

Working under the influence of autism

Catherine Curtis

Autscap 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

Headline stats

- ❖ 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 say about the quality of employment for those autistic people?
 - Are they in a job that REALLY meets their needs?

Equality Act 2010 – Protected Characteristics

- ❖ 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



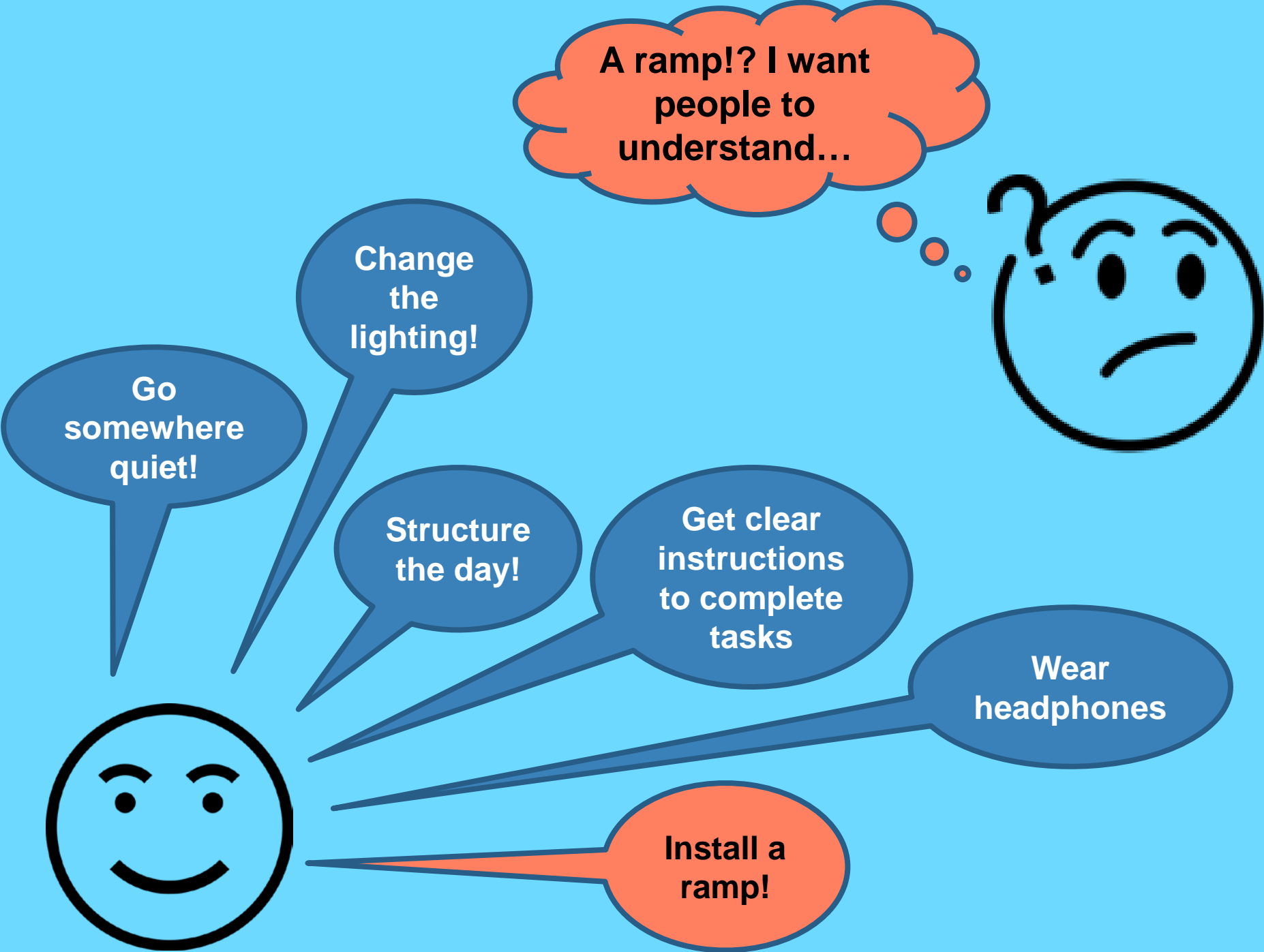
‘A person (P) has a disability if—
(a) P has a physical or mental impairment, and
(b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’

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





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

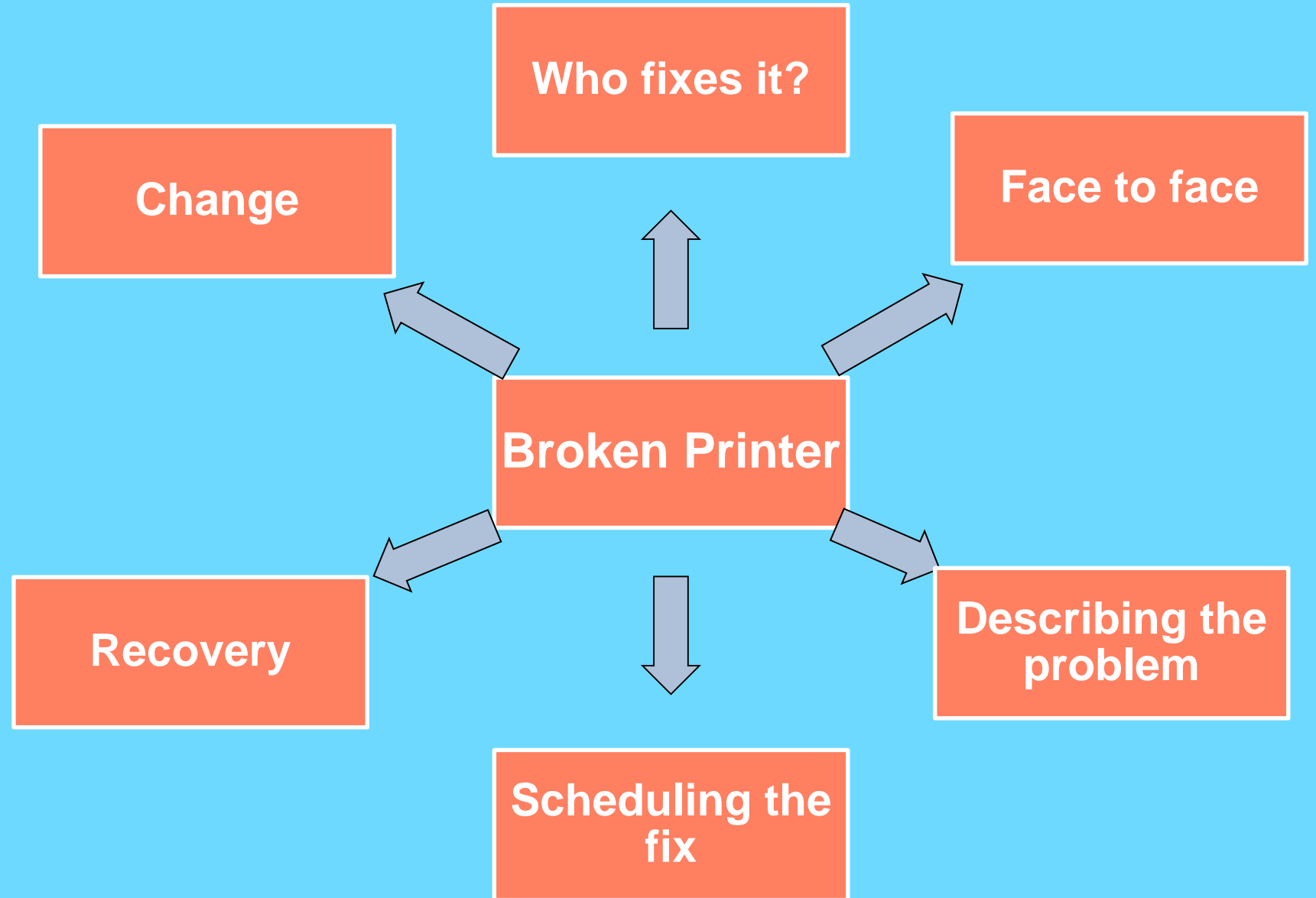




Example: Promotions

- ❖ 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**



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

Conclusion

- ❖ 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!