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Disability inclusion manager toolkit

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Managers play a key role in shaping the experience of their team members, especially those with disability. It is critical you have a good understanding about disability and are confident in creating an inclusive workplace where all people can thrive.

This toolkit helps you understand your role as a manager in contributing to inclusive workplaces where team members are enabled and supported at work.

The Removing the barriers: Inclusion of people with disability eLearning course is available as an important disability inclusion resource for people managers. The course will build your knowledge about disability and give you practical tips for removing barriers in areas like recruitment and managing workplace adjustments. If you'd like to complete the course, please contact your agency's learning and development team.

Creating positive employee experience

Your words and actions have a major impact on whether a person has a positive or negative experience at work.

You have a role to play in creating a positive experience for your team members, even before they start in your team. If you have a person with disability starting soon in your team, make time to talk with them ahead of their start date to explore their needs for adjustments and preferences. Ideally you will have implemented any adjustments from day one.

It is good practice to ask all new employees if they need any disability related adjustments at work.

Make the commitment to be an inclusive manager by removing barriers and creating positive work experiences for all team members.

Performance and career development discussions

As a manager it is your responsibility to create equitable opportunities and support career aspirations for all team members. Staff with disability may face additional barriers when trying to develop their careers. Here are some key things you can do to support the development of your team:

- Ask about aspirations as for any employee, then focus on capability steps to get there and any adjustments needed to remove barriers.
- If an employee's career goals seem unachievable, first check your own assumptions are not limiting the employee with disability.
- Ensure employees with disability have equal access to the range of opportunities including career development programs, secondments, on the job training and formal training.
- Create opportunities for teamwork and collaboration to build working relationships and confidence, stretch the person's capabilities and provide new experiences. This can also help break down stereotypes and bias that other employees may have about disability.
- Discuss and prioritise work goals – focusing on outcomes. Discuss adjustments so they can perform at their best.

It is important you work to build trust, have clear expectations and provide constructive feedback to your team members. Some key actions to take to do this include:

- Get to know the person, their strengths and areas that need developing. Establishing trust is especially important for some people with disability who may feel more vulnerable if they are managing sensitive disability and chronic health conditions, that can also change over time.
- Provide and seek constructive feedback, as for any employee. Constructive feedback is vital to developing individuals and their performance. Focus on outcomes and essential job requirements. Seek feedback to check if your management support is working for the employee with disability to achieve their best.
- Ensure fair processes for performance reviews, including workplace adjustments (e.g., Auslan interpreter or job coach support person for such important meeting) are in place.
- For ongoing performance issues, people with disability are subject to the same ongoing poor performance processes as people without disability. However, you should first check the person is not experiencing disadvantage or any form of discrimination in the workplace that may be negatively impacting their performance.
- Never make performance comparisons between employees with the same disability type. Always take a person-centred approach. Remember, every person's disability and experience of it is unique and impacts for work vary greatly.

Manager's Guide to Disability Inclusion Toolkit

[Download a copy of the toolkit](#) →