



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

“New Horizons for the Blue word”

2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996



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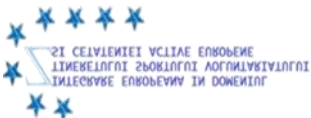
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NAMOI (Russian Federation)



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Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Content:

<u>“New Horizons for the Blue word”2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Employer's guide</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Chapter I. Review of the literature on current theoretical evidence-based approaches.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Chapter II Current gaps in the employment process of adults with autism spectrum disorders.....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u> Result SURVEY</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Chapter III.Methods and techniques of work that the employer must use in working with people with autism.</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>SC PSIHOFORWORLD (E10192553, RO) Suitable jobs for people with autism.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u> STANDO LTD (E10168250, CY) Difficulties and Problems Encountered by People with Autism at Work</u>	<u>29</u>
<u> International Institute of Applied Psychology and Human Sciences associazione culturale (E10061723,IT) MULTIDISCIPLINARY TAKING INTO CHARGE IN PEOPLE WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM</u>	<u>37</u>
<u> Namoi (E10191817, RU) COMMUNICATION OF THE EMPLOYER WITH PEOPLE WITH AUTISM</u>	<u>50</u>



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

<u>Cercle Augustin d'Hippone (E10159047, FR) Employer communication with families or legal representatives of adults with autism</u>	<u>95</u>
<u>INTEGRARE EUROPEANA IN DOMENIUL TINERETULUI, SPORTULUI, VOLUNTARIATULUI SI CETATENIEI ACTIVE EUROPENE (E10163149, RO) Creating a special work environment for people with autism</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>Chapter IV. Short Film with Demonstration Activities for Adults with Asperger Syndrome ...</u>	<u>105</u>
<u>STANDO LTD (Cyprus)</u>	<u>105</u>
<u>NAMOI (Russian Federation)</u>	<u>105</u>
<u>INTEGRARE EUROPEANA IN DOMENIUL TINERETULUI, SPORTULUI, VOLUNTARIATULUI SI CETATENIEI ACTIVE EUROPENE (Romania)</u>	<u>106</u>
<u>CERCLE AUGUSTIN D'HIPPONE (France)</u>	<u>106</u>
<u>SC PSIHOFORWORLD (Romania)</u>	<u>106</u>
<u>INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMAN SCIENCES ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE (Italy)</u>	<u>106</u>



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

“New Horizons for the Blue word”

2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

The project is in line with the horizontal priorities of adult education: improving and expanding the offer of high-quality learning opportunities for adults by providing flexible training offers tailored to their training needs; social inclusion; and the sector priority supporting opportunities for all for the acquisition and development of key skills, including basic skills.

The project proposes the use of training tools accessible online and adapted to the needs of this specific audience as well as a support tool for business leaders in order to promote the hiring of adults with autism. The selected themes are very well treated. The project benefits from three additional points under the national priority themes.

The project is likely to generate results that may be useful for other areas of education, training and youth, in addition to the area for which the main impacts are expected.

The results generated will be innovative for the whole of its education sector, as well as in the geographical context in which it will be implemented. In addition, it builds on previous projects, and demonstrates significant added value compared to the results of previous projects.

The innovation of this project is on several levels. After research by the consortium, it turns out that there is no existing project dealing with the professional integration of the adult autistic public via new technologies; it is innovative by providing an education method for adults with autism but also



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

providing a tool dedicated to business leaders; the education methods offered via the online platform are innovative and meet the expectations of the program (use of formal and non-formal education, adapted methods, accessibility). The proposed innovation is proportional to the scale of the project and the experience of the participating organizations, as well as the specific needs of the target audience.

The main objective of the project is to develop a training program with the help of new technologies adapted for adults with autism, which respects their pace learning and highlights their skills, in order to promote their social and professional integration. It takes the form of an innovation project led by a consortium of six European partners.

The outputs of the project are:

- IO1 E-learning platform-"I have autism - I can integrate"
- IO2 Virtual Assistant
- IO3 Employer's guide



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

IO3 Employer's guide

The employer guide includes information for employers and other stakeholders and facilitates the multiplier effect of the project. Practical tips and information on how to use the content of the guide are provided by organizing information sessions and distributing informative materials. Following the design of the guide, a review is carried out at the consortium level by a group of consultants.

After obtaining the feedback, the necessary adjustments and corrections are made. In general, variables that contribute to quality practices with impact on the process of social and professional integration of adults with autism are included.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Chapter I

Review of the literature on current theoretical evidence-based approaches.

What is autism?

Why would an employer be interested in hiring someone with autism?

Difficulties and problems faced by people with autism in employment. Behavior at work.

Inclusion of people with autism in the labor market

Legislative framework in each partner country of the project on the integration of people with disabilities into the labor market

Examples of “good practice” from other countries on the integration of people with autism into the labor market

What are the jobs where people with autism are employed?

LINK: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1vJD10qC2fb-kGFRwU2-aTISPODENV0MiQ-BBdvDBYEU/edit#gid=695435396>



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Chapter II

Current gaps in the employment process of adults with autism spectrum disorders.

Survey focused on a focus group in each partner country.

This survey was attended by : families / representatives of recruitment and distribution companies / representatives of local authorities and organizations (50 respondents for each partner country); the results obtained will be published in the second part of the guide;

Link SURVEY:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeXboCJ7vwZ40eB972Moigwp1RgaznaJu0671A-n7zFoGRtzQ/viewform>



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Result SURVEY

New Horizons for the BLUE World 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

IO3 : Employer’s Guide

Report of Survey Analysis:

**Current gaps in the employment process of adults with autism
spectrum disorders.**



Number of responses per country

Cyprus: 50

Italy: 66

France: 55

Romania (SC PSIHOFORWORLD): 56

Romania (INTEGRARE EUROPEANA IN DOMENIUL TINERETULUI,
SPORTULUI, VOLUNTARIATULUI SI CETATENIEI ACTIVE EUROPENE): 55

Russia: 52

Total: 334

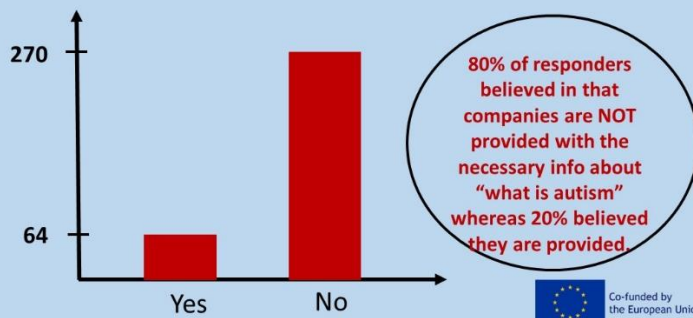




Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

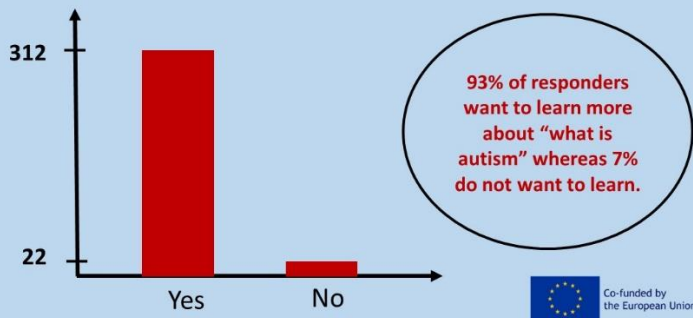
Theme1: What is Autism?

1-Do you think companies are provided with the necessary information about "what is autism" ?



Theme1: What is Autism?

2-Do you want to learn more information about "what is autism" ?

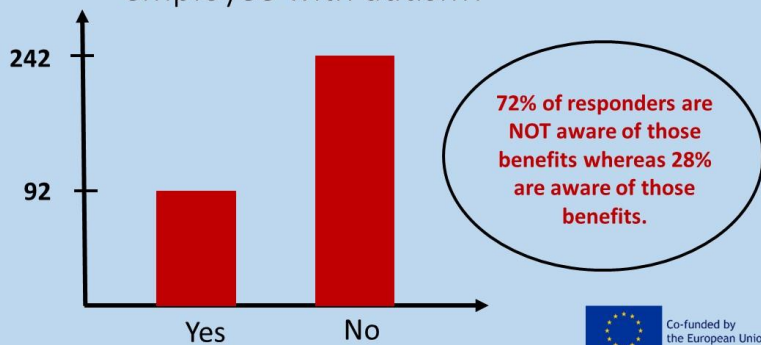




Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

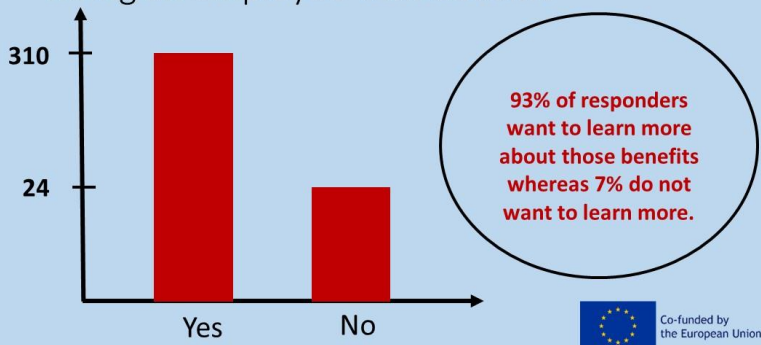
Theme2: Benefits of employing people with autism?

1- Are you aware of potential benefits of hiring an employee with autism?



Theme2: Benefits of employing people with autism?

2- Do you want to learn more about potential benefits of hiring an employee with autism?

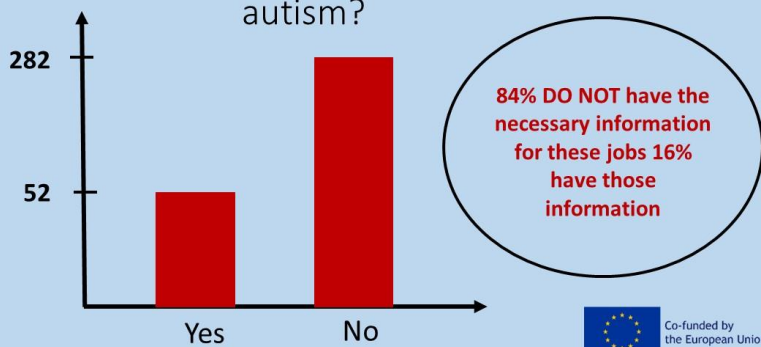




Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

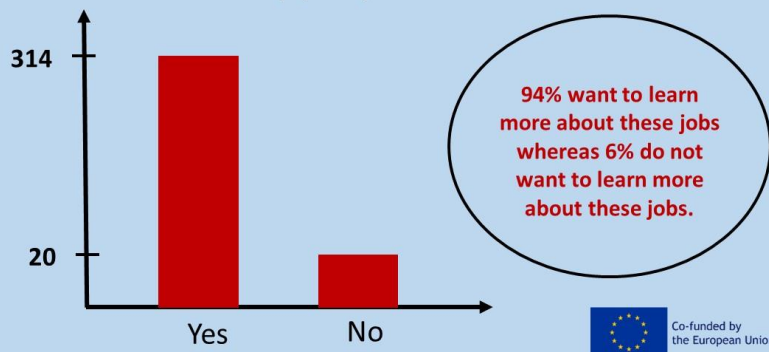
Theme3: Specific jobs for people with autism

1- Do you have the necessary information about the specific jobs that can be best handled by people with autism?



Theme3: Specific jobs for people with autism

2-Do you want to learn more about specific jobs that can be best handled by people with autism?

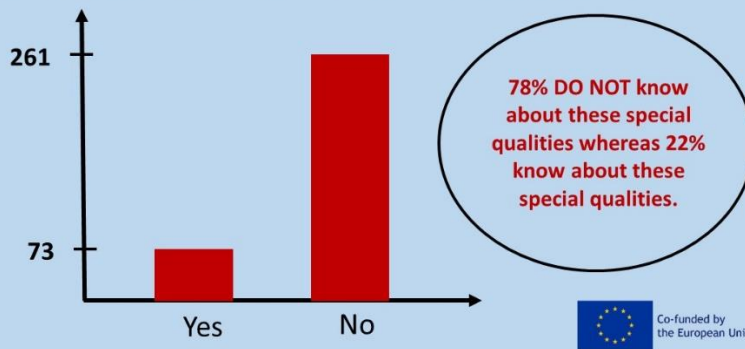




Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

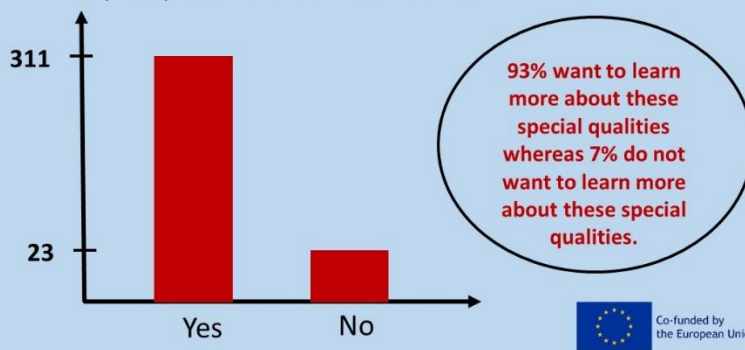
Theme4: Qualities of people with autism

1-Do you know what special qualities people with autism have that can benefit them in the workplace?



Theme4: Qualities of people with autism

2-Do you want to learn more about the special qualities people with autism have?





Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

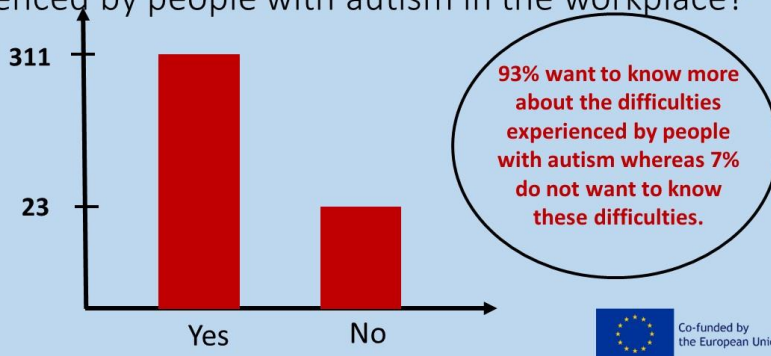
Theme5: Difficulties experienced by people with autism

1-Do you know the difficulties experienced by people with autism in the workplace?



Theme5: Difficulties experienced by people with autism

2- Do you want to learn more about the difficulties experienced by people with autism in the workplace?

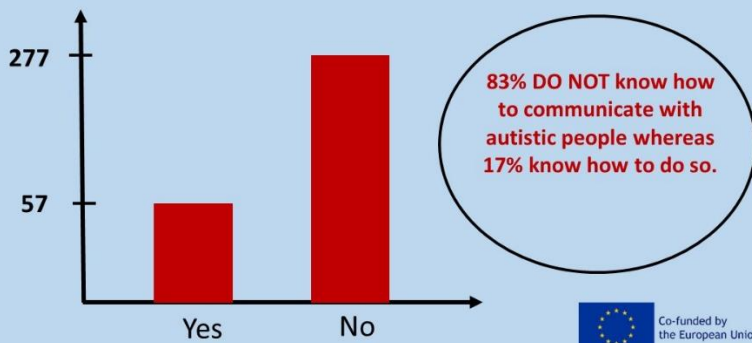




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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

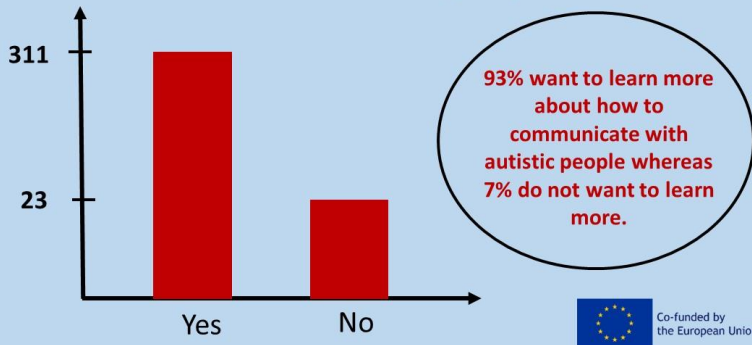
Theme6: Communication

1-Do you know how to communicate with autistic people?



Theme6: Communication

2- Do you want to learn more about on how to communicate with autistic people??

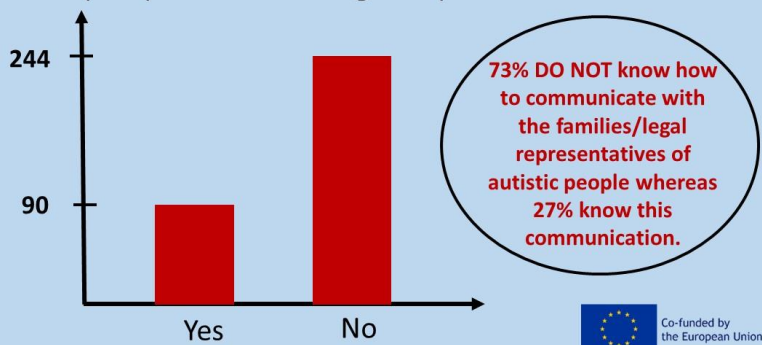




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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

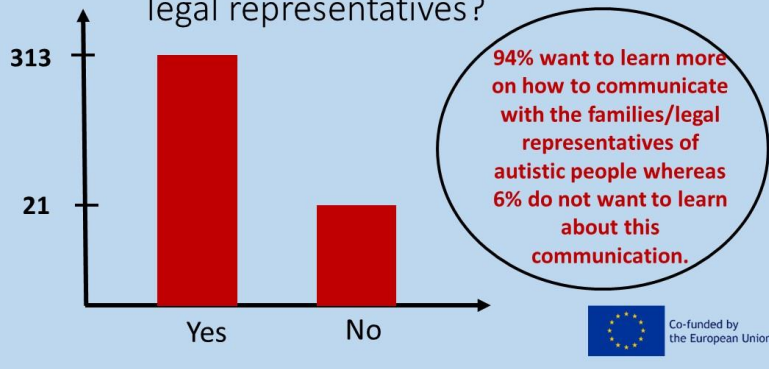
Theme6: Communication

3- Do you know how to communicate with the families of autistic people or their legal representatives?



Theme6: Communication

4- Do you want to learn more about on how to communicate with the families of autistic people or their legal representatives?

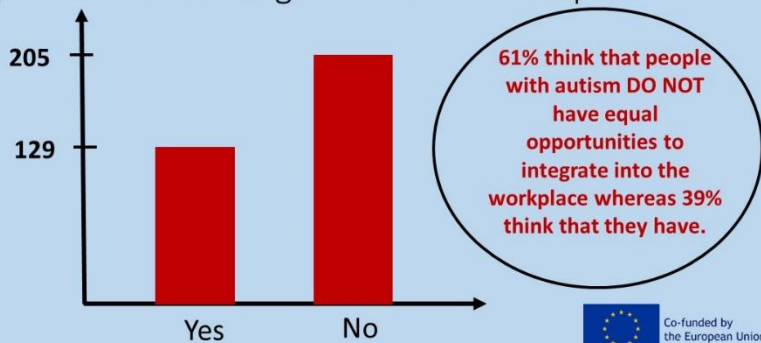




Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

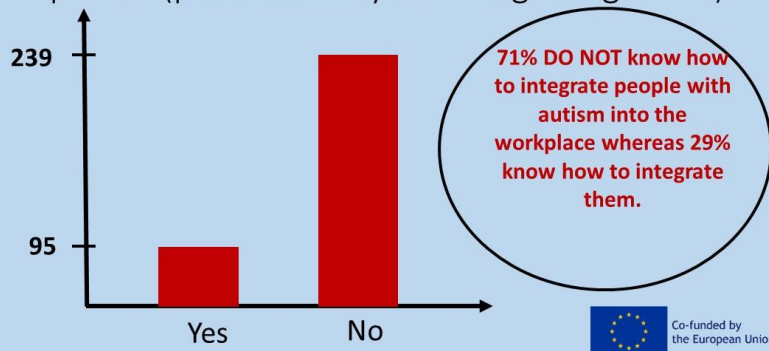
Theme7: Integrating people with autism into workplace

1- Do you think that people with autism have equal opportunities to integrate into the workplace?



Theme7: Integrating people with autism into workplace

2-Do you know how to integrate people with autism into the workplace? (potential ways of integrating them)

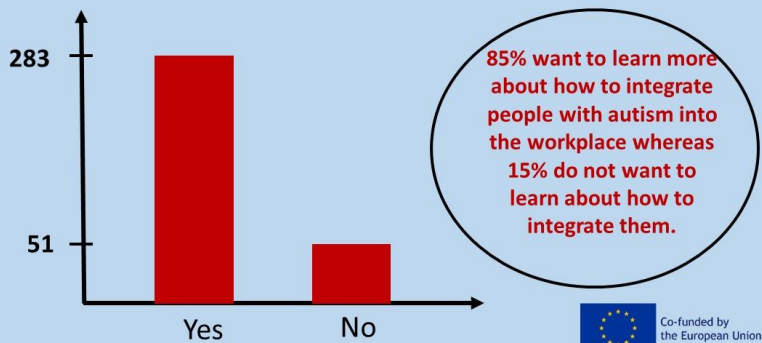




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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Theme7: Integrating people with autism into workplace

3- Do you want to learn more about strategies that can help societies to integrate people with autism into the workplace?





Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Chapter III

Methods and techniques of work that the employer must use in working with people with autism.

Based on the literature and the statistical situation presented above, the third part of the guide is designed. The methods and techniques of work that the employer must use in working with people with autism are developed and presented in order to obtain the proposed results, taking into account their professional integration and also the benefit of the company. Employers learn about strategies for addressing people with autism spectrum disorders, how to assign tasks for successful professional integration.

SC PSIHOFORWORLD (E10192553, RO)

Suitable jobs for people with autism

People with autism have particular talents that make them suitable for a variety of occupations. Teens and adults with autism can find productive jobs with the right help.

Finding autism-friendly jobs can be challenging if you have autism or support someone who does. This is especially true if you don't know where to start or are unsure of what career path will best suit your or your loved one's individual talents and skills.

An individual's capacity to perform certain tasks is significantly impacted by the severity of their autism. Some individuals with Level 1 ASD display symptoms that go unnoticed by those around them.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

They are capable of finishing challenging tasks with little assistance or by employing their own coping mechanisms.

Autism symptoms that are more severe have a higher impact on the types of professions that can be successfully done. However, there are numerous programs looking for persons with ASD who may contribute special skills to the workplace, and there are a variety of occupations accessible.



<https://images.app.goo.gl/ne4h5q8LNbvarqHT6>

These difficulties could give the impression that obtaining a fulfilling work is impossible. But this couldn't be further from the truth; being autistic doesn't prevent someone from succeeding in their career.

According to 2021 research, characteristics often associated with autism and translate well into the work environment may include:

- creative and innovative thinking
- attention to detail
- logical and systematic thought processes
- enhanced pattern recognition
- superior memory
- sustained and intense focus



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

- ability to work independently
 - enhanced productivity and dedication
 - ability to find practical and effective solutions
 - honesty and trustworthiness
 - reduced concern with social pressure
 - a strong sense of social justice and affective empathy
 - intense interests in specific things
 - enjoyment of tasks non-autistic people might find challenging
1. Careers in IT, cybersecurity, data analysis, and coding



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Teenagers and adults with autism frequently show a great interest in computer science. For tech-savvy individuals with improved attention to detail and a passion for working with computers, this career route may be suitable. An individual with autism may find appeal in the highly specialized, "behind the scenes" nature of many IT employment. Pay attention to how the employer explains the employment and work environment to determine the relevant roles. People with ASD can be excellent



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

network engineers, web developers, web designers, software engineers, and database administrators, but it's best to steer clear of jobs that are "client-facing" or take place in "agile environments."

2. An auto mechanic



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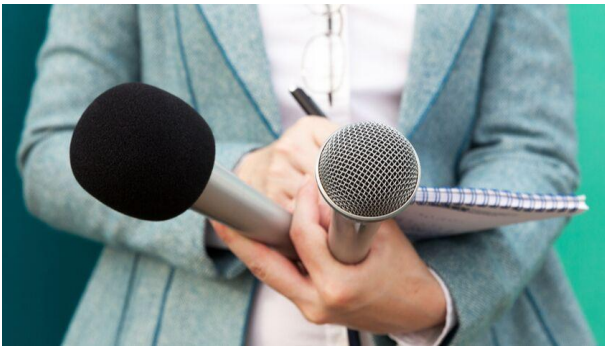
Love automobiles? Excellent with your hands? Why not consider working as an automotive technician? Vehicles get routine maintenance and repairs by automotive specialists. They might own their own business, work at a vehicle dealership, or operate an auto repair shop. While some customer interaction may be required, the majority of the work is done alone on the automobile or truck. For autistic persons who appreciate intricate or challenging undertakings and like to understand how things function, working on cars might be a rewarding career choice.

Of course, if you or the autistic person you help is interested in it, any career choice could be a suitable fit. Still, special needs may necessitate workplace adjustments depending on the profession.

3. Journalism



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996



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A gratifying job option for autistic people who enjoy writing is journalism or a similar industry. This line of employment allows for creativity while providing structure, regularity, and remote work options.

4. Accounting



<https://images.app.goo.gl/WidA3vig5H3sqSnW9>



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Jobs like forensic accounting or bookkeeping may be a good fit for autistic people who enjoy math and crunching numbers since they appeal to their interests and abilities. A career that focuses on numbers may be a fantastic option if your child excels in arithmetic. Similar to research, there are other similar occupations available at various skill and educational levels. Careers like forensic accounting, CPA, tax preparation specialist, bookkeeper, billing specialist, and accounts payable clerk can be quite successful for people with autism.

5. Animal care, pet grooming, and the study of animals



<https://images.app.goo.gl/qNHrr6aA3n937bCt6>

Some autistic individuals prefer interacting with animals to people. Consequently, working with dogs, cats, or horses as a job can be gratifying. Additionally, it may have therapeutic advantages. A profession as a veterinary technician, groomer, obedience trainer, dog walker, or pet sitter is a possibility for those who appreciate working with animals. People who feel comfortable around huge animals may choose to seek careers as zookeepers, livestock handlers, or equine trainers. Your child might even become a veterinarian if they are highly clever and high functioning.

6. Manufacturing



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996



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Aspects of the manufacturing sector like assembly, shipping and receiving, and robotics may be appealing to some autistic persons. Particularly those who enjoy predictability and consistency. Many autistic individuals work better in an organized setting. These people might succeed in manufacturing employment, a profession that depends on repeatable, standardized procedures. Your child might be interested in a profession as a machinist, baker, fabricator, machine operator, woodworker, assembler, or welder if they appreciate occupations that require component assembly.



7. Photography, computer-generated effects, and filmmaking

<https://images.app.goo.gl/9EUWW9tidy1eLidU7>

In the sphere of the visual arts, an individual with ASD may benefit from their distinctive perspectives. Additionally, this professional path provides for creative expression that is difficult to find in other jobs.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

8. Science and technology-related research



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Careers in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) industries might be a good fit for autistic people since they often have strong logical reasoning and excellent pattern identification skills. Autism can be used as a strength to help people pursue careers in research. Their propensity for rationality and objectivity is advantageous in many of these roles because it allows them to deliver the facts they discover without prejudice. Autism-friendly careers are available in a variety of industries and call for varying degrees of education. A reference librarian, title abstractor, fact-checker, genealogist, or research assistant are all potential careers.

9. Cashier



<https://images.app.goo.gl/Nv8njVxAJ39h6z2u8>



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

A cashier at a retail store or a grocery store is one of the most popular jobs for people on the autism spectrum. Though it involves interaction with customers, the job also follows a routine, and varies very little. The happiest cashiers are those who find jobs at their favorite places.

10. Caterer



<https://images.app.goo.gl/XGQ6cAR5Wtr8TeKu8>

Numerous individuals on the autism spectrum like cooking. People with ASD are particularly fond of baking since it necessitates careful adherence to a recipe. The position of caterer is an excellent choice for someone who wants to make a profession out of this hobby. Wedding receptions, baby showers, business conferences, and other special occasions require caterers to collaborate with clients to conceive and create a menu.

If working with people makes you uncomfortable but catering intrigues you, think about looking for jobs at a bakery or restaurant.

Nevertheless, people with autism may run into difficulties at work because of differences in social interaction skills, sensory processing impairments, and learning preferences. Additionally, issues with processing speed, receptive language, and expressive language may provide difficulty at work.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Managing these difficulties is doable with the right assistance. Job coaches, tailored training plans, and ensuring the employer has a thorough understanding of autism are a few examples of these services.

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3. <https://www.elemy.com/studio/autism-resources/jobs-and-careers>

STANDO LTD (E10168250, CY)

Difficulties and Problems Encountered by People with Autism at Work

According to global data, 85% of adults with ASD experience unemployment (Griffiths et al., 2020). This outstanding rate is crucial. However, things are more complicated than it seems. Specifically, the problems encountered by adults with autism do not end once the employment process is over. For adults with ASD, new challenges start when they enter the workplace.

Indeed, adults with ASD possess specific qualities that make them highly productive employees.

For example, adults with ASD are committed to quality and consistency and put emphasis on details. Moreover, adults with ASD are able to think creatively and realize the things that most people cannot realize easily (Kaufman, 2019). Even though they have all these qualities, it is still common for adults with ASD to face challenges at work. Throughout this section, challenges experienced by adults with ASD at work will be explained in detail. At the end of this section, employers will also be provided with



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

some suggestions on how to create an autism-friendly working environment for their employees. Most of the challenges experienced by adults with ASD at work gather under the topic of “soft skills”. It carries great importance for employers to understand these soft skills for a variety of reasons. First, employers will be able to empathize with the challenges adults with ASD encounter in the workplace.

Second, employers will have a chance to adjust their work environment according to the needs of adults with ASD.

Third, the company will receive benefits in terms of quality and productivity when the environment is arranged to minimize the challenges for adults with ASD.

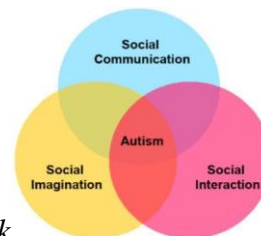
Last but not least, the perception regarding autism will change through ongoing education about autism. Nowadays, some employers perceive autism as an asset, not a deficiency. That is because those employers have already received education about autism. An increasing number of employers will follow the same path if the challenges are recognized and addressed by more employers.

As can be seen in Figure 1, work-related soft skills involve 3 main components; social interaction, social communication, and social imagination. Besides these 3 soft skills, time management skills and sensory differences will also be discussed as other important traits shared by adults with autism. All of these skills/traits are directly linked to the work environment. For this reason, they should be addressed by employers in the most efficient manner.

Figure 1 Soft Skills Difficulties Experienced by Adults with Autism at Work



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996



Soft Skills Difficulties Experienced by Adults with Autism at Work

Social Interaction

Social interactions are a vital part of everyday life. It is a broad topic and includes skills such as the ability to read social cues, manage feelings, and understand the emotions of others. Although social interaction might be an easy process for individuals without autism, it stands as a difficult process for individuals with autism. For example, adults with ASD experience difficulties in reading social cues. This might lead them to be seen as inappropriate during conversations with their colleagues. Specifically, adults with ASD have problems expressing and understanding the facial expressions of others which act as a crucial non-verbal element in social interactions (Trevisan et al., 2018). Eye contact is also another important non-verbal social cue that adults with ASD struggle to engage in. Unfortunately, all these difficulties in the area of non-verbal communication stand as a difficult obstacle for adults with autism, affecting multiple areas in their lives. For example, nonverbal communication (including facial expressions & eye contact) does not only guide interactions with colleagues but also conveys confidence in the workplace which increases job performance accordingly (Smith, 2013). Given all these, a lack of nonverbal communication skills results both in social interaction problems and also reduced performance for employees with autism.

Moreover, adults with ASD might experience difficulties in understanding and expressing their own emotions and the emotions of others. Having these difficulties might yield adults with autism to be



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

perceived negatively by other employees. For example, when an employer speaks about a serious issue for the company, adults with ASD might smile. This should never be understood as an intentional act.

Adults with ASD might do this as a result of difficulties in understanding and reflecting on emotions.

Social Communication

Social communication can be analyzed under two categories, namely receptive and expressive communication. Receptive communication involves difficulties in understanding verbal and nonverbal information whereas expressive communication involves difficulties in conveying verbal and nonverbal information. It has been long studied that both receptive and expressive communication are impaired in adults with ASD (Mody & Belliveau, 2013).

In terms of receptive communication, adults with ASD might be perceived as not listening to what their employer and employees are saying, thus might be seen as disinterested and disrespectful. In addition to this, adults with ASD might struggle to follow directions. This occurs because of the overloading demands of listening, processing, and organizing what is being said to them simultaneously (Marco et al., 2011). Therefore, employers should see the outside of the box and avoid perceiving this as a “refuse to follow/obey”. It is also important to note that adults with ASD might take things literally during their communication at work. This occurs due to a lack of understanding of abstract concepts. It is possible that an employee with ASD can misunderstand friendly jokes or sarcasm.

In terms of expressive communication, adults with ASD experience difficulties in taking turns in



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

conversations. For this reason, it is possible to think that they might speak excessively. This is due to a lack of understanding in terms of who takes the turn in speeches. Moreover, adults with ASD struggle in the area of “word finding”. For this reason, it is common to hear “thing” or “that” frequently from them for the words they cannot access easily.

Social Imagination

Our capacity for social imagination enables us to predict the behavior of others, make sense of abstract concepts and imagine possibilities that are not directly related to current circumstances. Adults with ASD experience difficulties in social imagination. In other words, they face challenges in grasping the “theory of mind” which entails inferring others’ state of mind (i.e., what others feel, think, and experience). This creates a situation for them in which everyone around them seems as unpredictable.

This unpredictability, in turn, yields feelings of extreme anxiety and avoidance respectively (Normansell-Mossa et al., 2021). Given all the uncertainties occurring in the workplace, an adult with autism might be perceived as a disagreeable person who does not respond positively to change. It should be noted that this occurs due to a lack of social imagination, not because of either being disagreeable or disliking change.

Time Management Skills

Time management is one of the important factors which directly affect job performance and productivity. It is one of the executive functioning skills that is linked with working memory. It has been supported by various studies that working memory is impaired in adults with ASD (Hughes et al., 1994; O’Hearn et al., 2008). For this reason, managing time at work might become a challenge for adults with ASD. Based on this, adults with autism need accommodation in the workplace which will help them to



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

manage their time efficiently. With the support of employers and employees, adults with ASD can manage their time effectively in the workplace.

Sensory Differences

Bright lights and noises can already be disturbing for everyone. For individuals with ASD, sensory perceptions can be frightening and even painful. They can be hypo-sensitive (i.e., under-reactive) and hyper-sensitive (over-reactive) to any of the senses. It is possible that an adult with autism might respond inappropriately when they experience sensory input (Laurie, 2014). Employers should take the possibility of these sensory experiences into consideration and arrange the working environment accordingly. For example, some might be hypo-sensitive to the noise whereas others might be hyper-sensitive to the same stimuli. For hypo-sensitive ones, the employer should arrange an environment in which the employer can hear the information in the most efficient manner. For hyper-sensitive ones, noise should be minimized as much as possible.

What Employers Can Do?

1. Understand what autism is and what are the difficulties experienced by adults with autism at Work As an employer, you need to understand what autism is and how it affects the individual in the first place. Without having the necessary knowledge about the experiences of adults with autism, you cannot empathize with them. You need to learn more about adults with autism in order to take the necessary steps to improve their working conditions.

2. Train your employees about autism

The working environment involves many employees with different levels of knowledge about autism. As an employer, start from the beginning and educate your employees about autism. It is a holistic movement and everybody should take steps to improve the working condition. Moreover, most



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

of the social interaction occurs between employees. Your employees should learn about the difficulties experienced by adults with autism and how to approach/respond to them accordingly.

3. Provide sensitive but honest feedback

As stated, it is difficult for adults with autism to pick up social cues. Thus, your feedback should be based on honest grounds. It is important to highlight that being honest does not mean being destructive (e.g., insensitive). While trying to be honest, you should also be constructive at the same time (e.g., sensitive). For instance, you can clearly explain why the task is wrong and how it can be corrected. While doing all these, it is important to remember that an employee with autism might have low self-esteem. For this reason, you can try to provide positive feedback whenever it is possible.

4. Review work regularly

It is always a good idea to make frequent reviews for the assigned tasks. This is valid even for employees without autism. Arranging regular one-to-one review meetings will prevent you from ending up with tremendous irremediable mistakes. With an employee with autism, try to keep these meetings more frequent but less long. Longer sessions might decrease effectiveness since paying attention for a long-time might become a challenge for an employee with autism.

5. Make sure instructions are concise and specific

While providing instructions, you should avoid using vague and confusing language. Informal and ambiguous instructions will only create unpredictability and anxiety. Your instructions should specify how to carry out each task from beginning to end. For example, instead of saying, “Let’s all have a meeting next week”, say “Schedule a meeting next week on Monday at 2 p.m. with Julia, Peter, George, and you”.

6. Encourage time management



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

As an employer, you can help your employee with autism to manage their time effectively. For example, large assignments can be divided into small tasks. Instead of asking for large assignments at once, you can proceed step by step by asking for small tasks. In addition to this, you can supply either electronic or handled organizers to your employee with autism. Once you supply an organizer, try to train them on how to use it in the most efficient manner since it might become a complicated task for them.

You can also supply them wall calendar and train them to use specific colors for the calendar depending on the urgency of the tasks. For example, they can use red color for the most urgent tasks, blue color for the tasks that are upcoming and green color for the tasks that can be pending. Throughout the frequent reviews, ask them about the deadlines and encourage them to work on the most urgent tasks. To avoid confusion regarding the deadlines, introduce a new task only when the previous one has finished.

7. Provide reasonable accommodations

As stated, an employee with autism might be hypersensitive in their senses. For this reason, it is necessary to supply noise-canceling headphones to the employees. In addition to this, an employee with autism should be provided an opportunity to turn off or dim overhead lights. Eye contact can trigger anxiety so try to avoid eye contact whenever you feel that it is discomforting them. Since touching can be perceived as an invasion of personal space, try to keep touching as minimum as possible. Instead of touching, verbal terms can be used to display appraisal (United Disabilities Services, 2019).

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Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
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Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

**International Institute of Applied Psychology and Human
Sciences associazione culturale (E10061723,IT)**
**MULTIDISCIPLINARY TAKING INTO CHARGE IN PEOPLE WITH
AUTISTIC SPECTRUM
DISORDER**

Introduction

Neurodevelopmental Disorders are clinical conditions that occur in the early stages of development and are characterized by developmental deficits that cause impairment of personal, social, educational or occupational functioning. The range of deficits varies from very specific learning limitations to global impairment of social skills and intelligence (Geraci, 2018). Among these is the Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Diagnostic framework

This disorder manifests as a number of symptoms that must be present in early childhood (but may not become fully manifest until social needs exceed the limit of ability) that limit and impair functioning in social, occupational, or other important areas. and they are not best explained by intellectual disability or global developmental delay even though they may be associated. Symptoms are: *Persistent deficit in social communication and social interaction in different contexts* , unexplainable through generalized developmental delay and manifested by all three of the following:



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

- Deficit in socio-emotional reciprocity ranging from an abnormal and unsuccessful social approach in normal conversation (back and forth) through a reduced sharing of interests, emotions, mental perception and reaction to a total lack of initiative in social interaction.
- Deficits in non-verbal communication behaviors used for social interaction, from poor integration of verbal and non-verbal communication, through abnormalities in eye contact and body language, or deficits in the understanding and use of non-verbal communication, to to the total lack of facial expressiveness and gestures.
- Deficits in creating and maintaining relationships appropriate to the developmental level (not including those with parents and caregivers), ranging from difficulties in adapting behavior to different social contexts through difficulties in sharing imaginative play and making friends up to apparent lack of interest in people.

Restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviors, interests or activities as manifested by at least two of the following points:

- Speech, movements or use of stereotyped or repetitive objects, such as simple motor stereotypies, echolalia, repetitive use of objects, or idiosyncratic phrases.
- Excessive fidelity to routines, reused verbal or non-verbal behaviors or excessive reluctance to change: motor rituals, insistence on going the same way or eating the same food, incessant questions or extreme stress following small changes.
- Highly restricted and fixed interests, abnormal in intensity or topics: strong attachment or interest in unusual objects, overly persistent or circumstantial interests.

Hyper or Hypo-reactivity to sensory stimuli or unusual interests towards sensory aspects of the



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

environment , apparent indifference to heat / cold / pain, adverse response to specific sounds or textures, excessive smelling or touching objects, attraction to lights or spinning objects (Mixture, 2006).

The disorder has three levels of severity:

Level 3: Requires very significant support

- Social communication: severe deficits in social communication, verbal and non-verbal, cause severe difficulty in functioning; very limited initiative in social interaction and minimal response to the initiative of others.
- Restricted interests and repetitive behaviors: inflexibility of behavior, extreme difficulty in dealing with change. Great discomfort / difficulty in changing the object of attention or action.

Level 2: Requires significant support

- Social communication: Marked deficits in social communication, verbal and non-verbal, social impediment is evident even when support is present; limited initiative in social interaction and reduced or abnormal response to the initiative of others
- Restricted interests and repetitive behaviors: inflexibility of behavior, difficulty in coping with change. Discomfort / difficulty in changing the object of attention or action.

Level 1: Requires Support

- Social Communication: Without support, deficits in social communication cause impediments that can be noticed. The subject has difficulty initiating social interactions and shows clear examples of atypical or unsuccessful response to the initiatives of others. It may appear that he has a reduced interest in social interaction.
- Restricted interests and repetitive behaviors: rituals and repetitive behaviors cause significant interference in one or more contexts. Difficulty switching from one activity to another.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

The diagnosis of Disorders of the Autism Spectrum according to DSM-5 includes under this diagnostic label the Autistic Disorder (autism), Asperger's Syndrome, Disintegrative Disorder of Childhood and Pervasive Developmental Disorders not otherwise specified (Surian, 2005).

Diagnostic path

The diagnostic path includes ***taking charge of child by a multidisciplinary team*** , made up of Child Neuropsychiatrist, Psychologist and Speech therapist. The team will be adequately prepared for a comprehensive clinical evaluation of the child. The diagnostic process must, in fact, specify whether the autism spectrum disorder is accompanied by intellectual disability, language disorder, or is associated with other disorders. It will be important to proceed as follows:

- *collection of anamnestic information family history and personal anamnesis* with events related to pregnancy, childbirth and the neonatal period; reconstruction of the phases of psychomotor and linguistic development; remote pathological history and aspects relating to the current disorder.
- *meetings with parents* in which information on the child's behavior is collected and the early stages of life and growth of the child are reconstructed . This is how the period of acquisition of the stages of psychomotor, linguistic and social development is defined.
- *meetings with the child* aimed at assessing the presence of symptoms typical of an autism spectrum disorder as well as the child's cognitive, adaptive and linguistic skills and the possible presence of other associated disorders .
- *Assessment of the cognitive level* through the following scales:
- *GMDS-III (Griffith's Mental Developmental Scales)*
- *O Leiter 3 Leiter International Performance Scale - Third Edition (Roid GH, Miller LJ, Pompolum M., Koch C.),*



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

- *WISC IV- Wechsler Intelligence scale for Children (Wechsler, 2013)*
- *Assessment of the adaptive and functional level through the following scales:*
- *VABS II (Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales) (Sparrow, Balla, Cicchetti, 2005)*
- *ABAS II (Adaptive Behavior Assessment System) (Harrison, Oakland, 2003)*
- *Evaluation of emotional-behavioral problems through the following scales:*
- *K-SADS-Kiddie Schedule for Schizophrenia and Affective Disorders (Kaufman, Birmaher, Brent, Rao and Ryan, 2004)*
- *CBCL - Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach and Rescorla, 2000; 2001).*
- *Evaluation of autistic symptoms , with the following tools:*
- *The ADOS-2-Autism Diagnostic Observation Shedule-2nd Edition (Lord et.al., 2012)*
- *L'ADI-R -Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (Rutter et.al., 2003. Italian translation: Faggioli et.al., 2005)*

Furthermore, a more functional diagnostic framework provides for the administration of tests that investigate the components of language (phono-articulatory, grammatical, semantic, pragmatic) in expression and reception.

The child's assessment must explore all areas of development: the affective, cognitive, communicative, relational, neuropsychological area. It is important to carry out:

- *Neuropsychiatric examination* that allows to highlight clinical situations associated with the disorder and is useful for the differential diagnosis with other medical conditions.
- *Psychodiagnostic evaluation* as at the moment a specific diagnosis for Autistic Disorder is possible only on behavioral data. An accurate psychodiagnostic evaluation requires from the clinician a prolonged observation ranging from 4 to 5 sessions in a supportive setting but not excessively rich in



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

stimuli suitable for soliciting and encouraging spontaneous activity and interaction. The clinician must carefully observe: spontaneous activity, interactive behavior, verbal and non-verbal communication, affectivity or mood (in terms of regulation, intensity and reciprocity), cognitive profile, repetitive behaviors. evaluation of the development profile related to the different abilities (linguistic, cognitive, motor, visual perceptive and so on) allows the clinician to establish a diagnosis, prognosis and plan the interventions. It is also advisable to administer *specific psychodiagnostic tests* such as *ADI-R Autism Diagnostic Interview - Revised* (Rutter M., Le Couteur A., Lord C., 2005), which is an interview aimed at obtaining a complete range of information for diagnosing autism and evaluating autism spectrum disorders. It was designed to be used in conjunction with a parallel observation instrument, the *ADOS Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule* (Lord C. et.al., 2013). Collected descriptions of a person's behavior throughout their life are used to determine whether or not their development path and behavioral characteristics meet the criteria for diagnosing autism. It focuses on three areas of functioning: language and communication, mutual social interaction, stereotyped behaviors and narrow interests.

Taking in Charge

Appropriate taking charge of the problems of developmental age must be done taking into consideration *the family environment in which the child was born and raised* , for this reason it is necessary that the taking charge of the problems detected involves the following subjects:

- *Child / Teenager*
- *Parents*
- *Teachers*



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

The *family system* needs a real evaluation through the exploration of the internal emotional climate, the educational choices towards which they have oriented for their child, and the ways in which their child's problems have been dealt with in the past.

In the moments following the evaluation, *the family he must have at his disposal* a context of intervention defined by a space and a time dedicated to accepting the problem and *supporting a parenting* . Acting on the child, without acting on the family, means in most cases, frustrating one's work or making it partial and inconsistent. It is essential that an alliance is formed with the parents, based on the sharing of the objectives of the treatment. It is necessary on the one hand to recognize the specific difficulties and problems of children, on the other hand to welcome and contain the needs, anxieties and expectations of their families (Montecchi, 2019).

In some cases, the *involvement of teachers* in the treatment process is fundamental, as the child spends most of the time at school and the problems it presents could interfere in an important way both in the relationship with the teachers and in the relationship with the class group. . The *objective* of involving teachers is to *provide tools* to understand some of the child's behaviors and support him in facing his own difficulties, *improving the relationship and communication with his pupil and interaction with the class group* (Rebecchi, 2018) .

Treatment

For the purposes of treatment, it is essential to set up a *multidisciplinary team* of experts (child neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist, psychomotor specialist, pediatrician) to structure and share rehabilitation programs and monitor the progress of therapy (Tribulato, 2013; Power, 1994; Carli Suburian, 1994)

- *Neuropsychiatric visits* to monitor the progress of treatment .



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

- *Psychological treatment* to work on the cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects. Among the most effective treatments, those of a behavioral nature are documented and many interventions involve the application of strategies and techniques based on the principles of cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy.
- *Speech therapy* to treat aspects strictly related to language.
- *Neuropsychomotricity treatment*
- *Parenting support meetings* to illustrate, motivate and share each phase of the therapeutic process to allow parents to support the acquisitions without confusing their parental role with that of therapist.
- *Taking charge of the family unit by the local services* to improve the bio-psycho-social well-being of the child.
- *Psycho-educational interventions at school* that can be activated based on the severity of the disorder, assistance is in fact provided for by law 104/92 which allows the activation of a psychosocial network consisting of a support teacher, specialist assistant , educational operator for autonomy and communication - OEAPA (former AEC) (Guglielmucci, 2017)

The *objectives* of the multidisciplinary treatment are:

- increase or reduce certain behaviors
- consolidate new learning
- foster communication, recognition and differentiation of emotions
- improve social adaptation
- *Direct intervention aimed at the child* Among the interventions that directly involve the child, we can mention the *method ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis)* , or the applied analysis of behavior. It



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

is based on the behavioral principles of operant conditioning (Skinner, 1953). The aim is to induce a process of "normalization", through the development of more adaptive behavioral patterns. The privileged place for this treatment is the context in which the child lives and which constitutes his world: the home and the school (Lovaas et al; 1990). The programming of the intervention takes place ad hoc for the specific characteristics of the child, evaluating the potential and gaps, trying to broaden the adaptive behavioral repertoire, reducing the "problem-behaviors" as much as possible. Parents, being always present at the meetings, know the aims of the program and can also put into practice the most appropriate educational methods. In fact, it is essential to share the objectives with the parents and the various operators who interact with the autistic child. The functional areas for the ABA intervention are:

- *Communication* : starting from the pre-requisites, we work on the understanding and production of language, up to the formation and expansion of sentences
- *Socialization* : we work mainly at school when this is possible, and we try to move from socialization in the small group to the large group through the support and selection of activities
- *Play and recreational activities* : in play, space is left for the child even in a "solitary" dimension with the help of technologies, while in recreational activities one tries to create sociability
- *Cognitive skills* : they depend on age and are also connected to school development
- *Scholastic skills* : these concern both cognitive and social skills. In this case, however, we try to work as much as possible with the teachers on some objectives, which they would like to achieve
- *Behavior* : reduction of problem behaviors or those that undermine the safety of the child, people, or the environment. Stereotypes themselves can represent a limit to social integration and learning, therefore they themselves can be considered problem behaviors. The elimination of problem behavior



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

is sealed by the replacement of a positive substitute behavior, which is broken down and proposed in an acceptable and acquirable way to the child

- *Autonomy* : you work on self-care, for example, depending on the age of the baby you can work on the elimination of the bottle or on sphincter control
- *Indirect intervention with parents: Parent Training* Parent training concerns psychological interventions aimed at improving the relationship between parents and child, and at increasing the ability of parents to analyze the educational problems that can be implemented. We try to enhance socio-communicative skills, with the aim of improving communication and problem behaviors, helping parents to interact with their children, promoting the development and increase of mother and father satisfaction, of their empowerment and emotional well-being .
- *Psychosocial network resources* To improve the bio-psycho-social well-being, it could be useful to advise the family to participate in family and non-family associations, aimed at activating socio-educational projects and workshops. It is advisable to send the family to an ASL to ascertain the minor's disability. The diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder can lead to the request for the assistance provided for by *Law 104/92* , which will allow the activation of a psychosocial network (for example a support teacher, OEPA: from assistance to the facilitation of pupils with special educational needs, etc.), who will be able to support and further favor the child's rehabilitation path, favoring the achievement of greater autonomy, integration and communication both in the school context and making school activities accessible to him.

Professionals involved: multidisciplinary team

The *treatment setting in developmental age* cannot be carried out by a single professional but requires a *structured intervention model* that involves a *multidisciplinary team* within a communicative



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

context, in which all the operators involved are confronted, up to the realization of a structured treatment project resulting from a continuous work of comparison between the various subjects that are part of it.

The *multidisciplinary team* must include the following figures:

Pediatrician

Evolutionary Psychologist

Psychologist expert in the intervention with the parental couple and the family

Child Neuropsychiatrist

Developmental neuropsychologist

Speech therapist

TNPEE Therapist of developmental neuropsychomotricity

Homework Tutor

OEPA: from assistance to facilitation of pupils with special educational needs

Within the team, the different professionals integrate their points of view to analyze in a complete and in-depth way, the needs and potential of the child and to jointly plan interventions that can respond to them in a relevant way, based on skills and the tools of their specific professional background. Furthermore, it will be important *to discriminate whether the reported problems mainly involve cognitive functioning, executive functions, language skills, learning, etc., and / or emotional and behavioral aspects of the subject.* In light of this, *a treatment can be set up that meets the criteria of clinical appropriateness and the real needs of the child and his family .*

The long-term objective common to all treatment paths is the achievement of the best degree of autonomy and social integration and the best possible level of psychic well-being, which can only be



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

obtained through a real and generalized adaptive capacity to the surrounding environment (Vicari, Caselli, 2002).

Model of CentroPsicheBalduina

CENTROPSICHEBALDUINA, as defined by its name, is a reality that operates within the NORTH ROME area and more specifically in the BALDUINA neighborhood.

The idea of inserting territoriality in the name of the firm stems from the precise intent to make those who come to us understand that our reality is closely rooted in the territory and therefore responds to the specific needs of the population who live there, as they know it. the habits, lifestyle and problems of the families that populate it.

In fact, the firm actively collaborates with the main neighborhood committees (BALDUINA'S and AMICI DI MONTE MARIO) precisely because we believe that the environment in which people live is fundamental in the growth of individuals and in solving their problems.

TECHNICAL SHEET: CENTROPSICHEBALDUINA

TERRITORY OF BELONGING: NORTH ROME - BALDUINA - MONTE MARIO 14 TOWN HALL

TEAM: Multidisciplinary works in the Discomfort and disturbance in the Growth Age Adult Age
Freelance Professionals with VAT number

USERS: Children, Teenagers, Families, Couples

MODEL OF INTERVENTION: Reception, 1 Visit and Taking in Charge according to the needs of the user and the skills of the Team.

TYPES OF INTERVENTION: Clinical Psychology, Developmental Psychology and Neuropsychology, School Psychology, Legal Psychology.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
 Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

CENTROPSICHEBALDUINA, is a reality that involves professionals from different disciplines Freelancers with VAT numbers who work, each with their own skills, to promote individual and social well-being.

Several figures carry out their professional activity within it:

- psychologists, psychodiagnostics, psychiatrists, psychotherapists
- speech therapists, TNPEE, child neuropsychiatrists, neuropsychologists, DSA tutors
- Parental Coordinators and Family Mediators



PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROPSYCHOLOGY DEVELOPMENT AGE

Neuropsychological Therapy and Rehabilitation Evaluation

Evaluation and Speech Therapy

Neuropsychomotricity Assessment and Therapy (TNPEE)

Infantile Neuropsychiatric Visit and Control

Task tutor / DSA tutor

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

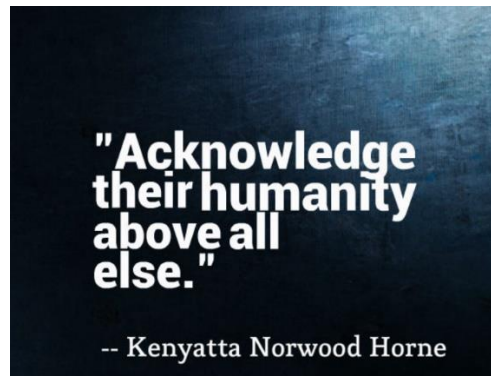


Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

- Parenting support (Parent Training)
- Psychological assessment and psychodiagnosis (TEST)
- Individual, couple and family psychotherapy
- Visit and Psychiatric Control
- Home rehabilitation / Adult companion
- SCHOOL SICOLOGY
- Listening Desk
- Projects for the prevention of juvenile distress and risk behaviors in adolescence

Namoi (E10191817, RU)

COMMUNICATION OF THE EMPLOYER WITH PEOPLE WITH AUTISM



This and other quotes from employees with ASD are borrowed from the Mighty

In this section of the project guide, you will learn:



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

1. What talents do people with ASD have;
2. What do you need to know before deciding to hire an autistic employee;
3. What difficulties might a person with ASD have in communicating in the workplace;
4. How to interview autistic applicants and when is the best time to cancel an interview altogether;
5. What tasks should be assigned to the mentor and social partner of a special beginner, in what and how to help him;
6. What colleagues of an autistic employee and his supervisor should know in order to communicate effectively with him;
7. What conditions need to be created in the office so that employees with autistic traits do not experience stress.

Methodology and sources

For this part of the guide, we have combined academic and practical approaches – critically reviewing existing approaches, the scientific publications and conducting 9 *in situ* interviews and study visits with the selected employers [December 2021 – January 2022] who hired people with ASD.

We provide nine direct quotes from the interviewed experts in the green boxes. We also attach a questionnaire for the employers at the end, in case you are curious.

And, of course, we relied on the opinions of the employees with ASD themselves.

We have inserted hyperlinks to useful resources and relevant scientific research directly into the text for your convenience.

A short list of recommended studies is attached as well.

Abstract



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People with autism make up about 2% of the population, many of them are very productive, but at the same time, less than half of people with this feature get a job in developed countries. In Western countries, no more than 14-15% of young people with autism enter the free labor market, the same number work under normal conditions, but require constant support. The largest percentage (41%) of young people work in special workshops and employment centers, sometimes on a volunteer basis. 15% have practically no professional activity. The spectrum of professional orientation of people with autism in the United States is surprising: they make up 40% of New York garbage workers and 50% of Silicon Valley professionals.

If employers know how to attract qualified employees with autism, find a position for them and organize suitable conditions, they will discover a gold mine – but only if communication is professional, friendly and effective.

Disclaimer from the partner organization

1. This text uses the terms "*autistic person*" and "*person with autism*". Within the autistic community and those who support them, there is no consensus on which expression is best (please explore [here](#) and [here](#)). Therefore, we use both.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

2. This text uses the terms *autism spectrum disorder (ASD)* and *autism*. We use them both in the sense of "an autism spectrum disorder that meets the criteria for DSM-5 and/or ICD-11 (more common for Europe). "Asperger's syndrome" and "high-functioning autism" are not singled out as separate disorders in these documents, but are included in the diagnosis of ASD.

3. While stating that there are autistic people who are able to work in the same environment with neurotypical (*hereinafter* – NT) people, with or without support, we do not deny the existence of autistic people who are not able to work in a NT world and need significant support (and do not wish to diminish the efforts of those who takes care of them).

What are autistic people good at?

Difficulties with social interactions and communication are diagnostic criteria for autism. Nevertheless, at least some autistic people have traits that are useful for creative activity.

Intelligence. An autistic person does not necessarily have low intelligence or language skills. According to modern diagnostic guidelines DSM-5 and ICD-11, intellectual and speech impairments do not necessarily accompany autism.

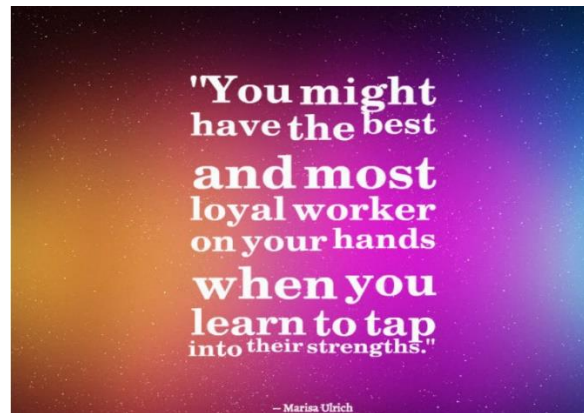
Two thirds of people with autism have average IQ or above average, while 50–75% develops functional speech.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Deep expertise. People with autism have special interests - hobbies of extraordinary power, which they give a lot of time. Often, through constant exercise, autistic people become real experts in what they love.

If a person's special interest coincides with his/her main occupation, it is beneficial for the autistic person himself, as well as for his/her clients and/or employer.



Special talents. In addition to expertise, autistic people there are talents- for example, an excellent memory, quick mental arithmetic, a good ear for music or the ability to draw.

Planning. Autistic people are proponents and proponents of uniformity and following the plans, which means that they can be expected systematic at work.

Attentiveness. If an autistic person has sensory hypersensitivity, this can be not only a disadvantage, but also an advantage – it allows you to pay attention to small details.

#1. Opinion of the interviewed expert, IT sector



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

“We would like the business to understand that people with ASD can work on an equal footing with everyone else if their strengths are used. As with any other employee, it is important to see the individuality of each and their interests. Someone fully realizes oneself as a task executor, someone is closer to creative tasks, and others like to develop their skills in the technical field. As our experience has shown, it is possible and feasible for any company to create comfortable work for employees with autism. The most important thing is to start.”



People with autism recruited for skilled jobs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_o5shDrPiM

Why are autistic people rarely hired?



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

It can be difficult for autistic people to show that they really have the qualities needed for the job. Firstly, such candidates experience difficulties in communication, and secondly, interviews are usually conducted in such a way that it is sometimes difficult for a person to show their best side.

For example, while preparing this part of the guide we repeatedly met recommendation for candidates watch interviewers in the eye. It turns out that at interviews, along with the qualities necessary for work, they also check the ability to maintain eye contact with an interlocutor or interlocutor. Autistic people not very good in this, but this skill is not needed for all positions that are interviewed with a similar expectation from candidates.

Vacancy description affects whether autistic people will respond to it.

People with autism tend to take things literally, so they're more likely to miss jobs that aren't 100% compliant, though they're often redundant. And of course, if the candidate knows about his diagnosis and reports it directly in the application or at the interview, going on direct discrimination: the employer assumes that such candidate/s are obviously unable to cope with the offered job.

HR specialists often complain that they cannot find good specialists for work that requires focus and concentration. Those who agree are quickly fired, as they get tired of the constant pressure. And while they work, they make a lot of mistakes. These are business losses. There is a solution: try to attract people with an autism spectrum disorder. Such specialists can be 30-40 percent more productive than neurotypical colleagues. How to select and adapt such people and how to effectively communicate with them, you will learn from this part of the guide.

INTRODUCTION FOR EMPLOYERS

How to avoid or overcome possible difficulties in hiring a person with autism, and how to ensure a mutually beneficial and effective working relationship.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Working with someone who has an autism spectrum disorder, can be a very rewarding and enriching experience for both managers and colleagues, but this situation can come with some challenges.



Awareness about autism will help to avoid possible misunderstandings

When problems arise in a relationship with an employee with autism, it is most often associated with social interaction and communication difficulties. If you become aware of such problems, act promptly and tactfully, and inform other employees of potential sources of misunderstanding.

1. If the person seems aloof and uninterested during conversations with co-workers, or frequently says the wrong thing, then remember (and, if appropriate, remind co-workers) that this behavior is almost certainly unintentional and most likely due to the person's communication difficulties.
2. If a person is too actively trying to "fit into the team" and annoys his colleagues because he "gets involved" in other people's conversations, then show patience and understanding. If necessary, explain to the person when he violates other people's boundaries. And remember that it's not just the person with ASD who needs to be reminded of other people's boundaries – it doesn't hurt other employees to remember that their attitude directly affects the quality of work of a colleague with autism.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

3. If a person begins to experience severe anxiety for any reason, try to determine the cause of anxiety. A face-to-face conversation is the best way to clarify this issue. The reason, most likely, will not be related to direct work responsibilities. For example, a person may be very stressed, not because they can't do their job, but because colleagues give instructions that are too confusing and abstract, or because their computer freezes, or because it is difficult for them to get to work. It will be helpful to discuss the most pressing problem, as well as sympathetically ask the employee specific (not too intrusive) questions to get to the root of the problems.



What difficulties might a person with ASD have in communicating in the workplace?

#2. Opinion of the interviewed expert, HR

“Some people with ASD do not use spoken language to communicate, but may use alternative means of communication, such as sign language, written language, or special cards. It is very important that, regardless of the degree of communication impairment, a person with ASD has the opportunity to



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

communicate, express their needs, feelings and thoughts, and also understand the people around them. Education in accessible means of communication should be started as early as possible, otherwise the development process becomes much more complicated.”

People with ASD can be qualified for a wide range of jobs, and many are successful in jobs ranging from accountant to administrator, journalist to analyst. However, in order to achieve such success, they need to overcome certain difficulties, especially in the following areas:

- a. Social communication
- b. Social interaction
- c. Social imagination

They may also have difficulty adapting their skills and knowledge to new tasks and work environments. These difficulties can complicate a person's position in the workplace.

Misunderstandings with other employees are also possible, especially if ASD is an "invisible" disorder. Colleagues who are not familiar with the manifestations of ASD may mistakenly consider a person's behavior to be rude, insensitive, or unfriendly. Fortunately, there are simple ways to ensure that the person gets all the support they need and to ensure positive working relationships within the team.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996



YOU WANT TO HIRE AN EMPLOYEE WITH ASD. READY FOR COMMUNICATION?

We have accumulated the answers of our respondents and prepared 7 steps for businesses to recruit people with autism inclusively. Step-by-step instructions will suit both an IT company and any other enterprise.

Step 1. Decide why the company needs it

Find your motivation - perhaps you need to shape the company's image as a socially responsible employer, create new corporate values, or you want to help improve the quality of life of a certain group of people, for example, people with autism.

Step 2. Determine if the company is ready for employees with autism

The head and employees of departments will be responsible for training and supporting an employee with autism, so the key decision is theirs. The employment of people with disabilities will affect the company's image and hiring policy, so it is important to get the support of all top management. It is crucial to make sure that the company has suitable jobs for employees with ASD.

Step 3. Assess the readiness of the company's budget for the experiment



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Employment of employees with autism is a separate project with its own budget. It will include the costs of paying mentors and the project manager, processing documents, auditing the office, training, organizing the workspace, taking into account the characteristics of new colleagues. Employees with autism can work in shifts, full-time or 0.5 pay, remotely or in the office. Depending on the speed of adaptation, it is possible to reduce the cost of an expert mentor.

Step 4. Enlist the support of experienced partners

Seek expert help from professionals who already work with employees with autism. Choose a trusted project partner - his level and competence will determine how successfully you employ a person with autism and how quickly he adapts.

Step 5: Prepare your HR team for interviews

People with autism have different abilities, so a very clear and specific job profile is essential. It is important to understand how the candidate and the job fit together. An interview with employees with autism takes place in several stages: a telephone conversation with a parent or guardian, a conversation with a candidate, special tests, a meeting in the office, an explanation of work algorithms, trial tasks, checking the assimilation of materials and instructions. The interview itself is based on clear direct questions, specific examples and practical tasks.

Step 6. Decide on the legal form of employment

There may be features in the employment contract, depending on the presence or absence of a disability in the candidate. The work schedule is selected according to the person - someone will be able to work a fixed long shift, someone will need a more flexible schedule. Any changes should be discussed with employees with autism in advance, as people with ASD are sensitive to change.

Step 7. Prepare a comfortable working environment for a person with autism



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

When organizing your workplace, consider factors that can cause sensory overload in a new colleague. Excessively loud printer sound, strong odors, and harsh lights can be strong irritants for a person with ASD. Such employees should have clear work instructions and a clear algorithm of actions - in this case, they work as efficiently as possible. For the first 2-4 months, a new colleague is helped to adapt by an accompanying mentor. He organizes a comfortable routine for the ward, breaks, daily routine, space with visual cues. The mentor works out the rules, explains the operation of the technique and helps to communicate with colleagues. After an adaptation period, an employee with autism works independently.

Where to find autistic candidates

Visit the city **social support services**, talk to their employees. Among those whom they patronize are families with autistic children of working age and with education. Ask social workers to find out if people with ASD are ready to work, get contacts of such families.

Some people with an autism spectrum disorder are given a disability, so contact the Disabled Society. They can recommend you potential applicants.

In addition, large cities open **support centers** children with autism, there are funds that help children and adults with ASD to adapt in society. Get in touch with foundations, the online community, and through them, reach out to promising neuro-atypical people who could become employees of your company. Contact and **to the employment service**. They may know about people with ASD who are looking for work.

#3. Opinion of the interviewed expert, HR
Employees with ASD can be socialized



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

“In 2020 when I worked in a big company, I was recommended an intelligent specialist. He refused a personal meeting, we talked via Zoom. The specialist agreed on a special mode of work: when everyone left, at 19.00 he came to the office and worked. Contacted personally with me and the technical director only via Zoom or e-mail. The employee solved expensive tasks, which brought the company to a new level of work. Two years later, we took the risk of appointing a specialist as the head of the IT department and cheerfully celebrated his next birthday: we decorated his workplace, congratulated him in front of everyone. The office has ceased to be a hostile environment for a specialist, and he calmly communicates with colleagues.

Place an announcement on the company's website that you are ready to hire special candidates, focus on this when you participate in exhibitions and at open days. Then the labor market will find out that your company is looking for neuro-atypical employees.

Example 1.

SAP launched the *Autism at Work* program. A message about this was posted on the company's website, indicating the email address of the HR service, to which applicants with ASD were invited to send resumes. Soon the mail was bombarded with letters. They contained resumes of bachelors and masters of science, mostly technical. Many graduated from universities with honors. Some have Ph.D.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

degrees and awards for rationalization proposals. Two candidates even submitted invention patents. HRs received an unexpectedly large selection of neuro-atypical candidates with a decent education.

Many autists receive higher education and even obtain Ph.D. degrees. But almost **90 percent remain unemployed**, the rest are forced to engage in low-skilled labor. For example, a leading cybersecurity specialist at Hewlett-Packard worked for many years at McDonalds in the kitchen before joining the company. It's safe to say that neurotypical people are underestimated by employers, this is a real storehouse of potentially effective personnel. You just need to find it and use it for the benefit of the business.

The director of one of the premium car-dealing centers a year ago doubted whether to hire a young autistic man as a repairman. But now he not only does not regret that he took it, but is proud of this worker. Clients - owners of prestigious cars - tend to get to him. They know that he remembers the device of cars of different brands to the smallest detail, understands how and what works. Therefore, it quickly detects and qualitatively eliminates any breakdowns.

I am an employer and I want to hire capable candidates regardless of their autism or neurotypicality. How can I organize effective communication in an inclusive selection?

How to conduct an interview and when to cancel it

For an ordinary applicant, an interview is stressful, and even more so for a neuro-atypical one. To meet with HR, such a candidate needs **deviate from the usual daily routines** and algorithms, which is very difficult for him. For example, if you ask him to come to a conversation today or tomorrow morning, a person will have a feeling of unpredictability and chaos, fear and depression will appear. In such a state, there is no point in meeting. That's why **per 5-7 days invite for an interview**. Give the candidate time to get used to the idea of an upcoming meeting with you outside the home, fit it into his



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

daily routine. Send the job seeker a letter inviting them to the office to meet with you. If possible, talk to the candidate's parents. Let them prepare it in advance for visiting the company's office. Sometimes relatives draw pictures: what you have to do to arrive for an interview, how to pass it.

Divide the interview into three stages, do not spend them on the same day.

Schedule three meetings with the neurotypical candidate. It is not possible to discuss all the important points in one interview. It is necessary that a person gets used to the office of the company and the HR manager, calms down internally and is ready to receive information and respond to questions. At Microsoft, for example, the HR department allows even five days for an interview with such applicants.

#4. Opinion of the interviewed expert, HR

Let employees with autistic personality traits be the custodians of knowledge

“Such people are often intellectually developed, they have an analytical mindset. Just do not force them to run with everyone to personal growth trainings, do not involve them in team building. Employees with ASD excel in jobs that do not require extensive social contact. Do not try to promote such specialists to the leadership of a project or a group, they will not become team leaders. Let them be the custodians of knowledge - to develop in their chosen field. Then these people will be more productive than a whole team of merry drummers. Neuro-atypical people need stability and predictability of the environment.”



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

At the first meeting, just get to know the applicant and briefly describe the job you want to offer him. At the second meeting on another day, repeat what was said at the first meeting and ask a couple of simple questions. For example: “Are you interested in this kind of work?”, “Would you like to do it?”. Don't ask both questions at once. Say one first, wait for a response, then move on to the second. Wait for a response a little longer than from a regular applicant. **Be concise, don't use too many words.** They create a noise effect in the autistic brain. Report that you have prepared test tasks for the candidate and ask them to complete them at the next meeting.

At the third meeting, give the candidate a task. It may be related to the work ahead, but do not assign a full-fledged production task to be solved. The applicant will not cope with it immediately. You need to check whether he has, in principle, sufficient abilities for future work. You will work out full-fledged working functionality in the future.

Give the applicant enough time to complete the assignment. Autistic job seekers are not slow-witted. They resolve the issue quickly. But they need more time than ordinary people to hear information from outside and process it. In addition, you need to get together in a new environment.

#5. Opinion of the interviewed expert, HR

“The HR director of a trade and logistics company gave applicants with ASD a stack of invoices. I asked to study them. An hour later, he took the papers and offered to remember what types of products were indicated on the invoices and waybills. Some applicants not only listed the types of products, but also called the numbers of invoices and waybills, in which this or that type of product appeared, as well as the amounts. Moreover, sometimes applicants also pointed to discrepancies in the data, perfectly noticed patterns and connections. Such candidates were invited to the company.”



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Be prepared to communicate without eye or emotional contact.

Applicants with ASD do not make eye contact. Their gaze is directed at his lips at best, and most often - to the side or up. This does not mean that a neurotypical person does not like you or that he does not listen to you. Looking away, he **saves own energy** to focus on your words. Otherwise, they won't understand anything.

The speech of autistics is monotonous and unemotional, like that of cyborgs. There is no sign language, so it is not always clear whether the interlocutor perceives what you say or not. He doesn't nod at you or say, "Yeah" or "Yes, I see." Pay no attention to it. Speak calmly and at a normal pace. Even if it seems that the applicant does not understand you, **not say the words loudly and slowly**. Otherwise, offend or humiliate the person, as he will think that you are communicating with him as flawed. And shut up.

Ask if it is more convenient for the applicant to answer questions non-verbally - **with using alternative means of communication**. If he shows that it is more convenient, allow him to use these means. For example, PECS cards, a portable speech synthesizer or a Go-talk program. It has "yes" and "no" particles, patterns of phrases that a neuro-atypical candidate takes to compose an answer. It is not uncommon for people with ASD to simply type phrases on a computer or iPad. Let's take time for this. Such non-verbal communication is not a sign of low IQ. Even among highly productive autistics, verbal communication is sometimes reduced to a minimum or even completely absent. They just don't need it.

WHAT IF a candidate with autistic traits avoids eye contact during an interview?



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

- a. Pay no attention to it. Speak calmly and at a normal pace. Even if the applicant does not seem to understand you, do not speak loudly and slowly.
- b. Finish the interview right away, it still won't lead to the desired result.
- c. Shout louder, then the interlocutor will wake up and begin to listen to you carefully.

Cancel the interview unless applicants are required who are socialized and able to communicate actively.

All the same, neuro-atypical candidates will not fully open up in an interview and will not show what they are capable of. Let them get to work right away. Let's say **launch a project or pilot program**. Conclude fixed-term employment contracts with applicants for the duration of this project. People with ASD are trusted to care for animals there. For three months, managers and HRs observe how and who works. Those who have shown themselves well are issued for work on a permanent basis. As a rule, at least 70 percent of applicants successfully pass the test. They take care of animals more diligently than their neurotypical counterparts.

#6. Opinion of the interviewed expert, consulting.

Let an employee with ASD write reports and communicate on them with his manager

“I drew this conclusion from my experience of communicating with people with autism. For example, one man in his 40s works as a technical supervision engineer. It is indispensable in the control of various parts, assemblies. He sees mistakes on the construction site that others do not notice. But there are also disadvantages. The employee alters any creative task and does it the way he likes or is



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

comfortable. In addition, often explodes in communication with people. We have learned to use his talents: he goes to construction sites alone, and passes the report with comments to the project manager, who conducts further communications with other employees.”

Memo I

1. Formulate clear requirements.

Write specific requirements in the vacancies you post. It is convenient to divide the list into mandatory and desirable (with varying degrees of desirability) selection criteria.

2. Offer a choice of online or offline interview.

On the one hand, neurodivergent applicants find it difficult to recognize spoken language passed through microphones and speakers, and then they are likely to prefer a face-to-face meeting. On the other hand, someone may be so weary of the road to the interview site and the anxiety of being in an unknown place that they become completely confused. Such candidates should be offered a video conversation, especially if the work itself will also be online.

3. Tell us what the candidate is up to.

You will help reduce the candidate's anxiety if you tell him/her in advance what awaits him/her at the interview: what your work building and office look like from the inside, how long the meeting will take, in what order and what the interviewers will have to talk about.

4. Conduct face-to-face interviews.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Autistic people find it difficult to have a conversation with two or more people at the same time. Therefore, if the job itself does not imply this, refrain from group interviews, speak with candidates one at a time, in turn.

5. Allow the candidate to twirl.

If the job does not require the ability to sit still, be calm about the fact that the applicant, during a conversation, can twist an object in his hands, draw with a pen on paper, or sway.

6. Create a calm environment.

Autistic people are often hypersensitive to sensory stimuli—noises, sights, smells, tastes, touches. Choose a room for the interview with a dim finish, where there will be no moving objects in the candidate's field of view, except for the interviewer. A screen with the latest news from your company, a figurine of a cat waving its paw on the table - all this is better to remove.

The interview room should be quiet: ideally, no one and nothing should be heard there, except for the candidate and the interviewer. Open space with colleagues talking in the background will not work.

During the interview, try not to make noise: do not click the pen, do not tap your fingers on the table. If you still want to turn something in your hands, the silent version of these actions will be much less distracting for the candidate.

Please do not overuse perfume.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

“ Do not underestimate
an individual’s
ability. ”

-- Laura Burrell

7. Do not require social skills that are not required for the job.

For example, a candidate may not look you in the eyes or know the appropriate answer to the question: “How did you build relationships with colleagues in your previous job?” — but that does not mean that he or she is not suitable for the job.

8. Check actual skills.

Instead of soft skills, it would be appropriate to check whether the candidate really has the skills and knowledge necessary for a particular job. Let him or her demonstrate their skills: ask questions on specific topics for future work, conduct testing.

9. Be direct, specific.

It can be difficult for autistic people to guess how detailed their answer to a broadly worded question should be. For example, the request “Tell me about yourself” is unsuccessful, because it is



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

not clear what exactly you need to tell about yourself. But the “Tell me about your relevant work experience” invitation is much better.

The question "What is your main weakness?" is also often incomprehensible to autistic people. Better ask something like: "What quality of yours could interfere with you in this job?" - and after listening to the answer, elaborate: "How could you solve the problem that this will create?"

Avoid figurative language. Your phrase like “We have a friendly team and we enjoy to death at corporate parties” can be taken literally. Don't be surprised if the person doesn't laugh at your jokes designed to defuse the situation: the candidate may simply not understand that you were joking.

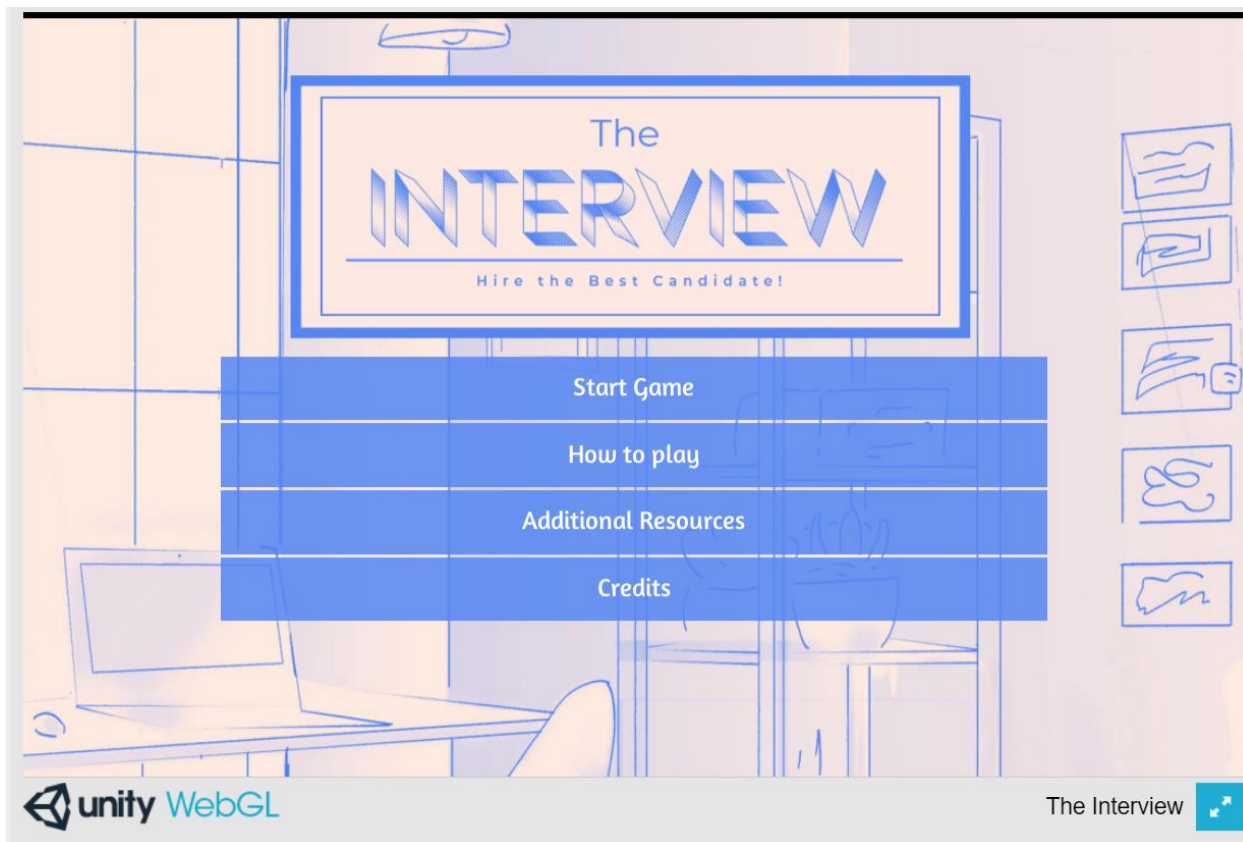
10. Give yourself time to think.

Autistic candidates may take longer than NT candidates to give a relevant answer to your question. Give them that time, don't jump to the next question after a couple of seconds of silence.

There is a useful [online game](#) about hiring neurodivergent people



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996



Try playing as a recruiter who interviews different candidates and decides who to end up hiring.

We have successfully hired autistic people.

How can we adapt our communication style and working conditions to them?

How to adapt newcomers with autism

#7. Opinion of the interviewed expert, psychologist, MD



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

“A person with ASD especially needs to develop coping skills. These are the ones we use every day: get dressed, wash, cook, clean the house, make an appointment with the doctor, buy groceries. For example, the ability to use public transport is taken for granted by many people. But for a person with ASD, this is a whole story that needs to be learned. If you teach a child or adult with autism how to use transportation, you will expand their territorial freedom, make a significant contribution to their future, prepare them for further education in a university and successful employment.”

A new neuro-atypical employee needs help not only in purely professional matters, but also in organizing their life at work and partly outside of it. One person can't do it. That's why **assign two assistants to the autistic novice**. So do, for example, in SAP and Microsoft. Name one instructor or mentor. He will be engaged in the professional adaptation of an unusual colleague, will help the ward to distribute work tasks, and prioritize.

Introduce the other as a social partner, organizational coach, or volunteer. It will help a neuro-atypical colleague cope with domestic and social issues. Being deaf to everything external, autistic people do not correlate their actions well with generally accepted rules and time frames. For example, they may get carried away and not notice that the working day ended two hours ago and it's time to go home. Or forget to go to lunch, get confused in front of people on the way to the office and be very late. A social partner or volunteer will accompany a colleague with ASD from home to work and back at the end of the working day, reminding them about lunch.

Explain to newcomers how to behave at work.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Autistic employees do not understand social rules. Therefore, organize a course for them, in which you directly and clearly indicate the various situations that develop in the office, and explain how to act correctly. For example, in SAP, Human Resources has developed **training "Communication skills"** where neuro-atypical candidates are introduced to the norms of behavior in a professional environment. They even talk about the fact that it is not necessary to respond to a letter from the CEO received by e-mail if it is sent to all employees of the company by general mailing.

#8. Opinion of the interviewed expert, HR

Ask the mentor not to put on press on the mentee with ASD, exclude teamwork

“Once a “strange” young man came to an interview. He didn't look into my eyes or even in my direction. He answered in monosyllables, made unnecessary gestures. I persuaded the foreman of the site to take the young man to work, explained what features autistic people have. We have successfully selected a mentor for a beginner. He was tactful, did not try to get into the soul of the ward. Thanks to this, the young employee did not become isolated, he mastered the skills of work. The master designed the beginner's functionality so that he would communicate only with him.”

Teach supervisors and colleagues how to deal with autistic employees.

Organize training for all who will have to contact on work with neuro-atypical colleagues. Explain the specifics of communication with them. The main thing is that the speech should be extremely concise and clear. Rigid logic is at the heart of the thinking of people with ASD, which helps them to identify patterns and relationships in any, even very complex, scheme. But they absolutely do not



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

perceive imagery and omissions, allusions and humor. These people are straightforward and frank, and **understatement is perceived as a dishonest way of communication**. Therefore, encourage managers and co-workers with autism to be pragmatic and precise. Otherwise, neuro-atypical employees will not understand what they are being told, or they will start asking a lot of clarifying questions and become intrusive. Identify three taboos in dealing with such workers.

Explain also that autistic employees **not have empathy and show no emotion**. You will not receive sympathy and a quick reaction from such colleagues to what has been said. Explain to the managers: it will not work to set a task for an autistic employee, passing by throwing a phrase. You need to calmly and respectfully talk with such a subordinate, explain what to do. It is often better to set tasks in writing, say by e-mail.

Tell us what incentives are and how to respond to them correctly. Stims are repetitive movements that may be accompanied by sounds that resemble lowing. It occurs in situations where there is a malfunction or **deviation from the previously built algorithm**, change in familiar office environment.

Give Autistic Workers Time to Adjust

People with ASD will show at their workplace what they are capable of, not earlier than in 3-4 months. So be patient and wait. In addition, such workers need clear instructions on how, what and in what sequence to do. Prepare these instructions. Use not only text, but also images. Remember that autistic people are only effective in a well-structured environment.

Stims are as follows: a person sways in a chair, walks back and forth, spins and takes strange poses. In the company of friends, he can wrap himself in a blanket or retire to another room. Encourage colleagues to be tolerant of this. Explain that this is not psychosis, but self-regulatory behavior that



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

helps to cope with stress. It is also found in neurotypical people. For example, we, immersed in thoughts, unconsciously tap our fingers on the table or feverishly shake our legs.

Ask regular employees not to keep a close eye on a colleague with ASD when s/he has stims. Forbid him to say: “No need. Stop doing that!”. **This will lead to an exacerbation of the reaction and the effect of "gas light"**. Its essence is that a person has a doubt about his own self-identity.

How to create a work environment for neuro-atypical specialists

People with ASD are very sensitive to bright lights, environmental noises, and intense movement. These factors cause such employees anxiety and even panic. In this state, they will not be effective. Therefore, extensive open space is not for them. If you can't allocate a separate office for each neuro-atypical employee, then put them in rooms in which no more than three people work.

Give the autistic worker earphones. Make the lighting dim, use frosted low-wattage light bulbs. Make the autistic employee's neighbors in the office those who do not need to have much contact with others for work.

Three communication calls for employees with ASD

Any circumstance that does not allow following a familiar algorithm causes neuro-atypical people to become hyper- or hypo-reactive. In other words, a strong emotional reaction or depression.

1. Due to the concentration of workers with autistic traits on details and perfectionism, it is difficult for them to explain that some shortcomings should not be paid serious attention to and spend a lot of time to correct them.
2. ASD professionals can come across as brazen and arrogant because of their straightforwardness. For example, they can directly tell a colleague that he is an unpleasant person. Or they will ask the head directly: “Are you really stupid?”.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

And another useful video



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajNANHryaWU>

Memo II

1. Ask them yourself. The most correct (and at the same time beneficial for all other employees) way to do this is to ask all employees in general how they would be comfortable working.

Among other things, it is useful to find out what kind of reaction colleagues are waiting for if suddenly some familiar, but unpleasant attack happened to them - anxiety, breakdown, epileptic seizure, etc.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

For example, if a colleague sways, screams and covers his head with his hands, it is not a fact that you need to rush to save him / her. It may well be that the best help is to do nothing. Find out in advance.

2. Set up a quiet workspace. Give employees the opportunity to choose a workplace with a low level of background noise - for example, not open space, but a small office. Ask colleagues not to turn on the radio or music without headphones and to arrange meetings in separate conference rooms, and not directly at the workplace surrounded by others.

3. Equip a rest room. If possible, select a room where it will be quiet, dark and comfortable to sit (for example, put a sofa there). There, employees can take a break from the sensory stimuli that come with work.

4. Be direct, specific, clear. When giving colleagues assignments or feedback, avoid allusions and figurative language. At the end of the conversation, check whether everything was clear to the interlocutor or interlocutor in your words. Do not use vague phrases like “The presentation is boring, spice it up, make it more fun” or “This solution lacks user care.”

Give as clear feedback as possible, list specific points of a colleague's work and describe what exactly you (didn't) like about them.

5. Send important information in writing. Everything that is important for you to convey to a colleague - assignments, requests, feedback, invitations to meetings - state in writing, by email or in a corporate messenger. If you want, you can also duplicate it orally.

6. Don't Ignore Questions. If a colleague asks a lot of detailed questions and verbosely answers every point of the document, there is a chance that he/she is autistic. To make the interaction as productive



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

as possible for both parties, try to at least briefly answer all the questions asked (answers “This is irrelevant” or “We will postpone this for now” are also important). Such a rule will be useful in any working environment.

7. Don't push for socialization. Do not force a colleague to participate in mass events.

8. Don't impose tactility. Autistic people often feel uncomfortable being touched, especially by people who aren't close. Do not be surprised if a colleague refuses to shake hands at a meeting and hugs at parting (if it is customary for you). However, non-autistic people should not be touched without their consent either.

9. Do no more than one task at a time. Often, autistic people can perform fewer tasks at the same time than neurotypical people. Do not ask a colleague a lot of questions in a row without waiting for an answer, or ask them to do several things at the same time. For example, when a person undresses when entering a room, you should not immediately ask: “Will you have tea?” and “How did you get there?”, while holding out your hand. Wait for the colleague to finish what he/she is currently doing.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

"Don't be degrading
if we need reminders
or if we don't
automatically
know something
that seems obvious."

-- Emma Wozny

10. Don't expect the usual reaction to small talk. An autistic person may not know how to respond to a compliment, thank you, or a good wish, and may not respond in the way you are used to. Don't be surprised if a colleague doesn't say anything or behaves unusually in response to your comment.

11. Learn. If there is a financial opportunity and such an initiative is appropriate for your position, invite specialists who will conduct a seminar on neurodifference. This will help you understand what you can expect from colleagues if they are autistic, and how to communicate in a way that is most convenient for everyone.

12. Consider working with an intermediary. There are organizations that specialize in career assistance for autistic people. They cooperate with both autistic people and employers, choosing the most convenient interaction option for everyone in each case. Such an intermediary can help you find talented autistic employees and better understand how to organize their work so that everyone is happy.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

In addition to consulting, such companies provide each of its autistic clients with a work mentor - a person who will supervise him, help him communicate with the employer in difficult situations.

13. Accept the characteristics of others. Your new colleague may never attend corporate parties, swing back and forth, not look you in the eyes during conversations, not take off his headphones or dark glasses, jump in one place and dangle his hands during breaks. This in itself does not make such people worse workers or comrades.

And please remember that business is not only about making a profit.

#9. Opinion of the interviewed expert, inclusive workshop

“All processes in our workshops are primarily tailored to meet the needs of people with mental disabilities. In some other production - for example, in a garment factory - the team tries to sew more, to come up with a beautiful design. We also think about this, but for us it is paramount to build processes in such a way that people with ASD get jobs and feel comfortable.”

APPENDIX A

Featured Studies

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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

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Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

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APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Employer Perspectives: Effective Communication for Employees with Autism Spectrum Disorder



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Q1 You are invited to participate in participation in the project “**New horizons for the BLUE world**” under the Agreement n° **2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996** designed to explore employer attitudes toward employees with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), employer attitudes toward employee disclosure of an ASD diagnosis, and employer attitudes toward accommodations in the workplace for employees with ASD.

There are no known risks involved with this study. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. This survey is comprised of 38 items, including yes/no and multiple choices questions, and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

This survey is anonymous; please do not enter your name or other identifying information anywhere on the survey. If you choose not to participate you can leave the survey site. Once you begin the survey, you may end your participation at any time by simply closing your browser. Your IP address will not be collected. Once you complete the survey you can delete your browsing history for added security. Completing the on-line survey indicates your consent for use of the 117 answers you supply. Results will be reported only in aggregate form. By completing this survey, you are also confirming that you are 18 years of age or older. Please print this page for your records.

Q2 I agree to continue.

- Yes
- No

Q3 Have you ever heard of autism, Autism Spectrum Disorder, or Asperger's Syndrome?

- Yes
- No



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Q4 Please check all that apply.

- I (or the business I work for) am a member of the Regional Chamber of Commerce.
- I am involved/have influence in the process of hiring employees at my workplace.
- I am not involved/have influence in the process of hiring employees at my workplace.

Q5 Have you ever employed or worked with someone with Autism Spectrum Disorder (previous or current job)?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

Q6 Please read the following statements and answer whether you believe the statement is accurate, not accurate, or if you are uncertain based solely on your knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Q7 Autism Spectrum Disorder is a mental illness.

- This statement is accurate.
- This statement is not accurate.
- I am not certain.

Q8 Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental disability.

- This statement is accurate.
- This statement is not accurate.
- I am uncertain.

Q9 Generally speaking, people with Autism Spectrum Disorder have limited eye contact.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

- This statement is accurate.
- This statement is not accurate.
- I am uncertain.

Q10 Generally speaking, people with Autism Spectrum Disorder are sensitive to light/sound.

- This statement is accurate.
- This statement is not accurate.
- I am uncertain.

Q11 Generally speaking, people with Autism Spectrum Disorder interpret language literally.

- This statement is accurate.
- This statement is not accurate.
- I am uncertain.

Q12 Generally speaking, people with Autism Spectrum Disorder focus on the "big picture" rather than details.

- This statement is accurate.
- This statement is not accurate.
- I am uncertain.

Q13 Generally speaking, people with Autism Spectrum Disorder have irregular communication styles.

- This statement is accurate.
- This statement is not accurate.
- I am uncertain.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Q14 Generally speaking, people with Autism Spectrum Disorder need aides/support staff in the workplace.

- This statement is accurate.
- This statement is not accurate.
- I am uncertain.

Q15 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Q16 I have a good understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- Yes, better than most.
- No, not that good.

Q17 I believe other business managers (outside of my own business) have a good understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- Yes, that is mostly accurate.
- No, that is mostly not accurate.

Q18 Would it affect your decision to hire a potential employee if s/he said he has Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- Yes, that is mostly accurate.
- No, that is mostly not accurate.

Q19 Would it affect other business managers' (outside of my own business) decisions to hire a potential employee if he said he has Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- Yes, that is mostly accurate.
- No, that is mostly not accurate.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Q20 Would it affect your decision to hire a potential employee if he said he would need some accommodations in your workplace?

- Yes, that is mostly accurate.
- No, that is mostly not accurate.

Q21 Would it affect other business managers' (outside of my own business) decisions to hire a potential employee if he said he would need accommodations in their workplaces?

- Yes, that is mostly accurate.
- No, that is mostly not accurate.

Q22 Please select all options of *how* you would prefer a potential employee tell you he has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- Face-to-face with me
- Phone call with me
- Written letter addressed to me
- Email sent to me
- Through the Human Resources Department
- I prefer s/he not disclose

Q23 Please select all options of *when* you would prefer a potential employee tell you s/he has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- On the application
- In a resume or cover letter
- During an interview



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

- During the first week of employment During the first month of employment
- During the first year of employment
- I prefer s/he not disclose

Q24 Indicate how likely you believe other business managers (outside of your business) would be to provide the following accommodations for employees who have reported a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Q25 Allow the employee with Autism Spectrum Disorder to work from home.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.

Q26 Change the lighting in the office to accommodate sensitivity to light for the employee with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.

Q27 Provide noise cancelling headsets to accommodate sensitivity to sound for the employee with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.

Q28 Allow employee with Autism Spectrum Disorder to provide clients written responses through email/instant messenger instead of verbal responses over the phone.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Q29 Allow employee with Autism Spectrum Disorder to provide written reports on progress or projects instead of in person.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.

Q30 Provide text-to-speech or speech-to-text technology for reading or preparing work documents.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.

Q31 Provide an employee mentor to help the employee with Autism Spectrum Disorder adapt to a new work environment.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.

Q32 Provide training about Autism Spectrum Disorder to employees.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.

Q33 Make employee attendance at social functions for work optional.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.

Q34 Modify the work schedule for the employee with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Q35 Allow additional time for the employee with Autism Spectrum Disorder to complete new or large tasks.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.

Q36 Provide the employee with Autism Spectrum Disorder a checklist or written instructions for tasks.

- Yes, it is likely they would provide this accommodation.
- No, it is not likely they would provide this accommodation.

Q37 Please choose the field that most closely describes your current occupation.

- Management
- Business/Financial Operations
- Computer/Mathematical
- Architecture/Engineering
- Life/Physical/Social Sciences
- Community/Social Services
- Law
- Educational Instruction/Library
- Arts/Design/Entertainment/Sports/Media
- Healthcare Practitioners
- Healthcare Support
- Protective Service
- Food Preparation/Serving-Related



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

- Building/Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance
- Personal Care/Service
- Sales
- Office/Administration Support
- Farming/Fishing/Forestry
- Construction/Extraction
- Installation/Maintenance/Repair
- Production
- Transportation/Material Moving
- Military Specific

Q38 Please indicate your company size.

- 0-25
- 26-50
- 51-75
- 76-100
- 101-150
- Above this number



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Cercle Augustin d'Hippone (E10159047, FR)

Employer communication with families or legal representatives of adults with autism

It is widely accepted that families not only play an important role in all aspects of life for people with autism, but they are often considered the experts on autism. However, given their strong and continuous involvement in the development and well-being of their children with this syndrome. However, when it comes to preparing their children who have become adults for the world of work, it is important to work to empower them and to ask them when the time comes for their opinion before any support from their employers. .

The development of self-advocacy skills is therefore essential and must be prepared upstream for people with autism successfully entering adulthood and the world of employment. Their families, helped by the various structures working in the field, must prepare them for the world of work and help them develop soft skills already at home and at school. These skills should include, for example:

- adopt active listening,
- speak at the appropriate times,
- maintain good manners at lunch and/or breaks,
- be practiced in problem solving,
- be experienced in planning,
- know how to manage time,
- know how to work in a team,



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

- communicate in the most effective way, etc.

So, even before reaching adulthood and the need to integrate into the world of work, parents are actors and involved in supporting and developing the life project of their autistic child.

The parents or the legal representative of the autistic person, if applicable, collaborate in the construction of the professional project of their child within the framework of his training at school and in that of the evaluation and support program. The child, adolescent or adult is also associated with the decisions concerning him, according to his level of understanding. Alternative or augmentative means of communication must be put in place if the person has language difficulties.

The role of the employer or line manager of the autistic employee

The employer or line manager welcoming an autistic person into his department must also seek the opinion of the person before involving his family in the work support process.

When supporting people with autism syndrome, the particular importance of the following actions should be emphasized:

- raising awareness of autism throughout the team,
- know the particular functioning of the person: his resources, potentialities and limitations,
- appoint a tutor/referent clearly identified by the person,
- take into account the expectations of the person,
- individualize the support,
- ensure coordination with the family and external partners, etc.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

It is therefore necessary when possible to involve parents for a better understanding of the autistic employee and his needs and to value the voice of parents who are the first experts. Strong cooperation with families could be very beneficial in the success at work of people with autism.

Role of the family in the professional life of the autistic adult

Once the time has come to work, as it is essential for the employer to offer the employee with autism a professional environment adapted to his needs, his family also has an important role to play knowing that the field of personal life can be a factor facilitating or hindering the professional career. Among the facilities that can bring positive effects, we can note:

- suitable, local housing,
- Proper hygiene and personal appearance are required on most job sites. Maintaining a clean, professional demeanor and dressing appropriately can mean the difference between success and failure in the interview and on the job.
- reliable and low-fatigue transport, planning transport to and from the construction site can be a key to a successful internship or job,
- fulfilling activities outside of one's job,
- emotional stability with regular returns to the family will have a positive influence on well-being at work,
- safety is also important, including for the independence of the autistic person, training in safety techniques is essential, etc.



Erasmus+project “ New horizons for the BLUE world”
Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

For parents, collaborating with their autistic son or daughter is very beneficial. The role of parents can be to help them articulate their strengths and challenges, teach them how to advocate for themselves, and advise them on their employment rights.

Parental support is invaluable both practically and emotionally. Even if you don't have to go to the workplace to intervene on your behalf, parents are a key player in the employment of their son or daughter.

It is very helpful to work with their son or daughter to help them articulate their strengths, talents and challenges to their employer and the team they work with. Ongoing dialogue can be crucial to ensure everyone is working toward the same employment goal.

It is also important for parents to teach their adult child with autism to manage conflict in general and at work in particular. Role plays and models exist to help parents achieve this goal. It may also be important to encourage them to request a career assessment from their employer or any other stakeholder during internships or other professional learning followed by their autistic child.

Medico-social services can also provide continuity of services between the place of work and the place of residence. They ensure the transfer of important information from one place to another and generalize the adaptations and compensation needs on the different spaces.

In conclusion, collaboration is possible between the family and the employer, the supervisor or the referent if the autistic adult at work is informed, involved and agrees to this collaboration. It all depends on the degree of independence of the autistic person, aid and arrangements must be provided to him in order to successfully carry out his tasks and sustain his professional activity.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

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- savoir gérer le temps,

INTEGRARE EUROPEANA IN DOMENIUL TINERETULUI, SPORTULUI, VOLUNTARIATULUI SI CETATENIEI ACTIVE EUROPENE (E10163149, RO)

Creating a special work environment for people with autism

We all know that people with autism face one of the lowest employment rates among people with disabilities, between 76% and 90 % being unemployed in Europe in 2014. Hiring a person with autism can be a great experience that can bring added value to both coworkers and the employer.

If an employer conducts a policy of recruiting, hiring, maintaining and promoting people who are part of the autistic spectrum, then he must create and maintain an inclusive environment that values the entire human potential existing on the labor market being aware of the advantages of this type of approach.

The most appropriate approach, according to the difficulties of the spectrum, is: The Individual Approach.

Although people with autism have certain common characteristics, in order to be successful at work, it is necessary to approach the individual starting from the knowledge of individual peculiarities, communication, learning, group operation, in a certain space, sensory, stress management, etc.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Thus, it is recommended that the person with autism know the following aspects:

Learning style: auditory or visual (some people learn better if the information is presented visually, less audibly);

Communication style: if he manages to follow the interlocutor who offers vast information, or if he speaks to him too quickly, if he needs to communicate also through other alternative means of communication: mail, icons, applications that facilitate communication.

Sensory sensitivities: If there are stimuli that bother her at work e.g., too much noise, too much traffic in her work area, too much light, flashing light

Stress factors and how he reacts in stressful situations: what can bother him at work, so as to decrease his performance, perfectionism or lack of empathy of colleagues, the unwillingness to relate to colleagues, unexpected changes, unclear messages, negative feedback.

Before actually starting work, it is good for the employer to provide the person with autism with information about the job and the expectations he has from it (schedule, breaks, dress code, social expectations, holidays, etc.). It is also good to present it to her work colleagues and to introduce her to the company/ organization, as this will reduce her stress and anxiety and make her better understand the organization in which she will work. Very important would be a period of accommodation, a practical training for the position he will occupy.

Clear projects and tasks, clear instructions, preferably written. The expectations must be clear. To know exactly what he has to do both in general and with each task. The instructions for carrying out each task must clearly state where it begins and ends. E.g., he won't be told: "clean up the meeting room!" but it will be said: "wipe the tables, the windows, give with the vacuum cleaner, empty the trash can! ";



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

The resource person. The employer can designate a colleague to whom the person with autism can turn each time he has a problem of any kind.

Adapting the workspace: In order to increase the performance at work of the person with autism, there must be minimal adaptations, depending on the identified needs. e.g. placing the work table in a quieter place, not in a place with a lot of agitation or near doors, copiers, noisy machines, kitchen, passageways, etc. Wearing noise-reducing headphones if it is auditory sensitive, blinds for blurring bright light if it is visually sensitive.

Clear organization and visualization: It is good that the space, time and activities that the person with autism has to do are well structured and visualized. The following are recommended:

Schedules with the sequence of activities, daily, weekly, monthly tasks;

Tables, lists in which he can tick what he has achieved;

Listing the skills, sequences, steps involved in carrying out a more complex activity, if any;

Written and displayed instructions in plain sight;

Written procedures in plain sight even for the rules of behavior within the workplace, expectations at work, adequate tone of voice, voice tone is not allowed to raise the voice, quarrels are not allowed, not smoking, greeting, etc.;

The language must be clear, accompanied, preferably, also by visual images to explain the rules and expectations;

Alternative forms of communication: some people with autism cannot communicate verbally or have difficulty expressing their needs verbally. For these cases, alternative forms of communication such as: icons, applications on your phone or tablet, photos, instant e-mails are recommended.



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

A recommendation for employers would be to provide people with autism with a flexible schedule, e.g., a few breaks during working hours, starting working hours later. People with autism are very conscientious, they get involved one hundred percent, they do not take time, they do not pretend to work, so their energy consumption is a very high one. In addition, these people have to cope with background noises or inappropriate light due to sensory sensitivities, which again implies a very high consumption of energy. That is why it is good that at some time he is given a break to retreat to a quiet place where he can regain his energy.

Creating a calm and stable environment, without sudden, unforeseen changes. Not recommended to:

Let constructive feedback be clearly given, as some people with autism have a low self-esteem due to the negative social experiences to which they have been subjected in the past. The use of assertive communication, empathy, the avoidance of criticism when he is wrong and rather the explanation of the mistake made, encouragement, will have a positive effect on the evolution as employees of people with autism.

In conclusion, the creation of an adequate working environment for people with autism, involves:
Individual approach through: knowledge of learning style, communication style, sensory sensitivity and stress factors;

Presentation of the workplace, the organization and colleagues;

Providing training;

The resource person;

Adaptation of the workspace;

Clear organization and visualization;



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Alternative forms of communication, if any;

Flexible schedule;

Calm, predictable work environment.

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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

Chapter IV

Short Film with Demonstration Activities for Adults with Asperger Syndrome

The fourth part of the guide is made up of short films with demonstration activities that adults with Asperger syndrome can do; films are created, from each partner country; these films help employers make the connection between the theoretical part, the need for social integration and the practical part; they have the opportunity to change their vision about the integration of this social category in their work and receive information about the practical activities they can adapt in their company according to the profile they have and which corresponds to the potential of adults with autism;

STANDO LTD (Cyprus)

‘Difficulties and Problems Encountered by People with Autism at Work’

<https://youtu.be/Tepi1ffnmcg>

<https://youtu.be/IS0lqwGWVNw>

NAMOI (Russian Federation)

“COMMUNICATION OF THE EMPLOYER WITH PEOPLE WITH AUTISM”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r75knDgXRM8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buFpMDeR9JA>



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Project No: 2020-1-FR01-KA204-079996

INTEGRARE EUROPEANA IN DOMENIUL TINERETULUI, SPORTULUI, VOLUNTARIATULUI SI
CETATENIEI ACTIVE EUROPENE (Romania)

“Creating a special work environment for people with autism”

<https://youtu.be/4ptjM082Ssl>

CERCLE AUGUSTIN D'HIPPONE (France)

“Employer communication with families or legal representatives of adults with autism”

<https://youtu.be/O81smruT5XQ>

SC PSIHOFORWORLD (Romania)

“Suitable jobs for people with autism”

https://youtu.be/LZu_OVPs88s

<https://youtu.be/6FtA1qzJohA>

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMAN SCIENCES
ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE (Italy)

“Multidisciplinary taking into charge in people with autistic spectrum”



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