Working under the influence of autism

Catherine Curtis
Autscape 2018
Lecture Overview

- What is the Equality Act 2010 and its definition of disability
- What are reasonable adjustments?
- Reasonable adjustment examples from the audience
- Reasonable adjustments beyond the immediate work area
- Case studies
  - Promotions
  - Printer not working
- Good practice of information governance
A study by the National Autistic Society (NAS) found that in the UK 16% of autistic adults are in full-time paid employment and 32% in some kind of paid work (NAS, 2016)

- But what can we stay about the quality of employment for those autistic people?
- Are they in a job that REALLY meets their needs?
It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- **disability**
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
‘A person (P) has a disability if—
(a) P has a physical or mental impairment, and
(b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’

*Equality Act disability definition*
Reasonable Adjustments (RAs)

- This law compels employers to provide adjustment so disabled people have the right to the same access to opportunities, facilities and services as their non-disabled counterparts.

- This duty requires the organisation to:
  - Change the way things are done (provision, criterion or practice),
  - Change a physical feature of a building, and
  - Provide extra auxiliary aids or services.

- Everyone’s needs are different and not everyone will need the same adjustments
Reasonable Adjustment examples

- Go somewhere quiet!
- Change the lighting!
- Structure the day!
- Get clear instructions to complete tasks
- Wear headphones
- Install a ramp!

A ramp!? I want people to understand…
Your reasonable adjustment suggestions

- Pen and paper are on the tables.
- Please provide suggestions for the reasonable adjustments you might want.
- These suggestions can be made on the paper provided.
- We can discuss them.
Autistic person’s immediate environment

- Understanding boss and team
- Working environment with low sensory processing triggers
- Structured work
- No sudden changes or events
- A defined set of job responsibilities
- Feedback and reassurances
Issues outside of the immediate environment

- Payroll
- Car parking
- Promotions
- Pension
- Policies/procedures
- Estates
- IT problems
- Talking to other teams
- Redundancies/restructures
Example: Promotions

- Promotion
- Competitive
- Unpredictable
- Meeting with new managers
- Interview questions
- Presentation
- Group assessments
Example: Promotions

❖ Some people are good at talking about what they can do but not so good at actually doing it…

❖ Level playing field:
  ➢ Test actual competences, not hypothetical abstract ones
  ➢ Look back at appraisals and testimonials of previous performance
  ➢ Drop the simulated group activities
Example: Printer not working

- Who fixes it?
- Change
- Recovery
- Scheduling the fix
- Describing the problem
- Face to face

Broken Printer
Example: Printer not working

- Provide online helpdesk or e-mail address for support queries
- Website for ‘Frequently asked questions’ – can the person fix the issue themselves? E.g. out of paper.
- In larger organisations, “follow me around” printers so you can print on another working printer if one isn’t working
- How-to guides on where to get more ink/toner, more paper, how to use the printer
What can we do to create good practice?

- Comprehensive new staff inductions
- Share commonly asked questions
  - Travel expenses, milk, where to get lunch, toilet paper, annual leave, sickness, work clothing, pensions, computer access, car parking, etc.
- Bulletins out to all staff on new policies, procedures (careful to not overload with too much information!)
- SharePoint/intranet with vital information
- Annual/bi-annual updates via staff training
Reasonable adjustments remain important and essential to meet individual needs.

We need to look beyond the person’s immediate work environment.

A culture where there is accurate and meaningful information available for all employees can positively support disabled employees and boost productivity for all!