

2025

Empowering Autistic Job Seekers Through Mentorship



Hire Autism



About OAR

researchautism.org



The Organization for Autism Research ([OAR](https://www.researchautism.org)) is a national nonprofit that promotes research that helps families, educators, caregivers, and autistic individuals find much-needed answers to their immediate questions and supports programs that enhance their quality of life.



About Hire Autism

hireautism.org



Hire Autism is a **FREE** program of the [Organization for Autism Research](#) with the mission to improve employment opportunities for autistic individuals and help businesses create more inclusive workplaces.

Hire Autism Navigators

Hire Autism has volunteer mentors called Navigators who virtually support autistic job seekers with aspects of the job search, including resume and cover letter writing, interview preparation, and answering general employment questions.



"Going through the navigator program has significantly increased my confidence in myself and my skills and removed a lot of the mystery around different aspects of job seeking. I feel well prepared for interviews and I am confident my resume will stand out."

- Mike G., Job Seeker

Autism in the Workplace



Challenges Facing Autistic Individuals in the Workplace

Recent statistics show that between 50%-90% of autistic adults are unemployed or underemployed.

This makes autism the highest unemployed disability*. Let's explore why!

*[Steven Zauderer, Cross River Therapy](#)



Social/Communication Differences:

While there is no stereotypical employee with autism, employers might observe differences between autistic employees and other employees.

- May avoid eye contact when speaking or interpret phrases literally
- May not understand office jargon or etiquette
- May not be able to concentrate when distracted certain sounds
- May hold a stress ball or other object to manage anxiety

Lack of coworker/employer awareness:

Unclear policies, lack of inclusive training, and limited opportunity for disclosure may lead to bullying, stereotyping, or incorrect perceptions of autistic individuals.

Masking:

An attempt to hide one's disability and come across as neurotypical. This can lead to burnout, anxiety, and depression.

Mentorship for Autistic Job Seekers

Benefits of Mentorship

- Clarification on career goals: short-term and long-term
- Enhanced job search materials
- Growth of the professional network/ networking skills
- Sense of independence in the job search
- Increased self-advocacy
- Increased communication skills
- Heightened confidence





Get to Know Your Job Seeker

- Ask about them
- Confirm details about their job search
 - What type of work are they seeking?
 - What is motivating their job search?
 - Money, independence, family, internal desire for growth
- Ask how they see you fitting into their job search
 - What areas do they need coaching in?
 - Do they need help with where to search for jobs?
- How do they best receive feedback?

A Clear Roadmap

It allows candidates to find and apply for job opportunities more closely aligned with their education, experience, and skills.

- **Goal identification**

- An important beginning step
- Help identify career goals and develop practical strategies for achieving them
- Provide suggestions for education, training, etc.

- **Needs identification**

- Help identify their needs
- The ability to understand one's needs is a great step to growing confidence and advocacy skills

Create a goals list and steps needed to get there



Action Items

- Career/strength assessment
- Spend time job searching/reading through applications
 - Identify keywords, required and recommended skills/experience
- Provide feedback on job search materials
 - Talk through suggestions and clarify questions
- Encourage them to stay organized and track opportunities
 - Demonstrate how to use beneficial software, tools, etc.
- Set expectations
 - Schedule a day/time for a regular check-in
 - Discuss their preferred method of communication



Best Practices

While no two job seekers are alike, here are some general best practices:

- Focus on the present & future
- Dig deeper and reveal skills
- Share feedback as suggestions
- Do it with, not do it for
- Set hard deadlines
- Be encouraging but be realistic
- Celebrate successes along the way

“Both the navigator and the jobseeker share the satisfaction of traveling this journey together. **Celebrating each success along the way** has brought me a great deal of joy.”

- Claudia Z., Navigator



A Note to Job Seekers

- Keep an open mind
 - Learn about job search best practices and how to showcase your skills
- Make a plan
 - Get familiar with your experience and materials
 - Think about disclosure/accommodations
- Network/Volunteer
 - Schedule a time to meet up with family, friends, and previous colleagues to share job search ideas
- Be patient but persistent
 - Rejection is a part of the process
 - Job searching is tough. Don't give up and stay positive!



"If I am dedicating the better half of my day five days a week to do something, there's hardly anything more important than if I am enjoying my time and having a pleasant use of those hours.
That is the best job for me."

- William S., Job Seeker

No One Formula that Works for Everyone



“Most importantly, believe in yourself—confidence in your abilities is crucial to succeeding in the competitive job market. For those on the autism spectrum, remember that **your unique perspective and strengths are powerful assets in the workplace.**”

- Assiya A-M., Navigator

Thank You



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