



## "Tapping The Hidden Talent Pool"

### **Sensory Overload**

The demands of a busy modern workplace with a wide range of sensory stimuli for the brain to process can be overwhelming for a Neurodivergent employee. For some Neurodivergent employees this can lead to sensory overload which can make it challenging for them to focus on the task at hand. Visual and auditory overload can become a constant challenge in the workplace for a Neurodivergent employee. Challenges can be with fluorescent lighting, noisy open plan office spaces or reactions to food and perfume smells which can be overbearing.

For most people in the workplace, fluorescent lighting is something that they are unlikely to pay too much attention to and it is seldom factored into their working day. Yet, for a Neurodivergent employee fluorescent lighting on white walls or the noise of the fluorescent lighting can cause challenges with stress, anxiety and concentration which can lead to them being constantly stressed and distracted in the workplace.

Similarly, busy office environments with lots of conversations going on, perhaps noisy meetings and the telephone constantly going can be stressful and frustrating for a Neurodivergent employee. This will only be intensified if they are already stressed or anxious. Sometimes, even quiet sounds from printers and photocopiers or aircon conditioning units can be annoying and stressful for Neurodivergent employees.

Some Neurodivergent employees may also be sensitive to certain types of smells, such as certain perfumes or cafeteria smells.

## Our Advice

- Designated quiet zones with help reduce workplace stress and anxiety for Neurodivergent employees.
- Replace fluorescent lighting with incandescent lighting in quieter parts of your office.
- Closed plan office spaces and fixed desk working areas will also help with reducing sensory overload.
- Access to noise cancelling headphones that they can wear to concentrate during the working day should they require it.
- Use of and or access to air purifiers to reduce the effects of some smells.
- Sound masking systems and noise reducing screens can also be beneficial.
- Flexible working arrangements where they can work from home on certain days during the week.