

NEURODIVERSITY TOOLKIT

# Self-help Guide



The Self-help Guide is divided into sections relating to the challenges or difficulties you may be experiencing at work. You may have noticed these yourself and find these are holding you back or your Line Manager might have raised issues with you.



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## Introduction

### Aims of the Neurodiversity Toolkit

The Neurodiversity Toolkit aims to provide information to enable neurodivergent individuals to work to their full potential for the benefit of the whole organisation. The tips, advice and suggested workplace adjustments can also be used by individuals and their managers to help resolve challenges at work that result from neurological differences.

We encourage you to read the relevant sections and think about which of the tips, advice and workplace adjustments could help you at work. Please then take time to fully discuss these with your line-manager and agree the ones which can be implemented.

## How to use the Self-help Guide

The Self-help Guide is divided into sections relating to the challenges or difficulties you may be experiencing at work. You may have noticed these yourself and find these are holding you back or your line-manager might have raised issues with you.

You may choose to read the whole guide. However for easy access we have included a short questionnaire for you to complete. Your answers will indicate which sections in the guide are most relevant and useful for you, so you can quickly navigate to them or prioritise certain sections to start with.

It is worth noting at this point that you should continue to use the other support services provided by your organisation and continue with any other support service you are accessing.

## How to access the interactive questionnaire

For ease of use and as an extra helping hand, we have created an interactive version of the questionnaire, which can be accessed via the button below.

The interactive questionnaire will make a note of which sections are affecting you the most, and upon completion, will indicate which sections of the self-help guide may be most useful to you.

The manual version of the questionnaire can be located [at the end of this booklet](#).

[Click here to access the questionnaire](#)



## Self-help guide

On these pages, you will find a range of adjustments and strategies for managing challenges and working more effectively. You will not need all of these; when reading through, choose the approaches which help with your main challenges or you feel could have the biggest impact on your productivity and wellbeing. It is also important to consider the practicalities of your workplace and how easy it would be to apply these in reality. Remember, some of these you can implement yourself, but some will need a discussion with your line manager as they may have a wider impact on the team.



## Section 1

### Concentration and focus

This section will outline the strategies you could use to help improve your concentration, attention and focus. These tips are divided into sub-sections including distraction, lack of focus, hyper-focus, and difficulty with concentration.



**Do you find your attention wanders?**

**Are you very easily distracted?**

**Do you find it hard to go back to a task after a distraction or interruption?**

- Identify your best working environment - replicate this for as much of your working week as possible
- Consider when your concentration is at its best – use this time for your most important or detailed tasks
- Access a quiet private space when needed, particularly for detailed work, important tasks or when your concentration is especially poor
- Use small temporary partitions, files or folders to make your workspace separate from others
- Discuss removing or covering posters, pictures or bright colours
- Turning your chair to face away from any distractions
- Use noise minimising headphones or listen to music to block out noise
- Planning your work so you can focus on just a single a task at a time
- Agree with your manager and team to use a “Do not disturb” type sign, turn off your phone and/or use an “Out of office” message to help to avoid interruptions. This could be for set times each day or discussed with your team when you need to use it
- Work out the best way to get yourself back on track after a distraction – such as getting up and walking around
- Taking a lunch time walk or other daily exercise can also help

**Do you tend to overlook details which can lead to errors or incomplete work?**

**Do you struggle to listen during conversations, training or instructions?**

**Do you sometimes zone out?**

- Ask for information in bite-size chunks
- Discuss different training methods with your line manager
- Find out if there is the flexibility to have shorter sessions or if different training methods can be used e.g. video or demonstration
- Take advantage of the different types of training available such as computer-based and classroom-based
- Ask for extra support in training
- Request a 1-1 meeting after training to recap and check your understanding
- Taking notes in meetings and training sessions may help you focus
- Request a follow up email from your supervisor after any meeting with key points highlighted
- Ask that colleagues give messages and requests in writing as well as verbally
- Have a notepad always available to write down details
- Ask a colleague to keep you focused e.g. give you a nudge if you seem to zone out

## Do you become absorbed in interesting tasks?

### Does this cause you to lose track of time or neglect other tasks?

- Use calendar or email alerts to mark when tasks should end
- Ask a colleague help to keep you on track if needed
- Do you struggle to stay focused on and complete mundane tasks?
- Do you find yourself flitting from one activity to another?
- Think about how you can make mundane tasks more interesting. E.g. using visuals or colour, doing the task in a different way each day
- Try to start your day with a fun and interesting task to spark motivation and concentration. Make sure you set yourself a time limit for this, so you go back to the other tasks
- Plan an interesting task for the end of a day or at the end of a piece of work as a reward
- Alternate mundane and interesting tasks throughout the day/week
- Ask someone else to check in with you on a regular basis
- Use a checklist or planner with timings to keep you on track

## General tips and techniques

- Doing something physical may help keep your attention focused e.g. doodling or stress ball
- Work standing up or walking around to boost your attention
- Taking a short break between tasks to clear your mind before starting the next one
- Take regular breaks? You may need to take a shorter lunch hour so you can take a mid-morning and mid-afternoon break
- Physical exercise and/or fresh air regularly throughout the week can really help



## Section 2

### Organisation and time management

This section provides tips and advice for improving organisation and time management and explores topics including tasks management, organisation of workspace, time management and punctuality, working to targets and deadlines.

**Do you struggle with multi-tasking or keeping track of multiple tasks?**

**Do you tend to forget where you are in a task sequence?**

**Do you have trouble starting and finishing tasks?**

**Do you struggle to plan and prioritise your work?**

- Incorporate planning / organisation time at the start and end of every day
- Find someone to help you with planning, prioritising and setting deadlines
- Make a list of priorities for the day- adding to these or re-juggling if needed
- Break down tasks into smaller steps e.g. a checklist – with timings
- Using a visual planner of work tasks may help
- Use calendar or email tools e.g. alerts
- Agree with your team / line manager that you check with your work planner before taking on work rather than automatically agreeing to requests
- Check your inbox at regular intervals rather than responding immediately to every email
- Arrange to adjust your work hours so you have time when fewer colleagues are at work
- Plan your work so you can focus on just a single a task at a time
- Use a “Do not disturb” type sign, to turn off your phone and/or use an “Out of office” message to help avoid interruptions. You could use these at set times each day or discuss with your team when you need to use it

**Do you struggle to be organised?****Does your work space tend be messy or cluttered?****Do you frequently lose or misplace things?**

- Think about how you can make your work space better organised and less cluttered?
  - » E.g. Folders, filing systems, in/out trays, desk tidy
  - » E.g. Colour coding and labelling
- Plan your workday to be able to set 15 minutes aside to clear and tidy workspace
- If possible, store items used together near each other

**Are you persistently late?****Do you forget appointments, meeting or deadlines?****Do you mix up arrangements or get times and days wrong?**

- Work out how you can keep track of appointments and deadlines
  - » E.g. Diary or calendar – written or on computer
  - » E.g. Planners and checklists
  - » E.g. Email or calendar alerts
- You may need to plan to arrive 15-30 minutes early

**Do you struggle to meet deadlines / targets?**

**Do you tend to underestimate how long things take?**

**Do you put things off and procrastinate then end up behind schedule?**

- Break down larger projects into smaller tasks with individual deadlines
- Set yourself interim deadlines or an earlier deadline than required
- Plan tasks to fit in a specific time slot E.g. top three things to do before lunch
- Prepare for work the night before E.g. including thinking through and planning tasks
- Create a “hot spot” for tasks you need to do in the next 24 hours
- Make your manager and/or colleagues aware that you might need extra time for some tasks
- Consider how you can get help with prioritising tasks and setting deadlines. Is there someone in your team who is good at this?
- Think about if you would benefit from a coach, mentor or buddy
- Agree a work schedule with timings with your manager or supervisor
- Set email and calendar alerts for each small task
- Use a specific planner or checklist with timings
- Keep a daily log of what you do to identify where the time goes
- Block time out in your calendar if the day starts filling up with meetings
- Arrange regular 1-to-1 meetings to review tasks and projects etc.



## Section 3

### Processing and memory

This section focuses on issues with processing of information and memory. You will find some suggestions to improve retention of information, following sequences and instructions and processing information.



**Do you find it hard to recall recent information and events?**

**Do you take longer to learn things than most people?**

**Do you tend to forget what you've learnt more easily than others seem to?**

**Do you find it hard to learn in "normal" way e.g. formal training?**

**Do you have difficulty with verbal instructions?**

- Have a notepad always available to write down details or important information
- Ask for examples and templates to guide you at the start of a piece of work
- Request handouts in advance of training or briefing papers in advance of meetings
- Consider if it would help if others to regularly checked that you have understood
- Ask for information in bite-size chunks
- Discuss different training options with your manager. Take advantage of the different types of training offered for example computer-based as well as classroom-based
- Ask for a 1-to-1 meeting after training to recap and check your understanding
- Take notes in meetings and training sessions help you retain the information
- Request a follow up email from supervisor after any meeting with key points highlighted
- Ask for colleagues to give messages and requests in writing as well as verbally

**Do you find it hard to see the bigger picture instead of detail?**

**Is it a struggle to string a chain of thoughts together?**

**Do you have difficulty following sequences and instructions?**

**Do you have trouble understanding a task and planning the steps needed to complete it?**

**Do you find it hard to apply rules to different situations?**

- Request extra time to ask questions and get clarification
- Ask for an explanation of the wider context for decisions, projects and tasks
- Mind-mapping may help you organise your thinking before starting a project
- Using flow charts, illustrations and diagrams could help you to understand concepts and how things fit together
- Ask a manager or colleague take time to discuss concepts
- Work with your manager to ensure you get clear task setting
- Check with your manager what they are expecting and what they think success looks like.

**Do you find you need extra processing or thinking time?**

**Do you feel pressured or need extra time to respond to questions?**

**Do you struggle with Interruptions / distractions?**

**Do you have trouble interpreting information from different senses and sources?**

**Do you find it hard to change or adapt part way through a task?**

- Plan your work so you can focus on just a single a task at a time
- Arrange your work so you finish one task before starting another
- Consider making colleagues, managers or trainers aware to give you extra time to answer
- Use a “Do not disturb” type sign, to turn off your phone and/or use an “Out of office” message to help avoid interruptions. This could for set times each day or discussed with your team when you need to use it
- Find a workspace free from posters, pictures or bright colours or ask for them to be covered
- Arrange to wear noise minimising headphones or listen to music to block out noise distractions





## Section 4 Visual Processing

This section explores ways to manage difficulties with processing visual information which includes challenges with reading and writing, taking in visual information, special awareness and visual stress.

**Do you read slowly or hesitantly making many small mistakes?**

**Do you have difficulty keeping track when reading or finding something specific on a page?**

**Do you tend to skip words or entire lines when reading, or read the same sentence twice?**

**Do you mix up letters, the sequence of letters or omit letters?**

**Are you slow at writing and do you struggle to copy text?**

**Do you find it hard to write within the lines or margins?**

- Arrange for information to be given in different ways to avoid a lot of reading
- Ask for flow charts, diagrams and pictures to help you
- Request that colleagues highlight key points in documents (bold) or give summaries of longer documents
- Take time to read information and instructions - highlighting important points in colour
- Check with someone that you have understood the material correctly
- Ask not to have to read out in front of a group / meeting
- Discuss the possibility of assistive technology with your line manager
- Ask for help with any hand-written work such as a proof reader
- Have a dictionary, spell checker or glossary available

**Do you have difficulty recalling what you've seen or read?**

**Do you find it hard to concentrate on visual tasks, videos or slide shows?**

**Do you miss changes in displays, signs or posted notices?**

- Request handouts / briefing papers in advance of training or meetings
- Ask for information to in bite-size chunks
- Discuss different training options with your manager. Take advantage of different types of training offered, for example computer-based as well as classroom-based
- Ask for a 1-1 meeting after training to recap and check your understanding
- Take notes in meetings and training sessions help you retain the information
- Ask for a follow up email from supervisor after any meeting with key points highlighted
- Request colleagues to give messages and requests in writing as well as verbally

**Do you have difficulty judging distances or where objects are in space?**

**Do you have trouble map reading and navigating?**

**Are you clumsy and tend to bump into things?**

**Is your hand-eye coordination poor?**

- Keep the space around your chair / desk clear and free from clutter and your workspace clutter free  
E.g. in-tray, filing system, desk tidy.
- Avoid having food and drink at your desk
- Use equipment such as trays or trolleys to help you with carrying items
- A guided tour of the workplace when empty help you to with new environments or changes to the environment
- Ask for clear directions and maps for any journeys you need to make for work
- Find someone to accompany you on first visits
- Use navigation software for journeys to other offices / sites
- A map of large buildings with routes marked might help
- Be extra vigilant around trip hazards
- Ask your colleagues to ensure items are cleared away and cupboard doors / draws are closed

**Do you find that words distort, blur or move when reading?**

**Do you get tired easily when reading or need to take frequent breaks?**

**Do you find white paper / high contrast difficult?**

**Do you squint, rubs your eyes, blink a lot or become wide-eyed?**

**Are you sensitive to bright light and get glare from bright things?**

**Do you get headaches, nausea or eye strain?**

- Find workspace in with suitable lighting. Or move to better light for reading tasks
- Change the background colour or use an anti-glare filter on computer screens
- Plan to take frequent breaks from computer work or reading
- Ask for documents to be printed on coloured or off-white paper if available and use coloured or off-white paper yourself
- A coloured overlay or coloured reading ruler may help
- Ask that colleagues use large print and good spacing in documents\*

\* Also see suggestions for Reading and Writing difficulties on pages 28 - 35



## Section 5

### Auditory processing

This section will help if you are having difficulties related to auditory processing – which is using information you hear. It covers issues with speech and verbal instructions.



**Do you struggle to hear speech clearly against background noise?**

**Do you have difficulty hearing poor quality sounds (e.g. mobile phone or in an “echoey” room).**

**Do you find it hard to pick out one voice from others or identify where a sound is coming from?**

**Do you have trouble hearing speakers clearly from a distance?**

**Do you struggle to listen selectively to one side or the other?**

**Do you find it hard to distinguish similar sounds – such as “70” and “17”?**

### **Self-help tips**

- Focus on the person speaking to you if you are in a crowded room
- Give them your full attention and concentrate on key words
- Observe gestures and facial movements very closely
- Position yourself directly in front of the person speaking to you
- Position yourself away from any sources of noise
- Try to arrive early for meetings / training sessions so you can position yourself close to the chair / speaker / trainer
- On the telephone hold the receiver as close to your ear as possible - it should be tight enough so that it covers the ear and keeps out other sounds

**Discuss acoustics and noise with line managers or trainers in advance of meetings and training. Things that might help include:**

- Choice of rooms for training – choosing rooms with carpets and soft furnishings, heavy curtains and acoustic ceiling tiles are best for your hearing.
- Sitting away from or minimising background noise.
- Shutting doors and windows,
- Asking nearby colleagues to keep noise to a minimum
- Sitting near the chair of meeting or the trainer if in training courses

- Ask colleagues to get your attention before they start talking
- Request that people face you and not cover their mouths when speaking to you
- Ask others to speak clearly and a little slowly and avoid complex grammar and vocabulary
- Request that colleagues allow you time for processing the information - only rephrasing or explaining information in a different way when you need it
- Ask others to emphasise key points when speaking or changes of topic in training
- A copy of notes or slides in advance of any training

**Do you have difficulty following spoken and/or multiple step instructions?**

**Do you struggle to understand information told verbally?**

**Do you find it hard to remember instructions or messages given verbally?**

- Ask others to write down information that is extremely important such as directions, telephone numbers or schedules
- Request information in small, manageable chunks
- Ask for briefing notes / handouts in advance of meetings / training
- Consider if it is helpful for managers/ colleagues/ trainers to regularly check you've understood
- Discuss different training options with your manager. Take advantage of the different types of training offered for example computer-based as well as classroom-based
- Ask for a 1-to-1 meeting after training to recap and check your understanding
- Take notes in meetings and training sessions help you retain the information
- Request a follow up email from supervisor after any meeting with key points highlighted
- Ask colleagues to use literal language when setting tasks for you
- Confirm your understanding of a task with colleagues
- Ask colleagues to give messages and requests in writing as well as verbally



## Section 6 Reading

This section covers issues with reading – including speed and fluency, difficulty with new words and misreading and visual stress.

**Are you a slow reader and struggle to read fluently?**

**Do you have difficulty with new or unfamiliar words?**

**Do you find that you misread or misunderstand words?**

**Do you have difficulty with pronunciation?**

- Consider if you want your colleagues to be aware of any difficulties so you're not asked to read aloud or they know to give you extra time to digest written material
- Request not to have to read aloud in front of others in training
- Ask for written material in advance of meetings or training
- Request additional time to read and digest written material during a meeting or training session
- Ask for instructions / information in other formats e.g. verbally, audio/video, written lists, demonstration
- Ask colleagues to highlight key points in documents (bold) or give summaries of longer documents, or include flow charts, diagrams and pictures
- Allow yourself time to read information and instructions
- Check with someone that you have understood the material correctly
- Discuss the possibility of assistive technology with your line manager?

## Do you have visual sensitivity to text?

### Do words appear to move or blur on the page?

- Anti-glare filter on computer screens help
- Change the background text and colour on your computer
- Coloured paper is available to print on
- A coloured overlay and/or a coloured reading ruler

### Ask that colleagues follow these simple guidelines for documents:

- Offer coloured paper if available
- Use dark coloured text on a light (not white) background
- Avoid red and green text and white text on black
- Use a plain, evenly spaced sans serif font such as Arial and Verdana
- Font size should be 12-14
- Avoid capitals, underline and italics –emphasis something in **bold**
- Make your text left-justified and full width
- Line-spacing of 1.5 is preferable
- Use bullet points and numbering rather than continuous text
- Use short, simple sentences in a direct style. Be concise
- Give instructions clearly. Avoid long sentences of explanation
- Lists of 'do's' and 'don'ts' are more useful than continuous text
- Use active rather than passive voice and avoid double negatives
- Flow charts, pictograms and graphics help
- Avoid abbreviations and jargon
- Animated PowerPoint presentations can be difficult





## Section 7 Writing

This section relates to writing and covers tips on how to minimise the impact of spelling and grammatical issues, challenges expressing things in writing as well as physical difficulty with writing.



**Do you tend to make spelling and grammar errors?**

**Do you have difficulty with hand writing? Do you write slowly?**

**Do people find it hard to read your writing?**

**Do you reverse letters or numbers?**

**Do you find copying hard?**

- Find other ways to record information e.g. voice recorder, typing
- Discuss with your manager how to avoid specific tasks that involve writing - especially in front of a group
- Ask for assistance with any hand-written work such as a proof reader
- Have a dictionary, spell checker or glossary available
- Discuss the possibility of technology with your line manager
- Arrange not to have to write on a board/flip chart in training
- Consider if you want colleagues to be aware of this difficulty to avoid embarrassing situations
- Discuss alternatives to written reports
- Ask for extended deadlines for completion of written work
- Schedule specific time in the working week for written work
- Set interim deadlines for assignments or lengthy reports
- Ask for handouts with gaps for short notes before training sessions
- Ask for a photocopy of a colleague's notes from meetings or training
- Discuss adjustments for tests or assessments?
- Lined paper may help

## Do you have trouble structuring your written work?

### Do you find it difficult to express ideas in writing?

- Templates, forms and examples can help you to understand what is expected in written work
- Share your ideas verbally by recording them
- Discuss the possibility of technology with your line manager
- Use a presentation or video instead of written reports
- Find a colleague help you to get your ideas down in writing
- Break writing tasks into stages e.g. brainstorming, drafting, editing, and proofreading, final draft
- Ask your Manager for feedback when they consider you have done well

## Do you have physical difficulty with writing?

- A pen grip may help
- Try writing at a slight angle (incline) – using a writing slope
- Discuss getting additional help to develop the mechanics of handwriting with your line-manager
- A coach, buddy, or mentor could help you with hand writing work if there is no alternative



## Section 8

### Numbers / Mathematics

This section looks at issues with number and mathematics – not just difficulty with mathematical calculations but also with data and remembering numbers.



## Do you struggle with mathematical and data tasks?

- Use a hand-held calculator or discuss the possibility of accessing a speaking calculator
- Ask for additional time to complete mathematics tasks
- Request a 1-to-1 meeting afterwards to review the material just presented
- Ask for figures in writing before a meeting or training session; that only essential data is presented, and all unnecessary words or figures are removed
- Request a written copy of figures rather than having to note them down
- Ask that people use visual representations such as pie charts, graphs and diagrams
- For calculations, write steps down and talk them through
- Have scrap paper ready for rough working

## Do you struggle with writing, reading or remembering numbers?

- Make use of permitted methods to help to remember codes and passwords
- Set up speed dialling of telephone numbers
- Ask for examples and templates of forms involving numbers

Some people who have difficulties with numbers also struggle with organisation and time management so please refer to that section for additional suggestions.

[Click here to read self-help tips on organisation and time management](#)



## Section 9

### Communication and social interaction

This section presents advice for managing challenges with social interaction and communication including difficulty with conversations such as small talk, turn-taking, body language and social cues. It also looks at managing the group activities and informal social situations.

**Do you find it hard to make conversation and small talk?**

**Do you have difficulty starting and ending a conversation?**

**Are you aware you sometimes choose inappropriate topics of conversation?**

**Do you struggle to change topics or tend to get stuck on a topic?**

- Decide what information you want to share with your manager and colleagues
- An awareness session may help avoid misunderstandings
- Agree “safe” topics of conversation at work to avoid inappropriate conversations
- Think about how you can learn the appropriate way to conduct yourself in a meeting
- Find someone to let you know if you are acting inappropriately
- Have some additional preparation time and support for any work reviews or appraisals or indeed any formal meetings with your manager
- If you are finding things harder than normal please discuss this with your manager

**Do you tend to interpret words literally?**

**Do you find it difficult to understand humour and sarcasm?**

**Do you struggle to work out what others are thinking from body language?**

**Do you find it difficult to make appropriate eye contact?**

**Do you find it hard to pick up on unwritten rules and social cues?**

- Consider if you want your work colleagues to be aware of your difficulties. Particularly about your literal understanding, difficulty with jokes and sarcasm and / or eye contact
- Ask colleagues avoided jargon, turns of phrase or words with double meanings in written work. A glossary of terms to refer to might help
- Find someone to identify and explain the unwritten rules or etiquette of the workplace and/ or to sort out misunderstandings

### Do you struggle in groups / team activities?

### Do you have difficulty making conversation and / or answering questions quickly?

### Do you find it hard to make friendships and / or find yourself alone during breaks?

- Make your manager / colleagues / trainers aware of any worries about social / group situations
- Ask for aims/objectives of meetings and training sessions in advance or at least at the very beginning of the session
- An agenda or lesson plan can make you feel more relaxed
- Request that people recap and summarise things regularly especially at the end of a particular topic
- Ask colleagues to allow you time to process questions and give answers, as well as not rephrasing or repeating
- Request information in bite size chunks and thinking time
- Ask that colleagues avoid using acronyms, metaphors, jargon, complex language or phrases open to misinterpretation
- Request verbal instructions are backed up with written note / email
- Find someone to help you integrate into a team, so you don't get isolated
- Join groups to help build up your social network
- Think of any common interests or interesting topics of conversation which you could use to make friends with colleagues
- Find time alone to process, recover and recharge if you need to
- Attend a quiet part at the start of a team social event, rather than the whole event
- Request that colleagues to respect your decision if you choose not to socialise







## Section 10

### Impulsivity and hyperactivity

This section will help if you find yourself acting impulsively or experience periods of hyperactivity. Guidance covers topics such as a tendency to interpret, rushing into tasks, restlessness and being easily bored or distracted.

**Do you find yourself Interrupting or talking over other people?**

**Do you sometimes blurt out something rude or inappropriate?**

**Are you impatient and struggle waiting for your turn?**

**Do you often give answers before the question has finished?**

**Do you act without thinking about the consequences?**

**Do you struggle to behave appropriately?**

- Write down ideas, suggestion or comments when you think of them rather than blurting them out. Pass these on when it's more appropriate.
- Sit down with your manager or a colleague and discuss / agree what is appropriate workplace behaviour
- Agree with your manager how he/she will deal with inappropriate behaviour E.g. sensitively, in private
- Consider if it would help if colleagues and managers are aware of this difficulty and how to respond. An awareness session may be needed
- Find a colleague who can advise and guide you in appropriate workplace behaviour

**Do you tend to rush tasks?  
Do you sometimes not take the time to fully  
consider the method, process or any instructions?**

- Mentally prepare for work the night before – giving yourself time to think things through and plan ahead if possible
- Create a plan of work including the method or process and then double check this with a colleague or manager
- Break down larger projects into smaller tasks with individual deadlines
- Plan tasks to fit in a specific time slot E.g. top three things to do before lunch
- Set email and calendar alerts for each small task
- Use a specific planner or checklist with timings

**Do you feel perpetually “on the go”, restless or agitated?  
Do you find your mind is racing constantly?  
Are you constantly fidgeting and  
have difficulty sitting still?  
Do you tend to try to do everything at once?  
Are you aware that you talk excessively?  
Are you easily bored, and do you crave excitement?**

- Move around at work
  - » Stand up
  - » Doodle, use a stress ball or fidget toy
  - » Take notes while talking on the phone
  - » Stand up and work
  - » Walking to talk to colleagues instead of emailing or calling
  - » Walking meetings
- Do some physical activity during meetings
- Take a break every hour or so for some physical exercise or movement
- Take a walk or get some fresh air during the day (lunch hour)
- Plan regular vigorous exercise into your week
- Consider making your colleagues and managers aware of this difficulty. They could prompt if needed e.g. suggest you slow down if you're rushing





## Section 11

### Routine, structure and change

This section provides ways to manage a need or preference for routine and structure. You will find tips on managing change, uncertainty and new experiences.

**Do you struggle with activities outside of your normal routine?**

**Do you find it difficult to imagine what could happen if...?**

**Do you find it hard to change the method you are using part way through a task?**

- Create your own work routine (with help if needed) for the regular tasks you need to complete
- Have a clear structured workday E.g. expected output and timings
- Give each separate activity a clear start, middle and end
- Incorporate planning and organisation time at the start and end of every day
- Make a list of priorities for the day- adding to these or re-juggling if needed
- Break down tasks into smaller steps e.g. a checklist - with timings
- A visual planner of work tasks may help.
- Plan your work so you can focus on just a single a task at a time
- Ask for meetings at regular times or at the best time for your routine, where possible

**Do you find it hard to prepare for change and plan for the future?**

**Do you have difficulty coping in new or unfamiliar situations?**

**Do you find it hard to cope with change and / or have a fear of trying new things?**

- Discuss and plan with your manager to limit or mitigate the effects of change whenever possible
  - » Have regular break times
  - » Avoid cancelling or changing meetings unless you really have to
  - » Keep regular activities to the same times and days
  - » Avoid changes of management or teams or work location
- Ask that potential changes or new activities are talked about well in advance so you can prepare your response to them
- Additional support to adapt to new situations or working practices
- Shadowing, training and mentoring for new duties will help
- Think about what information about a new situation would help you feel more comfortable
- Changes or new activities to be introduced gradually
- Full explanations of decisions or changes from managers / colleagues
- Request opportunities to have your questions about changes answered
- Ask for agendas and briefing papers for meetings, or lesson plan or handouts for training







## Section 12

### Movement and co-ordination

This section covers a range of strategies to support any issues you may have with movement and co-ordination including use equipment, personal presentation, clumsiness and spatial awareness.

## Do you struggle with the mechanical elements of writing?

### Do you find it difficult to use a keyboard or mouse?

- Find a different way to do tasks involving writing e.g. typed or given verbally
- Discuss the possibility of technology with your line manager? E.g.
  - » Dictaphone
  - » Voice recognition software
  - » Pen grips
  - » Ergonomic keyboard
  - » Vertical mouse
  - » Changes to setting such as sticky keys

### Do you have difficulty using equipment and machinery?

- Additional training for the physical or practical tasks
- Consider if equipment can be adapted E.g. larger levers, extra grips

### Do you struggle with personal presentation and formal dressing?

- Think about asking someone to offer advice sensitively
- Create an email or calendar alert for you to check your appearance

### Do you class yourself as clumsy? Do you tend to trip or fall and drop things?

- Maximise the space around your chair / desk – keeping it clear
- Keep your workspace clutter free E.g. in-tray, filing system, desk tidy
- Avoid food and drinks at your desk
- Use equipment such as trays or trolleys help you with carrying items
- A guided tour of the workplace when empty may help you with new environments or changes to the environment
- Minimise the distance you have to walk e.g. to your secure storage
- Store most used items closest to you

### Do you struggle with spatial awareness? Do you have a poor sense of direction and / or have difficulty navigating?

- Ask for clear directions and maps for any journeys you need to make for work
- Consider if it would help if someone accompanied you on first visits
- Use navigation software for journeys to other offices / sites
- A map of large buildings with routes marked may be needed
- Check you have not mixed up left and right in instructions and directions





## Section 13

### Sensory sensitivity

This section explores ways to manage sensory sensitivities including taste, smell, visual, texture, sound as well as issues with balance and body awareness.

**Over-sensitivity (Hyper) Under-sensitivity (Hypo) causing stress, emotional distress and even physical symptoms such as headaches or nausea**

### Are you sensitive to taste or smell?

- Discuss meal time arrangements with you line-manager E.g. bring your own food or a private space to eat
- If others are eating nearby you and this is disturbing talk through coping strategies with your Line Manager. This might include taking your own breaks at the same time to avoid this or working from a different location during others' mealtimes if possible.
- Request to work away from kitchen or café areas if possible

### Are you visually sensitive?

- Suitable lighting – getting it changed if necessary
- Anti-glare filter for your computer screen
- Change the colour background or contrast on your computer screen
- Avoid or cover bright colours and patterns if possible
- Cover posters, wall displays or windows if possible
- Use non-white paper if you find it easier

### Are you sensitive to certain material?

- Request an exemption from any corporate clothing, uniform or PPE or find a suitable alternative
- A cover or cushion for your chair

### Are you sensitive to sound?

- Discuss how to avoid noisy environments with your line-manager
- Use noise-cancelling headphones or music to block out noise distraction
- Request regular /additional breaks or access to a quiet space
- Ask for special arrangements to avoid fire alarm tests

### Do you struggle with your balance?

### Do you lack awareness of your body e.g. not able to judge internal or external temperature?

- Maximise the space around your chair / desk by keeping it clear
- Keep your workspace clutter free E.g. in-tray, filing system, desk tidy
- Avoid food and drinks at your desk
- Use lids for hot drinks
- Use equipment such as trays or trolleys to help you with carrying items
- Ask others to remind you about personal space
- Find a way to monitor working temperatures / avoid heat sources. You may technology or colleagues to help







## Section 14

### Confidence, self-esteem and emotional issues

This final section focuses on a range of issues relating to confidence and self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. This will help if you find social situations and groups hard, if you doubt yourself and your ability.

### Do you tend to avoid social and group situations?

- Consider what information you want to share with colleagues. Workplace awareness training may be needed.
- Consider if you want and need support to deal with training, meetings and group activity
- Arrange to enter the room in advance or have someone to meet and walk in with you
- Agree an “opt out” plan when it gets too much
- Discuss adaptations to activities with your line manager
- Could you dial in via phone or video instead?

### Do you have low self-esteem? Are you insecure and sensitive?

#### Do you feel you have underachieved?

#### Do you find yourself doubting your work abilities?

#### Do you have difficulty staying motivated?

- Consider if managers should be made aware of how criticism or negative feedback may affect you
- Support to deal with work reviews E.g. pre-planning meeting, agenda in advance
- Request to have smaller, achievable goals to build your confidence
- Speak to your manager if you would benefit from more reassurance, praise and positive feedback



A close-up, profile view of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly. She is looking towards the left of the frame. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be an office or classroom setting with a desk and a lamp.

## Dealing with workplace situations

## Receiving Feedback

### **Remember feedback can be positive and constructive**

- It is a way to find out if you are on track
- Feedback can give you new and better ways of doing things
- It can produce solutions for problems you are having
- Try to approach a meeting with an open mind and learn from the experience
- Your line-manager just wants to get the best performance from you and their whole team

### **Remember it is about overall team performance as well as your individual performance**

- Line managers have a wider view of work tasks for the team and the whole organisation
- They look at how your work fits in with overall company and department goals
- Sometimes you won't realise how you and your work affect others but they do
- Everyone has both individual and team goals and feedback can help you to assist your team to be more productive

### Informal feedback

- This can come at any time so you may not get chance to prepare for it
- Be calm and listen carefully – try not to prejudge what you think they are going to say
- It may not be easy for you to respond straight away. - If you need it ask for some time to reflect and think about what your line-manager has said before replying
- Is there someone you can talk it through with before you respond

### Formal feedback

- This will usually happen in a meeting which is pre-planned.
- It could be your review or appraisal (see next section) or could be at the end of a piece of work or project
- Hopefully, you will get some information about what will be discussed – if not ask for some

- Consider what you think about your own performance:
  - » What went well?
  - » What didn't go so well?
  - » What improvements can you make?
  - » This last one is really important as it is good to produce your own ideas, suggestions and solutions
- If needed find a colleague (buddy or mentor) to talk it through with
- You may want someone to come to the meeting with you to support you – if so ask your line manager about this
- If you need help to remember what has been discussed and agreed ask for some notes of the meeting as a reminder
- You might want to again think things through afterwards and send in a response when you have had time to think

## Getting the most out of your review or appraisal

### Before the review or appraisal

- Ask for an agenda of the meeting and also information on what will be discussed
- Familiarise yourself with the process and any documents that are used
- Read your previous appraisal notes and any action plans, targets or objectives
- Think about, and if it helps make notes on, how you have met your objectives
- Gather together any documents that can show what you have achieved
- Also think about what hasn't gone so well. What caused issues? What do you need to put it right? E.g. training, support, time. What will you do differently next time?
- You may want some support from a trusted colleague, workplace buddy or mentor for this
- Think about any ideas, suggestions or solutions you can put forward to help you achieve your work goals
- If you think it will help ask if someone can attend with you – the same person who helped you prepare.
- If you would like detailed notes of the meeting it is a good idea to ask in advance



### **During the meeting**

- Approach the meeting with an open mind and a positive attitude – the aim of these meetings are to get everyone to give their best work performance
- If you don't understand what your line-manager is trying to say ask for clarification or indeed ask them to share specific workplace examples
- If you don't agree with what is said, try not to argue and be defensive. Put your views across calmly and professionally
- If you are asked to improve on certain things or given goals and targets ask for these to be as detailed and specific as possible
- If you are not sure what is expected of you - ask
- If you need to, ask for some time to think about what has been said before responding
- Use your notes from your preparation to give your opinions
- Remember to highlight your successes and achievements but also be prepared to discuss what didn't go well

### **After the review or appraisal**

- Review the notes of the meeting and think carefully about what was discussed
- What do you need to respond to? Do you need to supply additional evidence? What suggestions can you make?
- Plan for what you are going to do to address any issues or meet any targets
- Do you need to request another meeting?
- Can you discuss this with a colleague, workplace buddy or mentor?
- If you disagree with the outcome of the review talk to your line manager to try to resolve it
- If you cannot resolve the issue follow the appeal process in a calm and professional manner.



## Self-help questionnaire

This questionnaire is an optional tool you may want to use to help you to prioritise which advice to seek out first. It is not there to diagnose or measure difficulties but to guide you to the most appropriate advice. Your answers are for you to use to navigate the guide and are not for any other purpose.



## Self-help questionnaire

Make a note of the number of questions you answer with a Yes in each set of questions. Where there are two questions in one, please tick yes if the answer is yes to either or both of them. Once you have completed all sets of questions, look at your totals. Where you have a higher number of yes answers indicates the sections you should prioritise, as they are likely to be the most immediately helpful to you. For example, if you ticked 6 yes answers on the Reading section, this indicates this is a significant issue and should be one of the first sections of the guide you read.

Don't forget: the aim of the exercise is not to focus on your difficulties, but to enable you to access information which can help you work more effectively.

## Section 1: Concentration and focus

Yes

Do you find your attention wanders or are you very easily distracted?	
Do you find it hard to go back to a task after a distraction or interruption?	
Do you struggle to stay focused on and complete mundane tasks? Or do you find yourself flitting from one activity to another?	
Do you become absorbed in interesting tasks which can cause you to lose track of time and/or neglect other tasks?	
Do you tend to overlook details which can lead to errors or incomplete work?	
Do you struggle to listen during conversations, training or instructions or sometimes zone out?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 8 for self-help tips on this section.

## Section 2: Organisation and time management

	Yes
Does your work space tend to be disorganised, messy or cluttered? Or do you frequently lose or misplace things?	
Do you have difficulty keeping track of multiple tasks / multi-tasking?	
Do you struggle to plan and prioritise your work?	
Do you forget or miss appointments, meetings or deadlines? Or are you often late?	
Do you struggle to meet deadlines and targets and/or underestimate how long things take?	
Do you put things off and procrastinate then end up behind schedule?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 12 for self-help tips on this section.

### Section 3: Processing and memory

Yes

Do you find it hard to recall recent information, events or verbal instructions?	
Do you seem to take longer to learn things than most people? Or do you find it hard to learn in “normal” way – e.g. through formal classroom training?	
Do you find it hard to see the bigger picture rather than the detail? Or do you find it hard to apply rules to different situations?	
Do you have difficulty creating and following sequences? Or do you have trouble planning steps needed to complete a task?	
Do you find you need extra processing or thinking time? Or do you feel pressured and need extra time to respond to questions?	
Do you struggle with Interruptions / distractions? Or do you find it hard to change or adapt part way through a task?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 16 for self-help tips on this section.

## Section 4: Visual processing

	Yes
Do you read slowly or hesitantly making many small mistakes such as skipping words / lines or reading the same sentence twice?	
Do you make mistakes when copying text such as mixing up letters, omitting letters or writing outside lines or margins?	
Do you have difficulty concentrating on or recalling what you've seen or read?	
Do you have difficulty judging distances, map reading or navigating?	
Do you find that words distort, blur or move when reading – especially on white paper?	
Do you get tired easily or experience discomfort when reading or need to take frequent breaks?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 20 for self-help tips on this section.



## Section 5: Auditory processing

	Yes
Do you struggle to hear speech clearly against a background of noise or hearing poor quality sounds (e.g. mobile phone)?	
Do you find it hard to pick out one voice from others or identify where a sound is coming from?	
Do you have trouble hearing speakers clearly from a distance?	
Do you struggle to listen selectively to one side or the other?	
Do you find it hard to distinguish similar sounds from one another – such as "70" and "17"?	
Do you find it hard to remember instructions or messages given verbally?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 24 for self-help tips on this section.

## Section 6: Reading

	Yes
Are you a slow reader or do you struggle to read fluently?	
Do you have difficulty with new and unfamiliar words?	
Do you find that you misread or misunderstand words?	
Do you have difficulty with pronunciation?	
Do you have visual sensitivity to text?	
Do words appear to move or blur on the page?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 28 for self-help tips on this section.

## Section 7: Writing

	Yes
Do you tend to make spelling and grammar errors?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you write slowly or have physical difficulty with hand writing?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do people find it hard to read your writing?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you reverse letters or numbers?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you find copying hard?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have trouble structuring your written work or expressing ideas in writing?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Total</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

See page 32 for self-help tips on this section.

## Section 8: Numbers / Mathematics

	Yes
Do you struggle with mathematical and data tasks?	
Do you have difficulty with writing, reading and remembering numbers?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 36 for self-help tips on this section.

## Section 9: Communication and social interaction

	Yes
Do you find it hard to make conversation and/or small talk?	
Are you aware you sometimes choose inappropriate topics of conversation or tend to get stuck on one topic?	
Do you tend to interpret words literally, making it hard to understand humour and sarcasm?	
Do you struggle with body language and eye contact?	
Do you struggle in groups / team activities?	
Do you find it hard to make friendships and/or find yourself alone during breaks?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 38 for self-help tips on this section.

## Section 10: Impulsivity and hyperactivity

Yes

Do you find yourself interrupting, talking over other people or blurting out something inappropriate?	
Are you impatient and/or struggle waiting for your turn?	
Do you act without thinking about the consequences? Or do you find yourself behaving inappropriately or taking unnecessary risks?	
Do you tend to rush tasks or try to do everything at once or don't take the time to fully consider the method or any instructions?	
Do you feel perpetually "on the go," restless or agitated?	
Or do you find your mind is racing constantly?	
Are you constantly fidgeting and have difficulty sitting still or tend to talk excessively?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 42 for self-help tips on this section.

## Section 11: Routine, structure and change

	Yes
Do you struggle with activities outside of your normal routine?	
Do you find it difficult to imagine what could happen if...?	
Do you find it hard to change the method you are using part way through a task?	
Do you find it hard to prepare for change and plan for the future?	
Do you have difficulty coping in new or unfamiliar situations?	
Do you find it hard to cope with change and have a fear of trying new things?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 46 for self-help tips on this section.

## Section 12: Movement and co-ordination

	Yes
Do you struggle with the mechanical elements of writing?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you find it difficult to use a keyboard mouse or other equipment and machinery?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you class yourself as clumsy? Or do you tend to trip or fall and drop things?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you struggle with spatial awareness?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a poor sense of direction and/or have difficulty navigating?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you struggle with your personal presentation and formal dressing?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Total</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

See page 50 for self-help tips on this section.



## Section 13: Sensory sensitivity

	Yes
Are you sensitive to taste or smell?	
Are you visually sensitive?	
Are you sensitive to certain material?	
Are you sensitive to sound?	
Do you struggle with your balance?	
Do you lack awareness of your body e.g. not able to judge temperature?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 54 for self-help tips on this section.

**Section 14: Confidence, self-esteem, emotional issues**

	Yes
Do you tend to avoid social and group situations?	
Do you have low self-esteem?	
Are you insecure and sensitive to comments?	
Do you feel you have under-achieved?	
Do you find yourself doubting your work abilities?	
Do you have difficulty staying motivated?	
<b>Total</b>	

See page 58 for self-help tips on this section.





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