



cesie
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Autism friendly selection process

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



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OPPORTUNITIES 4
AUTISM



The Selection Process



INITIAL SCREENING

The purpose of screening is to decrease the number of applicants being considered for further selection.

JOB INTERVIEW

Job interview is a goal-oriented conversation in which the interviewer and applicant exchange information.

REFERENCE CHECK

Conducting a reference check is often the final step a hiring manager or recruiter takes before presenting a job offer to a candidate.

FEEDBACK TO THE CANDIDATE

Feedback offered to a candidate after they finish interviewing with your organisation.

PROCESS EVALUATION

Evaluation of the recruitment process, collecting feedback of all people involved, including the candidate.



Initial screening

The purpose of screening is to decrease the number of applicants being considered for further selection.

A short talk aiming to:

- **Verify information provided on CV, resume or application.**
- **Provide additional information about the job position, organisation, selection process etc.**

What for?



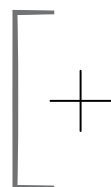
A SHORTLIST

4 or 5 candidates with a profile most in line with the expectations of the company

From this shortlist, the actual selection is usually made

Based on:

- **curriculum vitae**
- **cover letter**



- one existing work sample
- OR answers to a very small number of very short questions



Autism-friendly approach to initial screening



Online test

If the job requires technical skills, you can send candidates an online test to pre-assess these skills.



Email

Send out a very small number of very short questions.



Face-to-face

very functional questions to verify information and background.



Chat application

Online chat is social win when it comes to interaction with people with ASD, because there is no mistifying facial expression and body language.



By phone

Many people with autism may experience distress or anxiety when talking to an unfamiliar person on phone



Selection Methodologies

Recommended



- **Individual interviews**

- **Assisted interviews**

Many autistic people perform much better in interviews if they have a supporter accompanying them. This person can act as an intermediary to ease communication between the interviewer and the candidate.

- **Competence- and behavioural-based interview**

A systematic method to interviewing, using questions targeting a specific skill or competency, or candidates' behaviour in specific circumstances and explanations about their behaviour or skills.

- **Objective, scientifically validated tests**

- **Work trial (performance tests, work sampling, gamification)**

Not recommended



- **Unstructured interviews**

- **Panel interview**

- **Tests**

- **Group exercises**

- **Stress interview**

Aimed at assessing candidates' emotional self-regulation abilities. The interviewer's style of conduct is particularly pressing, confrontational, doubtful and, to the limit, hostile.

- **Case interview**

Derived from the role-playing technique, it consists of in the reproduction of critical work problem or situation faced by an organization.



Use of tests

Avoid using personality tests as part of recruitment. They are typically shaped for neurotypical minds, and could unfairly eliminate great candidates for your positions.

Online personality tests are becoming increasingly popular for recruitment. Personality tests are meant to help the employer understand the candidate's character traits, giving them insights into what they might be like to work with.

While a neurotypical individual might be able to easily answer questions in a way that would produce a 'good' result, neurodiverse candidates may find these tasks difficult to navigate.





Let the candidate know what to expect!

Make the hiring process as transparent as possible. Traditional interviewing can make autistic candidates more nervous due to uncertain process or expectations, combined with the knowledge their every action is scrutinized.

When finalizing the details for an interview, inform the candidate about the interview process and all it entails so that they know what to expect.

- Schedule a date and time; define format and length of the meeting, provide an agenda
- Provide directions on how to arrive to the interview location and check in process
- Send a checklist of the documents required
- Provide comprehensive information about each step of the hiring process
- Explain who (name, position) will be participating in the meetings
- Share if there will be a (individual/group) test/assessment to complete
- If possible, provide thematic topics or questions to be addressed during the interview.

We recognize each organisation has a different interview process, but taking these kinds of questions into consideration will help candidates feel at ease during the interview process.



Job Interview - Timing

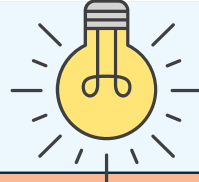
A standard job interview takes 60-90 minutes. People with autism may need more time.

Make sure you have a time reserve which allows you not to put additional pressure on the candidate, giving him/her time to think of responses, asking questions etc.

Offering extra time in formulation of responses of performing assessment tests can also help reducing candidate's stress and anxiety.



Choose a suitable quiet space



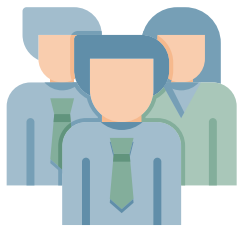
The room shouldn't be too cold or hot

Get rid of distractions such as blinking or bright lights, noisy air conditioning or strong air fresheners

Prepare a comfortable chair and a writing surface

The environment adjustments

Do a sensory check of the interview venue



Job Interview - Staff involved

Preparation of the interviewers

People normally involved:

- recruiter
- hiring manager
- diversity manager
- organisational psychologist
- coach or another expert

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- good awareness of expressions of autism
- pleasant personality
- empathy
- ability to listen and communicate effectively

TASKS

- To learn about the candidate and their needs
- To be familiar with the applicant's profile
- To eventually prepare other interviewers



Job Interview - Be aware of and understand your expectations

Make sure to understand what you are looking for.

For people with ASD, a job interview can be overwhelmingly stressful, not allowing them to “sell” themselves and prove they can do the job effectively.

Employers often look for very narrow and specific requirements in a candidate's interview behavior. These narrow criteria usually grow into judgments of candidate confidence, personality, cultural fit, and body language. A job interview can be often more a test of social competence rather than someone's potential ability to do the job.

People with ASD often struggle with communication, social, and nonverbal queues. Therefore, when they are judged by the same criteria as neurotypical candidates, they fall short and are denied opportunities regardless of their qualifications and capabilities for executing job duties.



Job Interview - Be aware of and understand your expectations

Make sure to understand what you are looking for.

Focus on the content of what the candidate is saying, don't judge their mannerisms, delivery, or other nonverbal behavior.

Here are some behaviors you should remove from evaluation of candidates with ASD:



Inconsistent eye contact



Lack of interest in small talk



Repetitive movements



Nonverbal language that does not match what is being said



Uncertainty or unease in tone of voice



Job Interview - Be Careful What You Ask

Use



- Concrete questions, linked to real situations
- Concrete questions linked to the job role, tasks and responsibilities
- Follow-up questions

Avoid



- Questions which are indirect, vague, general, and hypothetical such as “What would you do if...” or “Where do you see yourself in 5 years”.
- Questions about some else’s opinions such as “What would your supervisor say about you?”
- Metaphors, jokes, jargon, abbreviations not clear to the candidate
- Asking for improvisations



Job Interview - Be Careful What You Ask

Think as if you are a programmer giving commands to a computer: your logic has to be impeccable. Nothing has to be doubtful.

Name 5 of your biggest and most successful achievements.



Does he want 5 of my biggest achievements AND 5 of my most successful achievements?

Or some of those? Maybe 2 of my biggest ones and 3 of my most successful ones?



Job Interview - Using the STAR Technique

The content of interview questions can hinder candidates with ASD, which could result in not allowing them to show their potential for the roles. Just as a job advertisement, as we have discussed, should be inclusive of all kind of people, so should an interview.

As a guide to the process of collecting behavioural examples, a technique called **STAR** is utilised. To be a good predictor of future behaviour, an example of past behaviour must contain:

- The **S**ituation or **T**ask the candidate faced.
- The **A**ction the candidate took. (What did the person do? What behaviours did they display).
- The **R**esult of the candidate's actions.





Job Interview - Be Careful What You Ask



STAR questions

A few questions which will help you to understand the context and the candidates actual actions, not just general actions of the team.

Situation or Task

- Describe what led up to that.
- Could you give me a specific situation in which you used that approach?
- What was the most memorable time when that happened?
- What caused you to . . . ?
- Why did you . . . ?
- When was that?
- What were the circumstances surrounding . . . ?
- Who was that customer (co-worker, team member)?
- What were you reacting to?

Action

- Exactly what did you do?
- How were your actions different here from . . . ?
- How did you react?
- Describe specifically how you did that.
- What was your part of the project, and how did you handle it?
- Walk me through the steps you took . . .
- What did you say to him?
- What did you do first . . . ?

Result

- What was the result?
- What was the Outcome?
- How much did you save? (if asked about budget)
- Was it completed on time? (if asked about timeline)
- What feed did you receive?
- What did you learn from the experience?



Three Types of False STARs



You might find yourself in a situation where the candidate offers vague information or opinions. In that case, use the questions provided in order to get their answers back into the realm of what they actually did, and the outcome of that action.

Be mindful of:

- **Vague statements** are general statements that might sound good, but provide no specifics of what the person actually did.
- **Opinions** are a candidate's personal beliefs, judgments, or views. They tell us what a candidate thinks or how they feel about something, but like vague statements, they provide no information about what the person actually did - no behaviour.
- **Theoretical or future-oriented statements** tell us what a candidate "would" do, "would like to" do, or "would have" done, not what he or she actually has done.



Reference Check

Conducting a reference check is often the final step a hiring manager or recruiter takes before presenting a job offer to a candidate.

A reference check is when a hiring manager, employer, or recruiter contacts a job candidate's former workplace to confirm the information the candidate included in their CV and to get more information on:

- **Punctuality** - The baseline behavior for an employee: If they showed up to work as expected.
- **Contributions** - The positive things that an employee did during their tenure at their previous organisation.
- **Key Skills** - Key areas where an employee excelled (or said they excelled).
- **Attitudes** - The way a previous employee approached their work and their relationships with colleagues.
- **Other Issues** - Anything else pertinent to the role that a new employer may want to know about.

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Visit the project website at:

www.opportunities4autism.com

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