



cesie  
the world is only one creature

# Employer's external communication and presentation

Adjusting your external communication for people with ASD

Module 5 - RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH ASD - Creating an Autistic-friendly Recruitment Process



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

OPPORTUNITIES 4  
**AUTISM**

## Send out the right signals

Make sure you clearly signal that your organisation welcomes neurodiverse individuals

### AN EXAMPLE

*"[Insert company name] welcomes applications from neurodiverse individuals, and is willing to make accommodations in the interview process to best suit the needs and strengths of the individual. If you require accommodations, please inquire upon us reaching out to schedule your initial interview."*

**Share a clear message** people with ASD are welcome to apply: this small addition puts applicants with ASD at ease and helps them feel confident in submitting their application.

**WE LIKE YOU,  
TOO :)**



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OPPORTUNITIES 4  
**AUTISM**



## Send out the right signals

Make sure you clearly signal that your organisation welcomes neurodiverse individuals

**Share job vacancies** with local organisations and institutions working with people with ASD. They could refer qualified candidates. These organisations may also provide your organization with resources to support candidate transition into the workplace.



## Send out the right signals

Make sure you clearly signal that your organisation welcomes neurodiverse individuals

**Adopt a suitable visual style** of your website and/or career page.

This is an absolute necessity for people with ASD to actually be able to function on the web.

You can intervene on:



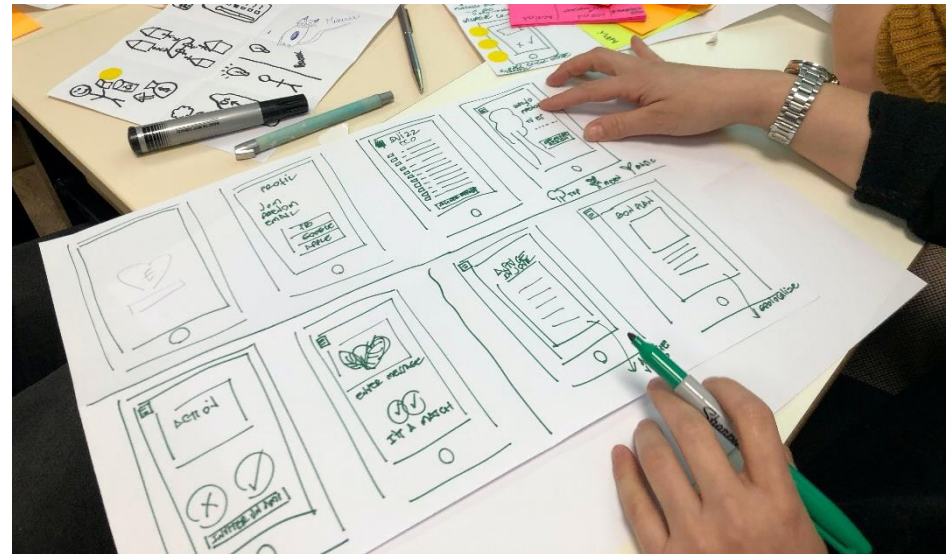
**STRUCTURE**

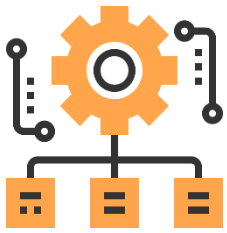


**LANGUAGE**



**DESIGN**





## STRUCTURE - (1) Provide ways to BYPASS

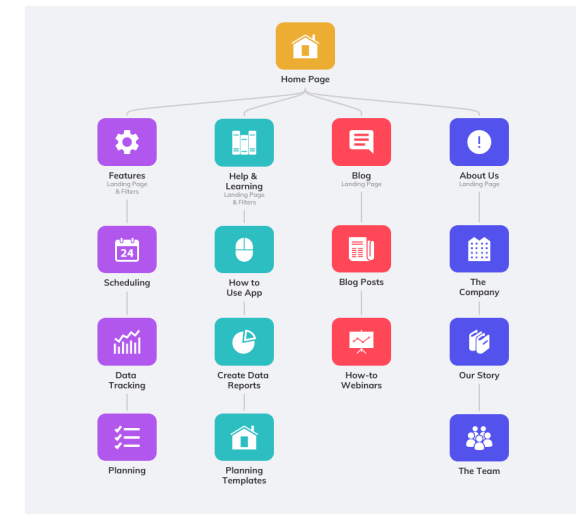
A website or an app already have a structure that owners or developers impose upon users.

People with ASD have bottom-up minds: they usually take details and they put them into their own structures. When they arrive at a website, they don't really do browsing or surfing, they have very strictly defined expectations.

For organisations' external communication online to be inclusive it is important that the structure of their website is logically correct because otherwise people with ASD struggle to focus.

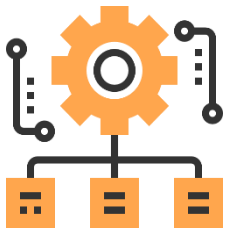
What developers can do is to provide in the website ways to bypass the imposed structure: a site map, a search functionality.

### A site map



### Search functionality



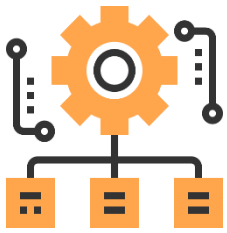


## STRUCTURE - (2) Visible CONTEXT is essential

People with ASD like to know where they are in the structure of a website or app and how they got to any particular point and where they can move forwards and backwards.

### The breadcrumb trail





## STRUCTURE - (3) Do NOT break up long text into sections

Whenever there is a long chunk of text the worst thing that you can do is to break it up into sections (e.g. first you display the first 25% of an article and then you have to click next or #2 to display the next 25% etc).

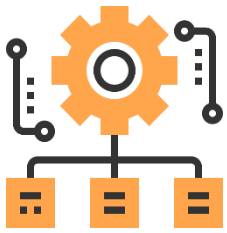
People with ASD have an eye for quick overview. **Whenever possible it is better to put the entire text.**



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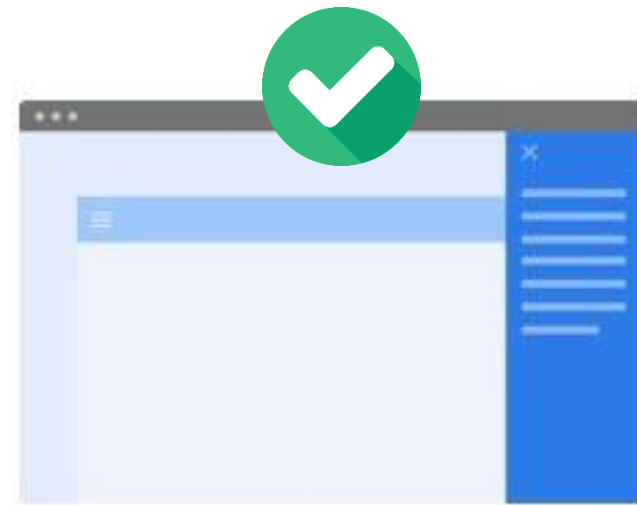
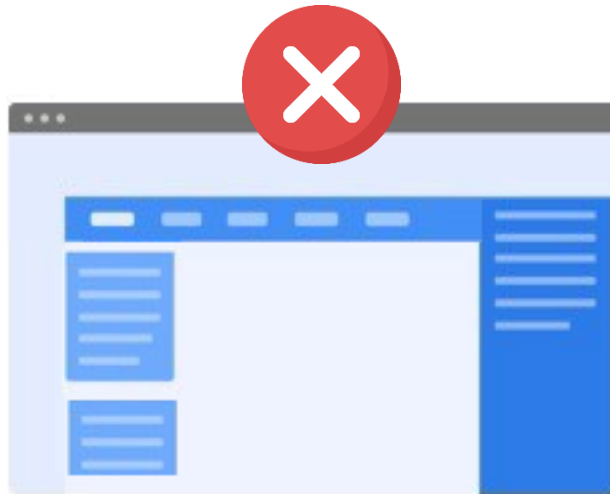
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## STRUCTURE - (4) GROUP all navigation in one place

When it comes to navigation, people with ASD can get confused when exposed to websites where you have multiple navigational elements or menus spread across the webpage. They can be baffled at how all these navigational elements relate to one another, they might want to make some sort of sense of why some items on the left and why others are on the top and if there's any logical connexion between them.

They can get really stuck thinking about that so it is better to group all navigation items in one place.







## LANGUAGE – (1) Use language that's DIRECT AND LITERAL

### Good copywriting is also good accessibility.

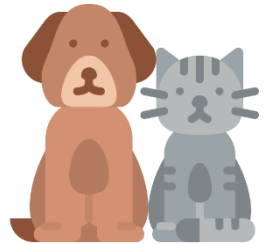
Use language that is direct and literal: people with ASD have issues with immediately understanding metaphors and idioms.

For example, when exposed to this text:

*Yesterday in a nutshell: first it was raining cats and dogs, then Joe got canned when he blew his top at his boss. His boss accused him of being a blabbermouth, and the bottom line was that Joe never said a word about his boss having lunch with an old flame. Joe's termination is really going to break his wife's heart. I hear they are broke.*

A person with ASD's first impression can be very visual. They really do see a nutshell and cats and dogs raining from the sky or Joe being in a can with its top off. It takes some extra time in their brain to actually understand they are being exposed to idiom.

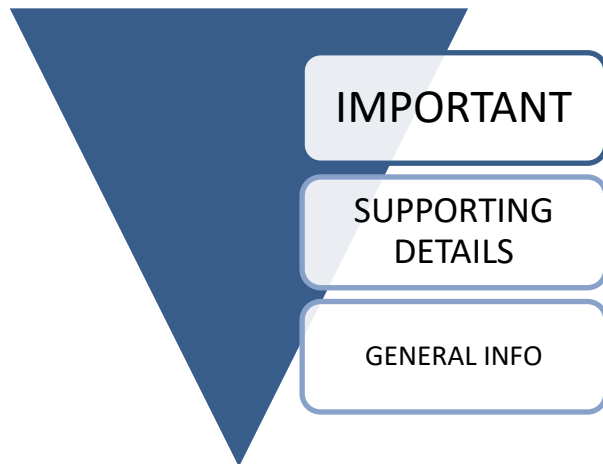
This can really be an obstacle so beware of using catchphrases or idiomatic expressions, especially when they spiked with visual vocabulary.





## LANGUAGE – (2) Use clear TITLES + SUMMARIES

This is very well known technique in journalism called “inverted pyramid writing” and it’s often found in newspaper articles: you have a headline then you have a quick summary and then you just get to the article itself.



### Lorem ipsum

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## LANGUAGE – (3) LIST & INDICES are made of win

Add list and indices whenever you see the opportunity. Try to itemise or list things because lists are an absolute wins for people with ASD.





## LANGUAGE – (4) Careful with IMPERATIVES

Whenever you have any sort of hyperlinks or buttons saying [“click me”](#) or [“click here”](#) the first impression for users with ASD is stressful.

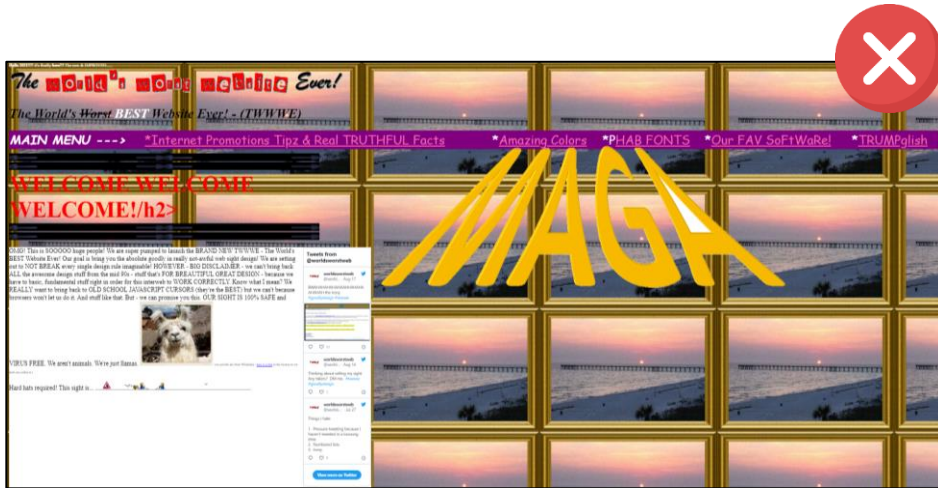
Ensure you make links self-explanatory, really telling the user where they lead (e.g. [Details of our return policy](#) or [Click here to go to home page.](#))

**Click Me**

**To return to the homepage, [click here.](#)**



# DESIGN – (1) NO HIGH AROUSAL websites



Source: <https://www.theworldsworstwebsiteever.com/>

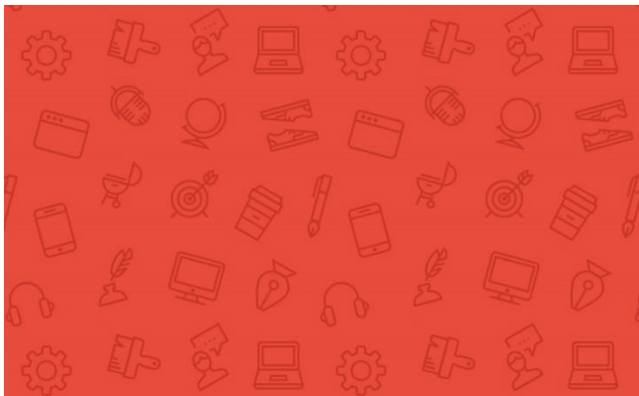
- NO flickering
- NO animations, movements (gif, videos)
- NO sounds
- NO super bright colours



- Be careful with contrast: some users with ASD may find the contrast too high or too low
- Allow users to adjust saturation.



## DESIGN – (2) NO patterns



When being exposed to patterns, people with ASD may find themselves so overwhelmed to be shut down or so fascinated they cannot focus on content.



## DESIGN – (3) BRANDING vs. METAPHORS

Be careful when designing your logos or when putting any sort of branding in your website or app. Branding is very often metaphorical in a way that cannot be immediately understood.

### Examples:



Nike is a sport company. People with ASD may be baffled by finding the relation between this image and sport.



A good example is the Shell logo, because the relation between the image (a shell) and the logo is more immediate.



## DESIGN – (4) Rivers of WHITE

Whenever you have a junk of text, do not justify it on both sides. Reading such texts can be immensely difficult for people with ASD.

People with ASD are often visual thinkers: they may be distracted by the white spaces created by the justification as they could see images, lines or patterns in them.



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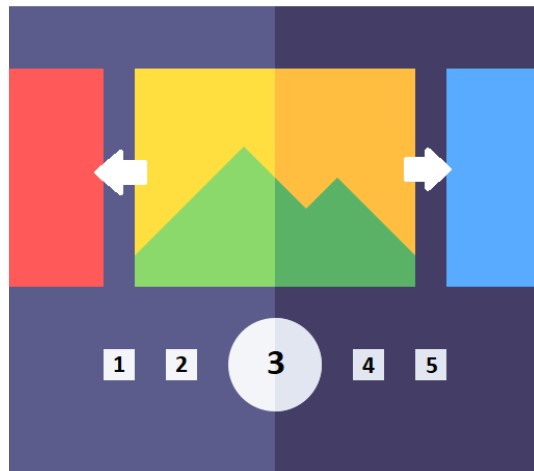




## DESIGN – (5) Allow SPEED control

Whenever in your website or app you have a slideshow or an image reel, do not impose your speed on the user. Let users access to the content at their pace.

For slideshows, provide navigation tools.



For videos, provide options to slow it down or speed it up.



# How to make websites more accessible no matter who you are working with:

## Guiding principles for text

- **Keep sentences short:** If possible, avoid using more than 20 words in a sentence. This will make it easier to read what you have written.
- **Break your long texts in paragraphs:** Use headings, subheadings, bullet points. Especially on websites, this will make what you have written far easier to read.
- **Be careful about how you emphasize text.** Do not use BLOCK CAPITALS and *italics* in the text. Use **bold text** or underlining for emphasis.
- **Use sans-serif fonts:** Fonts like **Arial**, **Century Gothic** and **Verdana** are seen as more accessible. This is because the letters are easier to read than in serif fonts like **Times New Roman**.
- **Allow users to resize text:** consider that a font size of at least 14 point is usually recommended for people with visual impairments.
- **Underline links:** Any links to webpages or documents you want to include should be underlined. Ideally, they should also be in a different coloured font e.g. [www. Blue . Com](http://www.Blue.Com)
- **Allow personalization of:** ▪ Font type and size, ▪ Line-spacing



# How to make websites more accessible no matter who you are working with:



## Guiding principles for numbers

- **For dates:** use the full format “Saturday, 26 June 2022”.
- **Telephone numbers should be separated:** 091-22.33.44 or 091-22 33 44
- **Always use the numeral and not the equivalent word:** even for numbers below 10. For example 3, 67, 239.
- **Never use roman numerals**



## Guiding principles for visuals

- **Pictures and words go next to each other:** this helps more people to understand the information. Make sure that it is clear which pictures support which bits of text.
- **Pictures must be easy to understand.**
- **Observe the quality of photographs in a printed version.**

# Organising LAYOUT of a website and/or career page

| AVOID  | WHY  | BETTER  |
|--|--|---|
| Bright colours   | People with ASD are at risk of sensory overloading   | Simple, soft, mild colours  |
| Inverted printing (light text on a dark background)  |  | Dark print on light background  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background images</li> <li>• Overlap transparent images and text</li> </ul>                   | People with ASD may have issues in processing rapidly changing information – it may can cause severe anxiety | Clear contrast between text and the background  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animated or moving images, pop-ups, banners</li> <li>• Auto-play on any videos/ads</li> </ul> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple graphics</li> <li>• Freeze moving elements</li> </ul> |
| Image-only icons   | People with ASD may feel anxious when they don't know what to expect   | Clear, large buttons with both icons and text   |
| Vague and unpredictable call-to-action or buttons (ex. <i>Click here</i> )   |  | Descriptive call-to-action ( <i>Click here to..</i> )   |
| Complex and cluttered layout   | People with ASD may struggle to focus – it may cause frustration   | Build simple and consistent layout  |

# Organising **CONTENT** of a website and/or career page

| AVOID  | WHY   | BETTER   |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex, metaphoric language</li> <li>• Sarcasm, jokes</li> <li>• Exagerations</li> </ul> | <p>People with ASD perceive language differently and might take phrases and expressions literally</p> | <p>Write in plain language</p>   |
| <p>Avoid jargon (long or technical words)</p>  | <p>People with ASD may struggle to understand – it may cause frustration</p>                          | <p>If you need to use a technical term, explain clearly what it means</p>  |
| <p>Text-heavy web page</p>   | <p>People with ASD may struggle to focus – it may cause frustration</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present text in a single column</li> <li>• Delineate clear text areas</li> <li>• Provide visual alternatives to textual material</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Attachments of more than 20 pages</p>   |   |  |
| <p>Breaking all of a content/topic in multiple sections or webpages</p>  | <p>People with ASD may struggle to focus – it may cause frustration</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display all the topic content on a single page</li> <li>• Ensure anything on a website is no more than two clicks from the homepage</li> <li>• Show a progress bar in all journeys that are more than one page</li> </ul> |

For information on this Training Unit:  
[alessia.valenti@cesie.org](mailto:alessia.valenti@cesie.org)

Visit the project website at:  
[www.opportunities4autism.com](http://www.opportunities4autism.com)

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