Neurodiversity In the Workplace Toolkit

Bow Valley College

CPHR Alberta

About

This toolkit was developed as part of a research project on improving neuroinclusion in the workplace. It combines survey data from neurodivergent individuals and HR professionals, along with interviews with HR professionals, to explore current challenges, best practices, and opportunities for more inclusive organizational cultures.

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We extend our sincere thanks to...

all the individuals who participated in the research project. Their openness and insights were instrumental in shaping the practical tools and strategies presented here. This guide is grounded in real-world experiences and evidence and is designed to empower HR professionals to take meaningful, informed action toward neuroinclusive practices.
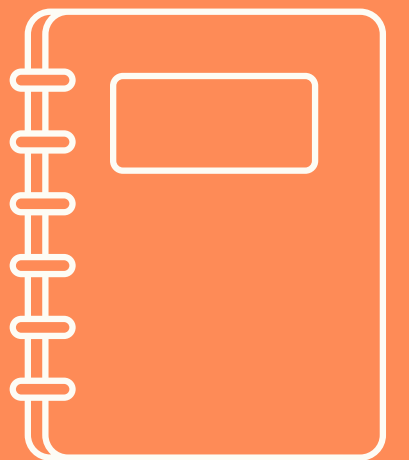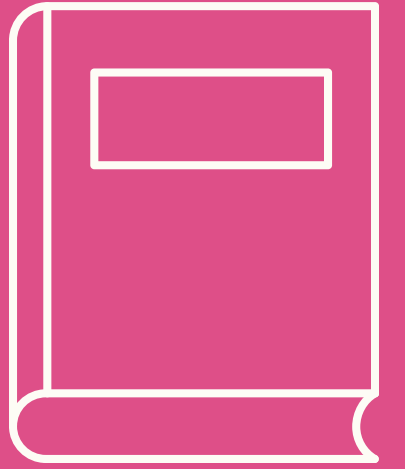
The Toolkit

1 Introduction

Introduction

This toolkit is your Practical Guide to Neuroinclusion in the Workplace. It offers actionable tools and insights to help HR professionals and organizations create more inclusive, supportive, and successful work environments.

It bridges the gap between awareness and implementation, equipping HR professionals with practical strategies, real-world examples, and step-by-step guidance to better support neurodivergent talent, ultimately improving not only the experience of neurodivergent employees but also fostering a more innovative, empathetic, and effective organization as a whole.

91% of HR professionals are familiar with neurodiversity

Only **29%** have received training

Neurodiversity In the Workplace
Research Report, 2025

2 How to use this Toolkit

What Why How

WHAT this toolkit is
A practical guide designed to help organizations build neuroinclusive workplaces.

WHY you should use it
To support neurodivergent talent, build stronger teams and create a healthier, more inclusive workplace.

HOW to use it
Use the step-by-step strategies, templates and tools to implement meaningful change in your workplace.

How to Use This Neuroinclusion Toolkit

This toolkit gives you practical tools you can start using right away to create a more inclusive workplace.

What's Inside

The toolkit is organized into **three action areas**:

1. **Securing Buy-In** – Gain support across all levels

2. **Building Awareness** – Increase understanding and empathy

3. **Reviewing HR Practices** – Identify and improve inclusive processes

Flexible & Easy to Use

The toolkit is organized into **three action areas**:

- Copy/paste the **ready-made templates** or edit to fit your needs

- **Print and share** any part as handouts or training resources

- Designed to support **neurodivergent** employees and benefit **everyone**

**You don't need to be a subject matter expert,
Just a champion for inclusion.**

3 Neuroinclusion in Action

Securing Buy-In
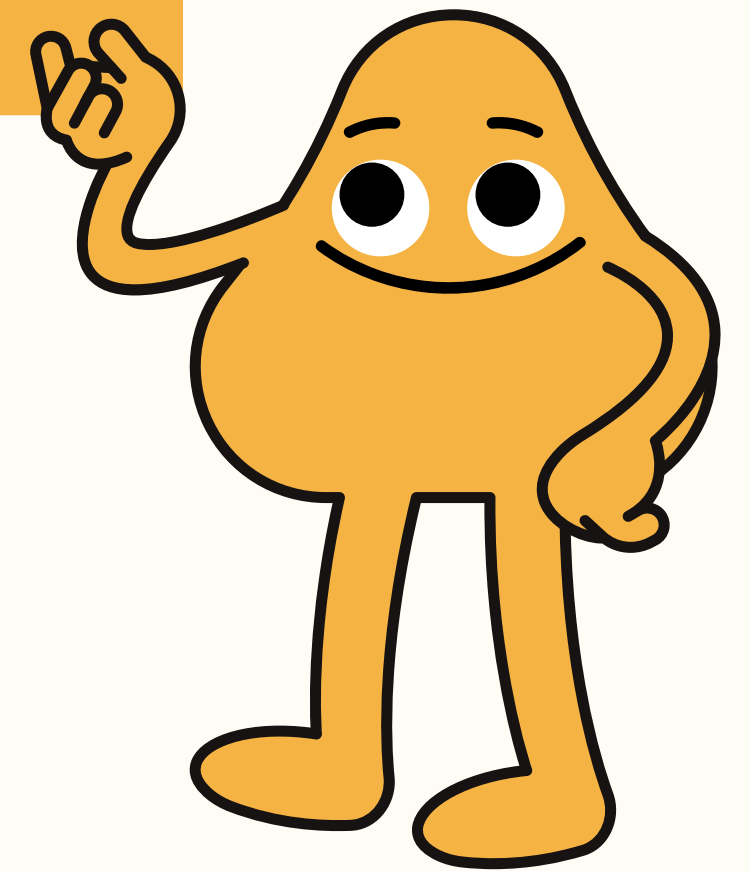
Securing Buy-In

Goal: Gain leadership commitment and organizational alignment by building a compelling case for neuroinclusion.

Key Stakeholders to Engage
- **Executive Leadership:** set the tone and allocate resources
- **HR Team:** build policies and employee experience
- **People Managers:** shape everyday team experiences

Practical Tools (click on each tool to see the details)

> Email Pitch

> Business Case

> Organizational Readiness

NOTE: You're welcome to copy and paste any text from the provided practical tools slides.. Feel free to use it as-is or customize it to fit your organization and audience.

Email Pitch – Spark Interest

Purpose: Introduce the concept, why it matters now, and request a short meeting or presentation slot.

Includes:
- o **Sell it to your boss Guide**
- o **Email Sample**

Email Pitch

○ You're welcome to copy and paste the email sample text. Feel free to use it as-is or customize it to fit your organization and audience.
○ **TIP**: You may consider attaching the Business Case infographic (see page 17).

Sell it to your boss Guide

Start with a Strong Opening Hook
Something relatable or timely to grab attention:
"We're always looking for ways to attract and retain great talent—and there's one talent pool we may be unintentionally missing: neurodivergent professionals."

Use a Real Example (Optional)
Show that this isn't just theory—others are already doing it:
"SAP saw a 30% increase in productivity in certain teams after hiring neurodivergent employees and adjusting how they work."

Highlight Low Cost / High Impact
Especially important for budget-conscious leadership:
"Most of the changes, like tweaking job ads or offering flexibility and clear communication, cost nothing, but make a big difference."

Reframe as Innovation, Not Just Inclusion
This helps shift the conversation from "compliance" to "value-creation":
"Neurodiverse teams have been shown to outperform others in pattern recognition, creative thinking, and innovation."

Suggested Call to Action
You can close with a friendly but clear next step:
"Would you be open to a quick 15-minute chat next week to explore this further?"

Email Sample

Subject: *Opportunity for Inclusion & Innovation*

Hi [Boss's Name],

We're always looking for ways to attract and retain great talent- and there's one group we may be unintentionally overlooking: neurodivergent professionals (those with ADHD, autism, dyslexia, etc.).

Research shows that they often bring unique strengths in innovation, problem-solving, and systems thinking. In fact, companies like SAP and Microsoft are already seeing measurable business results from neurodiversity-focused programs.

I'd like to propose a simple, low-cost approach to help us:
• Build awareness with managers and teams
• Review key HR practices to remove unintentional barriers
• Offer basic support options that benefit everyone

This isn't just a DEI initiative- it's a strategic way to strengthen performance and culture. I've put together a 1-pager with a few quick wins we could start on. Would you be open to a quick chat next week to walk through it?

Kind Regards,
[Your Name]

Business Case Presentation – Make the Case

Purpose: Secure leadership's attention and demonstrate the strategic and operational value.

Includes:

- o Business case structure
- o Infographic slide (one-slide business case)

Business Case

o Here is the suggested **structure for your Business Case**
o Use the next slide as a ready-to-share infographic to support your pitch.
o Pair it with the accompanying Neurodiversity in the Workplace Research Report for deeper data and context.

1. Opening Hook (1 min)

- Begin with a powerful stat or question:
  "While we compete for talent, up to 40% of neurodivergent adults remain unemployed, yet companies with neurodiversity programs report retention rates above 90%."
- Briefly introduce what neurodiversity is and why it matters now more than ever.

2. Why This Matters to Us (2 min)

- Align with organizational goals: DEI, innovation, retention, talent shortages.
- Highlight gaps or missed opportunities in current practices.

3. Business Case Snapshot (2–3 min)

- Present the provided infographic slide (see next page)
- Walk through the key branches: Competitive Advantage; ROI & Retention; Innovation & Problem-Solving; Inclusive Culture; Risk Mitigation
- Mention that the full research report backs up each point with data and case studies.

4. Real-World Examples (2 min)

- Share 2–3 quick examples (e.g., SAP's Autism at Work, Microsoft's inclusive hiring)
- Include key metrics (e.g., productivity boost, engagement increases).

5. What We Can Do Next (2 min)

- Pilot a neuro-inclusive hiring initiative
  - Train hiring managers on inclusive practices
  - Review job descriptions and processes
  - Appoint a cross-functional DEI taskforce

6. Closing and Call to Action (1 min)

- Reinforce the dual impact: business growth + equity.
- *"Let's not overlook talent—we just need to widen the lens."*
- Ask for support: endorsement, funding, or approval to explore/pilot.

Neurodiversity in the Workplace

While 30-40% of neurodivergent adults are unemployed, leading companies report 90% retention.
What are we missing?

NEURODIVERSITY DEFINED

"People experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one 'right' way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits."
(Harvard Health)

1 in 5 people are neurodivergent

Business Benefits

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY & INNOVATION
Neurodivergent employees often bring unique perspectives and nonlinear thinking, driving creativity and innovation. Companies like SAP, Microsoft, and EY have reported measurable gains in innovation after implementing neurodiversity hiring programs.

GREAT TALENT ACCESS & RETENTION
Neurodivergent individuals represent a large, often untapped talent pool. Inclusive hiring practices help organizations access highly skilled candidates. These employees also tend to show higher loyalty and retention, reducing turnover costs.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT & MORALE
Workplaces that accommodate and embrace neurodiversity tend to see improvements in overall employee morale, psychological safety, and team dynamics. A culture of inclusion, empathy, and respect benefits the entire organization.

Neurodiversity in Canada

1 of every 21 people in Canada have ADHD.

1 in 50 children and youth are diagnosed with Autism.

1 in 5 students in Canada has Dyslexia.

NEURODIVERSITY STRENGTHS

AUTISM
- Creativity
- Reliability
- Honesty

DYSLEXIA
- Creativity
- Connecting Ideas
- Out-of-box thinking

ADHD
- Creativity
- Hyperfocus
- Proactiveness

SURVEY SHOWS:

63% of neurodiverse individuals report not having received workplace accommodations.

Only **17%** of neurodiverse individuals say they feel "very inclusive" in their workplace.

Only **10%** of HR professionals say their organizations have policies to hire and support ND employees.

Let's commit to making our workplace inclusive for all.

Organizational Readiness Checklist – Assess & Engage

Purpose: Diagnose the current state and build shared awareness of strengths and gaps. You've made the case. Now you show leadership on *where* to start and why their input matters.

Includes:

- o Organizational reediness checklist guide
- o Sample Checklist

Organizational Readiness Checklist

Use this **organizational reediness checklist guide** to assess how prepared your organization is to effectively support and include neurodivergent employees

1. **Identify Gaps Before Building Solutions**
   Before jumping into action (updating policies or launching programs), you need to first understand where your organization currently stands. This checklist gives you a clear baseline.

2. **Strengthen the Business Case with Evidence**
   It helps justify requests for resources by showing where support is strong and where it's lacking (e.g., manager training or flexible hiring practices). It moves the conversation from "we think we need this" to "here's the data showing we do."

3. **Drive Strategic Conversations**
   It's a conversation starter with leadership, department heads, and managers grounded in real organizational needs, not theory.

4. **Monitor Progress Over Time**
   This checklist isn't just a one-off. It can be reused annually or after key initiatives to track improvement and re-assess needs.

Sample Checklist: Manager Capacity & Support

Question	Yes	No	In Progress
Are managers trained in neuroinclusive leadership?	✓	✓	✓
Do managers know how to access support/resources for neurodivergent employees?	✓	✓	✓
Are accommodations conversations part of regular check-ins with employees?	✓	✓	✓
Are managers encouraged to use strength-based approaches in performance reviews?	✓	✓	✓

If most answers are "No" or "In Progress":
➡ Recommend launching a neuroinclusion training series for people leaders.
➡ Pair with a quick-access resource hub on accommodations and communication tips.

Building Awareness
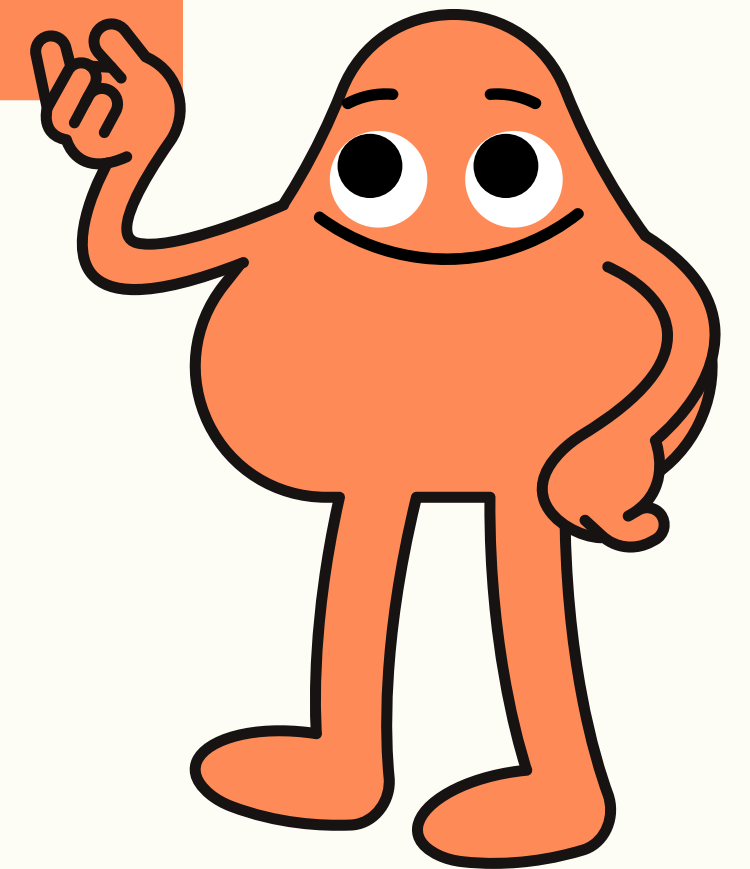
Building Awareness

Goal: Introduce the concept of neurodiversity in a simple, approachable way so that employees begin to understand what it is, why it matters, and how it shows up in the workplace.

Key Stakeholders to Engage:
All Employees: to build curiosity and openness
Managers: to model inclusive behavior
HR Team: to coordinate efforts and reinforce key messages

Practical Tools:

Organizational Awareness

Neurodiversity Manager Guide

NOTE: You're welcome to copy and paste any text from the provided practical tools slides.. Feel free to use it as-is or customize it to fit your organization and audience.

Organizational Awareness

Purpose: Provide a basic, approachable introduction to neurodiversity for the entire organization.

What it is: Simple, plug-and-play tools to help HR professionals introduce the concept of neurodiversity in the workplace, without being subject matter experts.

Includes:
- Neurodiversity 101 One-Pager
- Neurodiversity Learning Touchpoints
- Quick Planning Guide for Awareness Tools

Organizational Awareness

Neurodiversity 101 One-Pager

Use the infographic provided in this toolkit to introduce the concept of neurodiversity. This is a great way to start building awareness across the organization, especially when you're looking for a simple, high-impact first step.

You can distribute it in several easy ways:

- **Email it to staff** with a short, engaging message

- **Include it in onboarding materials** for all new hires.

- **Post it in visible areas** like break rooms, internal bulletin boards, or virtual channels like Slack or Teams.

- **Share it in a team or all-staff meeting** as a conversation starter or pre-read.

Email to staff Sample

Subject: *Embracing Different Ways of Thinking at Work*

Hi team,

As part of our commitment to building an inclusive workplace, we're sharing a quick resource to introduce a topic that affects many people, often invisibly: **neurodiversity.**

Neurodiversity includes the many different ways people think and learn, including those with ADHD, autism, dyslexia, and more. These are natural variations in how brains work, and they can bring incredible strengths to our teams.

This one-pager gives a quick overview of what neurodiversity means and why it matters. It's part of a broader conversation we'll be having over the coming weeks.

Thanks for taking a moment to read and reflect!

[Your Name or HR Team]

[Attach or link the one-pager infographic here]

Organizational Awareness

Neurodiversity Learning Touchpoints

Use this tool to build curiosity, correct misconceptions, and bring lived experiences into the workplace. Here are some resources you can use to keep the momentum going with small, meaningful touchpoints across the organization.

Myth vs. Fact Email Series

Short, digestible emails that challenge common misconceptions about neurodiversity. Each message can include 1–2 myths, facts, and a practical tip or reflection question.

How to use:
- ✓ Send one email per week over 2–3 weeks
- ✓ Embed links to the Neurodiversity 101 One-Pager or video clips
- ✓ Add a "Did you know?" section to internal newsletters

Example Myth/Fact Pair:
Myth: *People with ADHD are unmotivated.*
Fact: *ADHD affects executive functioning, not intelligence or effort. People with ADHD may need different supports to stay organized and on task.*

Curated Video Playlist

Short, engaging TED Talks or lived experience videos that highlight the value of neurodiverse perspectives at work.

How to use:
- ✓ Play a 5–10 min video in a team meeting, lunch & learn, or leadership huddle
- ✓ Share via internal platforms like Teams
- ✓ Include in onboarding or e-learning modules

Example videos to include:
- *"The world needs all kinds of minds,"* Temple Grandin
- *"What I've learned from my autistic brothers,"* Faith Jegede Cole

Invite a Guest Speaker

Bring in someone with lived experience (or an expert) to talk about neurodiversity in the workplace.

Tips for finding speakers:
- ✓ Reach out to local disability or inclusion-focused organizations
- ✓ Contact employee resource groups, CPHR, or LinkedIn professionals who speak on neuroinclusion

How to make it easy:
- Host a 30-minute virtual or in-person "Inclusion Spotlight"
- Provide guiding questions or topics

Quick Planning Guide for Awareness Tools

Start small – Whether you're posting a one-pager infographic or sending a myth-busting email, even one simple step can open the door to meaningful dialogue.

Mix tools – Combine written, visual, and spoken tools (e.g., posters, videos, emails, or a speaker) to engage different learning styles and make the message stick.

Create repetition, not overload – Awareness builds over time. Use short, regular touchpoints (e.g., one resource per week) rather than one big event.

Normalize the conversation – Integrate these tools into everyday processes like onboarding, meetings, or internal newsletters to make inclusion feel like part of your culture, not a one-time initiative.

Use feedback to adapt – After sharing a resource, ask questions like "What stood out to you?" or "What would you like to learn more about?" to guide future efforts and invite employee voice.

TIPS:
- ✓ You don't need to have all the answers - you're simply starting the conversation.
- ✓ It's okay to say: "I'm learning too."
- ✓ Focus on curiosity, respect, and openness.
- ✓ Frame it around inclusion and performance, not medical conditions.

Neurodiversity Manager Guide

Purpose: Secure practical leadership commitment to empowering people managers, who directly shape employees.

Why it matters: Managers are the daily connection point between organizational values and employee well-being. Providing management support helps managers lead with confidence and inclusion.

Includes: Four simple plug-and-play Manager Support Tools to share with the managers in your organization

- "Know Your Team" Neuroinclusion Conversation Guide
- Accommodation Quick Reference Sheet
- Manager Comms Template – Introducing Neuroinclusion
- Manager Support Request Form (Internal Use)

Four Plug-and-Play (P&P) Neuroinclusion Tools

Dear Manager,

These tools are designed to help you confidently support all team members, including those who may be neurodivergent. Use them proactively- no diagnosis or disclosure needed.

"Know Your Team" Neuroinclusion Conversation Guide

What this is: A simple guide to help you learn how your team members work best.

When to use it: During 1:1 check-ins, onboarding, or performance conversations.

How to use it:

➢ Choose a few questions and ask them in a casual, supportive way.

➢ Let your team know this is about helping everyone thrive.

Try asking:

o What helps you stay focused and do your best work?

o Are there ways you prefer to receive feedback?

o Is there anything that makes meetings or collaboration more difficult for you?

o What should I know about how you process information or handle stress?

o What kind of communication helps you stay in the loop and feel supported

TIP: This isn't about "fixing" anyone, it's about understanding and flexibility and can be used by managers without needing to know someone is neurodivergent.

Accommodation Quick Reference Sheet

What this is: A list of common challenges and low-effort accommodations you can offer.

When to use it: When a team member expresses a need or you notice a barrier to performance.

If someone struggles with...	Try this:
Sensory sensitivity	Noise-canceling headphones, soft lighting
Staying organized or on task	Clear task breakdowns, visual timelines
Social discomfort or anxiety	Written instructions, optional video participation
Processing speed	Share agendas ahead, allow extra response time
Memory and recall	Task checklists, notes, reminders
Time management	Flex schedules, set clear priorities

TIP: Many of these accommodations are helpful to everyone. Ask your team what works best for them without needing to know someone is neurodivergent.

Manager Comms Template

What this is: A ready-to-use message you can send or say to show your team that inclusion matters.

When to use it: During onboarding, after training, or at the start of a project.

Use this message (or make it your own)**:**

Hi team,

I want to make sure everyone on this team feels supported to do their best work.

We all think, learn, and communicate differently, and that's something I value.

If there are ways, I can better support your work style or communication preferences, I'm always open to hearing from you. My goal is to create a space where we can be flexible and inclusive while getting great results together.

Thanks for being part of this team!

TIP: Small signals like this go a long way in building trust. Can be used by managers without needing to know someone is neurodivergent.

Manager Support Request Form (Internal Use)

What this is: A quick way to request help from HR if you're unsure how to handle a neuroinclusion situation.

When to use it: Anytime you want support, early is better than late.

What to include in your request:

What kind of help do you need? (choose one or more)
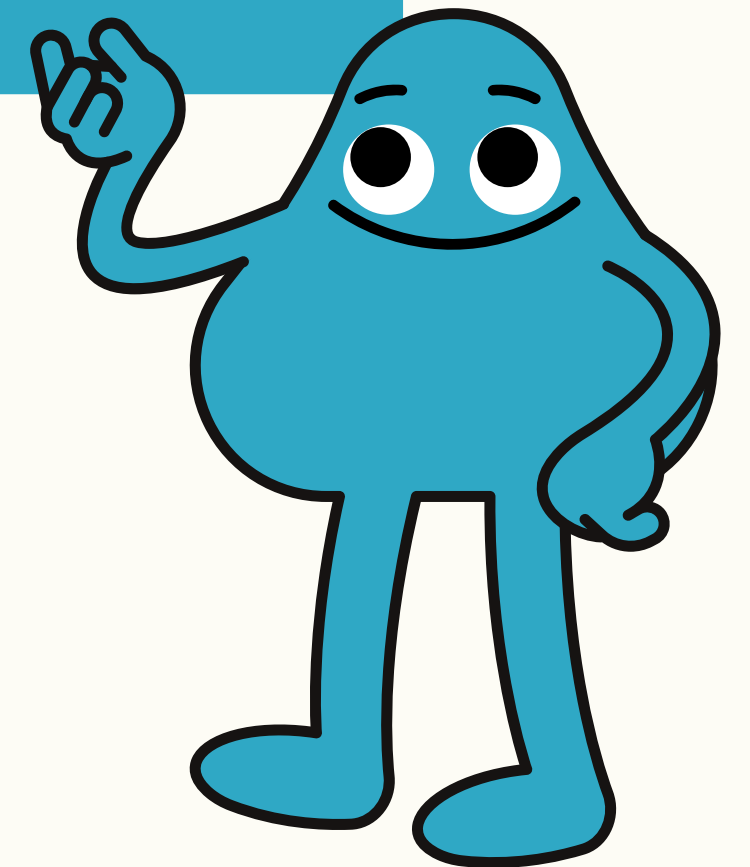
❑ Advice on a specific situation

❑ Help with accommodations

❑ Coaching on inclusive communication

❑ Something else (explain briefly)

❑ Short description (optional)

❑ Is it urgent? (Yes / No)

❑ Preferred follow-up: Email / 15-min call / Resource link

TIP: Asking for HR support is a strength, not a weakness. It shows you're committed to leading inclusively.

Reviewing HR Practices

Reviewing HR Practices

Goal: Identify and remove hidden barriers in core HR processes to ensure neuroinclusive hiring, development, and retention practices.

Key Stakeholders to Engage:

HR Team: to audit and adapt HR practices
People Managers: apply inclusive approaches in performance management and team development

Practical Tools:

Employee Journey

Everyday Supports

NOTE: You're welcome to copy and paste any text from the provided practical tools slides.. Feel free to use it as-is or customize it to fit your organization and audience.

Employee Journey

Purpose: Spot and remove common neurodiversity barriers in key stages of the employee experience, from hiring to performance, so more people can thrive without needing to navigate unnecessary friction.

Why it matters: Once awareness is building, it's time to ensure your systems don't unintentionally exclude. These tools help HR teams and managers identify small but powerful changes with big impact.

Includes:

- **Job Postings** – Tips and a checklist to write clear, bias-aware postings
- **Interview Process** – Audit template to reduce sensory and cognitive overload
- **Onboarding** – Guide to create structure, predictability, and clarity from day one
- **Performance Reviews** – Prompts to support fair, strength-based evaluation

While there are many stages in the employee lifecycle, these four are common pain points for neurodivergent employees and offer the best starting place for meaningful improvement.

Job Postings

The job posting is often the first barrier to entry for neurodivergent candidates. Overly complex language, vague requirements, or bias toward extroverted traits can discourage qualified applicants from even applying. By using clear, structured, and inclusive language, you open the door to a broader, more diverse talent pool while improving clarity for all candidates.

Practical Tips: Writing Neuroinclusive Job Postings:

1. **Use clear, concrete language**
Avoid abstract buzzwords (e.g., "rockstar," "guru," "fast-paced ninja") and opt for straightforward descriptions.
Instead of: *"You're a dynamic multitasker who thrives in a fast-paced environment"*
Try: *"You'll manage 3–4 client projects at a time, with regular deadlines and team check-ins"*

1. **Focus on outcomes, not personality traits**
Phrase requirements around skills and responsibilities, not soft traits or style.
Instead of: *"Must be a strong communicator and team player"*
Try: *"You'll collaborate with teammates to share project updates weekly"*

3. **Separate 'must-haves' from 'nice-to-haves'**
Neurodivergent candidates often interpret job ads literally. Overloading a posting with expectations may lead strong candidates to self-select out.
Use a short "Required Qualifications" section with only true non-negotiables
*Add a "**Bonus If You Have**" section for nice-to-haves*

4. **Add an inclusion statement that actually means something**
A brief statement about your openness to neurodivergent applicants can help reduce fear of stigma.
Example: *"We're committed to creating a neuroinclusive workplace. If you require accommodations during the application or interview process, just let us know — we're happy to support you."*

Neuroinclusive Job Posting Checklist

Use this quick checklist when writing or reviewing postings:

✓	**Item**
☐	Simple, jargon-free language used throughout
☐	Role responsibilities listed in bullet points
☐	Outcomes-focused phrasing instead of personality traits
☐	"Must-have" and "nice-to-have" qualifications clearly separated
☐	Statement inviting applicants to request accommodations
☐	Avoids unnecessary sensory or style-based language (e.g., "high energy," "extroverted," "fast-moving")
☐	Includes salary range or pay transparency where possible

TIP: Before posting a job, ask a colleague unfamiliar with the role to read it. If they can easily understand the expectations, your posting is likely clear for all candidates, neurodivergent and neurotypical alike.

Interview Process

Traditional interview processes often unintentionally favour extroverted, neurotypical communication styles- fast responses, small talk, and unstructured conversation. For neurodivergent candidates, this can create unnecessary stress or prevent their true skills from being seen. By making small, thoughtful adjustments, HR professionals and hiring managers can create a more equitable experience and better assess actual fit and capability, not just interview performance.

Practical Tips: Designing a Neuroinclusive Interview Experience:

1. **Provide interview details in advance-** Give candidates clarity around what to expect. Include:
   - ✓ **Date & Time** (in their time zone)
   - ✓ **Format** (virtual/in-person, one-on-one/panel)
   - ✓ **Estimated length**
   - ✓ **Interviewers' names and roles**
   - ✓ **Technology or platform details** (e.g., Zoom link, any required software)

2. **Offer questions or themes in advance-** This levels the playing field by giving candidates time to process and prepare.
   Even a general overview like *"We'll ask about your experience managing deadlines and working in teams"* helps reduce anxiety.

3. **Make accommodations easy and judgment-free-** Don't wait for a candidate to self-disclose. Proactively invite them to share needs.

Example: *"If you have any preferences or would benefit from adjustments to the interview format (such as more time, written versions of questions, or a quieter environment), just let us know- we're happy to accommodate."*

4. **Use clear, behavior-based questions-** Avoid abstract or vague phrasing. Focus on past experience and practical thinking.
   Instead of: *"How do you handle stress?"*
   Try: *"Tell us about a time you faced a tight deadline. What was your approach, and how did it turn out?"*

5. **Minimize unnecessary sensory load-** Ensure interview settings (virtual or in-person) are calm, well-structured, and low-pressure. Skip informal *"culture fit"* chats or rapid-fire panels unless truly necessary. For virtual interviews, avoid forcing cameras on and provide backup tech options.

Sample Interview Invitation Email (With Inclusion Language)

Subject: *Interview Invitation – [Job Title] at [Company Name]*

Dear [Candidate Name],
Thank you for your interest in the [Job Title] role at [Company].
We'd like to invite you to a [virtual/in-person] interview with our team.

Details:
- **Date:** [Insert Date]
- **Time:** [Insert Time + Time Zone]
- **Interviewers:** [Name + Title]
- **Duration:** [e.g., 45 minutes]
- **Format:** [e.g., Microsoft Teams – link to follow]

During the interview, we'll ask about your past project experience and how you work in a team environment.

We're committed to creating an accessible and inclusive experience. If you would benefit from any adjustments (e.g., extra processing time, questions in writing, or a quiet environment), feel free to let us know, we're happy to accommodate.

Looking forward to speaking with you!

Best regards,
[Your Name / Hiring Team]

Neuroinclusive Interview Audit Checklist

Use this checklist to review your current interview practices:

✓	Item
☐	Interview invitation includes time, format, interviewers, and expectations
☐	Candidates are proactively invited to request accommodations
☐	Interview questions are structured, specific, and behavior-based
☐	Sensory environment is calm and predictable
☐	Candidates are allowed time to pause, reflect, or return to questions
☐	Evaluation focuses on skills and contributions, not style or charisma
☐	Feedback is offered or available upon request (optional but inclusive)

TIP: Consider sharing your evaluation criteria or what you're looking for during the interview. This clarity helps reduce ambiguity and supports better preparation for all candidates.

Onboarding- Structure, Predictability & Belonging from Day One

The first days at a new job set the tone for belonging, confidence, and clarity. For neurodivergent employees, uncertainty, unspoken expectations, or information overload can create significant stress. A thoughtful, structured onboarding experience helps everyone, and it especially supports those who thrive with clarity and routine.

Practical Tips: Designing a Neuroinclusive Onboarding Experience:

1. Provide a clear schedule in advance
Let new hires know what to expect in their first week or two.
Share a daily or weekly agenda: *who they'll meet, when, and what tools or systems they'll be introduced to.*

2. Create a welcome guide or FAQ
Include key logistics, team norms, and unwritten rules.
Examples: *how to book a meeting room, expectations for camera use on video calls, typical email response time.*

3. Break information into smaller chunks
Avoid overwhelming employees with long meetings or too many systems at once.
Spread orientation across several days or weeks. Offer written summaries or recordings.

4. Assign a peer buddy or onboarding contact
Provide a go-to person for non-manager questions, someone who can answer casual or cultural questions without judgment.

5. Invite accommodation preferences early — but don't require disclosure
Let employees know they can ask for tools or changes to help them succeed, without needing a formal diagnosis.
"We want to make sure you're set up for success, let us know what tools, communication styles, or environments work best for you."

Neuroinclusive Onboarding Checklist

✓	**Item**
☐	Day 1–5 schedule shared in advance (clear agenda, who's who)
☐	Welcome guide or FAQ includes daily practices and unwritten norms
☐	Onboarding modules spaced out to avoid overload
☐	Option to ask for preferred learning/communication style
☐	Peer buddy or support contact assigned
☐	Clear invitation to discuss any tools, supports, or preferences — no disclosure needed

TIP: Include a one-page "Getting to Know You" form in your onboarding packet, invite new hires to share their working preferences (e.g., "I prefer email over calls" or "I focus best with short breaks").

Performance Reviews – Prompts for Fair, Strength-Based Evaluation

Traditional performance reviews often reward visibility, communication style, or social confidence- traits that may not reflect actual contributions or potential. For neurodivergent employees, unclear goals or inconsistent feedback loops can lead to anxiety, misalignment, or missed growth opportunities. A more inclusive approach to performance reviews ensures that neurodivergent employees are seen, supported, and recognized for their real impact, not just how they show up.

Practical Tips: Designing a Neuroinclusive Onboarding Experience:

1. **Be clear about success metrics and timelines**
   Ensure expectations are measurable and consistently communicated.
   Revisit goals regularly and use clear criteria (what success looks like) instead of vague phrases like "shows initiative."

2. **Focus on outcomes, not just communication style**
   Recognize impact, not how loudly or frequently someone contributes.
   Example: *Instead of rating "team participation" by how often someone speaks in meetings, consider how they support others or contribute ideas in writing.*

3. **Use structured, bias-aware review prompts**
   Guide managers with inclusive evaluation language.
   "What strengths has this employee consistently demonstrated?"
   "In what ways does this employee add value that might go unseen?"
   "Have we provided the conditions for them to thrive?"

4. **Invite employee self-reflection in advance**
   Allow employees to highlight their own contributions, working styles, and challenges.
   Provide a short pre-review reflection template to complete before the meeting.

5. **Ensure feedback is specific and supportive**
   Avoid vague or generic feedback. Pair praise or constructive input with examples and next steps.
   Example: *"Your documentation of that client process saved us time — let's explore how you might do more work like that."*

Neuroinclusive Review Prompts for Managers

Use these to shape more thoughtful and fair reviews:

Prompt	Purpose
"What does success look like in this role?"	Anchor review in role clarity
"Where has the employee demonstrated progress?"	Focus on development, not just end results
"How do they uniquely contribute to the team's success?"	Spotlight hidden strengths
"Are there adjustments we can make to help them do their best work?"	Open a door to supportive dialogue
"What feedback have we given — and how was it delivered?"	Reflect on manager responsibility, not just employee action

TIP: Don't wait for the annual review. Normalize short, structured check-ins quarterly or even monthly. This builds trust and helps identify needs before issues arise.

Everyday Support

Purpose: Empower managers and teams to offer small, supportive adjustments without requiring employees to self-identify or request formal accommodations.

Why it matters: Many neurodivergent employees don't disclose their neurotype due to stigma, fear of being treated differently, or simply not having a diagnosis. By embedding flexibility into everyday practices, you create a more supportive environment for everyone, without putting the burden on individuals to ask.

Includes:
- Quick-Start Flexibility Guide
- "How I Work Best" Template
- Team Norms Menu

Built-in flexibility benefits everyone, not just neurodivergent employees.
Think of it as universal design for workplace success.

Everyday Support

Quick-Start Flexibility Guide

A simple reference sheet for managers and HR to explore high-impact ways to embed flexibility into daily workflows, no formal process needed.

How to Use It:
o Share with managers in team meetings, manager toolkits, or during performance conversations.
o Use as a springboard for making team-wide shifts or quietly supporting individual needs.

Communication Options
o Let employees choose between email, chat, or 1:1 meetings for follow-ups
o Allow cameras off during video calls by default
o Provide written summaries after meetings

Work Environment
o Offer noise-canceling headphones or quiet spaces
o Allow work-from-home or hybrid days if feasible
o Support movement breaks and low-stimulation spaces

Scheduling Flexibility
o Offer flexible start/end times where possible
o Allow "focus hours" with no meetings or interruptions
o Normalize calendar blockers for recharge or sensory breaks

Processing Time & Formats
o Send agendas ahead of meetings
o Avoid putting people on the spot in meetings — offer opt-in participation
o Give time to process information and respond later (e.g., via follow-up message)

Everyday Support

"How I Work Best" Template

A voluntary, fill-in-the-blank form employees can use to share their preferred working conditions, communication styles, and strengths, without needing to disclose anything personal.

How to Use It:
o Share during onboarding, check-ins, or after team changes as a printed handout or a digital form (e.g., using Microsoft Forms).
o Emphasize that this is optional and about **how we work**, not *who we are*.

Prompt	Your Response
Focus & Productivity: I'm most focused when… e.g., mornings, after coffee, when I have quiet time	
Focus & Productivity: I do my best work when… e.g., I have clear steps, I can take breaks, I work solo first then collaborate	
Communication Preferences: My communication sweet spot is… e.g., email, chat, face-to-face, scheduled meetings	
Communication Preferences: When I'm stuck or unsure, I appreciate when… e.g., someone checks in, gives examples, walks through things with me	
Feedback & Support: I prefer to receive feedback… e.g., in writing, in real time, after a project, in private	
Feedback & Support: When I need support, it helps when… e.g., someone gives me space to process, offers specific next steps	
Motivation & Energy: What energizes me most at work is… e.g., solving problems, helping others, learning something new	
Motivation & Energy: What can help me recharge during the day is… e.g., quick breaks, walking meetings, time to think alone	
Anything else you'd like your team/manager to know? (optional)	

Everyday Support

Flexibility Without Disclosure

Simple workplace supports that reduce friction, improve focus, and help all employees thrive, no disclosure required.

Clear & Flexible Communication

- ✓ Allow "camera off" participation in meetings
- ✓ Share agendas and key points ahead of time
- ✓ Follow up meetings with written summaries
- ✓ Offer multiple ways to contribute (verbal, written, chat)
- ✓ Ask about preferred feedback styles (written, in-person)

Time & Task Support

- ✓ Build in buffer time between meetings
- ✓ Protect "no meeting" focus blocks
- ✓ Be flexible with start/end times when possible
- ✓ Break tasks into smaller, manageable steps
- ✓ Provide instructions both verbally and in writing
- ✓ Allow extra time for deep work or planning

Work Environment & Well-Being

- ✓ Offer quiet zones or optional work-from-home days
- ✓ Allow use of headphones/music for focus
- ✓ Normalize short movement or recharge breaks
- ✓ Encourage use of time off without guilt
- ✓ Support wellness practices (low-stimulation areas)
- ✓ Check in regularly, not just during formal reviews

4 Moving Forward

Final Reminders as You Take Action

Start Small, Start Somewhere

Neuroinclusion isn't all-or-nothing. One better interview question, one clearer job posting, one "How I Work Best" conversation — it all matters.

Ask, Don't Assume

You don't need to be an expert to be inclusive. Get curious, stay open, and invite feedback:
"What would make this easier for you?" can go a long way.

Use the Toolkit, Make it Yours

Adapt the templates. Try the scripts. You don't have to do everything at once — just what works for your people, your size, your culture.

Inclusion Without Disclosure

Most changes that support neurodivergent employees benefit everyone. Focus on removing barriers, not assigning labels -support doesn't require disclosure.

Keep the Momentum Going

Bookmark wins, share stories, ask what worked, and keep learning. Inclusion is not a one-time task — it's a habit you build.

REMEMBER

You don't have to do it alone. Many of your fellow HR professionals are navigating the same journey, so share what works, ask questions, and build together.
Neuroinclusion is a team effort.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking the time to engage with this Neuroinclusion Toolkit. By exploring these tools and strategies, you're taking an important step toward creating a more inclusive, supportive, and human-centered workplace, not just for neurodivergent individuals, but for everyone. This work doesn't have to be done alone; inclusion is a shared journey, and we encourage you to connect, collaborate, and keep learning. Your commitment matters, and the impact you create will ripple far beyond your own organization.