



# Supporting employees and colleagues with ADHD

Written by the Wellness Cloud team



ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition affecting millions of adults worldwide and those who have it find that they often face unique challenges in the workplace.

While having ADHD may present some difficulties, it can also provide individuals with unique strengths and perspectives. And with the right support and understanding, they can navigate these obstacles and thrive at work.

If you're the manager of an employee with ADHD, or have a colleague that you feel needs some friendly support, this guide is for you.

## What is ADHD?

Before we dive into the strategies for supporting people with ADHD, it's helpful to have a basic understanding of the condition. ADHD is characterised by persistent patterns of hyperactivity, inattention, and impulsivity and though it's often perceived as a childhood disorder, many adults live with ADHD throughout their lives.

Adults with ADHD often face multiple challenges in the workplace. We've listed some of the main ones below.

**Difficulty focusing** – Staying on task and maintaining the focus needed to complete tasks can be a hard struggle for individuals who have ADHD.

**Impulsivity** – Some people tend to be impulsive, which can be difficult in the workplace. Quick decision-making that's not been thought through properly can lead to many errors and misunderstandings.

**Time management** – Managing time adequately and meeting deadlines can be difficult for individuals with ADHD.

**Organisation** – The difficulty in organising tasks and maintaining order that can often lead to chronic inefficiency in the workplace.

**Prioritisation** – People with ADHD often find it hard to identify which tasks are most important and sometimes find prioritising tasks a challenge.

**Communication** – ADHD can affect communication with others in the workplace, leading to misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and strained relationships.

# Creating a neurodiverse-friendly workplace

## **Nurture open communication**

Encourage your employees to disclose their ADHD and create an environment where they can feel safe discussing their specific needs and challenges. Strive for an atmosphere of privacy and take care to ensure the confidentiality of employees is always properly maintained.

## **Provide proper training and awareness**

Conduct ethical training sessions to fully educate your team about ADHD, its symptoms, and how it can affect performance in the workplace. Raising awareness like this can help to promote cohesion and will also reduce the stigma and increase understanding.

## **Make reasonable adjustments**

Work with employees on an individualised basis to discern their specific needs and develop reasonable accommodations tailored to their requirements. This could include providing more flexible work hours, adjusting workspaces, or providing additional organisational or time management tools.



## **Give clear instructions and expectations**

If you have employees with ADHD, it's important to provide them with clear, concise instructions, deadlines, and expectations, to aid them with the completion of tasks and projects. Laying out well-defined goals and having structures in place will be greatly beneficial in helping them to stay on track with different projects.

## **Supply time management tools**

Make sure your workplace provides adequate time management tools and resources, like digital calendars and task management apps, as these will help employees to stay on top of their schedules and responsibilities.

## **Check-ins and support groups**

Carve out time to schedule regular, one-on-one check-ins with employees to discuss their progress, provide feedback, and offer them any needed support. You can also consider creating workplace peer support groups or mentorship programs where neurodiverse employees can connect, share experiences, and offer up guidance to one another.

## **Minimise workplace distractions**

If you can, try to create a workspace that minimises potential distractions, as some neurodiverse people find it particularly hard to focus. Supply noise-cancelling headphones, dedicate space for quiet areas, or arrange flexible seating to make the workplace as neurodiversity-friendly as possible.



## Effective communication strategies

**Practice actively listening:** Practice actively listening when communicating with colleagues who have ADHD, so you can identify where to help and allow them enough time to communicate. Make sure you give them your full attention, and avoid interrupting, or rushing the conversation.

**Keep clear communication:** Ensure you communicate using simple and straightforward language whenever you convey information to employees with ADHD. It's important to avoid using jargon or overly complex instructions when communicating with employees, as this can cause confusion and lead to potential misunderstandings.

**Use visual aids:** Make use of visual aids, like diagrams, graphs, charts, or slides, to complement your verbal communication. Using visual cues to accompany speech like this can go a long way to boosting understanding and memory retention.

**Recap key points:** Sum up important points and recap priority tasks discussed in meetings to reinforce their understanding.

**Follow up in writing:** After a conversation with employees, send them a follow-up email or message outlining the key takeaways, action items, and deadlines they need to be aware of.

**Allow time for processing:** Neurodiverse individuals may need some extra time to process information and respond, especially if they are participating in group discussions or meetings.



# Time management and organisation

**Task lists:** Promote the use of to-do and task lists or digital task management apps, to help employees better organise their daily responsibilities.

**Time blocking:** Encourage employees to use time-blocking techniques that will help them plan and allocate time for specific tasks or projects.

**Prioritisation:** Teach employees effective task prioritisation methods, like the Eisenhower Matrix, to help them deploy techniques that will allow them to focus on what's most important.

**Deadlines and reminders:** Provide staff with digital calendars and reminder apps so they get a heads up and don't forget, or overlook important deadlines and meetings.

**Set realistic goals:** Work with your employees to help them set realistic and achievable goals. Encourage them to break down large tasks into smaller, manageable steps, and tackle projects on a step-by-step basis, following this type of structure.

**Get rid of excess noise:** Noise-cancelling headphones and designated quiet workspaces are a great help to neurodiverse individuals, as they can be easily distracted by noise.

**Encourage breaks:** Suggest your employees take short, frequent breaks away from their workspace, to help maintain the focus and reduce stress and restlessness.

**Eliminate clutter:** Highlight the importance of an organised workspace and promote the reduction of clutter and unnecessary distractions.



## Feedback and achievements

Whenever you're providing feedback to individuals with ADHD, it's important to identify the specific issues that they need help with. To best help them course correct, first focus on evaluating specific behaviours or tasks, then offer constructive, clear guidance for improvement.

You can also recognise and celebrate the achievements and contributions that employees make, whether they are big and small, to help motivate them and boost self-esteem. It can also be helpful to conduct regular performance reviews to discuss progress with employees and clearly highlight any areas for improvement.

If appropriate, you could encourage employees to consider undergoing coaching or counselling, to receive personalised strategies for managing their condition, improve time management and enhancing their wellbeing.





Wellness Cloud and Parent Cloud give you easy remote access to coaches and specialists, who can support you with neurodiversity.

For further information, or to book a session online with one of our specialists, visit our website.

[www.the-wellness-cloud.com](http://www.the-wellness-cloud.com)

**HELPING PEOPLE THRIVE**

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