



Individual Work Preferences Assessment

USER MANUAL - LONG



NEURODIVERSITYHUB

Introduction

The aim of the Individual Work Preference Assessment (IWPA) is to gain insight into an autistic jobseekers' individual work preferences, strengths and working styles. The IWPA is a confidential document between the jobseeker and an Employment Consultant (EC). An employment consultant will need to prepare a separate worker profile document to describe an individual's needs and preferences within a work environment.

If you observe that the jobseeker is having difficulty completing this longer version due to:

- difficulties with comprehension or self-awareness,
- reduced expressive communication,
- mild to moderate intellectual disability or
- need a high level of support to provide responses

There is a shorter and more simplified version that can be used instead.

The process for completing either the long or short version of the IWPA is a means of gaining understanding of an individual and should be complimented by 'getting to know you' discussions. There is no right or wrong form to use. Rather the IWPA is a starting point for discussing an individual's needs and for the autistic individual to feel that their autism is better understood. Each further discussion may take place with the individual in the presence of a key support person (for example parent, guardian, support worker).

The IWPA explores the following areas:

- Communication preferences
- Team and work preferences
- Tolerance of change
- Organisational skills
- Focus and transition
- Interpersonal skills
- Sensory preferences

An autistic employee will need varied workplace supports and adjustments across the aforementioned areas. In the IWPA there is a separate section for each of these areas. Each section has a group of statements. At the end of each section there is an area for you to make rough notes. These notes should be transformed into a more helpful format in the work profile.

The jobseeker should respond to each statement using a 5-point scale from "Not at all like me" to "Entirely like me". If the jobseeker has not worked previously ask them to consider other environments such as school, university and volunteer work when answering the statements. It is important to understand that some autistic individuals may have difficulty with self-awareness, understanding their strengths or identifying areas in which they need support. This tool is designed to be a starting point for eliciting further discussions to gain further information.

In each section, this manual presents common characteristics of autistic people before replicating the statements from the IWPA. Then two groups of suggestions are made: the first explains how to evaluate the responses; the second suggests prompting questions for follow-up discussions.

The characteristics inherent in autism vary greatly from person to person, and as such every individual's experience of autism is different. The characteristics discussed in this assessment may not be relevant to every autistic jobseeker. It is important to treat each person on their merits, find out how they are impacted in each area, and develop a customised approach for learning their unique needs and preferences.

In the follow-up discussions you can prompt the jobseeker for more information. Ensure a combination of results from the IWPA and follow-up discussions are entered into the ***worker profile***.

PLEASE NOTE: It does not matter if questions remain unanswered because they are not relevant or not understood (ie. need more context to be able to answer it). If there is any stress, discomfort or anxiety relating to the completion of either IWPA form it does not need to be completed.

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Communication Preferences

Overview: The statements in this section aim to gain an understanding of an individual's communication preferences. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is an important aspect of the workplace. Autistic individuals often require support and understanding in this area.

Common characteristics:

- Prefer unfamiliar information to be given in written or diagrammatic (if appropriate) formats
- Face-to-face communication is difficult, especially maintaining eye contact
- Have difficulty reading other people's non-verbal communication, including gestures, facial expressions and body posture
- Require more time than others to process verbal information and formulate responses
- Have difficulty when a lot of people are talking at once; may experience difficulties focusing on the relevant conversation and 'filter out' the 'background' noise
- Often wanting to present as capable, individuals on the autism spectrum may not always be forthcoming in seeking clarification or asking for more information. Be willing to check in to ensure understanding or if an individual requires additional information
- Very literal with communication. Humour, sarcasm, idioms can be difficult to understand. Use caution and explain – build rapport first.

Communication Preferences <i>The following statements relate to how you prefer to communicate in the workplace.</i>		Not at all like me	A little like me	Somewhat like me	Really like me	Entirely like me
1.	I prefer to work in a job that does not require a lot of face-to-face communication, for example greeting customers and answering customer questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I prefer clear and concise written communication (rather than verbal).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I need guidance to know when to ask questions, or who to direct the questions to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I sometimes need time (and your patience) while I formulate my verbal or written responses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Looking people in the eyes is sometimes difficult for me. (I am still listening and its easier for me to concentrate if I don't look at you)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I would like assistance in sharing my ideas and communicating in meetings or groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I may sometimes need assistance to understand other people's humour in the workplace. Tell me if you are using sarcasm or joking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I may not be able to follow a conversation when multiple people are speaking at once.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	I prefer to receive regular and respectful feedback on my performance so that I know if I need to focus on areas to improve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please Note: Follow-up discussions may be required to get a better understanding of an individual's communication preferences. Each individual on the spectrum is different and will have unique areas of need regarding communication.

Evaluation of responses:

Question 1 – The response for this question will determine if an individual could be considered for roles that have some direct customer interaction. However, it is suggested that asking prompting questions and/or role-playing customer service situations may help to determine an individual's level of self-awareness in communication preferences.

For Questions 2-9, where the majority of responses are 'Really Like Me' or 'Entirely Like Me' – an individual may be more suited for a role that does not require a lot of communication with others. They may prefer to be assigned tasks, preferably in written form, prior to working on tasks independently. The benefits of breaking down a task into steps with this information being conveyed in written as opposed to verbal form are:

- Written instructions can be read at different speeds. They cater to different people's capacities to absorb information.
- As written information is static, the message doesn't change so a jobseeker can come back to the information at any point during completion of the task, in order to understand the next step of the process or seek clarification of a step in the process.

Suggested prompting questions:

- Do you prefer written or verbal communication when receiving instructions?
- Can you tolerate sarcasm and humour in the workplace? Once you become more comfortable would understanding improve?
- Do you use a strategy when eye contact becomes uncomfortable for you (for example, looking at the persons forehead or ear?)
- What could help you become more comfortable communicating in a group scenario or when attending social events?
- Would it be better if you had one main person in the workplace that you could go to if you had questions, or who you would trust to tell you if you did something wrong?

Team and Work Preferences

Overview: The statements in this section aim to gain an understanding of an individual's work preferences: in individual or team based working situations. Some jobs have more of a focus on solitary, independent work whilst other jobs have more of a collegial, collaborative approach.

Common characteristics:

- Often prefer tasks that have clear starts and ends, as well as distinct steps. The steps for completing a task often need to be laid out (and can benefit from being conveyed in a written format).
- Individuals on the autism spectrum may struggle to understand the 'bigger picture' and may have difficulties identifying the steps to get to the end of a task (Weak Central Coherence). By working with a jobseeker to identify and detail (in a written or diagrammatic format) the steps and how these relate to the 'bigger picture', that individual will achieve greater success at carrying out the task.
- Upon receiving clear instructions and steps, the individual is more likely to prefer to work on the task independently and may benefit from periodic 'check-ins'.
- The ability to control emotions, flexible thinking, working memory, self-monitoring, planning and prioritising, task initiation and organising relates to Executive Functioning. Many people on the spectrum experience difficulties in one or more of the areas relating to Executive Functioning. As many of these skills are essential to succeeding in employment, it is important to ascertain where the current difficulties are and then provide the employer with strategies to address these intrinsic difficulties.

Team and Work Preferences		Not at all like me	A little like me	Somewhat like me	Really like me	Entirely like me
<i>The following statements relate to on-the-job team and work preferences.</i>						
10.	I am usually happy working on my own, but I still like being included in team activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	I like to receive a demonstration of my tasks and then prefer to do the work independently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	To fully understand a new task I find it helpful to talk about the task and ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	To make sure I understand a new task I prefer to spend time thinking through and planning the task.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	I tend to understand what the end goal of a task is, but I like guidance on the steps I need to do to get to the end goal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	I focus on small details that others may not find important.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	I prefer tasks to be broken down step by step.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	I would consider myself a perfectionist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	I am creative in how I do my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	I like to have all the details before I start tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	I tend to look for new and different ways to do tasks. I appreciate knowing when it HAS to be done a certain way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21.	I prefer repetition and structure in my tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	I feel more confident when I receive regular guidance and supervision at work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	I prefer it when my supervisor plans and prioritises my daily tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	I always seek new work when tasks are complete.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please Note: Follow-up discussions may be required to get a better understanding of an individual's work preferences: in individual or team based working situations. Each individual on the spectrum is different and will have unique areas of need regarding team and work preferences.

Evaluation of responses:

Questions 14, 15 and 16 relate to the concept of Central Coherence. For many on the autism spectrum, there may be difficulties understanding and generating the steps associated with the 'bigger picture' or the product of a task. There can also be a tendency to become focused on the details but have difficulty seeing how they connect to the 'bigger picture'. If an individual selects 'Really Like Me' or 'Extremely Like Me', then it is likely that they have Weak Central Coherence, an intrinsic characteristic of autism.

If this is the case, it is important to detail to the employer the essential need to provide the individual with clear instructions (preferably written) on how the task is to be completed and a description of how their task contributes to a portion on the 'bigger picture'. A due date for task completion should accompany the instructions. Very clear and concise instructions act as scaffolding that enable the person to work more independently. Once clear on instructions, they will prefer to work independently without being micromanaged.

Questions currently numbered 13, 16 and 18-24 relate to traits associated with Executive Functioning. The traits include the ability to control emotions, flexible thinking, working memory, self-monitoring, planning and prioritising, task initiation and organising. Executive functioning is an area of intrinsic difficulty for individuals on the autism spectrum.

If an individual selects 'Really Like Me' or 'Extremely Like Me', then it is likely that they have one or more difficulties in the area of Executive Functioning. If this is the case, it is important to ask some additional questions, to gather further information relating to the areas of Executive Functioning in which they experience the most significant difficulties.

Suggested prompting questions:

- If you have a good idea for change at work, do you think you would go ahead and make the change or would you first check if there was a process to follow?
- Are you able to initiate conversations if you have questions or would you rather have people check-in with you regularly?
- Do you usually work well with others or would you prefer to work on your own?

Tolerance of change

Overview: The statements in this section aim to gain an understanding of an individual's ability to deal with and manage unexpected or unpredictable situations. As can be the case in many work environments, change often unexpectedly occurs.

Common characteristics:

- Prefer predictability and routine. They need to know what is happening or what has been scheduled in terms of work tasks
- Stress levels may increase as a result of being unable to predict what is happening with a work task. Stress can often be managed by detailing tasks in written or diagrammatic formats and by updating details if changes occur.

Tolerance of change		Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Really	Entirely
<i>The following statements relate to how you manage unplanned or unexpected changes in the workplace.</i>		like me	like me	like me	like me	like me
25.	I prefer to not have unexpected changes at work (for example changes in supervisors or work tasks)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.	I prefer to start a task having all the information I need, as I don't want to have to stop what I am doing to look for information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.	Sometimes the smallest doubt can mean I cannot initiate or continue a task. I am not being lazy. It can be hard for me to ask for help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.	When I experience uncertainty and anxiety at work it reduces my ability to work effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.	I work more effectively when I know what my daily work tasks are and what my expected output should be.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please Note: Follow-up discussions may be required to get a better understanding of an individual's ability to deal with unexpected or unpredictable situations. Each individual on the spectrum is different and will have unique areas of need regarding change and uncertainty.

Evaluation of responses:

Majority of answers 'Really Like Me' or 'Entirely Like Me': shows that uncertainty and unexpected change can create heightened anxiety which may impact work performance. If this is the case, an individual may be more suited to a role that is predictable and has a consistent workflow with clearly explained instructions and deadlines. The need to handle multiple tasks with differing deadlines may heighten anxiety and stress levels.

However, in the right role a jobseeker could demonstrate high levels of focus for extended periods of time.

Suggested prompting questions:

- Do you have strategies to help you regulate your frustrations in these scenarios?
- What could you do if you don't have all the information?
- How would you cope if your manager had to change the deadline? What are some of the things you could ask your manager?
- Would you be comfortable telling your manager that you prefer to receive warning of any upcoming changes? Would it be okay to say that you are not doing going to do a task that your manager has asked you to do?
- Is it a good idea to say that you can do a task even though you know you can't?

Organisational Skills

Overview: The statements in this section aim to gain an understanding of an individual’s abilities to organise, plan, prioritise and manage changes. These are necessary skills across a number of job types. The ability to do such things are related to a concept known as Executive Functioning.

Common characteristics:

- Often prefer tasks that have clear starts and ends, as well as distinct steps throughout.
- The steps for completing the task often need to be detailed.
- May require support to prioritise work tasks, especially if there are multiple tasks due for completion at the same time, or if deadlines change.
- Need extra time to transition from task to task, as transition can take a lot of mental effort.
- May require support from another to initiate a task, even after the task has been broken down into distinct steps

Organisational Skills <i>The following statements relate to your abilities in the areas of organisation and planning.</i>		Not at all like me	A little like me	Somewhat like me	Really like me	Entirely like me
30.	I like to keep my space tidy and organised.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.	I usually get to appointments on time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.	I plan my schedule so that I focus on the urgent and important tasks first.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.	I can be flexible and adapt when things do not go according to plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.	I reflect on situations and assess if I’ve done well and think of ways to improve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35.	I prefer to start work on tasks as soon as I am informed of them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.	I am able to retain my focus on a task despite distractions and interruptions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.	I can work well under pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38.	I have a good memory for details, tasks, dates and processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please Note: Follow-up discussions may be required to get a better understanding of an individual’s ability to organise, plan, prioritise and manage changes. Each individual on the spectrum is different and will have unique areas of need regarding organisational skills.

Evaluation of responses:

Majority of responses ‘Not At All Like Me’, ‘A Little Like Me’ or ‘Somewhat Like Me’ – The individual may require more support from colleagues and/or supervisors to understand each task, identify the steps in each task, prioritise the steps. Assistance might be needed to transition from a step or to change context from one work task to another work task. Depending on the individual’s work history or support from allied health professionals (for example, psychologists or occupational therapists), they may have developed some strategies to assist in each of these areas. By asking some of the prompting questions below, a

greater understanding may be established regarding the degree of support a jobseeker may need in an appropriate role.

Suggested prompting questions:

- What strategies have you or others used previously to ensure you meet deadlines (Outlook reminders, to-do lists, writing things down so you don't forget, phone alarms)?
- Do you often run late for appointments, either sleeping in or forgetting?
- Are you able to concentrate on a task for long periods of time?
- Do you need to move around and have breaks to keep focused?
- How do you respond when you are given options and are required to make a decision?

Focus and Regulation

Overview: The statements in this section aim to gain an understanding of an individual’s ability to stay focused and on task while managing their emotions, including stress. Some of the statements relate to gaining an understanding of an individuals’ interoceptive awareness: the ability to read internal physiological cues and relate them to various states, including hunger, thirst or emotions.

Common characteristics:

- Many individuals on the spectrum have difficulty ‘reading’ their internal bodily cues. It is often when they are ‘very hungry’, ‘very thirsty’ or ‘very stressed’ that they first become aware of internal states of being.
- Due to the inherent difficulties with ‘reading’ internal bodily cues, individuals on the spectrum may also experience difficulties ‘reading’ the cues of others, especially in relation to how their actions or communication styles may affect others.

Focus and Regulation		Not at all like me	A little like me	Somewhat like me	Really like me	Entirely like me
<i>The following statements relate to how you maintain focus and emotional regulation in the workplace.</i>						
39.	I can perform my work and complete tasks even in the presence of tight timelines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40.	I know how to regulate myself if I get frustrated with tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41.	I can usually stay focused on my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42.	I prefer to focus on one task at a time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43.	I work more effectively when I able to finish a task before getting another task.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please Note: Follow-up discussions may be required to get a better understanding of an individual’s ability to stay focused and on task while managing their emotions, including stress. Each individual on the spectrum is different and will have unique areas of need regarding focus and regulation.

Evaluation of responses:

Majority of responses ‘Not At All Like Me’, ‘A Little Like Me’ or ‘Somewhat Like Me’ – The individual may require more support, initially, from colleagues, mentors and/or supervisors to understand each task, identify the steps in each task, and prioritise the steps. Assistance might be needed to transition from a step or to change contexts from one work task to another work task. If the individual is experiencing difficulties understanding a task, difficulty in general or elevated stress levels, it is possible that they may begin to lose focus on the task at hand. If this is the case, it is important that the individual has an identified person who can notice the signs of stress or difficulty. The identified person could ask the individual if they need some help or prompt them to take a break.

Items 42-43: Majority of responses ‘Really Like Me’ or ‘Entirely Like Me’ – The individual is likely to prefer tasks that are presented one at a time, with clearly scheduled starts and ends.

By not overloading the individual with work tasks, it is probable that their strengths of focus and attention will produce quality results.

In addition to not overloading the individual with work tasks, they may also benefit from being given time to transition from the end of one work task to commencing another. In light of this, consideration should be

given to the scheduling of start and end dates. It may be beneficial, where possible, to make new tasks commence at the beginning of the work week, as opposed to in the middle of the week.

Suggested prompting questions:

- What strategies have you or others used previously to assist you with identifying and subsequently managing your stress levels?
- What are some factors that may affect your ability to concentrate on a work task?
- When commencing a new work task, would it be helpful to you if an identified support person 'checks-in' in order to manage any difficulties or missing information that may affect your ability to complete the task?
- When transitioning from tasks, what has helped you to make transitioning easier or less stressful?

Interpersonal Skills

Overview: The statements in this section aim to gain an understanding of how an individual interacts with others in the workplace. There are varying tiers of interaction that an individual may have to undertake as part of their role.

Common characteristics:

- May experience difficulties distinguishing with who, when and under what circumstances it is appropriate to use humour in the workplace.
- May need to be informed, in a considered and straightforward manner, when they are talking too much and providing too much detail.
- Demonstrate 'black and white' thinking in the absence of a compromising middle ground. As such, they often hold high standards for themselves and by extension, expect others to possess the same level of high standards. While possessing such high standards can be beneficial in the quality of work produced, it may mean that collegial relationships are strained.
- The ability to understand that others have different perspectives, feelings and ideas from their own is known as Theory of Mind. As with Executive Functioning and Central Coherence, Theory of Mind is another intrinsic difficulty associated with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- Might benefit from the support of trusted buddies or mentors to understand when they have made errors in terms of the 'Hidden Curriculum' in the workplace.

Interpersonal Skills		Not at all	A little like	Somewhat	Really	Entirely like
<i>The following statements relate to how you interact with others in the workplace.</i>		like me	me	like me	like me	me
<u>Supervisors</u>						
44.	I prefer it when my supervisor is very clear with instructions so that I know exactly what I have to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45.	I prefer it when my supervisor explains why a task needs to be done in a particular way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46.	It would help me if the supervisor clearly explained all the workplace rules and roles of different staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Colleagues</u>						
47.	I like to give detailed explanations of the things that I am interested in.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48.	I have been told that I am a talkative person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49.	I find it difficult to read body language. I would prefer my colleagues to explain what they mean rather than use gestures, sarcasm or innuendo.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50.	I may choose not to attend work social events as they can be overwhelming, however I still like to be invited.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please Note: Follow-up discussions may be required to get a better understanding of how an individual interacts with others in the workplace. Each individual on the spectrum is different and will have unique areas of need regarding interpersonal skills.

Evaluation of responses:

Questions 44-46 - Majority of responses 'Really Like Me' or 'Entirely Like Me' – The individual may require more support from supervisors to understand the task, identify the steps, and prioritise the steps. As with most individuals, an individual on the autism spectrum wants to be informed when they are 'doing something wrong', either in their role or with colleagues. Individuals on the spectrum often need explicit explanation of the unwritten workplace rules in order to understand the expectations, either in their role or in interactions with colleagues. Without this explicit guidance or information, it is possible that an individual on the spectrum will repeatedly get things 'wrong'.

Questions 47-50 – As with interactions with supervisors or managers, an individual on the spectrum also values receiving feedback from their colleagues, either in their role performance or their interactions with others in the workplace. Often, an individual on the spectrum values the feedback from their colleagues as these are the individuals they regularly engage and interact with. When providing feedback it is important to provide considered feedback and explain what to do, rather than focus on what they have done 'wrong'.

Suggested prompting questions:

- Are you aware of any behaviours that you have that could bother or annoy colleagues?
 - If yes, how would you manage these behaviours in the workplace?
- Do you understand that it is important that you receive feedback about your performance at work?
 - How would you respond if you didn't agree with the feedback provided?
- (Q.58) If it bothers you when your colleagues are not doing their work as well as you, how would you manage your frustration around that?

Sensory Preferences

Overview: The statements in this section aim to gain an understanding of an individual's sensory preferences and difficulties. There is value in understanding difficulties in sensory experiences that an individual may encounter in the workplace. Often, sensory difficulties may make it difficult for the individual to concentrate and participate. The difficulties may also increase their stress levels.

Common characteristics:

- Experience the input received from different sensory modalities differently from most other people
- Sensory experiences may be of such intensity that they cause pain or discomfort to the individual
- May seek certain types of input from varying sensory modalities in order to stay focused on tasks, or to manage stress and anxiety.

Sensory Preferences		Not at all	A little like	Somewhat	Really	Entirely like
<i>The following statements relate to your sensory sensitivities in the workplace.</i>		like me	me	like me	like me	me
Touch						
51.	Certain textures of clothes are uncomfortable for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
52.	I prefer to not have unpredicted sudden human touch (for example being tapped on my shoulder, being touched on my arm).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53.	I can experience discomfort in crowded spaces or if people are in my personal space.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sight						
54.	I can work more effectively when I am not in a brightly lit space (for example away from fluorescent lights)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55.	I would prefer to not work in an environment that has busy patterns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.	A flickering light would mean that I am unable to do my work effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hearing						
57.	I concentrate better in a quiet workspace (for example where people are not talking a lot or playing music).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
58.	I prefer it if I am given warning of loud noises (for example fire alarms)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
59.	I hear 'white noise' that other people may not be able to hear (for example air conditioners and fridges).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
60.	I can concentrate better if I wear noise cancelling headphones.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Smell						
61.	I prefer not being around strong smells, even those regarded as pleasant by others (for example perfumes, spray deodorants).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62.	I prefer it when colleagues do not eat strong smelling foods near me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Movement						
63.	I tend to bump into objects (for example doorways, tables, desks).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
64.	I prefer to have regular movement to help me to maintain focus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
65.	I prefer if my desk faces outwards so that I am not startled by people coming up behind me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
66.	Sometimes I may use certain movements to help calm me down (for example, stimming).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotion						
67.	I cannot always recognise when I am feeling stressed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
68.	I don't always know how to explain how I am feeling to other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
69.	The feelings of others are not always evident to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
70.	I empathise with people a lot, sometimes it is overwhelming.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
72.	It's not always easy for me to identify facial expressions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
73.	I am not good at remembering names and faces. I don't mean to be rude if I do not recognise someone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please Note: Follow-up discussions may be required to get a better understanding of an individual's sensory preferences and difficulties. Each individual on the spectrum is different and will have unique areas of need regarding sensory preferences.

Evaluation of responses:

Majority of responses 'Really Like Me' or 'Entirely Like Me' – The individual may benefit from an open discussion around accommodations in the environment that would assist in performing their role. It is important to note that many of these accommodations are minimal and low-cost. By offering to accommodate an individual's sensory needs, it is likely that the individual on the spectrum will feel more comfortable and accepted in their workplace. The accommodations will also reduce anxiety or stress associated with managing sensory challenges.

Suggested Prompting Questions:

- What strategies have you used that have helped with your sensory sensitivities?
- What accommodations would you find helpful to assist you in managing your sensory difficulties and make you feel more comfortable in your workplace?

APPENDIX 1 - Cognitive Processing & Autism

Executive Functioning is a term used to describe the many tasks our brains perform that are necessary to think, act, and solve problems. Executive functioning includes tasks that help us learn new information, remember and retrieve the information we've learned in the past, and use this information to solve problems of everyday life.

Working Memory is the part of short-term memory concerned with immediate perceptual and linguistic processing. It is the ability to temporarily hold and manipulate information for cognitive tasks performed in daily life

- Working Memory holds information for a few seconds – it is temporary.
- Working Memory can hold only five to seven items at a time – it has a small capacity.
- Working memory holds and manipulates information.
- Working memory depends on the control of attention and mental effort.

Sensory Differences

Sensory information includes things you see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. **Sensory overload** occurs when one or more of the body's senses experiences overstimulation from the environment.

Signs of sensory processing challenges:

- Hypersensitivity to sensory input
- Oversensitivity to sounds, sights, textures, flavours, smells and other sensory input
- Difficulty focusing due to competing sensory input
- Inadequate multisensory integration processing when attempting to provide appropriate responses to the demands of the environment.

Theory of Mind

- Understanding another's perspective
- Understanding emotions
- Predicting behaviour
- Understanding intentions of others
- Imagining how others think, feel and react

Context

- Context is understanding the different variables that can relate to the situations, tasks or stimuli
- Context is required to adapt learning to different situations or environments
- Contextual sensitivity is crucial for social interaction, communication and flexibility in thoughts and behaviour
- Context is required to predict and make sense of the world. The brain will guess more often without context. The autistic brain can lack fast implicit guessing.

Central Coherence

- Getting the point or gist of things
- Pulling information from different sources to establish a greater understanding
- Seeing the 'bigger picture'
- A lack of central coherence can result in misinterpretation of situations and communication

APPENDIX 1 - Cognitive Processing & Autism (cont.)

Hidden Curriculum

The hidden curriculum is the social information that everyone is expected to know without it being taught. These workplace social rules are assumed to be known and understood. The hidden curriculum can be confusing to autistic individuals.

Adaptive behaviour is the collection of social and practical skills learned by people to enable them to function in their everyday lives. Adaptive behaviour enables people to adjust to different types of situations or environments. Adaptive behaviour skills are mostly social and can be improved to change unconstructive tendencies into more constructive tendencies. Social behaviour can change and develop when expectations are clear.

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