



Inclusive Workplaces: An Employee's Guide to Psychosocial Wellbeing in the Workplace

What is Neurodivergence?

- About 1 in 5 employees (20%) are neurodivergent meaning they think, learn, or work differently from most people.
- Neurodivergence includes conditions such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, ADHD, and autism.
- Neurodivergent employees bring many strengths, such as creativity, focus, and problem-solving. However, they may also need support with tasks like reading, writing, organisation, or communication.
- Without the right support, neurodivergent staff can face higher risks of psychosocial hazards at work.

What are Psychosocial Hazards?

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Psychosocial hazards are parts of work that can harm a person's mental health or wellbeing.

Examples include:

- Heavy or unrealistic workloads leading to longer unpaid work hours
- Poor communication or unclear roles
- Bullying, exclusion, or unfair treatment
- Lack of support from managers or co-workers
- Unsafe or overwhelming work environments
- Lack of training

What is Psychosocial Safety?

Psychological safety means having a workplace where people feel:

- Safe to share ideas
- Safe to disclose your neurodivergence
- Comfortable asking for help including workplace accommodations such as tools and strategies that support you to work more productively
- Able to speak up about problems
- Supported when they make mistakes

When employees feel safe, workplaces see more collaboration, creativity, and wellbeing.



Psychosocial hazards for neurodivergent employees

Psychosocial hazards for neurodivergent employees

Psychosocial hazards are workplace factors that can negatively impact mental health and well-being. For neurodivergent employees (e.g., those with dyslexia, ADHD, autism), these risks are often amplified because workplaces are typically designed for neurotypical norms.

Why might I be at greater risk than others of psychosocial hazards in the workplace?

As a neurodivergent employee, you may face extra challenges if you don't have access to the right support and reasonable adjustments. When you don't have this support, it can be harder for you to do your job to the best of your ability.

Examples of challenges may be:

- Working in noisy or overstimulating spaces
- Being misunderstood by others
- Rigid work systems that don't support your working style, stopping you from doing your best work
- Stigma or lack of awareness
- Lack of access to workplace adjustments, clear processes for requesting and implementing workplace adjustments
- Not having enough time to complete tasks
- Not being able to take breaks and move around when you need to

When these issues aren't addressed, they can impact your mental health and wellbeing, leading to workplace burnout. You can learn more about burnout in our **Burnout Factsheet**.



EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

What are my rights?

Neurodivergent employees are protected under the Discrimination Act 1992, Fair Work Act 2009 [1, 2] and the Human Rights Act 1998, and as such, you are entitled to access reasonable adjustments to do your job to the best of your ability.

Additionally, workplaces are now required to minimise Psychosocial Hazards in the workplace [3], making sure you have:

- A workplace that is safe and inclusive for everyone
- Fair treatment and respect from others
- Access to the reasonable adjustments that you need to do your job well

What are Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments refer to workplace accommodations approved by an employer that allow individuals with disabilities and or neurodivergence to participate equally in a job role compared to those without a disability and or neurodivergence. You can find out more about reasonable adjustment through the Employment Assistance Program. Workplace accommodations are adjustments your employer can make to support you in your role.

The workplace can better support you and reduce psychosocial hazards by implementing reasonable adjustments that best meet your needs. This works best when solutions are created together, policies are flexible and inclusive, and help is offered early before challenges become serious.

These may include:

- Flexible work hours or breaks
- Hybrid working from home arrangements where possible
- Assistive technology (such as speech-to-text, screen readers)
- Modified tasks or deadlines and allowing extra time to complete tasks
- Quiet or low-stimulation workspaces
- Extra training and support with changes or new systems and processes
- Adjusted communication methods (such as visual support and direct language)



Creating Psychosocial Safety

Creating psychosocial safety is a shared responsibility.

Everyone, leaders, managers, co-workers and you all have a role in making work inclusive and safe. When workplaces value neurodiversity, they gain:

- Stronger teamwork
- Better problem-solving
- Reduced stress and turnover
- A happier, more productive workforce

Inclusive workplaces move from psychosocial hazards, towards psychosocial safety

Psychosocial Hazards

Risk factors that harm wellbeing

Stress, burnout, exclusion

Unsafe environment



Psychological Safety

Protective factors that build wellbeing

Belonging, trust, and inclusion

Supportive environment



Building a Safe and Inclusive Workplace

Additional ways to reduce psychosocial hazards in the workplace can include:

Pathways for Disclosure and Support

Your workplace should offer a private and clearly documented process, ideally managed by a central team, for sharing adjustment requests, diagnoses, or concerns. This means you only need to provide your information once, without repeating it to different departments. A workplace adjustment passport is a great initiative that many organisations are now introducing. Creating a safe disclosure pathway.

Peer Support and Allyship

You can take part in mentorship, buddy programs, and support groups to help connect with others and feel a sense of belonging. This can reduce feelings of isolation and to feel more supported at work. If your workplace doesn't have this type of support, you can connect with the Dear Dyslexic Facebook Community or other adult groups.

Neuroaffirming workplace consultants

Working with an external workplace consultant for 1:1 support can help you address workplace challenges by accessing tailored strategies and tools. Working with a consultant can boost your productivity, confidence, and self-advocacy skills. Here's what one participant shared after receiving support.

"I have learned more about dyslexia and how to approach my reading and written work in a way that plays to my strengths. I have been able to be a bit more time-effective. I have also gained confidence in speaking to others about my dyslexia and asking for accommodation[s] where needed."

Educated and Trained Staff

Your workplace should provide training for all staff to build awareness of different neurodivergent conditions. Managers and teams should receive additional training such as psychosocial hazards and workplace accommodations.

Supporting your wellbeing at work

There are several strategies in the workplace you can use to look after yourself at work, including:

- practice mindfulness or relaxation techniques
- maintain regular positive communication with a trusted network of friends, family or coworkers.
- break tasks into manageable steps and use planners or apps
- add breaks throughout the day to prevent fatigue from building up
- ask for help when you need it

Use AI tools to assist with daily tasks:

- Stay organised by setting reminders with apps like Alexa or track time with Toogl
- Get help with writing tasks with tools like Grammarly, Goblin Tools, and speech-to-text for note-taking, texting and dictating emails

Supports Within Your Workplace

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** ask your HR department or manager
- **Talk to your manager:** Discuss tasks and deadlines openly, explore workplace accommodations together.
- **Employment Assistant Fund:** You or your workplace can apply for funding support through the Federal Government Employment Assistant Fund ([JobAccess](#)). The fund can cover the costs of workplace accommodations, one-on-one support and training. Contact **re:think dyslexia** to find out more.

External Supports

- Your state/ Territory Regulator, such as WorkSafe
- Fair Work Ombudsman



Supporting your wellbeing outside of work

Outside of The Workplace

Here are some daily strategies that can help:

- doing things you love, such as hobbies and things you're good at
- Adjust the sensory environment to reduce overstimulation:
 - Wearing noise-cancelling headphones when going out and about
 - Turning the TV or radio down when speaking with others
- Use AI tools to assist with daily tasks:
 - Stay organised by setting reminders with apps like Alexa or track time with Toogl
 - Get help with writing tasks with tools like Grammarly, Goblin Tools, and speech-to-text for note-taking and texting
- Mindfulness activities, such as mindful breathing and self-compassion to decrease stress, increase emotional responses, and take guilt-free rest, such as Smiley Minds or Insight Timer
- set boundaries by clearly communicating your energy limits to friends, family so you get the rest you need
- get enough sleep, stay active, and eat well

Reach out for mental health support when you need it, such as visiting your GP to get a Mental Health Care Plan or seeing a counsellor or psychologist.

- Lifeline: Provides 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services at 131114.
- Beyond Blue: Offers 24/7 support via phone 1300 22 4636, online chat, or email for mental health and workplace wellbeing.
- 13 YARN: 13 92 76 (24 hours/7 days) and talk with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter.



Need more information

You can find out more on psychosocial hazards in the workplace at **re:think dyslexia** including our:

- **An Employer's Guide to Neurodivergence and psychosocial wellbeing in the workplace**
- **Neurodivergence and burnout a guide**

If you have further questions or would like to access our workplace training to support you in navigating how your workplace can mitigate psychosocial hazards in the workplace, contact us on our free Confidential Helpline: 1800 13 NEAP (6327) and speak with one of our Workplace Consultants or email us at hello@rethinkdyslexia.com.au

This Factsheet has been developed by the **re:think dyslexia** and reviewed by our Lived Experience and Subject Matter Advisory committee, including:

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For a full list of references for this guide, go to www.rethinkdyslexia.com.au