Meetings

Let’s talk about it

Meetings can be tough, especially if you need accommodations of any kind. For many neurodivergent individuals, a standard meeting format can be a barrier to contributing their best work. For example:

- Sensory overload means that a grid of faces on a video call, poor audio, or a noisy room can all be overwhelming
- Processing pace issues make it difficult to keep up if the discussion is too fast, topics change suddenly, or information isn't presented clearly
- Unclear rules like vague agendas, unwritten social rules about turn-taking, and the pressure of being "put on the spot" can create significant anxiety
- Focus fatigue means that long, unstructured meetings can be particularly draining for those with conditions affecting executive function or attention
- Cameras being required to be on means that the neurodivergent person may feel like they have to mask for the meeting, which increases exhaustion

This is why creating a more inclusive meeting culture isn't just a 'nice-to-have'. It's essential for collaboration.

Simple adjustments can make a huge difference, such as:

- Sending a clear agenda and any pre-reading at least 24 hours in advance
- Stating the meeting's purpose and goals clearly at the start (ideally in the meeting invite)
- Making cameras optional
- Normalising the use of the chat function for questions
- Sticking to scheduled times
- Including breaks for any meeting over 60 minutes
- Finishing by summarising clear action points and who is responsible for them

Consider making a neuroinclusive meeting guide, and putting a printed copy in every meeting room. It can give tips on how to make meetings fully inclusive, with a focus on people who are neurodivergent.

There's also a meeting invite template, which provides a full structure to add to your meeting description. This makes it simple for you to add information to your meeting

invites and ensure that no one is missing the clarity that they need. It also allows people to prepare for the meeting in advance, which is crucial.

Useful links

- Inclusion Toolkit
- Meeting Invite Template