



Prepare for an inclusive in-person job interview



The **Inclusive**
Workplace

This checklist for businesses outlines action items to assist you **before**, **during**, and **after** an inclusive interview. These tips were created to support candidates who are on the autism spectrum or have an intellectual disability, but are also excellent ways to make your interview process more accessible and inclusive for all candidates!



Before the interview

Confirm the details:

- Provide clear information about the in-person interview.
- Provide clear information about your interview process. Is there a competency test? Will you be asking for references? Will there be a second or third interview?
- Provide your phone number and email address so the candidate can contact you if they have any questions, or to reschedule.
- Explain any COVID-19 protocols, such as:
 - Wearing a face covering (mask).
 - Using hand sanitizer or having a temperature check upon arrival.
 - Following arrows on the floor that show the direction to walk.
 - Entering the building through a specific door.
- Anticipate that a candidate may request accommodations.
- When confirming the event, ask **all** candidates if they'll require any accommodations during the interview.
- Know what to say if a candidate discloses a disability.

“The interview will be on **Thursday, April 8**. It will be from 11:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Eastern time.

The interview will be at our office. The address is 123 Main Street. I will meet you at the reception desk.

During the interview, I will be there and my manager will join us. Her name is Prisha Patel.

Are there any **questions** you would like to ask me about the interview?”



Accommodations

Accommodations assist candidates in showcasing themselves and their skills.

- Anticipate that a candidate may request accommodations.
- When confirming interviews, ask **all** candidates if they'll require any accommodations during the interview. This ensures consistency and inclusivity.
- Be aware of various types of accommodations that may be requested. For example:



- A candidate may request that a **support person** (job coach) join the interview to assist them.
- A candidate may ask for fewer interviewers to attend the interview.



- A candidate may ask for the list of interview questions prior to the interview. Be prepared to share the interview questions.



- A candidate may request that the interview be scheduled for a time of day when they can focus or communicate best.
- Have multiple time slots available, as a candidate may need to coordinate with a support person.

“ We have **three interview times** available: Monday at 2:00 p.m., Thursday at 11:00 a.m., or Friday at 10:30 a.m. They are all 45-minute interviews. Would you be able to attend at **one** of those times? Would you like some time to check with your support person to see if they are available?”

- Know what to say if a candidate discloses a disability. **Thank** the candidate for sharing the information and let them know the business is committed to creating an **inclusive** workplace. Let them know that the business will work with them to provide requested accommodation(s).
- Provide requested accommodations in good faith.



Prepare interview questions

Prepare your interview questions.

- If possible, ask **all** candidates the same interview questions or the same types of interview questions.
- Use the **experiences** listed on a candidate's resume to build questions.
- Ask questions about qualifications or experience that are **essential** for the job.
- Focus on **how** the candidate will apply their skills to perform specific job tasks, instead of questioning if the candidate **can** do the job.
- Ask **one** question at a time.
- Ask **concrete** questions, not hypothetical questions.
- Use **plain**, simple, direct, literal language.
- **Avoid** using idioms, acronyms, or sarcasm.

Prepare alternative options for your interview questions.

- Be ready with **two to three different ways** to ask each question (to get to the point of the question in a different way) in case the candidate asks for clarification. Here is an example...

“Tell me about a time when you needed to **manage multiple tasks**.”

And here is a way the question could be **rephrased** (with the questions asked one at a time):

“Tell me about a time when someone asked you to do **two different things at once**.”

“How did you **decide** which one to do first?”

“Did you get both things **done**?”



“I see that you worked at a grocery distribution warehouse...”

“If a customer had a problem, how did you help them solve it?”

Inclusive interviewing tips

- Book interviews far enough apart that your schedule allows for extra time during the interview.
 - Candidates may **pause** before answering to process the question and formulate their answers.
 - Allow candidates to **write** down their responses before they answer.
 - Be prepared to **repeat** the question or **rephrase** it.
- Keep the number of interviewers small, but consider having a second interviewer.
 - A second interviewer brings added **diversity of thought** to the interview and selection process.
 - A second interviewer also helps **reduce bias** and make the selection process more objective and reliable.
- Consider asking for assistance or training on inclusive interviewing.
 - Assistance can be given in creating and conducting inclusive interviews.
 - Training can also be provided to employers on other aspects of inclusive hiring.
 - Ready, Willing and Able offers such services to Canadian businesses.



Click the link to read about **Accommodations for Your Workplace**.



Click the **link** to read the **Benefits of a Job Coach** document.

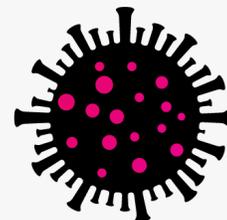
During the interview

Proceed as usual:

- Proceed with the **typical interview**—greet the candidate, make introductions, ask the interview questions, ask if the candidate has any questions, and explain next steps (when you'll select the successful candidate and how you will contact them).
- Keep small talk to a **minimum** at the beginning of the interview. Small talk in the context of an interview may cause the candidate anxiety. Make them feel welcome without spending time on non-job-related questions.
- Provide **time** for the candidate to think and respond. Candidates who are on the autism spectrum or have an intellectual disability may take longer to process questions. **Silence** allows them to do so. Avoid jumping in to fill the silence or assuming the candidate doesn't understand the question if they pause before answering.
- Be **natural**; speak clearly at a normal volume, pace, and tone unless the candidate requests otherwise. Use your natural facial expressions and hand gestures.
- Always **speak directly to the candidate**, not to a support person who may have joined the interview.
- Encourage the candidate to ask for **clarification**. Assist with clarification if needed, or provide alternative wording.



During COVID, do **not** shake hands with the candidate at the start or end of the interview.



If a candidate extends their hand, explain politely, **"I can't shake your hand because of COVID, but I'm very happy to meet you."** Then continue with the interview as usual.

“It's **okay** if you don't understand a question that I ask. If you don't understand a question, please tell me. I'm happy to ask the question in a different way.”



- Provide **prompts** to the candidate if needed. Let them know if you need more information.
- Redirect** the candidate if needed. Let them know if you've received enough information or if they're speaking off-topic.
- Minimize noises and distractions.
 - Hold the interview in a quiet room with soft, non-flickering lighting.
 - Turn off notification sounds on any devices.
 - Offer the candidate a seat away from distractions such as windows or busy hallways.

Avoid bias

- Avoid making assumptions about the candidate's ability to perform a task.
- Consider looking at informal experiences and qualifications.
- Avoid making assumptions based on the candidate's appearance.

How might the **socioeconomic status** of many people who are on the autism spectrum or have an intellectual disability impact their appearance? Due to such factors, they may not have a professional wardrobe.

Don't make assumptions. Instead, focus on the skills that are **essential** for the job.

“You said you're an organized person. Please give me an **example** that shows you're an organized person.”

“You were telling me about your volunteer experience at the seniors' home. Please **describe** your responsibilities there.”

- Avoid making assumptions based on the candidate's body language or soft skills.

If a candidate exhibits awkwardness, fidgeting, aloofness, different facial expressions, or a lack of eye contact, or provides short answers during the interview, this should **not** be interpreted as a sign of disinterest.

These behaviours may be part of the **social communication differences** related to being on the autism spectrum or having an intellectual disability.



After the interview

- At the end of the interview, assist the candidate in sharing their references if needed; explain how the candidate should get this information to you, and confirm that method works for them.
- Assist them in completing a background check if needed.

“ Who have you worked with before who can tell me more about your skills? Are they past managers or co-workers? What are their names? What are their phone numbers and email addresses?”

“ Do you want **help** filling in the background check forms we’ve given you?”



Next steps

If the candidate is successful

- Provide the job offer to the candidate.
- Let the candidate know when you need their decision and how they should let you know (by phone or email).

“Do you have any **questions** about the job offer, such as hours, location, shifts, wage/salary, or benefits?”

If the candidate is unsuccessful

- Thank them for their interest in the job and your business.
- Ask if you may provide helpful feedback.

“Are you open to **feedback** on what I thought you did well and how I think you can improve for your next job interview?”



Links



[Accommodations for Your Workplace](#)



[Understand the Role of a Job Coach](#)

Sources

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