A fact sheet about

# Getting what you need at work

UnderstandingZoe

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# Getting what you need at work

**A workplace self-advocacy guide for neurodivergent adults. Deciding whether to disclose, asking for adjustments, and handling problems fairly.**



Telling people at work that you are neurodivergent is always your choice, whatever your neurotype. Neurodivergent reaches well past Autistic and ADHD. There is no single right answer. Disclosure can make support easier to get. It can also carry risk, depending on the workplace. Racism, homophobia, transphobia and class change how safe it feels too. Weighing it up carefully is looking after yourself, not overthinking.

## Decide what to share

### What it can open up

- Support you can actually ask for
- Less energy spent masking at work
- Someone in your corner if it gets hard
- The law on your side if you need it
- Room to bring your whole self to work

### What to weigh first

- How safe the place really feels
- Sharing only what is relevant, not all of it
- Who to tell first, and when
- There is no single right moment
- You can start small, say more later

You do not have to decide this today. Sharing a little first is a real option.

# Find the words that fit

You should not have to explain your whole nervous system to get support. These are starting points you can borrow, adapt, or make your own.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

"I am neurodivergent, and a couple of small tweaks help me do my best work."

ASKING IN WRITING

"I take detail in better in writing. Could you drop the key actions in an email after we meet?"

BUYING A LITTLE TIME

"Let me come back to you on that shortly. I think it through better with a moment."

NAMING A BARRIER

"This part of the role is genuinely hard for me. Could we look together at what would ease it?"

MAKING THE INVISIBLE COUNT

"A lot of what I do to keep up is not visible. It is real, and I would rather ask than mask it."

You do not owe anyone the full explanation. A short, clear ask is enough.

# Know your words and rights

Some words make it easier to say what you need. These four come up most often at work. Knowing them helps you name a barrier out loud, rather than carrying it quietly. Asking is easier where there is a formal process to use. In casual, shift or gig work the words still help. The process may not be there.

**Words that can help**

## Masking

Covering or holding back how you naturally are so you seem to fit in. It can get you through the day, and it quietly runs your battery down.

## Burnout

The deep flattening that builds when masking and demands pile up for too long. A sign to lower the load, not a failing.

## Double empathy

Autistic people and non-Autistic people often misread each other. The gap runs both ways, and it is not one side's fault.

## Reasonable adjustments

Practical changes to how or where you work that remove a barrier. If an employer refuses, they carry the onus of proving it would cause unjustifiable hardship.

### Adjustments worth asking about

- Flexible start and finish times
- A low-sensory place to work
- Written instructions to re-read
- A written recap after meetings
- Time to reply, not on the spot
- Regular, predictable check-ins

You can ask for one thing on this list. It does not have to be all of them.

## Two rights, on two timelines

Two different rights cover you at work. One starts on your first day. The other starts after a year. You can use both, and you do not have to name your assessment to ask.

**From day one, adjustments.** Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, refusing a reasonable adjustment can be unlawful discrimination. Your employer would have to prove it would cause unjustifiable hardship. They may also have to show you could not do the essential duties anyway. If they refuse, you can take it to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

**After 12 months, flexibility.** Autism and ADHD normally count as a disability under the Fair Work Act. Other neurodivergent assessments may count too, so it is worth asking. After 12 months of continuous service, you can ask for flexible working in writing. If you are casual, that means regular ongoing work. Your employer has to genuinely consider it and reply within 21 days. They can only say no on reasonable business grounds. If they refuse or do not reply, the Fair Work Commission can review it.

Asking for an adjustment is an ordinary request, not a favour.

Understanding Zoe is the first neuroaffirming AI-powered app that turns every report, observation and moment into an actionable next step, supporting neurodivergent people and those who care about them to thrive.

**for more information, you can contact**

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