



# Inclusive Workplace Guide

A guide to hiring a person with intellectual disability



Council for  
Intellectual Disability





# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Council for Intellectual Disability	1
About this guide	1
Employees with Intellectual Disability	2
<hr/>	
<b>1 – Stage One: Workplace readiness</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 What is an inclusive workplace?	3
1.2 What makes your workplace inclusive?	5
1.3 Employment Inclusion Action Plan	11
1.4 Staff training	12
1.5 Easy Read	14
<hr/>	
<b>2 – Stage Two: Inclusive recruitment</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 Customised Employment	20
2.2 The interview	35
2.3 Post interview communication	40
<hr/>	
<b>3 – Stage Three: Onboarding, support and development</b>	<b>42</b>
3.1 Workplace adjustments	42
3.2 Practical tools to support learning	42
3.3 Support system	57
3.4 Professional development	59
<hr/>	
<b>4 – Additional Resources</b>	<b>60</b>

## Council for Intellectual Disability (CID)

Council for Intellectual Disability (CID) is a disability rights organisation led by people with intellectual disability. For more than 70 years we have been working to ensure a community where all people with intellectual disability are valued.

People with disability are at the front and centre of everything we do – they are decision-makers, members, directors, staff and spokespeople. We work to build a community that protects rights, includes everyone and supports people well. We focus on issues that people with disability tell us are important, such as the NDIS, health, jobs, education, transport and safety.

CID promotes human rights. We help people with disability to be heard, we speak up on the big issues and campaign for change. We advise organisations on how to be more inclusive so that our society is equal and accessible.

We believe people with disability should have the same opportunities as everyone else. Through CID people with disability, their families and supporters can learn and build skills, and actively participate in the community. We provide information, hold workshops and develop useful resources. We go to community events, share our stories and connect with peers.



## About this Guide

This Guide is for organisations who want to employ a person with intellectual disability.

It provides practical information about what organisations can do to recruit and support employees with intellectual disability in their workplace.

This Guide shows how to create an inclusive work environment and provides practical tools to build the confidence of staff to support their colleagues with intellectual disability.

You will find examples and templates that can be used to recruit, onboard, and provide ongoing support to employees with intellectual disability.

### More Than Just a Job Hub

This guide contains many useful tools and templates. You can use directly in this guide, but they are also available to download and print out. You will find blank templates, instructions and examples for each tool on our website: [www.cid.org.au/resource/more-than-just-a-job-business](http://www.cid.org.au/resource/more-than-just-a-job-business)

## Employees with intellectual disability

Intellectual disability affects the way a person learns, thinks, and communicates. It may be present from birth, or it can occur later in life as a result of a brain injury or illness. People with intellectual disability may learn and process information at a different pace and may need extra support in different areas. With the right supports in place, people with intellectual disability can lead meaningful, independent, and fulfilling lives.

Historically, people with intellectual disability were often denied the right to make decisions about their own lives. Through ongoing advocacy and leadership, people with intellectual disability and their families have challenged these barriers and advanced recognition of autonomy, inclusion, and participation. Yet, many barriers remain.

Employment is still a major area where exclusion exists, and many people with intellectual disability do not have access to open, meaningful and fairly paid work.

Employment is about more than earning an income, it is about autonomy, purpose, and belonging. When people with intellectual disability are supported to work in roles that match their strengths, skills, and interests, they gain greater control over their lives and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable community for everyone.



**Getting to know each employee as an individual, finding out what they are good at, what they enjoy and what support they may need is essential for a successful hire.**

## Stage One:

# Workplace readiness

## 1.1 What is an inclusive workplace?

Before you start the process of hiring an employee with a disability, it is important to think about how inclusive your workplace currently is. Creating an inclusive workplace means making the effort to ensure all people who work for the organisation are included and supported in the workplace. In many cases, this includes offering reasonable adjustments when they are needed.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, workplaces must provide reasonable adjustments (also called workplace adjustments).

Reasonable adjustments are changes that help a person with disability take part in work on an equal basis with others. These adjustments remove barriers so people can apply for jobs, take part in interviews, and perform their work well. They ensure everyone has fair access to employment and can do their best in the role.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- Physical changes to the workplace, such as wheelchair ramps.
- Equipment, tools or support services, such as screen readers.
- Changes to work tasks or the way work is done, such as amending the day's work start time.

Funding for adjustments may also be available through the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF).  
[www.business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/employment-assistance-fund](http://www.business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/employment-assistance-fund)

There are many different ways you can create an inclusive workplace. These will be covered in more detail later in this Guide, including using tools such as Easy Read and the provision of staff training. Inclusiveness in the workplace can be grouped into the following areas:



### Workplace culture

Making sure the environment is welcoming to all employees. Provide awareness and inclusion training for all staff and ensure all employees are included and valued.



### Workplace practices

Putting support systems in place. Conduct regular check-ins and reviews to ensure employees receive ongoing support to succeed in their role and continue to build their skills.



### Communication

Taking time to understand how to best communicate with employees and ensure everyone can access office communication. This includes:

- Writing emails in plain English.
- Using Easy Read format for workplace signage.
- Ensuring PowerPoints and other documents meet accessibility standards.



### Recruitment process

Making any necessary adjustments to job advertisements, job descriptions and the interview processes to make it easier for potential employees with intellectual disability to apply.



### Orientation

Making sure the orientation process is welcoming. Take time to get to know the employee well, develop adequate support systems and engage a buddy or mentor to support the person, especially initially as they learn their role.

## 1.2 What makes your workplace inclusive?

Depending on the size and structure of your organisation, you will probably find that your workplace is already inclusive for a wide range of staff needs. You may have policies written by your HR department that provide guidance on staff inclusiveness, or you may have procedures that you follow to onboard new hires. The processes in your workplace may be formal and structured, or informal and more ad-hoc. Either way, ensure inclusivity is an active part of your workplace culture.

Consider the following points, and how your workplace already meets inclusive goals. Not all points are relevant for all businesses, or for all staff. An employee who is legally blind may not require wheelchair access, whereas an employee in a wheelchair may not need assistive technology. Just like every other staff member, employees with intellectual disability have different needs, and it is not realistic or practical to provide a workplace that ticks every inclusive environment box. What is important is providing an environment that supports the people you employ.

Think further about the topics on the previous page:



### Workplace culture

Workplace culture sets the tone for how employees are included and valued. An inclusive culture means all employees can feel safe, valued, respected, and empowered to do their best work.

Would you agree with the statements below about your workplace?

Are there any that are not applicable?

Are there any that you would like to embed more fully in your workplace culture?

If yes, how could you do that?

- Our workplace is diverse and inclusive of all cultures, genders, religions, people with disability, and people who identify as LGBTQIA+.
- We have mechanisms in place to support the health and wellbeing of all staff.
- There are opportunities for employees to work with different staff, not just the same group of people.
- We make the time for regular team building activities.
- We ensure workplace events are inclusive of all staff, are held at accessible locations, and everyone is invited.
- Our people feel valued through recognition of good work and their positive contributions to workplace culture, such as celebrating staff wins, birthdays, and relevant religious events.



### Work practices

Work practices are the systems in place that support your inclusive goals.

They are the practical tools you can implement to ensure your workplace is truly inclusive.

How many of the below points does your workplace provide?

For any that are not provided, is there a need and capacity to introduce them?

- All staff are provided with equal training opportunities.
- All staff are provided with inclusion and diversity training.
- We ensure fair and equal pay rates for people working in the same roles.
- We have support systems in place, such as providing a buddy or mentor for new staff.
- Any support systems are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet staff needs.
- All staff are provided with opportunities for career progression.
- All staff have regular check-ins with their managers.
- Reasonable workplace adjustments are available to staff where required.
- For staff with specific support needs, tools such as a visual work schedule, modelling, task breakdown and Easy Read are utilised.





## Communication

Communication, in all its forms, is a key component of how workplaces function well.

Everyone will have different preferred methods of communication. Taking the time to understand staff communication styles ensures everyone can access workplace communications.

Staff with intellectual disability may have specific communication preferences, such as instructions provided in Easy Read or plain English.

How to write in Easy Read is covered in the next section of this guide.

There are many online resources that provide guidance on the use of plain English and accessibility.

**Some communication tips that staff with intellectual disability can find helpful are:**

- Providing written and/or visual instructions to support verbal instructions.
- Using relevant pictures or graphics to accompany text.
- Workplace signage that is clearly written and easily read (e.g. large dark font on a white or light background).
- Having an agenda during meetings that is written in plain English.
- Sticking to meeting agendas, and including breaks when needed.



## The recruitment process

When recruiting, it is important that your job advertisement matches the role you are trying to fill. The skills and experience required should be clearly defined, and the advertisement should be posted in places your target audience is likely to see.

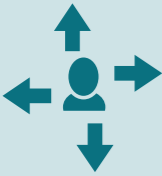
To ensure your job advertisement is accessible to people with intellectual disability and encourages them to apply, consider the following:

- In addition to using traditional recruitment platforms, post digital and hard copies of the job ad with disability rights organisations and on social media.
- Provide the job advertisement in Easy Read.
- Include wording such as “We welcome applicants who have intellectual disability”, and state that reasonable adjustments will be made during the application process.

### Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are modifications to processes that help someone perform more effectively. Some examples of reasonable adjustments when interviewing are listed below. However, it is important to ask the person what adjustments they might require, rather than assume.

- Provide the questions you intend to ask during the interview prior to the day, so the person has time to think about their answers.
- Allow extra time for the person to answer questions during the interview.
- Let the person know they can bring a support person to the interview if they would like to.
- Be open to how the person answers the interview questions – they may be able to show you what they can do rather than tell you.



## Orientation

The orientation or onboarding process is the first impression your staff have of your workplace, so it is important that it is warm and welcoming.

Some practical steps you can take when a new employee commences include:

- Take the time to get to know the person.
  - What are their strengths and skills?
  - What motivates them at work?
  - How do they communicate best?
  - Are there any supports they need to in the workplace?
- Develop a reasonable adjustment plan for any supports they may require.
- Introduce the person to other employees, encouraging everyone to get to know each other.
- Assign a reliable work buddy or mentor to the new employee.
- Make sure workplace support systems are set up and followed.



## Physical accessibility checklist

### Accessible front and back entrances:

- Ramps or sloped walkways
- Doorways wide enough for wheelchairs/electric chairs
- Handrails

### Accessible toilets:

- Doorways wide enough for wheelchairs
- Grab bars
- Lowered fixtures
- Clear floor space
- Accessible flush controls
- Larger stall space
- Accessible sinks
- Emergency alarm
- Adequate lighting and signage

### Accessible car park:

- Designated spaces for disabled drivers

### Accessible common areas (kitchen, meeting rooms, etc):

- Shelving and storage areas easy to see and reach
- Countertops low and uncluttered
- Open shelves
- Sinks easy to reach and operate
- Clear labels and signage on cupboards, appliances and rooms
- Quiet spaces available if needed

### Accessible workstations:

- Height adjustable desks
- Clear knee space
- Adaptable workstations
- Aisles and pathways wide and clear
- Step-by-step instructions or visual guides available

### Accessible floor space:

- Adequate open floor space to accommodate wheelchairs/electric chairs and allow for easy maneuverability



## Physical accessibility

If you look around your workplace, you will probably find areas where physical accessibility already exists. Perhaps you have height adjustable desks, and grab rails in the bathrooms.

Not every workplace can meet the accessibility requirements of everyone's potential needs, so work with your staff to find out what they need in terms of accessibility. A checklist of accessibility features is below for consideration of workplace areas you could possibly make more accessible if required.

## 1.3 Employment Inclusion Action Plan

The previous section should have given you a good idea of the areas where your workplace is already meeting accessibility needs, and where you want to make some changes.

Changes might be practical, such as converting one of the organisations car spaces to a designated accessible parking area, or related to workplace culture, such as introducing regular staff meetings to improve communication and foster participation.

An Employment Inclusion Action Plan is simply a list of the actions your business intends to take to make your workplace more inclusive. This could also be used in preparation for hiring someone with an intellectual disability, noting who will be involved, and a timeline for completion.

### Case Study:

Nicholas is a Project Manager leading a large, time-sensitive project. Some of his employees have been working overtime trying to meet deadlines, and he has noticed some important tasks are not being completed. Nicholas is concerned that this will affect project outcomes and staff wellbeing. He has decided they need an additional staff member to help with the high workload and is thinking about employing a person with intellectual disability.

After reviewing section 1 of the Inclusive Workplace Guide, Nicholas makes an Employment Inclusion Action Plan to prepare his workplace.

What we will do	Who will do it	When will it be done
Meet with staff to talk about hiring a person with intellectual disability. Highlight benefits, alignment with organisational values, and create space for questions.	Nicholas	15 May
Identify and discuss the project tasks that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are not being completed within time frames.</li> <li>• Distract key staff from core responsibilities.</li> <li>• Are important but currently not assigned.</li> </ul> This forms the basis for a customised role.	All staff, Nicholas to lead	30 May
Identify areas where cultural change is needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide disability awareness training to staff.</li> <li>• Create space for questions and discussions.</li> </ul>	All staff	All staff to complete by 30 July
Staff to complete a One Page Profile for themselves. Meet to discuss how the information can be used to best support everyone.	All staff	15 August
Review and update recruitment practices to ensure they support inclusion and accessibility.	HR	30 August

## 1.4 Staff training

Due to barriers we mentioned earlier, many people have not had the opportunity to work with, or spend time with, a person with an intellectual disability. This can mean some people lack confidence when communicating with a person with intellectual disability and are not sure how to best support them. Others may feel overly conscious of making a mistake, or saying the wrong thing.

To employ someone with intellectual disability successfully, staff, especially those who have no experience with people with intellectual disability, need to feel prepared, supported and reassured.

The best way to do this is by providing **disability awareness training** for staff, ideally before an employee with intellectual disability begins their role. This type of training promotes disability sensitivity and supports an inclusive work culture. It can be delivered in person or online.

### Disability Awareness Training

#### In-person training

CID offers in-person training with facilitators with lived experience of intellectual disability. You can contact CID on 1800 424 065 or visit [www.cid.org.au](http://www.cid.org.au) for more information.

#### Online Training

The Australian Human Rights Commission and Disability Awareness offer free online disability awareness training. These e-learning courses are easily found online.



## What is Easy Read?



Easy Read is important.

It means I can understand and I am included.



People with intellectual disability are usually visual learners.



Easy Read uses clear, everyday language matched with images to make sure everyone understands.



## 1.5 Easy Read

Easy Read, which has been mentioned several times in this guide, is an accessible way of providing written information in an easy-to-understand way, with pictures accompanying the words.

Easy Read is a valuable communication approach that respects people's diverse ways of processing information and supports everyone to access information on equal terms. Easy Read uses specific layout guidelines to combine concise text and images in a way that makes information more accessible.

Easy Read guidelines are provided below to assist you to develop Easy Read documents.



### Language

Use everyday words: avoid jargon and slang.

Use short sentences and short words.

Avoid acronyms unless widely used and known such as NDIS and NSW.

Think about what people **need to know**, not what is nice to know.

Have one idea per sentence.



### Text

Use sans-serif fonts: Arial, Verdana or Tahoma.

Use size 14 or 16 font for main text.

Use size 18+ for headings and use **bold**.

Do not use *italics* or underline.

Use dark text on light background.





## Format

Ensure there is plenty of white space on the page.

Use wide margins with a minimum of 2.5cm on all sides.

Use double line spacing or a minimum of 1.5.

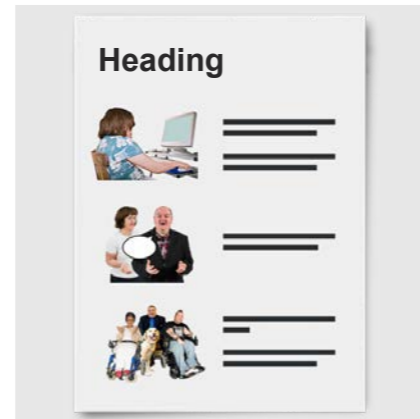
Bullet points

- Good to break up large amounts of text
- Do not use for every line on a page
- Great for a short list up to 3 points

Do not use tables, graphs or columns.

Align text to left, do not centre or justify.

Limit punctuation such as (brackets) – hyphens / slashes are not easy to read.



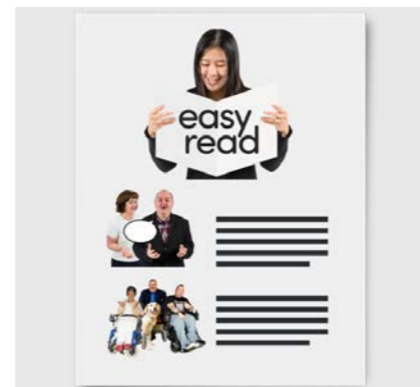
## Pictures

Pictures and images help illustrate main points.

Pictures should sit to the left of text or between the heading and text.

Make sure images and pictures relate to the text.

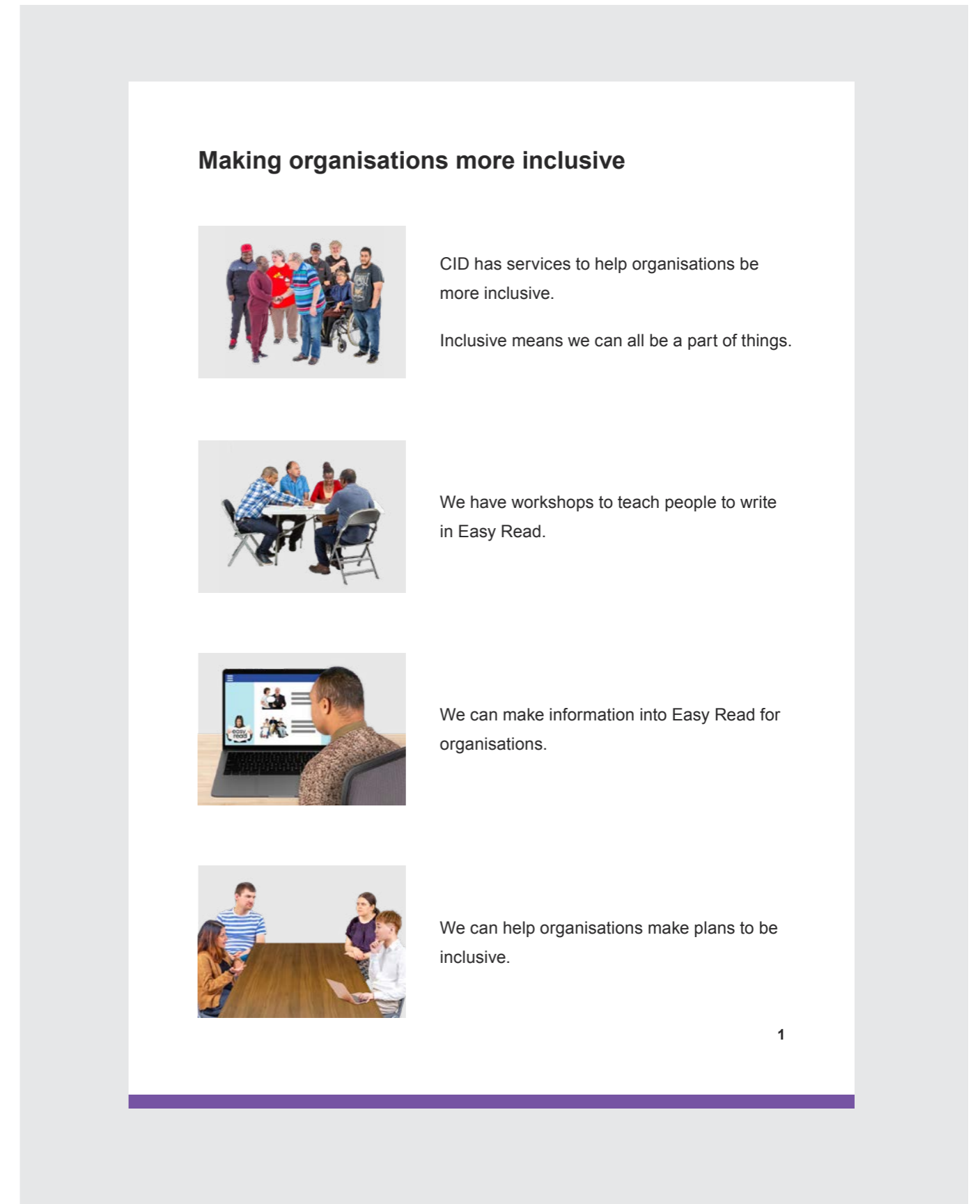
If you cannot find a suitable picture do not use one.



All documents can be translated to Easy Read. In the workplace, consider translating relevant documents and information, such as job advertisements, employment contracts, policies, and information that will be shared to all staff.

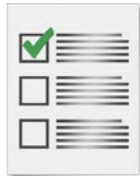
If you would like to learn more, CID offers Easy Read training both in person and online.

Here is an example of an Easy Read document:





## Online meetings checklist



A checklist is a list of things to remember to do.

This checklist will help you prepare for an online meeting.

On the last page you can add your own checklist.



It is good to start getting ready before your online meeting starts.



Get ready for an online meeting 30 minutes before it starts.



Plug your **device** into power.

A device is a computer, tablet (iPad) or phone.



Turn your device on.



Put your phone on silent or turn it off.



Plug headphones into device.

### Yourself

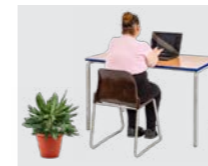


Dress in your work clothes.



You may want to make a cup of tea or coffee.

Pour a glass of water for the meeting.



Check behind where you are sitting for the meeting.

Make sure it is clean and tidy.

### Yourself



Do you want to take notes?

Have a pen and paper handy.



Have you been asked to prepare anything for the meeting?

Prepare what you need.



Have you been asked to say something at the meeting?

Make sure you have what you need.

## Example of Online meeting Checklist

↓ You can download this resource on our website: [www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide](http://www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide)

## Inclusive Workplace



### Treat me as an equal

- Look at me
- Introduce yourself
- Smile
- Be patient
- Give me time to answer you
- Ask me if I need help, don't assume I do



### Make adjustments

- Customise a role that will help me succeed
- Ask me what support I need
- Give me information in a way that I can understand
- Give me the right support to learn
- Work closely with my support people



### Include me

- Connect me with buddies
- Meet with me weekly to see how I'm doing
- Support me to develop my work skills
- Create an inclusive workplace by providing disability awareness training

## Stage Two:

# Inclusive recruitment

Inclusive recruitment means ensuring that the recruitment process is accessible for all candidates, including people with intellectual disability, enabling meaningful and successful participation at every stage, from application through to onboarding.

There are several things you can do to make your recruitment process more accessible for people with disability. These can include:

- Customised employment.
- Information in Easy Read.
- Interview adjustments.
- Seeking support from Inclusive Employment Australia and Job Access where available.

## 2.1 Customised employment

### What is customised employment?

Customised employment is a person-centered framework that follows specific stages and steps. Customised employment is when a workplace works with a person with intellectual disability to create a new role that matches their skills, strengths, and support needs while also meeting genuine business needs.

Even if your workplace doesn't create a fully customised role, using strategies from customised employment, such as job carving or role crafting, can make a real difference in recruiting and supporting people with intellectual disability.

Some elements of a role that can be customised are:

- Hours of work.
- Location of work.
- Duties and responsibilities.

Please note, there are different ways to customise a role. In the next section, we describe some of the common processes used.

If you want to seek further support in this process, contact qualified experts such as external job coaches, disability employment professionals or customised employment specialists.

## How to customise a job?

Customising a job involves designing a role to meet your organisation's needs while supporting a potential employee with disability to succeed. It is about finding the right match between efficiency, the strengths of the employee and the right support.

Taking time to identify these areas helps you see where a customised role could make your organisation more efficient and your team more focused on their core responsibilities.

The following six steps show how to customise a job.



## Step 1. Identify your organisational needs

### Regular duties that pull employees away from their main tasks

**Example:** In a marketing department, a senior manager spends several hours each week compiling performance reports from multiple campaigns. While these reports are important, this work takes time away from strategic planning, creative development, and coaching team members. By assigning the reporting tasks to a customised role, the manager can focus on higher-level decisions, while the new employee gains meaningful work that contributes to the success of the campaigns.

### Tasks that are necessary but could be reallocated to improve efficiency

**Example:** In a finance team, the accountant spends time entering routine transaction data into the accounting system. This task is essential but could easily be completed by someone in a customised support role. The accountant can then focus on financial analysis, budgeting, and advising management, high-level work that requires their expertise. Meanwhile, the new employee learns valuable processes and plays an important role in keeping the organisation's financial management.

### Identify your organisational needs

Look at your organisation and identify areas where extra help could improve efficiency or meet demand. This step is about understanding why work is needed. Think about areas where tasks are falling behind, staff are under pressure, or processes could work better.

Identifying organisational needs helps you recognise where a role could add value to your organisation.

### Tasks that are left unfinished or take focus from core responsibilities

**Example:** In a busy café, the chef often restocks condiments and washes dishes during peak service times. These tasks are essential but prevent the chef from focusing on preparing high-quality meals and coordinating kitchen operations. By creating a customised role to handle cleaning, restocking, and basic kitchen tasks, the chef can focus on food quality and kitchen management, while the new employee performs meaningful, contributing work that supports the whole team.

## Step 2. Identify the tasks for the role

Once you have identified your organisation's needs, the next step is to look more closely at the specific tasks that could meet those needs. At this stage, you do not need to create a formal job description. Instead, focus on the specific work that could be done differently to improve efficiency and create a meaningful role.

You can do this in a few ways:

- Make a list of tasks that need to be done more often or take up staff time.
- Draw a simple workflow or chart showing where extra help would make a difference.
- Write a short outline of duties that could fit into a new or existing role.

The goal is to clearly describe what the new person would do day to day.

Tip: Make the list practical and focused on tasks that match the organisational need.

**Example:** Nicholas and his staff develop a list of tasks that could be included in a customised role to support delivering their project on time and within schedule.

### Task List

List the tasks that could potentially be included in the duties and responsibilities of the customised role.
Assist with preparing presentations and workshop materials.
Help coordinate logistics for team meetings and community events (e.g. setting up spaces, greeting participants, managing sign-in sheets).
Keep track of resource stock and order or restock supplies when needed.
Support accessibility reviews of documents (checking readability or plain English).
Enter feedback or survey data into spreadsheets.
Prepare participant packs and name tags for events

### Template: Task List

List the tasks that could potentially be included in the duties and responsibilities of the customised role.

[You can download this resource on our website: www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide](http://www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide)

### Step 3. Identify desired employee characteristics

Once you have identified the tasks and responsibilities of the customised role, the next step is to consider the characteristics that will help someone succeed in it.

Think about the personal qualities, skills, and interests that would be a good match for the role. This helps ensure the job is designed around both the needs of the organisation and the strengths of the employee.

Include:

- Skills and experience (e.g. has skills in computer software, inventory management).
- Personality traits (e.g. is friendly, patient, reliable).
- Interests and goals (e.g. enjoys working with people, interested in the industry).
- Ability to handle the work environment (e.g. can work in busy or noisy spaces).

**Example:** Nicholas lists the personal characteristics that a potential employee should have to be successful in the role.

## Employee Characteristics List

List the characteristics required to fulfill the role.
Likes being around people and is friendly.
Is organised and good with checklists.
Is comfortable using basic computer functions (email, Word, shared drives, spreadsheets).
Knows how to ask for help when needed, and works well with a team.
Reliable and punctual.
Can work in a noisy and busy environment.

Template:

## Employee Characteristics List

List the characteristics required to fulfill the role.

[You can download this resource on our website: www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide](http://www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide)

## Step 4. Identify supports for the employee

Once you know the tasks and desired characteristics for the role, think about what supports will help the employee succeed. Supports are practical adjustments and guidance that make it easier for someone to do the job well.

Supports could include:

- Training and on-the-job guidance.
- Regular check-ins to review progress.
- Adjustments to the environment or tasks (e.g., clear instructions, modified tools).
- Ensuring staff have disability awareness and know communication tips.
- Welcoming a support person, if the new staff chooses to bring one.

**Key points:**

### Induction

A thoughtful induction helps new employees feel welcome, informed, and supported from the start. When inducting a person with an intellectual disability, plan for extra time and provide information in ways that suit their learning style.

**Key steps:**

- Use clear, plain English language. Avoid jargon and explain terms that may be new.
- Ask how the employee learns best. They may prefer visuals, demonstrations, repetition, or written step-by-step instructions.
- Break learning into manageable sessions over several days to support understanding and retention.
- Schedule regular check-ins to review progress, clarify information, and provide feedback.
- Ensure support is available. Assign a go-to person for questions and guidance.
- Collaborate on solutions. If something is not working, discuss it openly and decide on adjustments together.
- Promote inclusive culture. Make sure all staff have completed disability awareness training and are familiar with accessible communication guidelines.

## Supports in the workplace

Providing the right supports helps employees perform their roles confidently and independently. These supports may be formal or informal and should be adjusted over time as the person becomes more familiar with their role.

**Examples of workplace supports:**

- Clear instructions and visual aids such as photos, diagrams, or checklists.
- Consistent routines and predictable work schedules.
- Job customisation, focusing on tasks that match the person's strengths and interests.
- Buddy systems or peer mentors to assist with learning new tasks.
- Regular feedback delivered in a positive and practical way.
- Assistive technology or adaptive equipment where needed.
- Encouragement and recognition to build confidence and motivation.

### Career progression plan

Supporting career development shows employees that their contributions are valued and that growth is possible within the organisation.

**Steps to support career progression:**

- Discuss career goals during regular reviews and identify areas for skill development.
- Provide opportunities for learning such as courses, job shadowing, or mentoring.
- Celebrate achievements and recognise progress, no matter how small or big.
- Encourage participation in decision-making about future roles or new responsibilities.
- Review supports regularly to ensure they continue to meet the employee's needs.



**Example:** Nicholas thinks about how he and his staff can potentially support an employee with intellectual disability.

## Supports Available to Employee

Induction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask the person how they learn best and adapt demonstrations, written instructions, or hands-on practice accordingly.</li><li>• Walk the person through the project plan using a visual workflow to show how each task fits into the bigger picture.</li><li>• Break induction into short sessions over the first few days: Day 1 – team roles; Day 2 and 3– project tracker; Day 4 – first hands-on task.</li><li>• Start with simple tasks, like checking materials and updating the checklist, before assigning more complex responsibilities.</li><li>• Check in every morning to review progress and to plan for the day.</li><li>• Assign a buddy for guidance and day-to-day support.</li><li>• Identify challenges with systems or tasks and provide extra support or adjustments as needed.</li><li>• Reinforce inclusive communication guidelines and ensure the team follows them.</li></ul>
Supports in the workplace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a clear visual task board showing daily priorities and project progress.</li><li>• Maintain consistent routines, including daily check-ins and updates.</li><li>• Assign tasks that match the employee's strengths and interests.</li><li>• Pair the employee with a buddy to demonstrate new tasks and provide ongoing support.</li><li>• Give specific, constructive feedback to recognise achievements and clarify expectations.</li><li>• Provide accessible materials, Easy Read or plain English versions, and visual aids as required.</li><li>• Ensure all tools and equipment needed to complete tasks are available.</li><li>• Recognise and celebrate achievements to build confidence and motivation.</li></ul>
Career progression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss career goals and areas for skill development during review sessions.</li><li>• Introduce new responsibilities gradually as confidence and skills grow.</li><li>• Arrange shadowing or mentoring opportunities to build experience in new areas.</li><li>• Celebrate milestones and progress.</li><li>• Involve the employee in planning future responsibilities and project tasks.</li><li>• Review supports regularly to ensure alignment with development and career aspirations.</li></ul>

**Template:**

## Supports Available to Employee

Induction
Supports in the workplace
Career progression

[You can download this resource on our website: www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide](http://www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide)

## Step 5. Develop an Easy Read job description

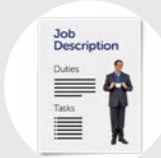
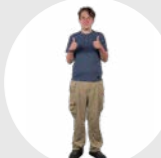
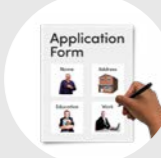
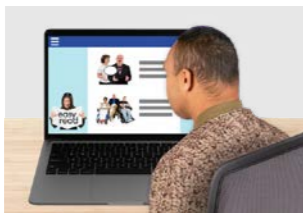
You can now develop an Easy Read job description for your role. Easy Read is a tool used to help people read and understand information.

Some Easy Read principles to remember:

- Use everyday language avoiding jargon, slang and acronyms.
- Use Arial font in size 14 for main text and in bold size 18 for headings.
- Only include information people need to know.
- Use 1.5 spacing to break up text.
- Use pictures to the left of text to help explain each idea.

Here is an example of an Easy Read job guide for an Administration Officer, a role advertised specifically for a person with intellectual disability.

### Administration Officer who has a lived experience of intellectual disability











This job guide has 3 parts

- About this job
- **Skills** you need for this job  
**Skills** are things you are good at.
- How to apply for this job.

Please read all the information before you apply.

1

This job is for 12 months.

You will be paid **\$38.65** an hour.

This is level 4 of the **SCHADS award**.  
The **SCHADS award** tells disability organisations how much to pay their staff.

You might work at

- the office
- Online from home.

2



## Step 6. Advertise the position (noting exemptions)

### Exemptions

Once you create the job advertisement, you can advertise it as a targeted recruitment for a person with intellectual disability. Under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, discrimination in recruitment is usually illegal.

However, there are specific situations where a targeted recruitment, or exemption, is allowed.

#### For example:

- Designated roles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- To recruit women into roles that are traditionally male dominated.
- Designated roles for women in female-only medical centres or shelters.
- Roles for people with disability.

When advertising the role specifically for people with intellectual disability in NSW, you may need to apply for an exemption from the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. This can be done by contacting the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW on 1800 670 812. The Anti-Discrimination NSW website has more information about exemptions.

For further information about exemptions in all other states and territories contact the Anti-Discrimination Board in your state.

### Where to advertise

You can advertise the role through your usual employment platforms, as well as via disability rights organisations and on social media.

It may also be beneficial to advertise through an Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA) provider.

## Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA)

IEA is an Australian Government program that provides funding to not-for-profit and private sector organisations to help people with disability find and keep a job.

Providers do this by connecting candidates to jobs that match their skills, strengths, and interests. They prepare both the workplace and candidates for employment and provide ongoing support to ensure continued success.

Some people with intellectual disability use an IEA provider to find employment.

Services offered by IEA providers can include:

- Identifying their organisation's needs.
- Finding suitable candidates.
- Accessing training.
- Making workplace adjustments, job customisation and tailoring.
- Providing safe and productive workplaces.
- Retaining employees with disability.

You may not need to apply for an exemption from disability discrimination laws if you engage with an IEA provider to find an employee with intellectual disability.

The Australian Government Department of Social Services website has more information about the IEA program and a list of providers.

[www.dss.gov.au/inclusive-employment-australia](http://www.dss.gov.au/inclusive-employment-australia)

## 2.2 The interview

A number of adjustments can be made to interview processes to make them more accessible.

Prior to interviewing, make contact with the prospective candidate (and their support person if applicable) to ask if there are any adjustments required.

If you are proceeding with a standard interview, the following adjustments could be useful:

- Provide questions to the person before the interview.
- Use plain language and ask one question at a time.
- Give the candidate time to answer. If they are having trouble, you may need to change the way you ask the question.
- If a candidate's verbal communication is not their strength, it may be difficult for them to explain what they can do. If this is the case, you may prefer to arrange a job trial as an opportunity for them to demonstrate their abilities (with appropriate support).
- Allow a support person to attend.
- At the end of the interview process talk about any workplace adjustments and support the person might need. For example, you could ask: 'Is there anything we can do to support you to do this job well?'

For government sector agencies, there is flexibility to change recruitment and selection processes to support more inclusive employment practices. Rule 26 allows agencies to modify these processes to facilitate the employment of people from disadvantaged groups, including people with disability.

The NSW Government Public Service Commission website has more information about Rule 26 and how it can be applied.

[www.psc.nsw.gov.au/assets/psc/documents/Rule-26-fact-sheet.pdf](http://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/assets/psc/documents/Rule-26-fact-sheet.pdf)

# Top communication tips

## Working with a person with intellectual disability



### 1. Your body language is important

**Why?** How you hold yourself can affect how comfortable we feel.

**Good example:** Be open with how you sit and how you hold your body. Try not to cross your arms. Be professional, but personable.



### 2. Make an effort to understand us

Find common ground. Be friendly. Have good eye contact.

**Why?** Finding common ground is important to feeling comfortable, safe and an equal. Looking at us lets us know we are seen.

**Good example:** If you are asking us a question, look at us. Start the conversation with 'ice breaker' questions so we can get to know each other. Ask questions like "what are you interested in?" or "I like football, do you follow a sport?"



### 3. Give us time

It is important to be patient, to wait and listen. Speak calmly and clearly.

Taking the time now saves time later.

**Why?** It can take time for us to process what is being said and then formulate our response.

**Good example:** After you ask a question, ask if we have understood it and if we need time to answer. Be happy to sit in silence for a while to give us time to process your question and come up with a response. You might have to wait for 5 minutes or more.



### 4. Explain things in everyday language

**Why?** Big words and complex terms are hard to understand.

**Good example:** Ask us if we know or understand the word or term you are using. If there is a different, easier word to use then use it. If there is no other word or term, then explain the meaning. Remind us of its meaning the next few times you use it.



### 5. Break down big ideas

Don't give us information overload.

**Why?** It can be hard to follow a conversation when a lot of information is given in a short period of time.

**Good example:** Regularly stop to ask if we understand or if we need a few minutes of quiet to process. Using pictures or illustrations can help us follow or better understand what is being said.

# Top communication tips

## Working with a person with intellectual disability



### 6. One topic at a time

Finish one topic of conversation before you start another. Make it clear you are moving on to another topic.

**Why?** It is very easy to lose track of what is being said. When this happens we can feel excluded, upset and overwhelmed.

**Good example:** After you finish a topic let us know and then check in with us. Offer to have a 5 to 10 minute break to allow us time to process what's been said.



### 7. Check in with us often

Make sure we understand what you are saying.

**Why?** It can be hard or embarrassing for us to stop you to say we don't understand.

**Good example:** During a conversation, regularly check to see if we are following. A good way to find out if we understand is to ask us to explain back to you what we think you said.



### 8. Repeat new information

**Why?** Remembering and processing new information takes time.

Repeating helps us remember.

**Good example:** If it is important information, repeat it a couple of times in different ways. Send us a follow up letter or email with a summary of the main points in Easy Read or plain English.



### 9. Ask open questions

**Why?** This will help you learn more about us. If you ask a yes/no question, we will most likely choose the answer we think you want to hear.

**Good example:** Questions like 'How can I help you?' or 'Tell me about...!' give us the chance to tell our story.



### 10. Always check if we want a supporter

A supporter might be a carer, family member, friend or other support person.  
**Why?** We have the right to choose who comes into our appointments or meetings.

**Good example:** Welcome us then ask us who we want to join in our conversation.



### 11. Extra care and patience over the phone

**Why?** We can find it hard to talk over the phone unless we know the person on the other end well. Over the phone you can't read people's facial expressions or body language.

**Good example:** Make sure you give extra time for us to take in and understand what you are saying. Ask if the phone call is working for us. If it isn't then work out another method of contact.



### 12. Use pictures when you can

**Why?** Pictures can help explain hard words and reinforce what you are saying.

**Good example:** Use pictures to help explain a difficult concept such as 'social distancing'.



### 13. Give us as much information in Easy Read as you can

**Why?** Accessible information is our human right.

**Good example:** To put something into Easy Read:

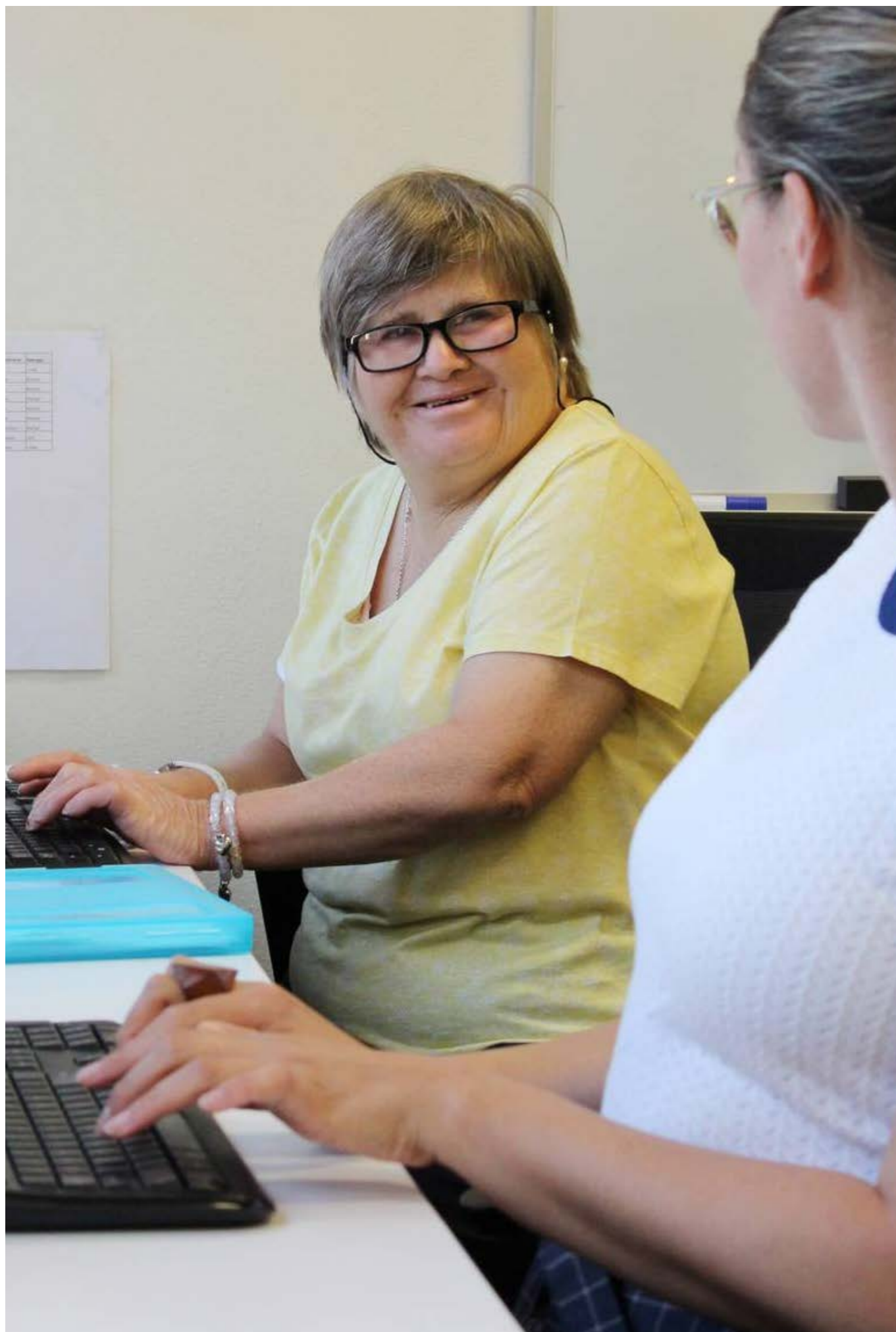
- Use everyday language
- Only include what information is needed
- 14 size font and 1.5 line spacing
- Headings in bold to signpost
- New topic = new line or new page
- Use pictures to explain what you are saying



### 14. Ask us

And finally, remember, don't be scared to ask us questions about how we communicate. We really will appreciate it.





## 2.3 Post interview communication

Once a candidate has been interviewed and chosen for the role, ensure any post interview communication such as letters of offer and contracts, follow plain English or Easy Read guidelines.

This makes documents, including legal documents, more accessible to a person with intellectual disability.

In addition to written letters or emails advising the candidate of their successful application, ensure you also follow up with a phone call, including to their support person (if required).

For candidates who were not successful, provide clear and strength-based feedback that highlights what they did well and offers constructive guidance. This supports their confidence, growth and future employment opportunities.

**An example of an Employment Contract written in plain English is on the next page.**



11 October 2025  
Nathan Dale  
100 The Road,  
Daleford, NSW



Dear Nathan,

We are happy to give you a job at MetroFresh Distribution.  
The job is for the role of Records Management Assistant.

#### Your contract

This contract starts on **14 February 2026**.  
This contract ends on **14 February 2028**.

This job is part time.  
You will work **8 hours** each week.  
You will normally work on Monday and Tuesday. You will normally work between 10am to 2pm.

You might have to work outside these hours sometimes, but we will tell you when this happens.

#### Pay

You will be paid \$30 for each hour you work.

You need to give us your bank account details so we can pay you your salary. We will send you a form for this.

Your salary will be paid every two weeks.

If you are getting any government support you should tell them that you have a job. They will tell you what you need to do.

#### Superannuation

We will pay Superannuation.

We will give you a form to fill in.

You can tell us what Superannuation fund you use.

If you do not have a fund we can explain what you can do.

## Stage Three:

# Onboarding, support and development

## 3.1 Workplace adjustments

Once you have hired your new employee, it is time to support their transition into the workplace. Arrange for any reasonable adjustments and be prepared to modify these as you both learn what works best.

Observation is a valuable tool, especially in the early stages. Take note of what is working well, and what is not. Sometimes a direct question like “How do you learn best?” can be difficult to answer. You could ask questions such as “How have you done this before?” or “How do you do this at home?” to help the employee think of concrete examples. You could also try the tools below and adjust as needed.

Remember, the important thing is what needs to be done, not how things are done. We all have our own processes, so be flexible in allowing people to do things their way.

## 3.2 Practical tools to support learning

Inclusive workplaces use a range of strategies to support employees to learn new tasks and do their job well.

There are many tools that can assist a person with intellectual disability to settle into the workplace, learn new skills, and keep track of the things they need to do in their role.

These tools can be used to support your employees in their work.

# One Page Profile

The One Page Profile is a tool that can help you understand an employee's strengths, what is important to them, and how to best support them. It provides a record of this information for reference and can be updated as things change.

The One Page Profile is useful for all employees as an opportunity for self-reflection and to discuss personal skills and support needs.

Colleagues can share their answers with each other as a team-building exercise to build trust and contribute to a healthy workplace culture. It can also be a useful tool in navigating career progression.

## John Wellis

### One Page Profile

**What people like and appreciate about me**

- I am a good communicator and am very responsible.
- I am well organised and structured.
- I work well as a team member.
- I have great admin skills.

Important to me	What to know and do to best support me
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That I trust my colleagues and they trust me.</li> <li>When people respect me for my work.</li> <li>Feeling like I am part of a team.</li> <li>Giving and receiving feedback.</li> <li>Having information in an accessible way.</li> <li>I like to take on challenges, I will ask for support if I need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give positive and negative feedback. That helps me to build my skills.</li> <li>Give me time to think about a new concept, new tasks or changes.</li> <li>An easy to read and accurate work schedule.</li> <li>I like to work in quiet places. This helps me to concentrate.</li> <li>Give me written instructions.</li> </ul>

Template:  
**One Page Profile**



**What people like and appreciate about me**

Important to me	What to know and do to best support me

↓ You can download this resource on our website: [www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide](http://www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide)

# Good Day and Bad Day

Support your employee to complete the Good Day and Bad Day tool and use this opportunity to open up a conversation about how to best support the employee.

This information can also be used to form part of a One Page Profile.

## How to use the Good Day and Bad Day tool

- Use the template as a guide to ask the questions related to each column.
- Explore the areas that make a positive change and discuss how these can be achieved if the day turns bad.
- Reflect on each question and provide feedback if needed.

Good day at work	Bad day at work
What helps make a good day?	What throws your day off?
Getting to work on time. I know what work I have to do. Do different tasks, one at a time.	Not knowing what will happen when my tasks change without enough notice.
What do you look forward to doing?	What makes the day bad for you?
Talking to the people I work with. Checking data and fixing errors.	People do not have time to talk to me. I cannot get help when I need it.
Who do you look forward to seeing?	What makes you frustrated? Bored?
My work friends. The warehouse team.	Not having enough work. If my work is too hard or boring. When information is too hard to understand.
What happens that gives you energy to deal with difficult situations?	What takes the fun out of your day?
Having good support. Having a laugh. When I fix a problem and people tell me I did a good job.	Having no one to talk to. Not having anyone to help me if I need it.

Template:

# Good Day and Bad Day

Good day at work	Bad day at work
What helps make a good day?	What throws your day off?
What do you look forward to doing?	What makes the day bad for you?
Who do you look forward to seeing?	What makes you frustrated? Bored?
What happens that gives you energy to deal with difficult situations?	What takes the fun out of your day?

[You can download this resource on our website: www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide](http://www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide)



# Task analysis

An important part of teaching someone how to do a task is to break the task into smaller, repeatable steps. This is called task analysis.

This provides an opportunity for the employee to learn the task in a logical sequence. It also assists in understanding which parts of the task the employee might require support with.

You can write these steps down for the employee to use as a reference, as shown below.

It may be helpful to include pictures to support the text. As in Easy Read documents, it is usually best to provide images of real people and items, and even better if they are images of your actual workplace.

You may need to demonstrate the task before providing a written task analysis and be present for questions and support while the employee is still learning.

---

**Example:**

## Task analysis: Make and send a meeting agenda

### What is the job?

- You will make a meeting agenda.
- An agenda is a list of things people will talk about in a meeting.
- You will send the agenda by email.

### Steps

#### 1. Check the meeting details

- Open the meeting invite.
- Find the date.
- Find the time.
- Find the place (online link or room).
- See who is coming.

#### 2. Open the agenda template and add information

Open the file called “**Agenda Template.**”

Type in:

- The meeting name.
- The date.
- The time.
- The place.
- Who is coming.

Add the agenda items (the things people will talk about).

Examples: Welcome, Updates, Work tasks, Questions, Next meeting date.

Your manager will give you a list, or you can copy the last agenda and update it.

#### 3. Check your agenda

- Read the agenda slowly.
- Check the date is right.
- Check the time is right.
- Ask your manager if you are not sure.

#### 4. Save the agenda

- Click Save.
- Give the file a simple name. Example: Agenda 15 March 2025.

#### 5. Send the agenda by email

- Open a new email.
- Write: “**Hello, I have attached the agenda for our meeting. Thank you.**”
- Click Attach file and choose the agenda you saved.
- Check the file shows in the email.
- Add the email addresses of the people in the meeting.
- Read the email again.
- Click Send.

# What Happens Here







What Happens Here is a template that can be used to capture the nuances, details or unwritten rules that occur within a particular event or meeting. The template can be used to introduce a person to a new environment, event or group of people. It helps the person to get ready and to know what will happen and what will be expected of them.

Use this template with your employee to explain each part and understand any further information or reassurance they may need to participate successfully. If there are expectations they perform a task or contribute to content, ensure preparation occurs beforehand and utilise other tools in the toolkit such as a one-off schedule or checklist.

### Considerations when filling in the template





- What time do people arrive?
- How should the person be dressed?
- Do they take anything along?
- Are there any unwritten rules?
- Where do people sit?
- Do particular people have roles?
- Are there expectations of what will happen or what will be achieved?
- How do people leave?

### What Happens Here: Work Health and Safety training

What Happens Here		
	Start time End time	Start time :10 am End Time : 5.30pm
	Breaks	Morning tea: 11:30am Lunch : 1pm.  All food will be provided.
	What to wear	What you normally wear to work.
	What to bring	Bring a notepad and pen.  Water bottle if you need it.
	What to know and do	This is training about Work Health and Safety. It is about how to be safe at work. All staff will be there to learn together.
	Transport	The training will be at 2 Drive St, Fairfield. It is 10 minutes from work. You can catch the 205 bus from the office.

Template:

# What Happens Here

	Start time End time	
	Breaks	
	What to wear	
	What to bring	
	What to know and do	
	Transport	

[You can download this resource on our website: www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide](http://www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide)

# Who am I poster

This can be used to help someone introduce themselves to others.

Sections include:

## 1. My identity

Everyone has different backgrounds, beliefs and ways of expressing themselves. Here we can see how the person sees themselves and the different roles they have in life.

## 2. My skills and things I know a lot about

Person lists their skills and knowledge. This can be things they have learnt well or are passionate about.

## 3. My hobbies and interests

Person lists their hobbies or activities they do frequently.

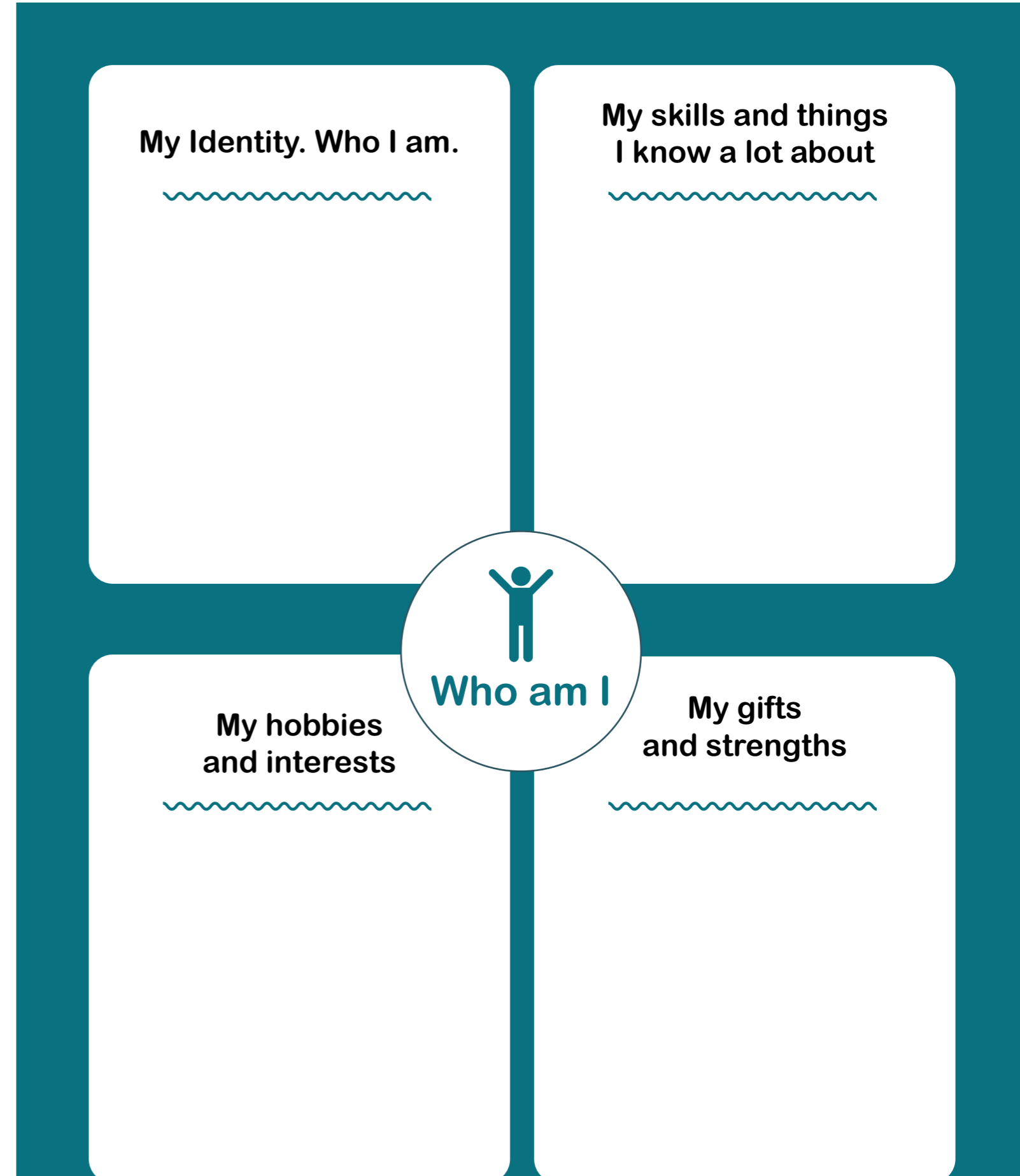
## 4. My gifts and strengths

Person notes the positive things they bring to the world, what other people like about them, and nice things they can say about themselves.

A completed Who am I poster could look like:



Template:  
**Who Am I**



# Power of 10

The Power of 10 is a brainstorming tool.

It allows people to think of different options and possibilities. It can be used in any situation where you want to support a person to think creatively or explore different ideas.

### How to use it:

Place the topic in the centre circle. Use the 10 circles to write down as many relevant points as possible.

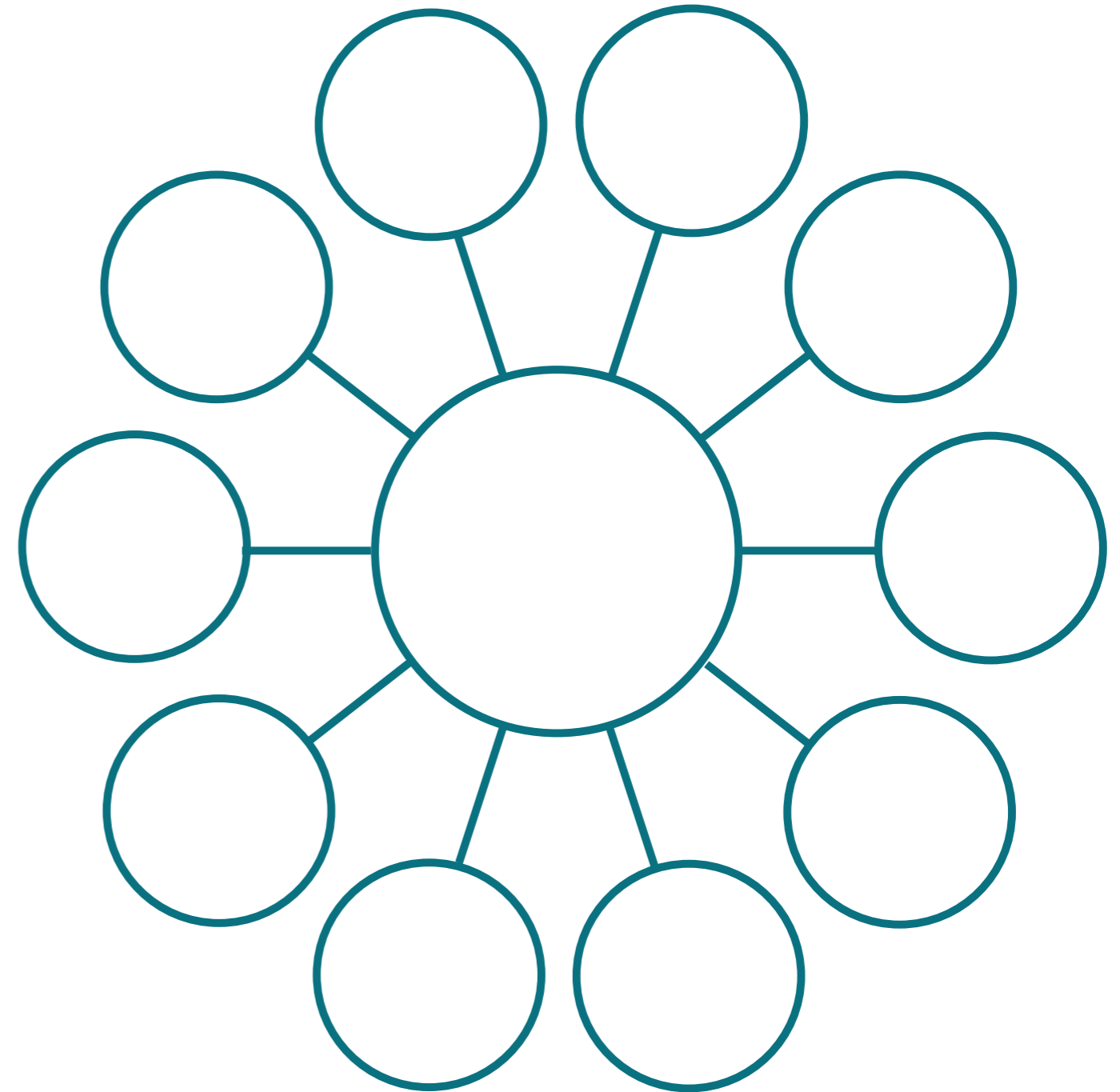
Be mindful that people with intellectual disability may need more time to think and complete. That is ok. Keep thinking and discussing, but respect the person's support needs.

It is important to keep in mind that your role is to support the person through the process and learn together, so check if they want

- Breaks,
- Examples, or
- To schedule another time to finish it.

Template:

# Power of 10



## 3.3 Support system

All employees have support in the workplace. Structured support traditionally comes from managers, supervisors, team leaders, and the CEO. Natural support systems are developed with colleagues by working together over a period of time.

### Buddy system:

Buddy systems are regularly used in the workplace to support new employees and are a great way to set up semi-structured support systems for your new employee. While you may already have a buddy system in place for new employees, it is an important tool to be utilised when on-boarding a new employee with intellectual disability.

#### What a buddy does:

- Shows the new employee around the workplace.
- Introduces them to other staff.
- Shares insights about the workplace.
- Is a friendly person to go to.

The buddy system is not only utilised when onboarding a new employee with intellectual disability but is continued throughout the person's employment.

Regular check-ins with a buddy allow time for relationship building and the formation of trust. Through this, team members are able to ask questions as different circumstances arise.

It is important to remember that it is the team's responsibility to support each other and make everyone feel included and part of the team. While the buddy is important, should not be the only support and network available.

**“A good buddy is someone who is patient, a good communicator, friendly and open to learning new things.”**

– Team Leader

## Managers meetings or structured meetings:

Regular structured meetings with the employees' manager are essential for success. The purpose of these regular meetings is to:

- Check in with the team member.
- Review completed and upcoming tasks.
- Discuss workplace adjustments.
- Raise any concerns you have.
- Understand what is working well.
- Find out what is not working. Sometimes it helps to give a concrete example such as 'how did you find completing the one page profile?'
- Determine what needs to change to better support the person.

To ensure meetings between Managers and an employee with intellectual disability are successful:

- Stick to an agenda.
- Make the agenda available to both parties prior to the meeting including specific questions you will be asking to allow the employee time to reflect and answer in a meaningful way.
- Have a recurring meeting time – this lets your team know they are valued.

**“Regular meetings ensure that little problems don't turn into big problems.”**

– Manager



## 3.4 Professional development

Employees with intellectual disability have the right to the same professional development opportunities as their colleagues without a disability. Professional development involves supporting your employee to think about what new skills they may like to develop and new tasks they may like to try.

### Tips for professional development conversations with people with intellectual disability:

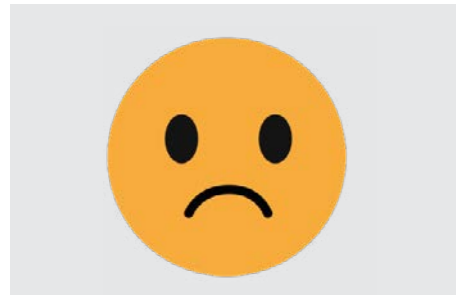
- Allow enough time to have these conversations. Articulating career goals may be a new experience for your employee. It is likely to be an ongoing process of observing and talking about what they enjoy and what could be developed further.
- Every employee is different. Some may be keen to take on new tasks and learn new skills, others may find it overwhelming at first. Follow the employee's lead, let them have control of the process.
- Provide opportunities for your employee to try different tasks with the support of a colleague. This will help them decide which new tasks they may like to take on.

### Discuss things such as:



#### What is going well

- Ask the employee to identify aspects of their role they are performing well in.
- Break down components of the role to assist their thinking.
- Provide feedback on what you feel is going well.



#### What could be better

- Ask what is not going well or could be better.
- Reiterate this is their personal support and development meeting and they will not be in trouble for anything they mention.
- Break down components of the role again if necessary.
- Share what you feel is not going well in a constructive way with the view to providing additional support.

## 4 Additional resources

### Resources

We hope you have found the information in this Guide helpful, and that you now have a better understanding of what constitutes an inclusive workplace to accommodate a range of diverse employees, including those with intellectual disability.

In addition to the templates and other resources provided in this Guide, CID also offer:

- Inclusive Business Guides tailored specifically to your business needs.
- Easy Read translations of documents.

Contact CID at **1800 424 065** or **business@cid.org.au** for further information and costings on these and other services CID can provide.

### Keep in touch

CID are constantly updating the resources and supports available for organisations and individuals. To keep up to date with CID visit the website where you can:

- Become a CID member.
- Sign up to the eNews.
- Hear stories about people with intellectual disability via their Podcast series Visibility.
- Learn about upcoming CID events.
- Find resources on employment and many other topics.

### Websites referenced in this Guide

- [www.cid.org.au](http://www.cid.org.au)
- [www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide](http://www.cid.org.au/workplaceguide)
- Employment Assistance Fund (EAF)  
[www.business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/employment-assistance-fund](http://www.business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/employment-assistance-fund)
- The Australian Government Department of Social Services IEA program  
[www.dss.gov.au/inclusive-employment-australia](http://www.dss.gov.au/inclusive-employment-australia)
- NSW Government Public Service Commission  
[www.psc.nsw.gov.au/assets/psc/documents/Rule-26-fact-sheet.pdf](http://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/assets/psc/documents/Rule-26-fact-sheet.pdf)

# More than just a job



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