Cohesion
Inclusion of the Students with Trauma and Neurological Disorders

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Guidebook - WP4 COHESION Training Package for Students with Neurological Disorders

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Executive Summary

The COHESION Training Package addresses a critical gap in the European labor market: the transition of students and graduates with neurodivergent profiles (such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and dyspraxia) and those affected by war-related trauma from higher education to sustainable employment. While academic institutions often provide

structured support networks, the transition to the private sector can be challenging due to rigid workspaces, implicit communication expectations, and hiring processes designed for neurotypical candidates. This guidebook is designed specifically for students, interns, and job seekers. It offers a practical framework to understand inclusive workplaces, match personal strengths to job roles, identify and navigate barriers, and develop self-advocacy and disclosure strategies. By focusing on strengths and utilizing practical tools like the Learning Hive, this package empowers young learners to navigate their early career pathways successfully, fostering social cohesion and sustainable employment.

How to Use This Guidebook

This guidebook is designed as a practical, student-centered manual. It is structured to help you navigate your transition from higher education to the workplace. You do not need to read it from cover to cover; instead, it is organized into modular sections that you can refer to based on your current needs. If you are preparing for your job search, focus on the chapters on strength-based matching, recruitment accessibility, and disclosure decisions. If you are currently in an internship or starting your first job, utilize the soft skills exercises and self-advocacy scripts. Every concept is linked to a practical crash course that provides checklists, mini-procedures, and self-assessments to turn knowledge into action. Career advisors, university mentors, and peer buddies can also use this guidebook to support students through their transition journey.

Key Terms and Inclusive Language Note

Language shapes how we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us in the workplace. This guidebook uses neurodiversity-affirming, strengths-based language. Key terms include:

- Neurodiversity: The natural variation in human brains and minds; a valuable form of human diversity.

- Neurodivergent: Individuals whose cognitive functioning diverges from dominant societal norms (e.g., autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia).
- Self-Advocacy: The ability to identify your needs, articulate them clearly, and request adjustments that help you succeed.
- Disclosure: The voluntary decision to share personal information, such as a diagnosis or lived experience, to access workplace support.
- Masking: The exhausting effort of hiding your natural traits to conform to social expectations.
- Psychological Safety: An environment where you feel safe to speak up, ask questions, or request help without fear of negative consequences.

We encourage you to use terms that make you feel comfortable and respected, and to remember that your cognitive style is a valuable asset to any team.

INTRODUCTION: PREPARING FOR THE WORKPLACE: NEURODIVERSITY, TRAUMA, AND SELF-ADVOCACY

0.1 Purpose and Scope of the WP4 Guidebook

The WP4 Guidebook is a practical, methodological manual designed for university students, interns, and young graduates. Its purpose is to support your transition into the workplace, particularly if you navigate neurodivergence, learning differences, or trauma-related experiences. This manual is not a clinical guide or a diagnostic tool; it is an empowerment resource. It provides you with the knowledge and tools to identify inclusive work environments, request reasonable accommodations, and build the soft skills needed for collaborative projects. The guidebook aims to boost your confidence, protect your well-being, and help you find roles where your unique talents are recognized and valued.

0.2 Academic Foundations of Neurodiversity

The neurodiversity paradigm recognizes cognitive differences—such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and Tourette syndrome—as natural and valuable variations in human neurocognition. Rather than viewing these conditions through a medical model of deficit, the neurodiversity paradigm emphasizes a strengths-based approach. Many neurodivergent individuals have a "spiky profile," meaning they possess exceptional abilities in specific areas, such as analytical logic, creativity, hyper-focus, or pattern recognition, alongside challenges in executive function or social communication. Recognizing your spiky profile allows you to seek roles that align with your natural strengths while proactively managing areas where you need support.

0.3 The Social Model and Biopsychosocial Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability posits that individuals are disabled not by their differences, but by barriers in their environment. In the workplace, barriers can include loud open-plan offices, rigid working hours, or implicit communication styles. By recognizing that these barriers are external, you can focus on advocating for adjustments rather than feeling that you are "deficient." The Biopsychosocial Model complements this by showing how your biology, psychology, and social environment interact. In a supportive workplace with clear communication, flexible routines, and sensory adjustments, your environment enables you to perform at your best.

0.4 Trauma and War-Related Stress in Employment Contexts

For students who have experienced displacement, conflict, or war-related trauma, entering the workforce can carry unique challenges. Trauma affects the nervous system, sometimes manifesting as anxiety, hypervigilance, difficulty concentrating, or fatigue. A trauma-informed workplace is built on safety, predictability, and trust. Understanding how trauma affects your focus and energy can help you identify triggers and establish personal coping strategies, such as structured routines, quiet spaces, and

supportive peer networks. You have the right to a safe working environment that respects your history without forcing you to share private details.

0.5 Why This Matters for Students Transitioning to Employment

Entering the job market is a major milestone, and finding the right environment is crucial. The modern economy values innovation, detail, and diverse perspectives—qualities that neurodivergent individuals and trauma survivors often possess in abundance. However, traditional hiring and management practices can screen out this talent. By learning to identify inclusive employers, understand your rights, and articulate your strengths, you can find a workplace where you can thrive, contribute meaningfully, and build a sustainable, rewarding career.

0.6 Learning Objectives of the Guidebook

By working through this guidebook and its practical crash courses, you will achieve the following objectives:

- Explain neurodiversity, self-advocacy, and inclusion using strengths-based language.
- Identify and describe common workplace barriers and the accommodations that can resolve them.
- Assess your own cognitive profile and match your unique strengths to job tasks.
- Develop strategies for disclosure and requesting reasonable adjustments at work.
- Strengthen key soft skills, including emotional regulation, communication, and collaboration.
- Create a personalized inclusion plan to support your transition into your next internship or job.

PART II. PRACTICAL CRASH COURSES

Source note: This guidebook includes all 22 crash courses published in the Learning Hive for Students, to preserve partner contributions and provide comprehensive transition training.

Recommended delivery standard: Each crash course is designed as a self-paced 10-15 minute microlearning unit with clear objectives, content sections, checklists, practical exercises, a self-assessment quiz, and a next-day implementation checklist.

Crash Course Descriptions

Crash Course 1. Mental Health, Neurodiversity, and Inclusion in the Workplace

Source ID and partner: CC4 1.1 | Innopares

Linked chapter: Chapter 1: Understanding Inclusive Workplaces: What Makes a Safe and Supportive Job Environment

Description: This crash course helps students understand how mental health and neurodiversity shape workplace experiences and how inclusive behaviours, routines, empathy, and flexibility support well-being and participation.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Identify common challenges faced by neurodivergent individuals and people with mental health conditions in work settings
- Describe inclusive behaviours and routines that support psychological safety
- Apply communication strategies that reduce stress and improve clarity
- Recognize the importance of flexibility and empathy in team environments
- Create a personal inclusion plan for future study or work settings

Suggested workplace activity: Prepare a short “personal inclusion plan” in which learners identify possible workplace barriers, preferred communication routines, and one action that would support psychological safety.

Crash Course 2. Designing Inclusive Workspaces with Universal Design

Source ID and partner: CC4 1.2 | Innopares

Linked chapter: Chapter 1: Understanding Inclusive Workplaces: What Makes a Safe and Supportive Job Environment

Description: This crash course introduces Universal Design as a proactive approach to creating accessible, supportive, and inclusive work environments for people with different abilities, cognitive styles, and sensory needs.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Identify and explain the seven core principles of Universal Design
- Recognize barriers to inclusion in traditional work environments
- Apply Universal Design principles to redesign a workspace or workflow
- Select tools and technologies that support diverse cognitive and sensory needs
- Reflect on how inclusive design benefits all users, not only people with disabilities

Suggested workplace activity: Use a Universal Design checklist to analyse a workspace or workflow and propose three simple improvements that would make it more inclusive.

Crash Course 3. Fit First: Discovering Your Strengths for Meaningful Work

Source ID and partner: CC4 2.1 | Innopares

Linked chapter: Chapter 2: Finding the Right Fit: Matching Your Strengths to the Right Role

Description: This crash course helps students identify their strengths, interests, working preferences, and role-fit needs so they can choose or shape work roles that support motivation, well-being, and performance.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Identify and articulate personal strengths, interests, and preferred working styles
- Explain the concept of person-job fit and its relevance to well-being and performance
- Recognize signs of poor fit and propose adjustments
- Create a personalized "Role Fit Blueprint" for future internship or job choices
- Communicate needs and preferences confidently in workplace settings

Suggested workplace activity: Create a "Role Fit Blueprint" matching personal strengths, preferred tasks, communication needs, and suitable workplace conditions.

Crash Course 4. Inclusive Internships: Designing Roles That Work for Everyone

Source ID and partner: CC4 2.2 | Innopares

Linked chapter: Chapter 2: Finding the Right Fit: Matching Your Strengths to the Right Role

Description: This crash course supports students in recognizing barriers to inclusion in internships and co-designing roles that better match individual strengths, needs, pacing, and communication preferences.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Identify common environmental and task-related barriers in internships
- Apply strategies to customize tasks, pacing, and communication styles
- Use feedback loops to co-design inclusive roles with supervisors or mentors
- Recognize inclusive design principles and their wider benefits
- Create a simple plan for advocating adjustments in future internships

Suggested workplace activity: Analyse an internship scenario and prepare a short adjustment plan covering task clarity, pacing, communication, and feedback.

Crash Course 5. Rigid Structures

Source ID and partner: CC4 3.1 | EDITC Ltd

Linked chapter: Chapter 3: Recognizing barriers at work

Description: This crash course helps neurodivergent students recognize rigid organisational structures, understand how they create workplace barriers, and identify flexible arrangements that support inclusion.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Recognize workplace barriers for neurodivergent individuals
- Define rigid structures at work
- List the negative impacts of rigid structures
- Suggest flexible arrangements that make organisational environments more inclusive

Suggested workplace activity: Map one rigid workplace rule or routine and redesign it into a more flexible alternative that still meets organisational goals.

Crash Course 6. Unclear communication and overstimulating working environment

Source ID and partner: CC4 3.2 | EDITC Ltd

Linked chapter: Chapter 3: Recognizing barriers at work

Description: This crash course explains how unclear communication and overstimulating environments become barriers for neurodivergent students and how clearer communication practices and sensory-friendly spaces can reduce stress.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Define unclear communication in relation to neurodivergent students
- List barriers created by unclear communication
- Explain the impacts of unclear communication on neurodivergent students
- Develop practices that make communication more effective
- Identify sensory challenges in the workplace
- List the impacts of overstimulating environments
- Suggest ways to create sensory-friendly working conditions

Suggested workplace activity: Rewrite an unclear workplace instruction into plain language and complete a short sensory audit of a work area.

Crash Course 7. What happens when awareness is missing and recognizing rigid systems

Source ID and partner: CC4 4.1 | Luiss

Linked chapter: Chapter 4: When Employers Don't Understand: Dealing with Inflexible Workplaces

Description: This crash course helps students understand how limited employer awareness, fixed routines, and rigid evaluation methods can exclude neurodivergent people and reduce workplace well-being.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Explain how rigid corporate norms act as invisible barriers
- Recognize how fixed routines and evaluation methods may exclude diversity
- Understand how constructive dialogue can turn support requests into collaboration
- Explain how adapting time, space, and feedback can improve well-being and inclusion

Suggested workplace activity: Analyse a short scenario of an inflexible workplace and identify hidden barriers, their effects, and one collaborative change request.

Crash Course 8. Handling strategies and turning barriers into change

Source ID and partner: CC4 4.2 | Luiss

Linked chapter: Chapter 4: When Employers Don't Understand: Dealing with Inflexible Workplaces

Description: This crash course develops practical strategies for managing challenging workplace environments, seeking support, advocating for solutions, and turning individual barriers into broader inclusion improvements.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Use reminders and routines to support focus, rest, and energy management
- Seek mentors or allies for emotional and practical support
- Frame accommodation requests as collaborative solutions rather than blame
- Build networks and alliances to reduce isolation and share resources
- Use personal experience to support structural advocacy and workplace change

Suggested workplace activity: Prepare a solution-focused accommodation request and identify one mentor, ally, or support network that could help implement it.

Crash Course 9. Self-advocacy and disclosure

Source ID and partner: CC4 4.3 | Luiss

Linked chapter: Chapter 4: When Employers Don't Understand: Dealing with Inflexible Workplaces

Description: This crash course helps students communicate their needs effectively, understand when and how to disclose support needs, and frame requests in ways that improve performance and reduce misunderstandings.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Explain how sharing needs early can prevent misunderstandings
- Communicate support needs during onboarding or workplace dialogue

- Frame accommodation requests as tools for better performance
- Present self-advocacy as professional responsibility rather than a special favour

Suggested workplace activity: Create a short self-advocacy script for requesting a workplace adjustment in a respectful, performance-focused way.

Crash Course 10. What workplace culture really is

Source ID and partner: CC4 8.1 | Luiss

Linked chapter: Chapter 8: Workplace culture – How to know if a job is right for you

Description: This crash course explains workplace culture as the everyday values, behaviours, communication patterns, and decision-making practices that shape whether a workplace is genuinely inclusive.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Explain that workplace culture is shown through behaviour, not only formal statements
- Observe how teams communicate and make decisions
- Identify whether communication is transparent, structured, and accessible
- Look for openness, fairness, and respect as signs of genuine inclusion

Suggested workplace activity: Use a workplace culture observation checklist to compare what an organisation says about inclusion with what people actually do.

Crash Course 11. Signs of inclusion during interviews

Source ID and partner: CC4 8.2 | Luiss

Linked chapter: Chapter 8: Workplace culture – How to know if a job is right for you

Description: This crash course helps students read early signs of inclusion during recruitment and interviews by observing communication, fairness, accessibility, and respect.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Identify behavioural signs of authentic inclusion during interviews
- Observe how information is shared and whether communication is accessible
- Recognize openness, fairness, and respect in recruitment interactions
- Use interview clues to assess whether a workplace may support diverse needs

Suggested workplace activity: Prepare five interview questions that help assess inclusion, clarity, flexibility, and support before accepting a role.

Crash Course 12. Matching your needs and growing in inclusive workplaces

Source ID and partner: CC4 8.3 | Luiss

Linked chapter: Chapter 8: Workplace culture – How to know if a job is right for you

Description: This crash course helps students reflect on the conditions they need to thrive and understand how inclusive workplaces support confidence, creativity, authenticity, and long-term development.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Reflect on workplace conditions that support individual thriving
- Recognize that calm, structured, or flexible settings can be valid professional needs
- Explain how support can increase confidence and creativity
- Understand authenticity as part of sustainable career development
- Identify workplace environments that respect identity, health, and growth

Suggested workplace activity: Complete a workplace-fit matrix matching personal needs, preferred conditions, strengths, and warning signs of poor fit.

Crash Course 13. Asking for Accommodations and Knowing Your Rights

Source ID and partner: CC4 9.1 | MANS

Linked chapter: Chapter 9: Advocating for Yourself at Work

Description: This crash course helps students and young professionals ask for workplace accommodations in a clear, positive way and understand the rights and support available to them.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Explain what a workplace accommodation is and why it is not a favour
- Name at least three common, low-cost accommodations
- Prepare a short, specific and solution-focused accommodation request
- Name the main legal frameworks that protect workers with disabilities in the EU
- Identify where to get support (university office, HR, NGOs)

Suggested workplace activity: Prepare a short, specific and solution-focused accommodation request for one situation at work or in an internship, and note where you could get support.

Crash Course 14. Setting Boundaries and Building Confidence in Self-Advocacy

Source ID and partner: CC4 9.2 | MANS

Linked chapter: Chapter 9: Advocating for Yourself at Work

Description: This crash course helps students express their needs and boundaries at work in a respectful, confident way and build self-advocacy as a skill that grows with practice.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Explain why boundaries protect health and performance
- Express a boundary about time, workload or sensory needs using an “I statement”
- Use short, ready-made scripts for everyday self-advocacy
- Plan small practice steps to build confidence

Suggested workplace activity: Write one “I statement” for a boundary about time, workload or sensory needs, and plan two small steps to practise it.

Crash Course 15. Staying Calm and Confident at Work – Emotional Regulation for Success

Source ID and partner: CC4 6.1 | MANS

Linked chapter: Chapter 6: Building Soft Skills for Diverse Workplaces

Description: This crash course helps learners recognize stress and emotional overload, apply self-regulation techniques, and build confidence in academic and professional settings.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Identify signs of stress or emotional overload
- Apply three grounding or self-regulation techniques
- Reframe mistakes as learning opportunities
- List three ways to build confidence through daily practice

Suggested workplace activity: Create a personal stress-trigger map and choose three grounding techniques to use before, during, and after difficult workplace situations.

Crash Course 16. Communicating and Collaborating Effectively in Diverse Teams

Source ID and partner: CC4 6.2 | MANS

Linked chapter: Chapter 6: Building Soft Skills for Diverse Workplaces

Description: This crash course builds practical communication, feedback, teamwork, flexibility, and conflict-resolution skills for inclusive and diverse teams.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Use plain language and active listening

- Give and receive feedback constructively
- Apply strategies for team collaboration and conflict resolution
- Demonstrate flexibility and resilience in group work

Suggested workplace activity: Write a short team communication script showing clear instructions, active listening, constructive feedback, and respectful conflict resolution.

Crash Course 17. From classroom to workplace (role of internships) and inclusive internships

Source ID and partner: CC4 7.1 | EDITC Ltd

Linked chapter: Chapter 7: Internships and first jobs – What you can learn and expect

Description: This crash course helps learners understand how internships support the transition from education to employment and what inclusive internships should look like for neurodivergent students.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Explain how internships can ease the transition to the workplace
- Identify the benefits of internships
- Recognize what inclusive internships look like

Suggested workplace activity: Create an internship expectations map showing tasks, support persons, communication routines, and inclusion features needed for a successful start.

Crash Course 18. Mentorship and feedback during an internship

Source ID and partner: CC4 7.2 | EDITC Ltd

Linked chapter: Chapter 7: Internships and first jobs – What you can learn and expect

Description: This crash course explains the value of mentorship and feedback during internships and shows what neuroaffirming mentoring and effective feedback can look like.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Identify the benefits of mentorship
- Describe what neuroaffirming mentorship looks like
- Identify the benefits of providing feedback
- Explain how effective feedback should be provided

Suggested workplace activity: Prepare a mentor–intern feedback dialogue script using clear expectations, supportive language, and one agreed next step.

Crash Course 19. Inclusive recruitment

Source ID and partner: CC4 5.1 | VAMK

Linked chapter: Chapter 5: What Good Employers Do – Inclusive HR Practices Explained

Description: This crash course helps students understand what inclusive recruitment looks like and how to navigate applications, job advertisements, recruitment tasks, and interview processes with confidence.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Identify key features of a clear and inclusive job advertisement
- Recognize signs of a transparent and supportive recruitment process
- Ask relevant questions when job information is unclear
- Understand how different recruitment methods can support individual strengths

Suggested workplace activity: Review a job advertisement and mark unclear requirements, inclusive features, possible barriers, and questions to ask the recruiter.

Crash Course 20. Clear orientation and mentoring

Source ID and partner: CC4 5.2 | VAMK

Linked chapter: Chapter 5: What Good Employers Do – Inclusive HR Practices Explained

Description: This crash course shows how structured onboarding, clear instructions, mentoring, and regular feedback help students and new workers adapt confidently to a new workplace.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Identify key elements of a supportive onboarding process
- Understand the role of mentoring and regular feedback
- Recognize what kinds of support help learners adapt to a new workplace
- Describe what a structured and clear start at work looks like

Suggested workplace activity: Design a first-week onboarding checklist including written instructions, mentor contact, feedback points, and space for questions.

Crash Course 21. Understanding your strengths and seeing their value

Source ID and partner: CC4 10.1 | VAMK

Linked chapter: Chapter 10: Real-Life Success Stories – How Neurodivergent Students Have Thrived

Description: This crash course helps students recognize personal strengths and understand how different strengths, including neurodivergent traits, can be valuable in different roles and work environments.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Identify personal strengths such as accuracy, creativity, empathy, or persistence
- Recognize how different strengths are valued in different roles
- Understand how neurodivergent traits can contribute to team performance
- Reflect on how personal abilities can be used in real work situations

Suggested workplace activity: Complete a strengths-to-roles mapping task linking three personal strengths to specific workplace tasks or career paths.

Crash Course 22. Turning Strengths into Success

Source ID and partner: CC4 10.2 | VAMK

Linked chapter: Chapter 10: Real-Life Success Stories – How Neurodivergent Students Have Thrived

Description: This crash course helps students understand how internships, trial periods, part-time work, supportive environments, and gradual progress can support a successful transition into working life.

Indicative learning outcomes:

- Understand how internships, trial periods, and part-time work support career development
- Recognize how supportive work environments help people learn and build confidence
- Identify practical ways to build experience step by step
- Describe realistic next steps when preparing to enter working life

Suggested workplace activity: Prepare a “next small step” career plan identifying one opportunity, one supportive environment feature, and one person or resource that can help.

PART III. COMPETENCY MAP FOR INCLUSIVE EMPLOYEES/INTERNS

The competency map outlines the transversal and distinctive skills that will support your transition and growth in inclusive environments:

Transversal Soft Skills

- Emotional Regulation: Managing stress, utilizing energy-recovery strategies, and handling sensory sensitivities productively.
- Communication: Expressing ideas clearly, asking for written instructions, and confirming expectations.
- Teamwork & Collaboration: Cooperating constructively in diverse teams, sharing tasks, and respecting different work styles.
- Flexibility & Resilience: Adapting to workspace changes, learning from constructive feedback, and recovering from setbacks.

Self-Advocacy & Adaptation Competencies

- Strengths Recognition: Identifying your cognitive "spiky profile" and matching your specific abilities (e.g., focus, creativity) to tasks.
- Barrier Identification: Recognizing physical, sensory, or communication barriers in a workspace and understanding their impact.
- Accommodation Requests: Articulating and co-designing practical workplace adjustments (e.g., quiet desk, visual timelines) with supervisors.
- Disclosure Management: Assessing when, how, and whether to share diagnostic information or support needs.

PART IV. ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Self-directed progress tracking is essential for transition success. You can evaluate your learning using the following strategy:

1. Quiz Success

Complete the Check Your Understanding quizzes at the end of each crash course. A score of at least 70% (e.g., 4 out of 5 correct answers) indicates a strong grasp of the fundamental concepts.

2. Practical WCAG Tasks

Perform the practical digital accessibility tasks provided in the courses, such as adding descriptive alt text to images, verifying text contrast, and organizing content with proper heading levels (H1-H3). Save screenshots or files of your work to document your accessibility skills.

3. Transition Presentation

Prepare a short 1-2 slide presentation (maximum 2 minutes) demonstrating how you applied accessibility or inclusive design principles in a team project, university course, or internship. Focus on using readable fonts, high contrast, and strengths-focused communication.

PART V. CASE STUDIES AND BEST PRACTICES

Real-life success stories show how neurodivergent students and graduates thrive when matched with the right roles and supported by small, practical workplace adjustments:

Case Study 1: ICT and Software Development

An autistic student created an e-learning solution during their studies, which led to a permanent position in software development. They thrived in work where they could focus deeply on one task, supported by clear instructions and a calm environment. The employer noticed that their precision significantly improved software quality. Key takeaway: Structured, quiet environments allow analytical and detail-oriented strengths to shine.

Case Study 2: Marketing and Creative Ideation

A student with ADHD completed an internship at a marketing agency. They excelled at idea generation and brought fresh perspectives that were turned into real campaigns. The workplace was a good fit because quick thinking and creativity were valued, and flexible ways of working were allowed. Key takeaway: Dynamic and creative roles benefit from flexible routines that support flow states and energy variation.

Case Study 3: Customer Service and Healthcare

A student with a trauma background began a placement in healthcare. They built strong trust with patients through empathy and calm interaction. The workplace supported them with mentoring and time to get comfortable, which created a safe environment and allowed their strengths to shine. Key takeaway: Predictability, peer support, and gradual onboarding build confidence for employees managing trauma or stress sensitivities.

PART VI. SELF-ADVOCACY AND ACCOMMODATION GUIDELINES

Advocating for your needs is a powerful skill that helps you build a supportive, sustainable career. Follow these guidelines to request accommodations and manage disclosure:

1. The Disclosure Decision

Sharing your diagnosis is completely voluntary. You are protected by privacy laws and anti-discrimination frameworks. Consider these options:

- Focus on Needs: You do not need to share a medical label. You can simply state: "I work best when I receive tasks in writing so I can review them carefully."
- Timing: Decide whether to disclose during applications (to request interview adjustments), onboarding (to set up desk adjustments), or later when role demands change.

2. Accommodation Request Protocol

When asking for workplace adjustments, use a clear three-step approach:

1. Identify the barrier: "The bright fluorescent lights above my desk cause eye strain and make it difficult to focus."
2. Propose the adjustment: "Moving my desk closer to natural light or wearing a cap/tinted glasses would help me stay focused."
3. Emphasize performance: "This simple change will help me maintain high accuracy and quality in my reports."

3. Setting Boundaries

Establish healthy boundaries to prevent stress and burnout. This includes clarifying your availability, requesting quiet zones, using shared calendars to block focus time, and asking for private feedback instead of public critique.

PART VII. PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR STUDENTS

Use these tools and templates to organize your transition and advocate for your needs:

- Student Self-Assessment Checklist: A worksheet to map your sensory and cognitive preferences before starting a job.
- Onboarding Conversation Script: A template to guide your first meeting with your supervisor.
- Accommodations Request Template: A written guide for formal emails or forms requesting workplace adjustments.
- Individual Support & Work Preferences Profile: A one-page document to share with teammates and mentors.
- Inclusive Collaboration Checklist: Best practices for group projects and team coordination.

CONCLUSION

Transitioning from university to employment is a journey of discovery. Your unique cognitive profile, strengths, and lived experiences are valuable resources for the private sector. By understanding inclusive workplaces, practicing self-advocacy, and utilizing the tools in this guidebook, you can navigate this transition with confidence. Remember, you do not need to conform to a single "normal" standard—inclusion means creating environments where diverse minds can succeed together.

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