A fact sheet about

Working as yourself

UnderstandingZoe

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Working as yourself

A job-search guide for neurodivergent adults. Understanding your fit, applying, interviewing, and knowing your worth.

There is no single right way to find work. Your path may double back, and that is usual. These are ideas you can try in any order. Each one looks for a role that suits how you actually work. The aim is not to squeeze yourself to fit the role.

Look for a role that fits

1. **Start with fit, not the job title.** It can help to notice which tasks energise you and which drain you. Notice what helps you focus. A supportive manager, clear expectations and a calm space often matter most. The title on the door matters less.

2. **Read the day, not just the ad.** A role can look fine on paper and still clash with how you work. Where you can, ask what an ordinary day actually involves. How is change handled? How much is put in writing? How calm is the space?

3. **Go at a pace you can keep.** Applying takes energy. It is fine to do it in small pieces. Keep a base you adapt each time, and pause in between. A no is information too. It is reasonable to ask what would have made a stronger case.

4. **Level the interview where you can.** You can ask for the questions ahead of time, or for extra time. You can ask for a written task instead of a live one. Prepare rather than push through. It is also your chance to check whether the place suits you.

5 **Weigh what fits, where you can.** When you have a choice, a quick check can help. One thing to honour. One thing you do well, to use. One need to protect. When there is less choice, and sometimes there is, protecting one of these is enough.

Work often has to happen on the world's terms, not ours. You are allowed to do it in the way that costs you least. Asking for what helps is reasonable, whatever your options.

Understand how you work

Work is often built around neuronorms. Those are the unwritten rules that put neurotypical ways of working first. When a job feels hard, it is easy to assume the problem is you. Often it is not. It holds for Autistic and ADHD people, and for dyslexia, dyspraxia and sensory processing too. Many neurodivergent people have real strengths, and also things they need in place. No single list fits everyone. Tick what feels true for you, and add your own.

Strengths to build on

- [ ] Going deep on work that holds your interest
- [ ] Spotting patterns and details others miss
- [ ] A fair mind and honest, direct talk
- [ ] Thorough, dependable follow-through
- [ ] Fresh, original ways into a problem
- [ ] Real depth of knowledge where you focus
- [ ] Loyalty and a point of view worth having
- [ ] Add your own

Conditions that can help

- [ ] Expectations spelled out in specific terms
- [ ] Somewhere low on noise and glare
- [ ] Notice ahead of changes
- [ ] Some say over when and how you work
- [ ] The key things in writing, not just spoken
- [ ] A moment to think before you answer
- [ ] One task at a time, with real breaks
- [ ] Add your own

Which of these feel most true for you? Which two or three would make the biggest difference if an employer knew?

Know the words for work

Among working-age Autistic people, unemployment sits at 18.2 percent. For people without disability it is 3.1 percent.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022. The barrier is the system, not you.

Words that can help at work

Monotropism

A style of attention that goes deeply into one interest at a time. It can bring real depth and flow, and can make switching on demand harder.

Hyperfocus

Getting so absorbed that time and the room fall away. Brilliant for deep work, tricky when you need to stop.

Executive function

The behind-the-scenes work of starting, planning and finishing tasks. Finding this hard is common, and support for it is practical, not a flaw.

Sensory load

The build-up of noise, light and busyness your system is handling. When it runs high, everything else gets harder.

Spiky profile

Being strong in some areas and needing more support in others. Ability is not even across all of them.

Recharge time

The rest, quiet or interest-led downtime that tops your energy back up. Part of how you work, not a luxury.

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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