

Neurodivergent Recruitment

TOOL KIT

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doing things differently



About this toolkit

This toolkit was created through the Banyule Neurodivergent Youth Workshop program, co-designed with young people across three workshops in 2026. In collaboration with re:think dyslexia, Banyule City Council and the North Eastern Melbourne Local Jobs Program.

Why a toolkit?

There isn't one right way to find work, and there isn't one right way to be neurodivergent.

Young people told us they wanted practical resources they could actually use when looking for work, preparing for interviews and communicating what works for them. So rather than creating another guide telling you what to do, we created a toolkit you can make your own.

The tools are based on what young people shared across our three workshops: the barriers they experience, the language that feels right, the strengths and skills they bring, and what they said would make a difference.

Start anywhere. Use what helps. Skip what doesn't. Come back when you need it. You are in control:

- You can pass.
- You can take a break or stop.
- You decide what you share.
- You don't have to complete everything.
- This toolkit is for you first.

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Myths & Facts

about Neurodivergence



Myth: Neurodivergent people are less capable.

Fact:
Neurodivergent people are just as capable as anyone else, especially when they get the right support, understanding, and environment to thrive.

Myth: Neurodivergent people need to be "fixed."

Fact:
Neurodivergence is a difference, not something that needs to be fixed, cured or changed.

Myth: If you can read you can't be dyslexic.

Fact:
Dyslexia is on a spectrum and everyone's reading ability is different depending on the age of diagnosis and intervention accessed.

Myth: We are "all a little bit 'ADHD', 'dyslexic' or 'autistic."

Fact:
This is not true. Everyone occasionally struggles with spelling, misplacing their phone, or preferring to stay home. Neurodivergent people experience these challenges daily and can affect their life, mental health and wellbeing without the right supports.

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What Young People shared with us:

Applying for jobs is exhausting and feels like shouting into the void.





It's hard to explain skills in the way employers want to hear them.

"I feel exhausted applying for jobs and never hearing back."





"Job ads feel like a different language full of words that don't mean what they say."

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What Young People said about being part of the project:

"This is so amazing, I'm so grateful and thankful for these sessions!!"





"I learnt so much! It was good learning what the job ads actually mean and it helps it all feel a little bit less overwhelming and scary!"

" I feel more hopeful and motivated to apply for jobs again."



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What's inside

TOOL 1:
Building a Language Bank: How to Translate Your Skills

TOOL 2:
How to Decode a Job Ad

TOOL 3:
Cover Letter Starters: Building Your Answers

TOOL 4:
Selection Criteria: what it is and how to write one

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Know Your Rights and the Disclosure Decision Tree

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Looking after your mental health and wellbeing

Resources and services

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TOOL 1

Building a Language Bank: How to translate your Skills



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TOOL 1
Language Bank

Your Language Bank

A **language bank is a collection of words and phrases** you can keep and use when you need them. This is your space to collect words that describe the kind of workplace you want and how you want to be treated. They might be words you have read in a job ad, heard from someone else, or discovered for yourself.

Use your language bank to help you:

- write cover letters and selection criteria
- prepare for interviews
- explain what matters to you at work
- look for clues in job ads and an organisation's About Us page about whether the workplace might be right for you.

Over time, you'll start to notice when a workplace is, or isn't, speaking your language. Here are some examples:

- **They lead with their values in plain language.** Say what they actually do, not slogans. "We share interview questions ahead of time" says more than "We value diversity."
- **Name their inclusive practices.** Examples are flexible hours, written instructions, quiet spaces, choice of how to communicate, and adjustments without needing a diagnosis.
- **Show who's already there**. Mention neurodivergent staff, ERGs, or leaders who speak openly about it, but only with their consent.
- **Explains how you can ask for support**. Who to contact, what happens next, and that asking won't count against you.
- **Be honest about where they are at**. "We're still learning, and here's what we're working on" builds more trust than claiming to be perfect.



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TOOL 1
Language Bank

What to do

Start your own list of workplace words and phrases. Add to it whenever something feels positive, respectful and inclusive, or when a word makes you feel uncomfortable or concerned. Over time, this can help you recognise workplaces that are a good fit for you.

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TOOL 1
Language Bank

TOOL 1
Language Bank

How I like to work

Think about times you've felt focused, respected and at your best. What made that possible? These words can help you name how you like to work and the values you want a workplace to share.

How I like to work	How I want to be treated
• Flexible hours • Clear, written instructions • Time to process • Focused, uninterrupted time • Remote or hybrid options • A predictable routine	• Respected • Trusted • Heard • Valued for my strengths • Not judged for asking questions

You deserve a workplace that understands you. These words can help you spot the employers who do, and the ones that might need a closer look before you apply.

Words that feel RIGHT ✓	Words that DON'T FEEL right ✗
• Kind • Supportive • Non-judgemental • Inclusive • Flexible • Patient • Understanding • Respectful • Neuroaffirming • Strengths-based • Adjustments	• Exceptional • Self-motivated • Strong • Judgemental • High-pressure • Fast-paced • Demanding • Dismissive • Rigid • Thick-skinned • Overwhelming

Use this when you read a job ad or company website. If the 'wrong' words are stacking up, that's useful information, it may not be the place for you.

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TOOL 1
Language Bank

Green flags and things worth asking about. This isn't about good words and bad words. It's a quick gut check, what's worth a closer look, and what's worth a question before you say yes.



Green flags, worth a closer look	Worth asking about (not always a no)
• Mentions support, training or mentoring • Talks about adjustments or accessibility • Clear expectations and structure • Flexibility with clear boundaries • Names neuroaffirming or inclusive practices	• Lots of pressure words (fast paced, deadline driven, dynamic) with no mention of support • “Self starter” with no structure or training • “Wear many hats” or “no two days are the same” • “Thick skinned” or “works well under pressure

Words aren't promises. If a place uses the right words, it's fair to ask what they look like in practice, and if you're not sure what a phrase means, decode it with Tool 2.

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TOOL 1
Language Bank



This tool helps you take the strengths you already have and turn them into words that make sense in job applications, resumes and interviews.

Turn **“I'm good at X”** into the **language employers recognise**. Same skill just said in their language.

What you'd say	What an employer hears
“I'm a good writer.”	Strong written communication skills, able to produce clear, concise and professional content.
“I like working with people.”	Collaborative team player with excellent interpersonal skills and a track record of building positive working relationships.
“I'm good at computers.”	Proficient in computer systems and digital tools, with strong technical aptitude and the ability to quickly learn new technologies.
“I am good at noticing things others miss.”	Strong attention to detail, with a careful and thorough approach to work and the ability to spot errors and inconsistencies that others may miss.
“Caring about doing the right thing.”	Strong integrity and sense of fairness, with a commitment to doing the right thing and acting honestly and ethically in all aspects of work.

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TOOL 1
Language Bank

Now it's your turn to try

Some strengths that young people shared that you can use such as:
public speaking · confident working in a team · empathy · learning from mistakes · time management · creativity · seeing the big picture · following a process properly

Start with any of these, or your own.

What I would say	My translation (read to paste)

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TOOL 2

Job Ad Decoder



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TOOL 2
Job Ad Decoder

Job Ads have a hidden layer. This tool cracks them open so they stop feeling like a foreign language. Common phrases, decoded.

Some words turn up in ad after ad. Here is what you might have first read, and what they usually mean once you decode them. Neither column is the whole story, so use them to ask better questions.



Words we see in job ads	How we might read it	What it usually means in practice
Neuroaffirming	This is good, this workplace is for me!	The employer is aware of neurodiversity and may have some inclusive practices, but it's still worth asking what support actually looks like in practice.
Fast paced	High pressure and rushed, I won't keep up.	Tasks often have quick turnaround times and priorities may change frequently.
Flexible	I can work whenever I want.	The employer may allow some flexibility in hours or work style, but expectations and boundaries should be clarified.
Team player	I must constantly collaborate and be social.	You'll be expected to collaborate and adapt to group dynamics; the level of teamwork can vary.
Dynamic environment	Constant change and unpredictability.	Constant change and unpredictability.

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TOOL 2
Job Ad Decoder



Words we see in job ads	How we might read it	What it usually means in practice
Attention to detail	I must be perfect and never make mistakes.	Accuracy is important, and tasks may require careful checking or precision.
Multitasker	I'll have to juggle many things at once.	You may be required to manage several tasks or priorities at the same time.
Deadline driven	Strict time pressure.	Work is structured around timelines, and meeting deadlines is a key part of the role.
Customer focused	I'll be dealing with people a lot.	The role involves supporting clients, customers or stakeholders, often requiring patience and emotional regulation.
Inclusive	Accepting of all people.	The workplace aims to avoid discrimination, but inclusion can vary depending on team culture and leadership.
Willing to go above and beyond	I'll have to do more than I'm paid for.	The role may involve extra effort, unpaid overtime, or high expectations beyond the basic job description.
Self starter	I have to figure everything out alone.	You may be expected to work independently with limited guidance or structured support.
Excellent communication skills	I must be very confident socially and verbally.	The role likely involves frequent interaction (written, verbal, or both), though the type isn't always specified.

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TOOL 2
Job Ad Decoder

Green flags check

Things in an ad that might be a good sign for you (add your own):

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TOOL 2
Job Ad Decoder

Red flag check

Things in an ad that might be a warning sign for you (add your own):

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TOOL 3

Cover Letter Starter





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TOOL 3
Cover Letter Starter

What is a cover letter, and why does it matter?



A cover letter is a short, one page note that goes with your resume. It introduces you, says which role you're applying for, and explains in your own words why you're a good fit.

It should add to your resume, not repeat it. Your resume lists what you've done; your cover letter tells the story behind it, why you want this role and what you would bring. A letter that just restates the resume is a missed chance to show you're a unique person!

Pick the opening that sounds most like you, fill in the prompts, and stitch them together. Don't repeat your resume, and keep your own voice, because employers can usually tell when something was written for you rather than by you.

Pick a starter

Direct: "I'm applying for [role] because [reason]. Here's what I'd bring..."

Story: "The first time I [did something relevant], I realised I was good at [skill]..."

Values: "What drew me to [organisation] is [value you share with them] ..."

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TOOL 3
Cover Letter Starter

Here is some space to practice

Why I'm a good fit (fill these, then join them up)

One thing I'm genuinely good at	
A time it showed up	
Why this role / place	
My closing line	

One thing I'm genuinely good at	
A time it showed up	
Why this role / place	
My closing line	

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TOOL 3
Cover Letter Starter

Here is some more space to practice

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TOOL 3
Cover Letter Starter

Here is some more space to practice

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TOOL 4

Selection Criteria



Responding to Selection Criteria Using the STARS Method

Selection criteria are the skills, experience, knowledge, or personal qualities an employer is looking for. They may appear as:

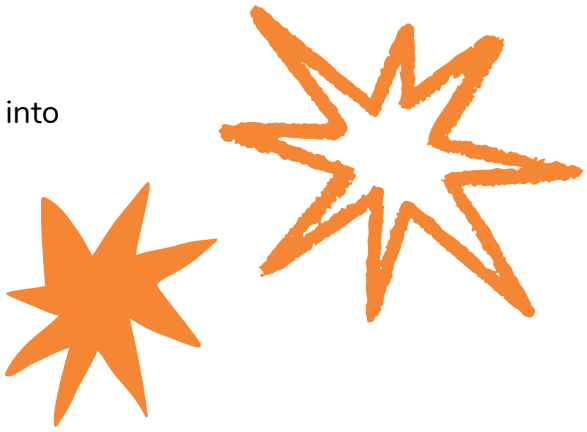
- Dot points in a job advertisement
- Questions in an application form
- Interview prompts such as, “Tell us about a time you worked in a team”.

Your goal is not to sound perfect. Your goal is to share a real example that shows how you have used a skill, solved a problem, or demonstrated a strength.

What is the STARS Method?

The STARS method helps you turn your experiences into clear, structured answers.

S = Situation
T = Task
A = Action
R = Result
S = Strengths



The first four steps make up the STAR method commonly used by recruiters. We have added a final S for Strengths to help you highlight what you do well and what makes you unique.

How It Works

- **Situation:** What was happening? Briefly describe the context.
- **Task:** What needed to be done? What was your role or responsibility?
- **Action:** What did you do? Focus on the steps you took.
- **Result:** What happened because of your actions? Share the outcome or what you learned.
- **Strengths:** What strengths did you use? This is your opportunity to name the qualities that helped you succeed, such as problem-solving, creativity, persistence, communication, or attention to detail (see Tool 1).

TOOL 4
Selection Criteria

Example Question:

Describe a time when you worked as part of a team to achieve a goal.

Formula

What happened? → What was your job? → What did you do? → What was the outcome? → What strengths did you use?

S = Situation:
During Year 12, I was part of a group organising a fundraising event for our school.

T = Task:
My role was to help plan the event and promote it to students and staff.

A = Action:
I created social media posts, helped design posters, and worked with my team to organise activities for the day. I also attended planning meetings and made sure tasks were completed on time.

R = Result:
The event raised over $2,000 for a local charity and had strong participation from students and staff.

S = Strengths:
My strengths were communication, creativity and teamwork. These strengths helped me share ideas, work well with others and encourage people to get involved.

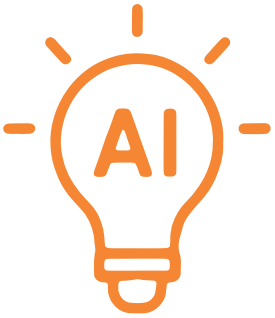
This final Strengths step helps employers see not only what you did, but what you are good at and how those strengths can benefit their workplace.

Using AI to help you apply

AI tools can take some of the pressure out of writing. Used well, they help you get your ideas down, tidy your words, and make sense of confusing ads, without taking over.
The golden rule: it helps you say what you mean. It does not say it for you.

What it is good for:

- Explaining a job ad in plain words
- Turning your rough notes into clear sentences
- Improving a cover letter you have already started
- Practising interview answers: give it a question, try your STARS answer, and ask for feedback
- Checking your spelling, grammar and tone



How to ask (try these) prompts

- **"Explain this job ad in plain words and list what they must have."**
- **"Here are my rough notes for a cover letter. Tidy them into clear sentences but keep my voice."**
- **"Ask me questions to help me build a STARS answer about a time I solved a problem."**
- **"Is this email polite and clear? Suggest small fixes."**

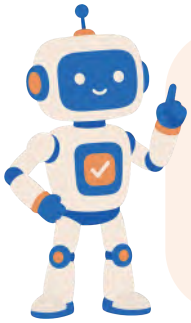


Using AI to help you apply for Jobs

Stay in the driver's seat:

- Keep your own voice. Employers can tell when something sounds copied and pasted.
- Always check it. AI gets things wrong and can make things up, so read every word before you send it.
- Be honest. Never let it invent experience or skills you do not have.
- Protect your privacy. Do not paste private details like your address, phone number or anything personal.
- It is a helper, not a replacement. Your ideas and your story are what matter.

Tools	Good for
Free AI tools	**Free:** Claude, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini Ask questions, draft and improve writing including spelling, grammer and sentence structure. **Paid subscription:** Extra features for these products.
Writing help	**Free:** Grammarly, Microsoft Editor and Immersive reader (built into Word) check spelling, grammar and text to speech and speech to text tone. **Paid subscription:** Grammerly full licence.
Reading help	**Free:** Read aloud and dictation (speak instead of type) are built into most phones and computers. Microsoft Immersive Reader makes text easier to read and you can listen to it as well. **Paid Subscription:** Read&Write from Everway



AI works best alongside this kit, **not instead of it**. Use it to support the tools here, the thinking is what makes your application yours.

Tools change, so check what is current and what your school, TAFE, Uni or library offers, and ask your facilitator if you are not sure where to start.

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TOOL 4
Selection Criteria Builder

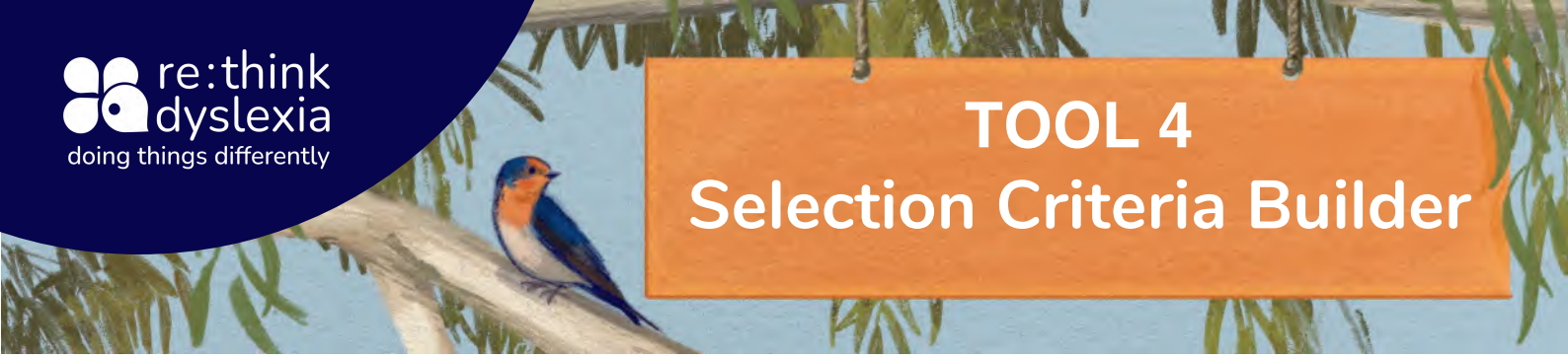
Now it's your turn.

Here are two examples questions to practice with.

Example question 1

Describe a time you overcame a challenge when doing a group assignment.

Step	What goes here
S: Situation	
T: Task	
A: Action	
R: Results	
S: Strength	



TOOL 4
Selection Criteria Builder

Example Question 2

Tell us a time something went wrong at work and how you handled it.

Step	What goes here
S: Situation	
T: Task	
A: Action	
R: Results	
S: Strength	

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TOOL 5

Interview Prep

TOOL 5
Interview Prep

An interview is a conversation to help the employer understand whether you are a good fit for the role, and to help you work out whether the workplace is a good fit for you.

Employers are not usually looking for perfect answers. They are listening for your strengths, how you solve problems, how you communicate, how you work with others, and whether you understand the job. Interviews are also a chance for you to ask questions, notice how the employer treats you, and decide what support would help you do your best.

Interviews can feel intense, especially when questions come quickly or you are not sure what the employer is really looking for. Almost everyone feels nervous before and during an interview. Being asked questions, watched closely, and expected to answer on the spot can feel stressful for anyone.

For neurodivergent people, including people with dyslexia, ADHD or autism, interviews can bring extra challenges. You might need more time to process a question, organise your thoughts or find the words you want to use. You might also find sensory distractions, reading social cues, sitting still or thinking under pressure difficult. You may also be deciding whether to tell the employer you are neurodivergent or ask for adjustments. That decision can add another layer of pressure.

This section is here to help you prepare, know your options, and feel more in control before you walk in, so you have examples, words and strategies ready. You will use **your strengths, the Job Ad Decoder and the STARS method** to practise common questions, understand what interviewers are asking, and decide what support helps you do your best.

You do not have to be perfect. The goal is to feel more prepared, answer in your own voice, and show how you **think, learn and grow**.

TOOL 5
Interview Prep

Preparing for the interview

An interview goes better when you know what is coming and you have asked for what helps. You have the right to understand the process and to request adjustments before you walk in.

What you can ask for before the interview

You are allowed to ask for these, most employers expect it, and good ones welcome it:

- The questions or topics in advance.
- The format, one on one or a panel, and who you will be meeting.
- How long it will take, and whether there is a task or test.
- Extra time to answer, or a quiet space.
- Any other adjustment that helps you do your best.

Example of a template you can use to respond to an email interview offer:

Copy, adjust, send

"Thank you for the interview invitation. So I can do my best, could you let me know who I'll be meeting, the format, and roughly how long it will run?

I work best when I can _____, would that be possible?"



TOOL 5

Interview Prep



Preparing for the interview

Clarifying what to expect

Ask them	What it tells you
“Who will I be meeting?”	Whether it's one on one or a panel, so there are no surprises.
“What's the format?”	A chat, a trial task, or a group exercise or interview so you can prepare the right way.
“How long will the interview go for?”	So you can plan your energy and any breaks.
“Should I prepare anything?”	Whether to bring examples, notes, or ID.
“In the interview face-to-face or online?”	If you need any instructions on how to get there so you feel orgnasiaed and calm with enough time to feel prepared. You can check if the office easy to access, or are there visitor parking rules, security sign-in steps I should know about?" If online: "Which video platform are we using, and is there a backup dial-in or contact number if it donest work.

TOOL 5
Interview Prep

Common Questions you might be asked

The question	What they're really asking, and how to answer
"Tell me about yourself"	Not your life story. A few sentences: who you are now, one relevant strength, why you're here. Use the Answer Builder.
"Why do you want this job?"	Connect something you value to something about them, use what you found with the Job Ad Decoder.
"Tell me about a time you..."	A real example, structured: Situation → Task→ Action (what I did) → Result → my Strengths
"Why should we hire you?"	Two or three strengths, each with a quick example. Borrow the wording from Tool 1.
"What support do you need?"	An invitation, not a trap. Name one adjustment that helps you do your best work.

When you're asked about areas of support, that is growth mindset in action.

Naming what helps you work well shows confidence, not weakness. Have one or two adjustments ready that help you do your best work.

TOOL 5
Interview Prep



Handling difficult questions

Young people told us that one of the hardest questions was The **weakness question!**

“What's your biggest weakness?” or
“What areas do you need support in?”
is the one most people dread. The trick is simple: name something real, then show what you do about it. That's a growth mindset, it shows self awareness and that you act on it, which is exactly what employers are listening for.

Step	What goes here
Honesty	Name a genuine weakness but not one that's central to the job.
What I've noticed	Show you're aware of it.
What I do about it	The strategy or system you've put in place.
How it's improving	The progress you've made, or what you've learned.

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TOOL 5
Example Answers

Asking for help

"I used to try to work everything out on my own and end up stuck for ages. I've learned to ask questions earlier. Now I check in with whoever is supervising me when I'm unsure. My work is more accurate for it, and I waste a lot less time."

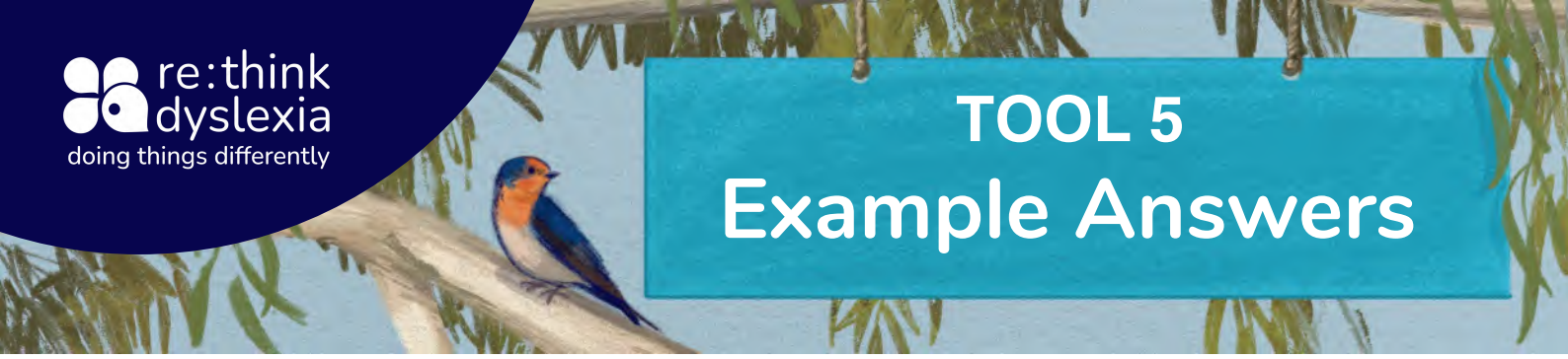
Staying organised

"Keeping track of lots of tasks at once, used to get on top of me. I've built a system: I write everything down and break big jobs into small steps with their own deadlines. It has turned into one of my strengths, I rarely let things slip now."

Speaking up in groups

"I used to go quiet in big group meetings. I've been working on it by jotting my point down first so I don't lose it, and speaking up early before the nerves build. I'm a lot more comfortable than I was six months ago."

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TOOL 5
Example Answers

Do's and Dont's

Do	Don't
• Pick something genuine, but not core to the job. • Show the strategy you use. • Keep it short and forward looking. • End on the progress you've made.	• Say "I don't have any weaknesses." • Use a fake one ("I just care too much"). • Name a flaw with no plan attached. • Dwell on the negative.

Build your own

My growth area	
What I've noticed	
What I do about it	
How it's improving	

TOOL 5
Interview Prep

Examples Answers questions you can ask at the interview

Pick two or three questions that feel natural to you. You do not need to ask them all.

Easy questions to ask

- “What support does someone in this role usually get?”
- “How do new staff settle into the team?”
- “How does the team usually communicate, written, verbal, or a mix?”
- “How flexible is the team to different working styles?”
- “What does inclusion look like in practice here?”
- “What does the first month look like for the successful applicant.“
- “What are your expectations for the first 6 months (this is for probation period)."

If you want one stronger question

“What does good support look like in this team when someone is finding something challenging?”

What to listen for

Green flags:

- “We tailor things.”
- “We offer flexibility.”
- “Managers work with people one on one.”
- “We adjust communication styles.”



Red flags:

- “Everyone is treated the same.”
- “We follow one process for everyone.”
- “You will just need to adapt.”



TOOL 5
Interview Check list

My prep checklist

- ☐ Two or three examples ready (build them with Tool 3).
- ☐ Notes I can bring in with me.
- ☐ One adjustment I'll ask for in advance.
- ☐ Practised my first 30 seconds out loud.
- ☐ A couple of questions ready to ask them at the end.

Remember

You do not have to disclose anything personal in an interview unless you choose to. These questions help you understand whether the workplace is supportive, without sharing anything you are not ready to share.

Not every interviewer is trained or inclusive. If a process feels unfair, that's worth noting, and you can give feedback to HR afterwards if you want to. For common questions and how to answer them, see Tool 6: Interview Prep.

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TOOL 6

Knowing your Rights and The Disclosure Decision Tree



TOOL 6
Knowing Your Rights

Know Your Rights and Disclosure

Telling an employer that you are neurodivergent, or that you have a disability, is called disclosure. Whether you do it, when, and who you tell is completely your choice. This tool helps you make that choice with confidence, and know what an employer can and cannot ask.

It is your choice, always

Disclosure is always your choice. You don't have to tell anyone.
Who you tell: No one, just your manager, only HR, or a colleague you trust.
When you tell them: Before you apply, at the interview, after you start, or never.

You can start by telling one person and tell others later. There's no wrong answer. Do what feels right for you.

Why you might want to share or disclosure your neurodivergent condition

Telling your workplace about your neurodivergent condition can make work easier. When your manager or employer know, they can:

- **Give you adjustments**. These are changes that help you do your job, like extra time, written instructions, a quieter space or flexible hours.
- **Understand you better.** Your manager and team can learn how you work best.
- **Back you up.** If things get hard, it's easier to ask for help when people already know.
- **Protect your rights**. In Australia, your employer has to make reasonable adjustments, and the law protects you from discrimination. Telling them helps make sure those protections apply to you.



TOOL 6
Knowing Your Rights

Some people also find that sharing or disclosing takes away the stress of hiding something. You don't have to explain everything, though. You can share as much or as little as you like.

- You only need to share what is relevant to support your needs, not the reason you need it.
- You can ask for an adjustment without naming your diagnosis or condition.
- You can ask for what helps and focus on the benefit to your work, not the reason behind it.

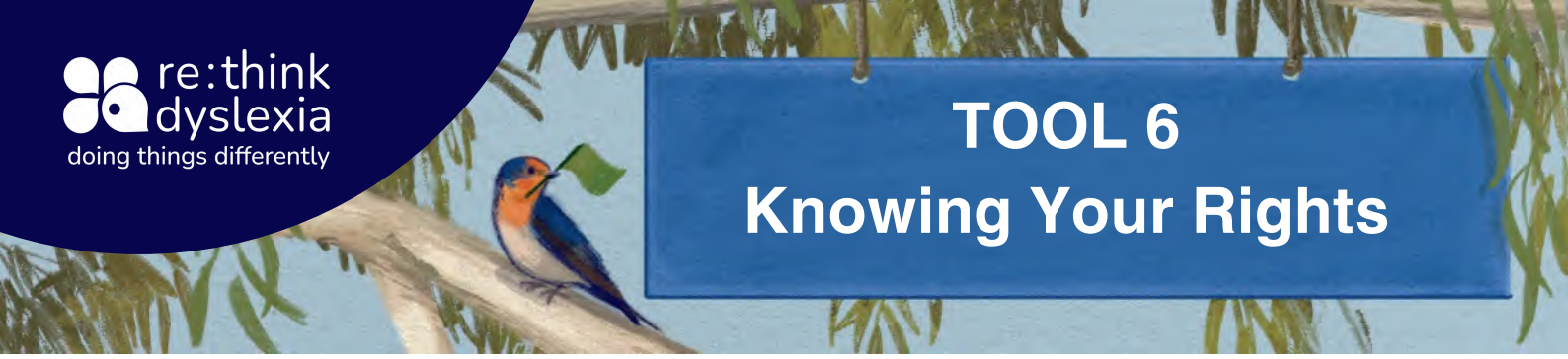
What an employer can and cannot ask

What they can ask	What they cannot ask you
• "Is there anything that would stop you doing this role safely?" • "How do you work best?" • "Is there anything that would help you to do your job?"	• "Do you take a lot of medication?" or "What medications are you on?" • "Do you have a disability?" • "Are you neurodivergent?" or "Do you have ADHD?" • "Are you going to be able to cope?"

An employer can ask for information from a treating doctor or allied health professional only when there is a genuine need to understand what tasks you can or cannot do safely as part of your core job.

You can find out more information about disclosre and your rights and funding support for tools such as assistive technology and they will need to see proof of you diagnosis for you to access this funding support at JobAccess.

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TOOL 6
Knowing Your Rights

Questions to ask yourself or a trusted person before sharing

- Do I need an adjustment to do my best work? If yes, I can ask for what helps, and I do not have to say why.
- Do I feel safe and supported here? Your Language Bank green flags can help you read this.
- Who do I trust? You can start with one person and share more over time.
- What feels right for me? Your comfort matters most. Not now is a complete answer.

If you don't want to share you could ask for support in other ways.
Here are some examples below.

"I do my best written work when I can use voice to text software. Would that be possible?"

"I remember instructions best when I get them in writing after a meeting. Could you send me a quick email with the key points?"

"I find it easier to stay on track when I have a checklist for big tasks. Could we set one up together?"

You can use the next part of Tool 5 to help you to decide if you feel safe and comfortable to share and why.

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TOOL 6
Knowing Your Rights



To weigh up whether a place feels safe, the workshop group built this guide. Look for green flags (good signs) and red flags (worth caution) at each stage.
More green than red is encouraging.

STAGE	Green flags (good signs)	Red flags (worth caution)
In the job ad	• Mentions neurodivergence or disability. • Diversity and inclusion networks. • Position description in flexible formats. • A clear person to contact with questions. • Inclusive language and flexible working.	• No mention of support. • Vague or unclear wording. • No mention of diversity and inclusion. • Research show lots of changes in the organisation. • Job role has been advertised a lot.
At the interview	• Adjustments offered. • Questions sent in advance. • Time to process and think. • Interviewers with lived experience.	• Cookie cutter or unclear questions. • An uncomfortable space. • No flexibility. • The energy in the room. • No adjustments offered.
Once you are in the job	• Steady, consistent managers. • Supportive colleagues. • Managers who ask what tools you need. • Information you can actually access.	• Managers changing often. • Little or no support or supervision. • Seeing others treated badly. • Unclear communication. • Unable to access adjustments.

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TO SHARE OR NOT TO SHARE



1 STEP 1

Do I need an adjustment or support to do my best?

- **No, not right now** → You do not need to share anything yet. You can come back to this at any time.
- **Yes, or I am not sure** → Continue to Step 2

2 STEP 2

Do the signs feel mostly green or mostly red?

GREEN FLAGS

- **I feel safe**
- I trust the people around me
- I know what support would help
- I feel comfortable asking

If mostly green

- **Choose someone you trust.**
- Share what helps you, not necessarily why.

NOT SURE/ MIXED SIGNS

It's okay to take your time. You know yourself best.

If unsure:

- **Ask for general support.**
- Take some time and see how things go.

RED FLAGS

- **I do not feel safe or ready**
- I am worried about how people might react.
- I am not sure what support I need.
- Things feel confusing or overwhelming.

If mostly red

- **I'm not ready to share right now.**
- Remember "Not now" is a complete answer.
- You might decide at a different time to ask instead.

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TOOL 7

Looking After Your Mental Health and Wellbeing

Taking a break

Eating well

Hanging out with friends



Talking to people

Asking for help is OK

Taking care of myself

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TOOL 7
Looking After Your Mental Health and Wellbeing



Job hunting can be exhausting and disheartening, especially when you've put a lot of time and effort into applying, going to interviews and putting yourself out there. If you're feeling worn down, that's completely understandable.

This tool is about looking after yourself when it is hard, and finding your way back when you are ready.

Setbacks are normal

Most people apply for lots of jobs before they get a yes. Employers often get a huge number of applications, so a no is usually about timing, numbers or fit. It means "not this time", not "not good enough".

Having a growth mindset can help

A setback isn't the end. It's information you can learn from. Having a growth mindset means believing your skills can grow with time and practice, rather than being fixed. Every application and interview is practice, and practice helps you get better. It also helps to notice how you talk to yourself, and try to change unhelpful thoughts into kinder, more useful ones.

Instead of	Try saying
I am just not good at interviews.	I am getting better at interviews each time.
I failed, I can't do this.	That did not work yet, what can I learn?
They did not pick me, so I am not good enough.	That role was not the fit, the right one is still out there.
I will never get a job.	Every application is practice and gets me closer.

TOOL 7
Looking After Yourself

Look after yourself first

After a knock-back, it's important to look after yourself before you think about what's next.

- **Name how you feel.** Disappointed, frustrated or flat. Whatever you're feeling is OK.
- **Do something kind for yourself.** Go for a walk, rest, spend time with people, listen to music or do something you enjoy.
- **Talk to someone you trust.** Saying it out loud can make it feel lighter.
- **Keep up the basics.** Get enough sleep, eat well, move your body, and take breaks from screens and job applications.
- **It's OK to stop for the day.** Resting is an important part of the process. It doesn't mean you've failed.

When it feels like too much

If the low feeling sticks around, or things start to feel like too much, please take that seriously. Reaching out is a strength, and you do not have to carry it on your own.

You can talk to someone today

If things feel too heavy, you don't have to deal with it alone there are free services that are confidential, and you can call them any time, day or night. You can find these services on **Where to get help page**.

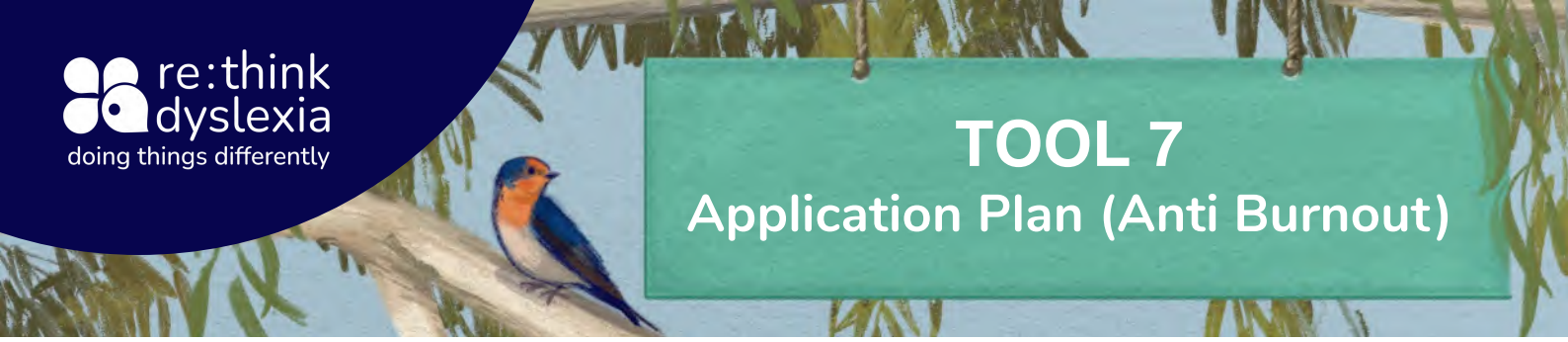
When you are ready to start again

When you feel ready, these small steps can help you get going again.

- **Take your time.** There's no rush. Small steps are enough.
- **Look back kindly**. What went well? Remember that applying at all took courage.
- **Ask for feedback if you can.** There's a script below to help.
- **Change one small thing.** You don't need to change everything. Try rewriting one line of your cover letter or one STARS answer.
- **Use your tools again.** Go back to the Job Ad Decoder, the Answer Builder and your Application Plan.
- **Set a gentle pace.** Send a couple of applications, then take a break. A few good applications are better than lots of rushed ones.

Asking for feedback: copy, adjust, send: "Thank you for letting me know, and for the chance to apply. If you have any quick feedback that would help me improve for next time, I would really value it."

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TOOL 7
Application Plan (Anti Burnout)

Applying for jobs is exhausting and the silence is the hardest part. This is the plan that keeps you in the game long enough to land an interview, your rules, not anyone else's.

My rule	What I decide
Jobs I'll apply for per week	
When I stop for the day	
What I do when there's no reply	
Who I check in with	
What refuels me	

Remember

Every application is practice, and every no gets you closer to the yes that fits. Go at your own pace. You belong in work that values how you think.

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Where to get help



Where to get help

You do not have to work this out on your own. Whether you want to check your rights, ask about workplace adjustments, find local support, or talk to someone when job hunting feels heavy, there is a free service that can help.

This page brings together the people and organisations behind this toolkit, services that can back you up at work, and places to turn to if you need to talk. Use it whenever you need it, and reach out to the ones that feel right for you.



YOUR TOOLKIT TEAM

Your team	How to reach them
re:think dyslexia	A social enterprise led by neurodivergent people, offering tools, training and support. **hello@rethinkdyslexia.com.au** **rethinkdyslexia.com.au**
Banyule City Council	Youth and community programs in your local area. **local.jobs@banyule.vic.gov.au**
Local Jobs Program	The **North Eastern Melbourne Local Jobs Team** connects local jobseekers, training organisations and employers. Find more information and contact details of your nearest Local Jobs team at **https://www.dewr.gov.au/local-jobs**

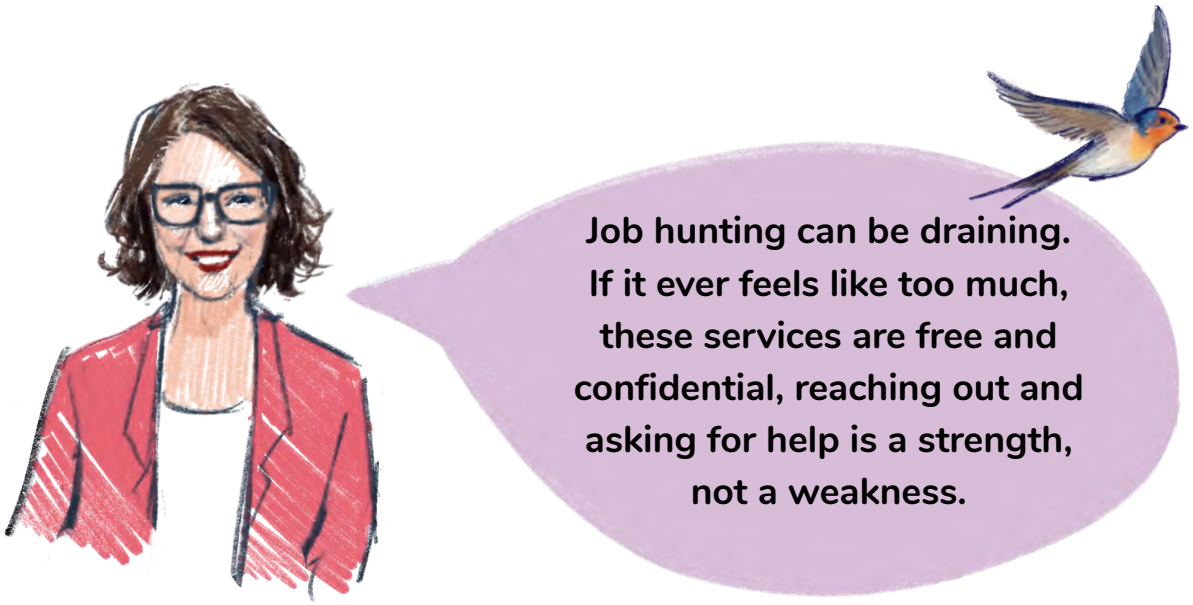
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SERVICES YOU CAN SPEAK TOO

Who they are	What they help with
re:think dyslexia	Supporting young people and adults with dyslexia other learning difficulties, ADHD and autism in and out of the workplace. Free confidential helpline providing independent, expert information, advice, and service navigation : **1800 13 6327** Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00pm AEST www.rethinkdyslexia.com.au
Workplace rights and support	
Fair Work Ombudsman	Pay, conditions and workplace rights. **13 13 94** Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 5:30 pm fairwork.gov.au
Australian Human Rights Commission	Discrimination complaints and information, humanrights.gov.au **1300 369 711**
Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	Discrimination help and complaints in Victoria, **1300 292 153** humanrights.vic.gov.au
Supports and services	
JobAccess	Free advice on workplace adjustments and the Employment Assistance Fund, **jobaccess.gov.au**
Disability Gateway	Connects you to services and supports across Australia, **disabilitygateway.gov.au**
headspace	Mental health and wellbeing support for 12 to 25 year olds, **headspace.org.au**
ADHD Australia	Information, resources and support for ADHD, **adhdaustralia.org.au**
Autism Connect by Amaze	A free, national autism helpline providing independent, expert information, advice, and service navigation **1300 308 699** (Monday–Friday, 8am–7pm local time).

Where to get help



IF YOU NEED TO TALK

Services	What they help with
LifeLine	**13 11 14:** 24/7 crisis support for anyone, (or text 0477 13 11 14)
13Yarn	**13 92 76:** 24/7 crisis support by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
Beyond Blue	**1300 22 4636:** Free counselling Anxiety, depression and wellbeing support, beyondblue.org.au
Kids Helpline	**1800 55 1800:** Free, confidential counselling for ages 5 to 25, kidshelpline.com.au

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This toolkit was created with and for young neurodivergent people in the Banyule City Council, in collaboration with **re:think dyslexia** and North Eastern Melbourne Local Jobs Facilitators Workforce Australia, ensuring lived experience was at the centre of this resource.

Illustrations by Lauren Skender, artist and workshop participant.
Thank you, Lauren your artwork brings the ideas and experiences shared through the workshops to life.

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