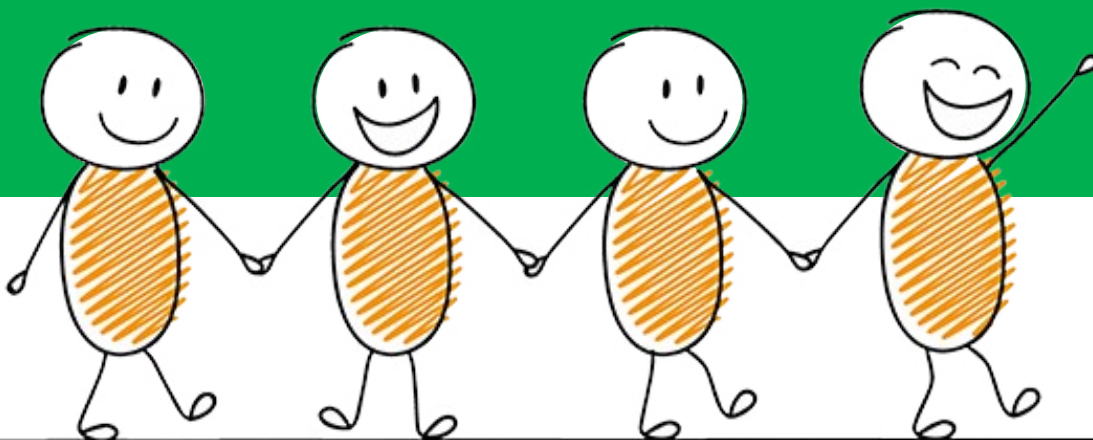


Guide to Attracting & Engaging Autistic Volunteers

STEP

2

Attracting &
Engaging



These resources were developed by Empower Autism.

Empower Autism is a well-established, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to providing information, support and capacity development services to autistic people, their parents, carers and families. Empower Autism's vision is a world where autistic people fully participate, contribute and succeed to their fullest potential with confidence and self-belief.

Volunteers have been the heart of Empower Autism for the life of the organisation, which was established in 1994. The organisation currently has over 50 volunteers, who assist across a range of programs and services.

With over 30% of their staff and 47% of their volunteers identifying as autistic, and 30 years of experience supporting a team of neurodiverse volunteers, Empower Autism was well placed to develop these resources to build capacity in the sector.

These resources provide autism affirming information alongside practical and easy-to-implement tips based on extensive experience. They are designed to get you started on your journey to becoming more accessible and inclusive. We have included further links to expand your understanding to suit your organisational needs.

We encourage you to share this resource with other volunteering organisations and your broader community.

Acknowledging our support partners

This project was made possible by [Volunteering Queensland](#) with the support of the Australian Government Department of Social Services.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

We would like to also acknowledge the team from **Amaze** who provided feedback and guidance on the content of these resources via a formal review process.

Feedback

We value feedback, as this enables us continuously to improve the supports and resources we provide to volunteer organisations. We would greatly appreciate you completing a survey on your experience using these resources. To complete, please follow this [link](#)



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Opening the Conversation

You have learned some new information about autism and hopefully you're ready to make some practical changes to the way you engage and advertise to autistic volunteers.

This part of the journey is all about increasing and communicating accessibility to open up the conversation with the autistic community and work towards a thriving volunteering partnership.

We will be focussing on:

- Attracting new volunteers through simple changes to your volunteer listings and role descriptions
- A few tips on how to structure initial engagements when responding to expression of interest

It's important to remember that while all these recommendations have been designed to be easy to implement, they communicate many of the values and principles we have discussed in the previous resource.

After completing this step, you will be better equipped to engage and attract members of the autistic community to your volunteer organisation.

You will have achieved another important milestone in improving the accessibility of your organisation!

Key Takeaway

- We want to **open the conversation** with the autistic community, and we can often do this best when advertising new volunteer roles and responding to expressions of interest.

Attracting Autistic Volunteers

Some aspects of job listings and job descriptions may make it difficult for autistic applicants to apply for volunteer opportunities. Fortunately, by making simple changes to the language and style used in your volunteer listings and role descriptions, you can significantly increase accessibility for autistic applicants.

We have provided you with several checklists as a starting point. These will help you adjust your current and future volunteer role listings and descriptions, making them easier, clearer, and more accessible.

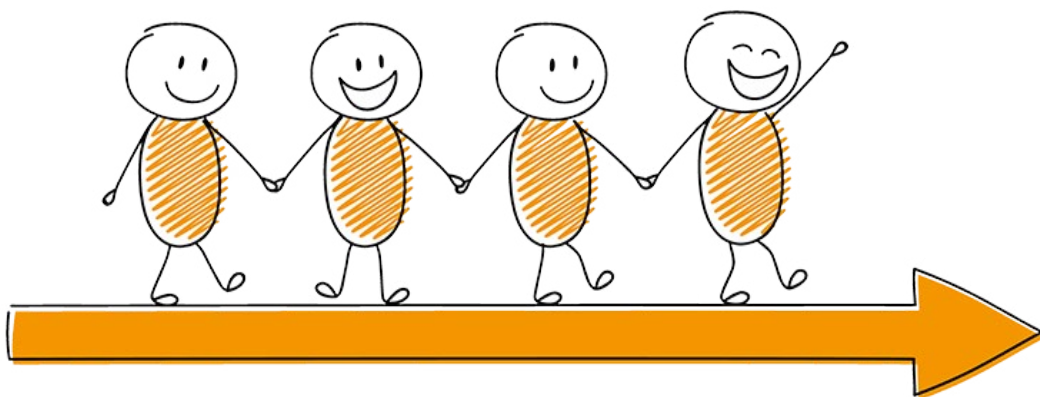
By making some of these changes, it is likely that **all applicants** will have a better understanding of the volunteering role advertised.

Each checklist covers the following area:

- General areas where language can be made more accessible across volunteer listings and descriptions
- More specific examples of how you can communicate flexibility and diversity in volunteer listings
- How you can tailor volunteer role descriptions to be clear and accommodating

It's important to note that several of these options express a willingness or providing an option for autistic applicants to discuss any support requirements.

These recommendations are non-committal and intended to open the discussion to potential adjustments and accommodations. What is considered reasonable and achievable will vary based on the specific needs of each individual, volunteer organisation, and role.



Key Takeaway

- This section is aimed at **simple and easy to implement** changes to your volunteering role descriptions and listings aimed at opening a dialogue with the autistic community.

Accessible Language in Role Listings & Descriptions: A Checklist

Making documents clear and easy to read is often the best way to clearly advertise and describe a volunteering role. We have provided some broad changes that can be made to existing and future communications and how this can be more accessible to the autistic community (and people more broadly!)

Where can I make this change? The changes in this section can be applied to any document that is provided to the public.

ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE			
COMPLETED?	CHANGE	WHY IS IT BENEFICIAL?	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<input type="checkbox"/>	All acronyms are expanded	Expanding acronyms means giving the full meaning of shortened words or phrases. This can be really helpful in avoiding confusion and making it easier for autistic applicants to understand what is expected and what the volunteer listing requires.	Instead of using abbreviations like “VQ,” it’s better to use the complete term, like “Volunteering Queensland.” This way, it’s clear and easy to understand for everyone.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jargon is simplified	Autistic applicants often work better with straightforward and clear language. Replacing complex terms with simpler ones will work to build a shared understanding.	Please see below some links to resources that can help you to identify commonly used terms » Canva – Jargon of Jobs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Slang and colloquialisms are avoided	Language, cultural references, and social nuances communicated through slang and colloquialisms can be difficult to interpret for autistic applicants and can make expectations unclear.	Instead of using words like “chill”, “giving 110%” or “win-win situation” use terms like “relaxed”, “putting effort into a task” or “everyone will benefit”.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use identity-first language and avoid clinical terms	Using identity-first language and avoiding clinical terms avoids continuing negative stereotypes and misconceptions and embraces the neurodiversity movement.	Review our language and external resources guide within these this guide! » Talking About Autism » External Resources

Communicating Diversity & Flexibility in Volunteer Role Listings: A Checklist

Communicating a commitment to diversity and flexibility is a great way to attract autistic volunteers. It allows for further conversations relating to volunteering role adjustments and matching strengths of an individual to a particular role. We have provided several areas that can convey this message to a diverse range of volunteers.

Where can I make this change? These changes can be implemented in areas where you describe your organisation and set the scene for an applicant, for example this could be under 'About This Opportunity' in [Volunteering Queensland's role listings page](#). Think about anywhere you are introducing your organisation and mission to a new volunteer!

COMMUNICATING DIVERSITY & FLEXIBILITY			
COMPLETED?	AREA	WHY IS IT BENEFICIAL?	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<input type="checkbox"/>	Include a link to a diversity statement on your listing and/or website	A diversity statement shows that your organisation values diversity and is committed to including people with a range of abilities and experiences. It is a simple way of letting autistic applicants know you welcome them into your volunteering community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » You can find examples of diversity statements outlined in the following links: » A range of large organisations » Volunteering Australia - Diversity and inclusion statement.

COMMUNICATING DIVERSITY & FLEXIBILITY			
COMPLETED?	AREA	WHY IS IT BENEFICIAL?	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Your willingness to make workplace adjustments</p>	<p>Articulating a willingness to make adjustments can help ensure autistic applicants can openly provide and discuss any adjustments that can support them to fulfill a volunteering role. This includes any preferred meeting structures and formats which is discussed later in this resource (See Engaging Autistic Volunteers)</p> <p>It's important to note that not all autistic applicants will require adjustments to their role and what is reasonable depends on the requirements of your volunteering organization and roles available.</p> <p>An example may look like:</p> <p><i>“We are committed to inclusivity and recognize the importance of making adjustments to accommodate specific needs and preferences. We are open to discussing any preferred adjustments to the current role that can support you effectively”</i></p>	<p>Adjustments relate to changes to a role or environment to better cater for an autistic volunteers sensory, executive functioning or communication needs. Types of adjustments are covered in Step Three:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Sensory Sensitivities » Thinking Preferences » Communication Styles <p>At the beginning of the next section, we have also provided email templates that can help open the conversations to what (if any) adjustments can help facilitate participation in a volunteer role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Before the Engagement: A Template » After the Engagement: A Template

COMMUNICATING DIVERSITY & FLEXIBILITY			
COMPLETED?	AREA	WHY IS IT BENEFICIAL?	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Provide the option to request alternative formats other than written text</p>	<p>Providing the option to request alternative formats can help autistic applicants who process information in different and unique ways to access and comprehend the volunteer listing.</p> <p>An example may look like:</p> <p><i>“We understand that individuals process information in different ways, and we are open to accommodating those needs. If you need alternative formats other than written text (e.g., visual or simple English), please contact us at X”</i></p>	<p>Providing the option for video or audio descriptions in addition to written text greatly increases accessibility of volunteer role listings. Several organisations have provided tools and guides to creating alternative formats and increasing overall accessibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Microsoft – Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities » Scope UK – Raising Standards with Alternative Formats

Accessible Role Descriptions: A Checklist

Volunteering role descriptions are primarily aimed at articulating the responsibilities of a role and the skills required. It can serve as a reference point for organisations and individuals to discuss the expectations of a role and what is involved from day-to-day. We have suggested two changes that can make these descriptions more accessible for autistic volunteers.

Where can I make this change: We have used the example template in Volunteering Australia’s resource [‘Designing Volunteer Roles & Position Descriptions’](#) as a reference to where you can make these changes when designing volunteer descriptions. These changes relate to describing ‘Key Responsibilities’ and ‘Skills, Experience & Attributes’ within Volunteering Australia’s template and are aimed at increasing accessibility.

CLEAR ROLE DESCRIPTIONS			
COMPLETED?	AREA	WHY IS IT BENEFICIAL?	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<input type="checkbox"/>	Key Responsibilities are broken down into tasks	<p>Breaking down responsibilities of a volunteer role makes it easier for autistic applicants to understand the separate tasks involved. It also increases the capability to request and discuss potential volunteer role adjustments.</p> <p>This allows autistic applicants to feel comfortable opening a dialogue around how they can match their skills and requirements to different aspects of a volunteering role.</p>	<p>A role that involves helping an animal shelter with ‘daily care tasks’ could be broken down into ‘walking the animals, washing, and bathing, planning vet appointments and reaching out to potential adopters’.</p> <p>This example may allow a potential applicant who needs communication adjustments to discuss any changes or support necessary when it comes to social aspects of the task.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Only the essential requirements of the role are listed	<p>There are a range of broad terms and descriptions that are common across all job roles than can be an unintentional barrier to applying. Often these requirements are not essential for the role listed.</p>	<p>Phrases like ‘<i>great interpersonal skills</i>’, ‘<i>ability to think outside the box</i>’ and ‘<i>ability to work in a fast-paced environment</i>’ may not accurately reflect the requirements of the role and often make their way into a lot of listings!</p> <p>Review the skills and requirements of the role and ask, ‘<i>is this really necessary to completing the role?</i>’.</p>

Putting it all together: A Brief Example

Below is a fictional advertisement for a volunteering role and position description at Animal Alliance. We have used the first three sections from Volunteering Australia's guide to role descriptions to help illustrate a supporting role description. We hope this can help you better understand how to implement some of the changes from our checklist.

Within the listing, the different colours highlight where potentially unclear information has been expanded upon and made more accessible.

Please note that this example is for explanatory purposes and is not intended to reflect all of the requirements of a volunteering role listing!

ROLE LISTING	
BEFORE	AFTER
<p>AA is seeking volunteers at our animal shelter to help with daily care tasks for our dogs. Candidates should have a good sense of humour and a passion for animal welfare and be able to work well in a team. Some experience working with animals is preferred but not necessary. Please apply by filling out our online application form.</p>	<p>Animal Alliance is seeking Animal Care Assistant's to volunteer at our animal shelter! We value diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all volunteers. You can find our diversity statement at www.aa.com.au/diversity.</p> <p>We are currently seeking a volunteer for specific tasks such as feeding and providing care for our animals, cleaning their living spaces, and walking dogs.</p> <p>No experience is required for the role, having a pet or prior contact with animals will be useful but not an essential requirement of the role.</p> <p>Candidates will work as part of a diverse team and will have a commitment to animal welfare.</p> <p>We encourage applications from people of diverse backgrounds, and if any questions, adjustments or accommodations are required please note this in the online application or contact Tanya on 3456 6543 or via email at tanya@animalalliance.com.au.</p>

ROLE DESCRIPTION	
POSITION TITLE	ANIMAL CARE ASSISTANT
<p>Key Responsibilities</p>	<p>We expect volunteers to assist in managing the personal hygiene and day-to-day operations of animals currently within the shelter.</p> <p>You will work as part of a diverse team committed to positive outcomes each and every animal.</p> <p>Key responsibilities include the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Feeding the animals (once in the morning) » Cleaning living spaces once per day, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Checking water bowls and sources are clean – Removing and disposing of animal droppings – Removing and storing any toys not currently being used » Walking the dogs <p>Volunteers will walk the dogs once per day, around the shelter for approximately 20 minutes. There is a maximum of 3 dogs per volunteer.</p>
<p>Skills, Experiences & Attributes</p>	<p>No previous skills or knowledge will be required to undertake the role, but volunteers will need a commitment to animal welfare and be comfortable interacting with animal droppings and physically touching the animals.</p> <p>Training will be provided for each of the key responsibilities.</p>

Key Takeaways

- Accessible and clearly articulated volunteer listings and descriptions are just the beginning in a process of continual learning and improvement!
- Simple changes in **language** and **communication** can make volunteer role listings and descriptions more accessible to **all volunteers**.

Engaging Autistic Volunteers

Congratulations – you have successfully created and advertised a volunteering role and now you are looking at engaging and meeting with a potential volunteer.

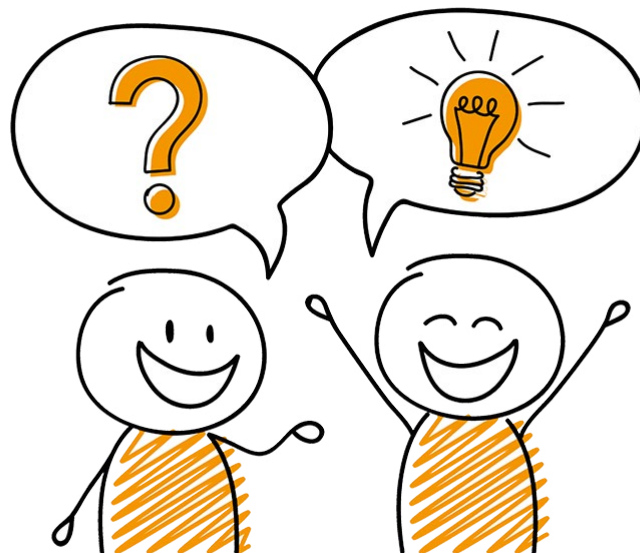
You may not actually know a potential volunteer is autistic, nor are they obliged to disclose this. However, you are able to provide the opportunity for an autistic volunteer to disclose and discuss any preferences and adjustments.

This section is intended to illustrate key areas throughout the engagement process for all volunteers to allow you to be forthcoming with inclusion.

We have provided questions and examples aimed at demonstrating how a conversation around one's disability can be facilitated when expressing interest in a volunteering role. This opens the channels of communication and creates a dialogue with autistic applicants to discuss any support required in a volunteering role (if additional support is required at all!).

Being forthcoming with these questions is a key part of the process as it opens the conversation for potential adjustments, the focus of upcoming information in [Step 3: Onboarding, Supporting & Retaining](#).

We have structured the following information according to two different stages of an initial engagement following an expression of interest: before and after.



Key Takeaway

- The recommendations and questions in this section are aimed at facilitating your engagement with **all volunteers** and to provide the **opportunity** for an autistic volunteer to disclose and adjust any adjustments or support required (if any!!)

Before the Engagement

Often the best time to make expectations clear and reduce uncertainty is before a meeting even begins. We have provided three tips and an example of how you can enact some of these changes in [‘Before the Engagement: A Template’](#).

1. Providing specific and detailed information to the applicant

Autistic volunteers benefit from having clear expectations and information ahead of time. Think about providing the following information in an e-mail, over the phone or whatever suits when setting up an engagement with a new volunteer.

- Date and time of the meeting (with an option for alternatives)
- Visually assisted instructions to the meeting location (e.g., a picture of the building)
- The name and number of participants attending the meeting
- Topics to be discussed
- Questions to be asked (see below on how to prepare questions and make them more accessible!)
- An opportunity to disclose any possible adjustments
- Refer to our [‘Before the Engagement: A Template’](#) at the end of this section.

2. Preparing questions (avoiding open-ended and unclear questions)

Open-ended questions cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” and require a longer and more detailed response. These questions can be unclear and may be interpreted differently for autistic volunteers and not answered within the original context.

Having alternatives to these questions in literal, concrete or in just a more targeted form can make all the difference. Autism from the Inside discusses the use of open-ended questions in their video [‘Autism Communication Strategies’](#).

We have provided a brief table below of how to translate potentially problematic questions to autism affirming versions.

ORIGINAL OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS	MODIFIED QUESTIONS FOR AUTISTIC VOLUNTEERS
How do you feel about volunteering on weekends?	Would volunteering on weekends fit in your current weekly schedule?
What do you hope to gain out of the volunteer experience?	What are some specific goals you have for volunteering with us?
What is your biggest strength?	What specific skills do you excel at?
Tell me about yourself?	What are your personal preferences, interests, or hobbies?

3. Be flexible with meeting structures

Being flexible with meeting structures is important when engaging with autistic volunteers. They may have specific sensory needs and feel more comfortable in certain settings, so offering alternative options can create a more comfortable and collaborative meeting experience. Simply being open to alternatives communicates the flexibility of your volunteering organisation.

Some of these alternative options include:

- Online (e.g., ZOOM, Microsoft Teams) meetings may be less intimidating and preferable for a range of volunteers
- Sometimes small group discussions can be less intense than one-on-one meetings and allow for autistic applicants to better contribute and add input to the conversation
- A structured meeting with a clear agenda, direction of discussion and time-limits can make the meeting expectations clear and predictable.

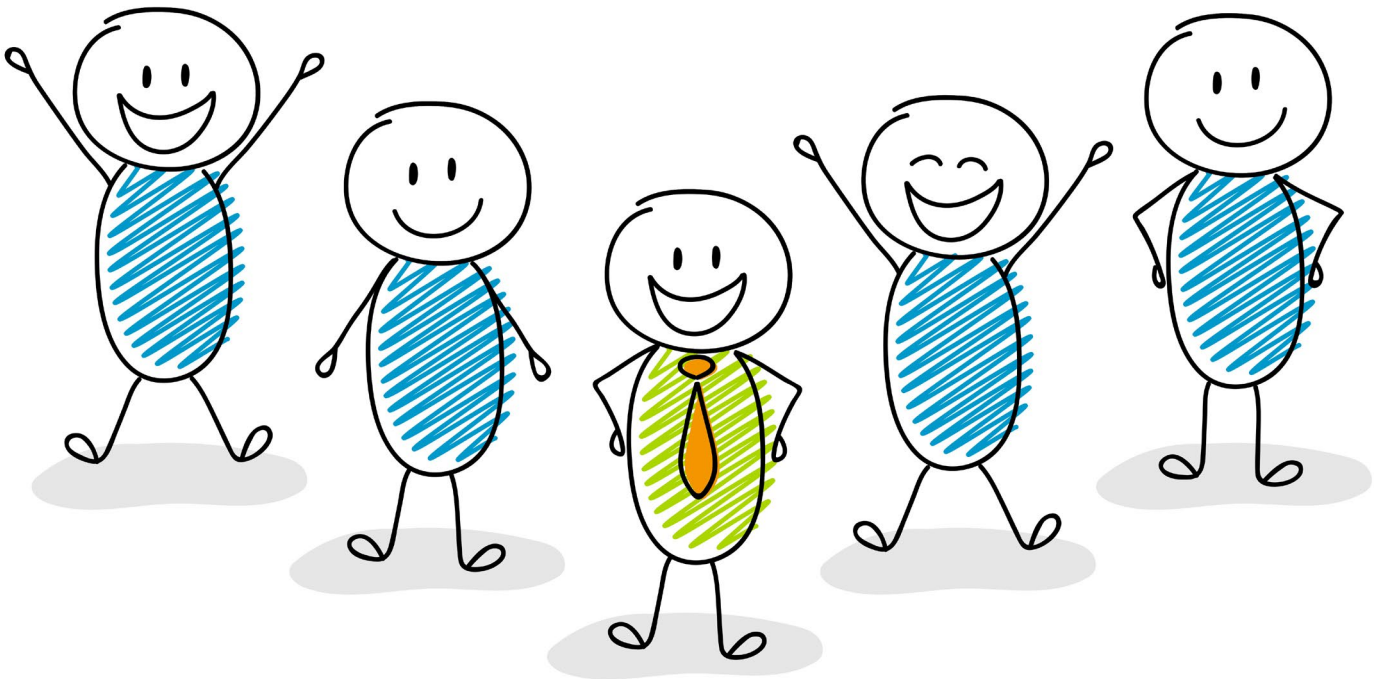
Before the Engagement: A Template

- We have provided an example of a template that could be sent to a potential volunteer prior to meeting to discuss a volunteering role.

This template was developed for explanatory purposes, and we encourage you to adopt your own personal flavour and existing questions and processes! How this is communicated (e.g., over the phone, or email) depends on what works best for everyone involved.

WHEN	INFORMATION PROVIDED
<p>Before the Meeting</p>	<p>Thank you for contacting us at Animal Alliance!</p> <p>Dear [Applicant],</p> <p>Thank you for expressing your interest in volunteering as Animal Care Assistant with Animal Alliance. We are excited to have you on board as a potential volunteer and we want to make sure that our organisation is a welcoming and inclusive environment for you. The meeting details are as below. If you would prefer to communicate or meet over another format (e.g., online) or have any other specific requirements, please do not hesitate to let us know.</p> <p>Date: May 1st 2023 Time: 10:00am - 11:00am Location: 57 Volunteer St, Gibson 4098 Physical location: (Picture and Instructions) Attendees: Ross Gibson (Volunteer Manager), Geoff Scott (Volunteer Mentor)</p> <p>To ensure that we can provide you with the best possible volunteering experience, we would like to give you a few questions before our initial meeting. These questions are a great opportunity for you to tell us about your strengths, any concerns, and how we can both get the most out of your volunteering experience. You can give your responses to the questions via return email or bring them with you to the meeting to discuss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Would volunteering on weekend fit in your current weekly schedule? » What are some specific goals you have for volunteering with us? » What specific skills do you excel at? » What are your personal preferences, interests or hobbies? » Do you have any personal preferences or adjustments we should know about to provide you with a positive volunteering experience? (e.g., ways to accommodate medical conditions, neurodiversity, support workers?) <p>We value your commitment to making a difference in the lives of animals and appreciate the time you've taken to reach out to us. If you have any further questions or require specific accommodations, please don't hesitate to contact Ross Gibson (Volunteer Manager) at [email] or Geoff Scott (Volunteer Mentor) at [email]</p> <p>We look forward to discussing these questions in person or reviewing them a reply email. We will see you on May 1st, 2023 to discuss how we can best your volunteering experience with us.</p> <p>Best regards, Animal Alliance</p>

Before the Engagement: A Template continued



Key Takeaway

- The more **clarity** and **detail** you can provide before an engagement can often help to create a shared understanding and clear path to success!
- Be willing to **slightly adjust** your current approach can increase accessibility and open a dialogue to discuss any support needed within a volunteering role.

After the Engagement

Just like before the engagement, resolving any uncertainty and expectations after engagement is an important aspect of developing a clear direction and establishing a path for success. There are two quick tips and an example at the end of this section in [‘After The Engagement: A Template’](#).

1. Detail the next steps via phone, e-mail or preferred contact method

Providing specific information on the next steps allows an autistic volunteer to clearly understand the expectations and requirements of the role.

- This may include start date, start time, further instruction (with visuals) on how to get to the volunteering location.
- You can take this opportunity to break a volunteering role down into tasks (if you haven’t already) and ensure the expectations of a role are clear. This allows for further discussions regarding any potential adjustments or supports.

2. Proactively offer additional support

An autistic volunteer may require adjustments and additional support in a role to suit their strengths and skills. This may be in addition to a support worker that accompanies them to the role. Being forthcoming in opening the dialogue for adjustments allows for better strength-based role matching and a more collaborative relationship. This works to break down barriers and makes autistic applicants feel more comfortable about openly discussing their needs.

- Link autistic volunteers in with a mentor, buddy or peer to support them navigate a new role (discussed further in [Step 3: Supportive Relationships](#)).
- Encourage ongoing feedback on how you can better support an autistic volunteer within their role

After the Engagement: A Template

The example below provides an illustration of what information can be provided to a potential volunteer after an initial engagement.

This template was developed for explanatory purposes, and we encourage you to adopt your own personal flavour and existing processes. You may also have different ways of communicating with your volunteers.

The most important aspects are relate to an example of making a sensory adjustment, responsibilities broken down into tasks, alternative formats of information and a link in with a mentor or supportive figure.

Key Takeaways

- **Be proactive!** Combining Before the Engagement and After the Engagement templates allows for a dialogue to open about potential adjustments and accommodations we discuss in Step 3.

WHEN	INFORMATION PROVIDED
<p>After the Meeting</p>	<p>Welcome to Animal Alliance! We're so happy to have you on board as a volunteer. As discussed at our initial meeting, we have listed the details of your next meet-up for the volunteering role with us.</p> <p>Date: 30/05/23 Time: 1:00pm - 3:00pm Volunteering location: Animal Alliance HQ, 157 Berry Road, Gibson 4098 Visual location: (Picture and Instructions)</p> <p>Role description and tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sign in and meet Geoff, your mentor, at reception 2. Clean the living spaces of the animals 3. Walk the dogs for 30 minutes 4. Feed the dogs with the food provided in the fridge labelled 'Dog Food' 5. Put away leads and toys and sign out at reception <p>If there any additional skills you believe you could bring to a volunteering role or if you have any questions about the tasks above, please let us know!</p> <p>We have also discussed your request for sensory adjustments in the animal living area. We are more than happy to dim the lights in the animal living area, if you need any further adjustments or if this isn't suitable please contact Geoff and we can discuss further.</p> <p>Please keep in contact with your mentor [Geoff] around how this is working for you and we can discuss any other further adjustments you may need.</p> <p>We look forward to having an ongoing and collaborative volunteering partnership.</p> <p>Best regards, Animal Alliance</p>

External Resources

SPECIFIC RESOURCES	
What is Autism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Autism Spectrum Australia: How do we describe Autism? » Autism Tasmania: What is Autism? » Amaze: Free online course to understanding autism » Autism Awareness Australia: Understanding Autism
Talking about Autism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Autism CRC: Language Choices and the Autistic Community » Harvard Health: What is Neurodiversity?
Autistic Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Autism Tasmania: Autism Strengths » Embrace Autism: Sensory, Cognitive & Behavioural Strengths in Autism » Spectrum News: Finding Strengths in Autism
Attracting & Engaging Autistic Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Writer Girl: Accessible Language: what it is and why it matters » Academy to Innovate HR: 9 Inspiring Diversity and Inclusion Statement Examples » Volunteering Australia: Diversity and Inclusion Statement
Supportive Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Employment Autism: The Benefits of Buddying » Neurodiversity Hub: Mentoring » Autism CRC: Peer mentoring program for Autistic university students
Communication Styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » May Institute: Seven Tips for communication with Autistic Adults » Autism CRC: Language Choices and the Autistic Community » Autism Tasmania: Social Communication in Autism
Sensory Sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Autism CRC: Guidelines for Creating Autistic Inclusive Environments » Autism Tasmania: Sensory Differences » Autism Awareness Australia: Sensory Processing
Thinking Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Autism Tasmania: Information Processing » Autism Awareness Centre: Executive Function: what is it, and how do we support it in those with Autism?

GENERAL RESOURCES	
Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect):	<p>https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/</p> <p>Aspect is Australia's largest autism service providers. Their website offers a wealth of resources, guides, and training materials specifically tailored to support organisations in creating inclusive environments for autistic individuals. There is also a multitude of resources covering each stage of develop for an individual with autism.</p>
Autism Awareness Australia	<p>https://www.autismawareness.com.au/</p> <p>Autism Awareness Australia is a national organisation dedicated to increasing awareness and understanding of autism. Their website provides resources and information for organisations seeking to support autistic individuals and raise awareness of the nature of autism and increasing accessibility and a large-scale.</p>
Autism CRC	<p>https://www.autismcrc.com.au/</p> <p>The Autism Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) is a collaboration of researchers, industry partners, and autistic individuals in Australia. Their website offers research findings, practical resources, and training materials to support organisations in creating inclusive environments for autistic individuals.</p>
Australian Network on Disability (AND)	<p>https://www.and.org.au/</p> <p>AND is an organization that promotes the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. Their website provides resources, guides, and training programs that can help organisations effectively support and accommodate the autistic community.</p>
Autism Queensland:	<p>https://autismqld.com.au/</p> <p>Autism Queensland is a state-based organization providing support and resources for individuals with autism and their families. Their website offers resources and training programs to assist organisations in creating inclusive environments for autistic volunteers.</p>
Amaze:	<p>https://www.amaze.org.au/</p> <p>Amaze is the peak body for autism in Victoria, Australia. Their website provides resources, toolkits, and training programs to assist organisations in supporting autistic individuals in a variety of settings.</p>

GENERAL RESOURCES	
Empower Autism	<p>https://empowerautism.org.au/</p> <p>Empower Autism is a well-established, not-for-profit organisation that provides information, support and capacity development services to autistic people, together with their parents, carers and families. We are strong advocates of the benefits of peer led support and we value the active participation of those with lived experience of autism.</p>
Yellow Ladybugs	<p>https://www.yellowladybugs.com.au/</p> <p>Yellow Ladybugs is a non-profit organization that supports and empowers autistic girls and women in Australia. They offer mentorship programs, social events, workshops, and resources to promote self-acceptance and understanding.</p>
Autism Connect	<p>https://www.autismconnect.org.au/</p> <p>Autism Connect is an online directory and resource hub that connects individuals with autism, their families, and professionals to relevant support services and resources across Australia.</p>
Autism Advocacy Australia (A4)	<p>https://a4.org.au/</p> <p>A4 is an advocacy organization that promotes the rights and interests of individuals with autism and Asperger's syndrome. They provide information, resources, and advocacy support to ensure individuals with autism are included and supported in all aspects of life.</p>

Common Autism Related Terms: A Glossary

This glossary contains autism-specific terms to help promote a shared understanding with the autistic community.

It's important to acknowledge that language is dynamic, and this list is not set in concrete. Be mindful of individual preferences when using any of the language contained in this glossary.

TERM	DEFINITION
Autism	A neurodevelopmental condition that is characterised by a range of unique characteristics in communication, interests and routines, sensory processing and executive functioning.
Autism-adjacent	A term used to describe individuals who do not have an autism diagnosis but share common values and experiences with autistic individuals.
Communication Styles	Common ways in which autistic individuals may express themselves or interact with others.
Executive Functioning	A set of thinking processes that are involved in planning, organising, initiating, and completing tasks. These processes help with organising our environments, thoughts and actions. Differences in executive functioning are commonly experienced by individuals with autism and other neurodivergent conditions.
Identity first vs Person first language	Refers to the way in which a person's condition or disability is referred to in language. Identity first language prioritises the person's identity as an autistic or neurodivergent person, while person first language prioritises the person over their condition.
Masking	The act of hiding or suppressing one's autistic traits or behaviours in order to fit in with non-autistic social norms. Masking can be mentally and emotionally exhausting for autistic individuals.
Neurodevelopmental Condition	A condition that affects the development of the nervous system and brain, such as autism, ADHD, or dyslexia.
Neurodivergent	Refers to individuals who have neurological differences, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other conditions.
Neurodiversity	The idea that neurological differences should be recognised and respected as a natural part of human diversity. Different ways of thinking, learning and behaving are treated with respect and not seen as deficits.

TERM	DEFINITION
Neurotypical	Refers to individuals whose neurological development and function are within the typical range.
Reasonable Adjustments	Modifications or accommodations that are made to enable individuals with disabilities to participate fully in society, such as making changes to the physical or sensory environments.
Sensory Sensitivities	The different ways in which individuals process sensory information, such as touch, taste, smell, sound, and sight. Autistic individuals may have sensory processing differences throughout their daily lives.
Social Model of Disability	A model of disability that emphasises the role of societal barriers and attitudes in limiting the participation and inclusion of individuals with disabilities, rather than focusing on the individual's impairment or difference.
Strengths-Based Approach	An approach that focuses on identifying and building upon an individual's strengths and abilities, rather than focusing solely on their deficits or challenges.
Stimming	Stimming is the colloquial term for self-stimulatory behaviour. Some autistic individuals stim to regulate sensory input, express excitement, and cope with stress or anxiety. Common stims include rocking, flapping, or repeating words or phrases.