



## "Tapping The Hidden Talent Pool"

### **Creating a Culture of Disclosure and the Universal Design Framework**

Disclosure for any who identifies as Neurodivergent is a deeply personal and subjective journey. Some people who are Neurodivergent might have received a diagnosis, years ago and might feel comfortable about sharing their experiences. Generally speaking, they will disclose a disability to their employer for one of two reasons – they trust that their employer will understand their situation and provide reasonable adjustments to the extent necessary, or they need adjustments and are at risk of losing their job without them. Yet, these very reasons can also be significant factors in why many Neurodivergent people deem that it is not their employer's business or concern to know that they identify as Neurodivergent.

It is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that a culture of openness, inclusivity, integration and belonging exists which ensures that all Neurodivergent employees can feel comfortable coming to work without fear of having to disclose if they don't want to. Ultimately, organisations must create psychologically safe working environments where Neurodivergent employees regardless of their status of disclosure can come thrive in working environments where they are celebrated for their differences. Organisations must never force Neurodivergent employees to disclose their disability nor should they ever threaten them with dismissal or breach of contract for failure to disclose.

Ideally all organisations will have the necessary workplace cultures to implement a universal design framework which supports all Neurodivergent employees regardless of diagnosis, disclosure or those who have either not being diagnosed or those who have not met the medical criteria for a diagnosis. A universal design framework can be an essential tool for organisations can help ensure that all Neurodivergent employees can thrive and succeed in psychologically safe working environments

which innately understand the appropriate support mechanisms that they need to be successful in the workplace.

## **Our Advice**

- Training – Train HR colleagues, managers, and central services teams on Neurodiversity, and some of the behavioural differences that they might present in the workplace. This can reassure Neurodivergent employees that any required reasonable adjustments will not be misunderstood by other colleagues and managers.
- Neurodiversity Employee Resource Groups (ERG's) Use these groups for employees with disabilities to participate in driving your disability programs and policies.
- Avenues for disclosure – Create multiple channels within your company for individuals to disclose (e.g. employee assistance programs, HR, Line manager, intranet portal).
- Create a values driven culture in your organisation. Implement change from the top downwards.
- Challenge erroneous individual and group thinking on Neurodiversity through listen and learn forums.
- Listen to your Neurodivergent population about what changes they want to see in your organisation.
- Implement reasonable adjustments regardless of disclosure, diagnosis, or medical criteria.