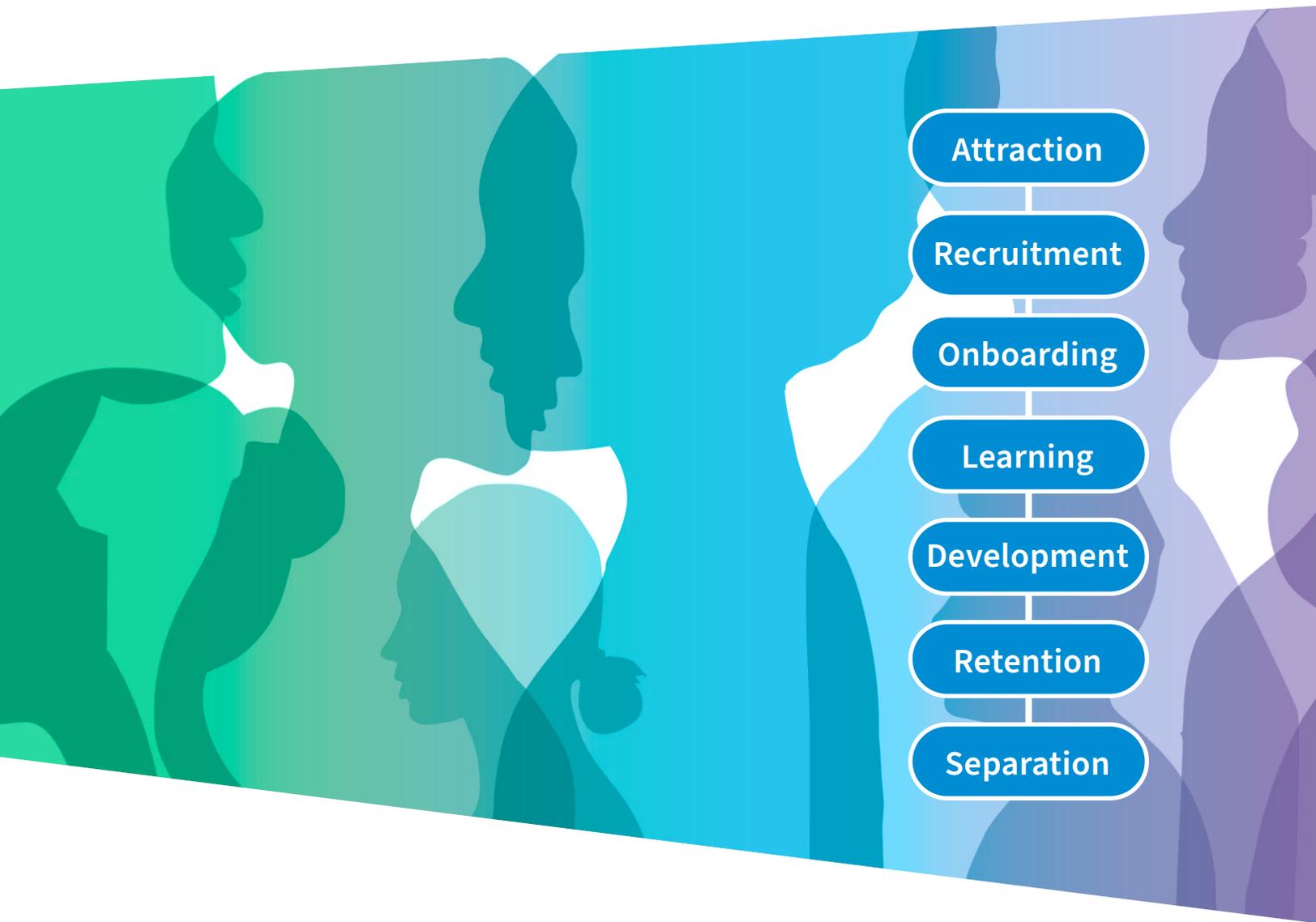


Quick Guide

Neuroinclusion Across the Employee Life Cycle



Employer Resource

To Support a Neuroinclusive Workplace





Quick Guide: Neuroinclusion Across the Employee Life Cycle is a complimentary, high-level introduction designed to help employers, leaders, and HR professionals quickly understand how neuroinclusion can be embedded across the employee life cycle.

This practical guide highlights key concepts, common workplace barriers, and actionable starting points, serving as an accessible first step toward more inclusive policies, practices, and cultures.

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Calgary, Alberta, Canada



Background



Neurodiversity is a difference in how people experience, think about, and act on information.

Neuroinclusion in the workplace means creating a culture that fosters inclusion of neurodivergent individuals and setting up the structure needed to promote lasting change.



This Quick Guide was created to provide practical strategies for employers to advance neuroinclusion in the workplace. It highlights opportunities across the employee life cycle to make impactful changes that benefit everyone.



Attraction

Attraction is the strategies and practices a company uses to be desirable to potential employees.

Inclusive practices that will attract a more diverse and talented workforce, as well as a broader customer or client base include:

- ▶ Communicating in easily accessible, plain language.
- ▶ Ensuring website and online materials are accessible and identify where to share a genuine commitment to neuroinclusion through public-facing content and employee storytelling.
- ▶ Using photos and images that reflect the diversity in Canada.
- ▶ Adding statements inviting marginalized job seekers to apply and set realistic expectations on job postings.
- ▶ Implementing universal design principles when developing policies and processes. Examples of universal design relevant to neurodiversity include clear signage, speech to text, closed captioning, and scent-free policies.



Recruitment

Several practices can make the recruitment phase more inclusive for all applicants.

Neuroinclusive job posting strategies:

- ▶ Focus only on the essential qualifications, skills and experience that are required for the position.
- ▶ Provide a clear and succinct description of the physical and social environment for this job.
- ▶ Include inclusive hiring statements in position descriptions.
- ▶ Let candidates know that you are ready to help them succeed. Incorporate a statement about the availability of adjustments. Example : “Adjustments are available upon request to all candidates throughout the selection process, as well as on the job.”
- ▶ Use clear, succinct language that can be interpreted literally.

Neuroinclusive interview strategies:

- ▶ Consider the best way to determine suitability of a candidate. Options include:
 - **Traditional Interview** question and answer
 - **Skills Assessments** leverage standardized tests to evaluate required skills
 - **Skill Demonstrations** where suitable/appropriate
- ▶ Share the following details with all candidates in advance of an interview:
 - **The Who, What, Where, When And How!**

Who will be conducting the interview.	What type of interview and some/all the questions to be asked.	Where the interview will take place (e.g. location and space).	When the interview takes place (i.e. start and end time).	How a candidate should dress.
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- ▶ Provide a quiet, distraction-free environment for the interview or host a virtual interview.
- ▶ Limit the number of interviewers.
- ▶ Recognize and accept individual differences in interaction style. For example, limited eye contact, fidgeting.
- ▶ Ask clearly worded questions to get the information you are seeking. For example, try “Tell me one or two things you are good at that will help you in this job” instead of “What are your strengths?”

Onboarding

The onboarding stage of the employee life cycle provides an important opportunity to welcome new employees and set them up for long-term success. A great onboarding experience [improves new-hire retention by 82 percent and increases productivity by 70 percent](#).

Strategies to support successful onboarding:

- ▶ Send an email in advance of their first day with instructions including parking and office information, contact details, and a schedule of what their first day or week will look like.
- ▶ Assign a mentor for new employees to support orientation to the unwritten ‘rules’ or norms at your workplace, such as dress code and breaks, and to introduce them to co-workers.
- ▶ Create a workplace glossary of acronyms and commonly used industry terms.
- ▶ Check in regularly with your new employee – ongoing feedback and support in the early days is important.
- ▶ Make workplace adjustment requests a clear part of your onboarding processes for all – not just by exception. Clearly developed and articulated processes to ask for accommodations (i.e. adjustments) help employees to advocate for what they need to be successful on the job.

The term “accommodation” often implies special treatment for people with disabilities. One way to demonstrate inclusion for disabilities is to move away from the language of accommodation. Recognize and communicate that accommodations are simply “adjustments, strategies or supports” that employers make to ensure all employees can perform at their best.



Workplace accommodations are often [easy to implement and cost less than employers think](#). A 2025 study from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) indicates that 1425 employers who reported on accommodations,

61% of accommodations cost absolutely nothing and one-time accommodations had an averaged cost of **\$300**

Commonly requested workplace adjustments for neurodivergent employees:

- ▶ Access to a quiet workspace that's free of visual and auditory distractions.
- ▶ Reasonable adjustments that support/enable management of sensory differences like noise canceling headphones or sunglasses.
- ▶ Ability to control temperature, fans, and ventilation for their immediate workspace.
- ▶ Access to focus tools.
- ▶ Ability to get up and move when needed.
- ▶ LED lighting or lighting that doesn't hum and flicker.
- ▶ Flexible working hours.
- ▶ Scent-free environment.
- ▶ Access to weighted blankets, vests or lap pads.
- ▶ Access to different chair and seating options.

Learning & Development

Organizations receive many benefits when they provide ongoing learning and development opportunities for their employees. These should include regular opportunities to learn about inclusive practices, adjustments, strategies and supports.

Ensure learning opportunities are inclusive by understanding what your employees require to succeed on the job. Take the same approach when evaluating training methods and ways employees can engage and participate. If employees attend training delivered by a third party, ensure the trainer and training space can support the adjustments an employee may require.

Inclusive Learning Environments Include:

- ▶ **Multimodal Training:** Offer multiple communication modes - such as visual, auditory, reading, writing, and kinesthetic activities.
- ▶ **Clear and Direct Objectives:** Explain the purpose and objective of training activities and make it clear what the expected outcome is.
- ▶ **Individualized Adjustments:** Offer and support individuals to request/utilize adjustments that will support them throughout the training.

Empower employees to be open and honest about their learning and development needs, and work with them to determine what will help them maximize their success. Ask employees what new skills and competencies they need or want to develop.



Retention

Promote neurodivergent (and all) employee success by embracing strategies that:

- ▶ Respect communication preferences.
- ▶ Create consistent and clear feedback loops.
- ▶ Communicate and manage change.
- ▶ Support access to social situations.



Respecting communication preferences

- 1 Using multiple sources to communicate (verbal, written, visual supports).
- 2 Keeping conversations short, specific and clear (less is more).
- 3 Communicating complex tasks by breaking them down into smaller tasks.
- 4 Allow adequate time to process and respond to questions.
- 5 Sharing feedback and expectations using clear and concise language.
- 6 Say what you mean to avoid misunderstandings: avoid using sarcasm, figurative language, rhetorical questions, idioms or exaggeration.



Boost employee confidence

- ▶ Creating regular feedback loops with employees; don't save it for performance reviews.
- ▶ Allowing employees to address concerns as they arise.
- ▶ Providing feedback that is honest, non-judgmental, and clear.
- ▶ Reviewing any supports and adjustments with employees and changing as needed.
- ▶ Being transparent and structured about what's involved in planned performance reviews.
- ▶ Providing employees with a draft of their performance review in advance of an in-person discussion.



Communicating and managing change

Strategies that may help employees adjust to change include:

- ▶ Providing advanced notice of change.
- ▶ Explaining reasons for changes.
- ▶ Providing timelines for change.
- ▶ Allowing time to process and respond to the change.
- ▶ Creating space to answer employee questions about the change.
- ▶ Involving employees in change management process.
- ▶ Regularly checking in - being patient, understanding, and flexible during any change.



Supportive social situations

Employees may have varying preferences and comfort levels when it comes to socializing in the workplace. Strategies for creating more inclusive social situations include:

- ▶ Providing advanced notice and expectation of social events.
- ▶ Empowering and encouraging employees to participate in social committees.
- ▶ Ensuring quiet spaces are available at social events and providing virtual options to connect if possible.
- ▶ Allowing employees to skip (or attend a portion of) social events without judgement or repercussions.
- ▶ Connecting employees with a mentor to help them navigate social events (if required).



Separation

Neuroinclusive separation ensures a smooth and respectful transition for employees leaving the organization.

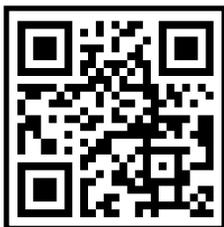
- ▶ Add structure to the process by providing an offboarding checklist, timeline, and check-ins to reduce stress.
- ▶ Reflect and ask about the employees experience, take steps to address any relevant concerns.
- ▶ Maintain positive relationships where possible. Handle the offboarding with respect and professionalism, leaving a strong final impression.

Asking an outgoing employee the right questions during an exit interview will help employers learn from their experience, reflect on the feedback and make meaningful changes.

Exit interview questions to consider asking when an employee is leaving:

- 1 What recommendations do you have for the employer regarding supporting neurodivergent employees?
- 2 Did the employee ask for supports, or did the employer ask how they could support the employee?
- 3 Did the employer periodically review the adjustments they were providing for the employee? If yes, how often? If not, why not?
- 4 In what ways can the employer encourage open communication between employees and management regarding their support needs?

■■■NEUROinclusive
Workforce Solutions



Thank you for your interest in
inclusive employment.

Please see worktopia.ca for the full
version of the Employer Toolkit.