

Tips on how to sensitively talk to a neurodivergent team member

It can be difficult for an individual to disclose or talk about their neurodivergence, and every conversation will be different. Here are some tips to help managers with these conversations.

<p>Before the conversation takes place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find an appropriate place • Try to find somewhere private • Try to hold the conversation on a one-to-one basis • Make a list of what you need the meeting to achieve • Consider how to focus the meeting towards your aims • If you know the form of neurodivergence, read up on it • Get advice from managers and/or HR colleagues who have held similar conversations
<p>At the start of the conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the meeting as informal and relaxed as possible • Be sensitive and calm • Make clear that anything discussed will be kept confidential unless agreed otherwise • Check how they are • Explain the reason for the conversation
<p>During the conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask simple, open and non-judgmental questions • Listen carefully and don't make assumptions • Be patient • Provide reassurance where necessary • Discuss current strengths and how these can be utilised • Discuss any difficulties and how these can be mitigated • Discuss adjustments and additional support that might help • Consider whether to highlight examples of workplace adjustments implemented for other employees • Adjourn for a break if emotions take over
<p>At the end of the conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and clarify what has been discussed • Check if they want to discuss anything else • Agree actions moving forward • Keep a note of what was discussed and agreed • Highlight additional sources of support within the organisation including neurodiversity champions and support networks etc.
<p>After the conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide any support as agreed and monitor the situation • Consider whether further opinions are required from HR, senior management or Occupation Health • Be available and approachable in case the team members wants to talk to you again

For more information, go to www.acas.org.uk/neurodiversity