia

To find out more about how you can develop autism-friendly practices or to book an autism-friendly consultation, contact Aspect's Autism Friendly team:
autismfriendly@autismspectrum.org.au or
visit autismspectrum.org.au



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