



# INTERVIEW SUCCESS WITHOUT DISCLOSURE

A Neurodivergent-friendly guide

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## Welcome

Job interviews can be stressful for anyone, but they can present extra challenges if you're neurodivergent and prefer not to disclose it. Without disclosure, it may feel difficult to ask for specific accommodations, but there are still ways to minimise the stress of the interview as much as possible. With the right preparation and strategies, you can navigate the process in a way that plays to your strengths and helps you feel more in control.

Remember – you've been selected for the interview because the organisation feels that you have the skills, qualities and experience that they are looking for. They don't know how anxious you might be, or how many hours of preparation you've put into preparing an answer to a question. Most interviewees are nervous, and interviewers expect a degree of anxiety and nerves before an interview. By using some of the strategies below you can take back control of the interview and focus on your experience and skills. Neurodivergent people make great employees, and what you're bringing to the organisation is your unique outlook on the world which is a great asset to any employer.

## Before the Interview: Preparation is Key

### 1. **Research the Company & Role**

Understanding the company culture and job role will help you predict what kind of questions they might ask. Look at the company's website, mission statement, and recent news.

### 2. **Research the practicalities and logistics of the interview**

Where will it be held, what are the parking arrangements like, what trains and buses go near the interview venue? Knowing as much as you can – and even visiting the location in advance of the interview or doing a "trial run" – will help minimise some of the anxieties that you might have around the unknown circumstances of the interview. If there's an aspect of the interview that's really causing you anxiety, contact the organisation to ask for clarification – often it's something they simply haven't thought to mention in their information.

### 3. **Prepare and Practise Responses**

Many interviews follow a predictable pattern. Prepare answers to common questions such as:

- “Tell me about yourself.”
- “What are your strengths and weaknesses?”
- “Why do you want to work here?”

Practising aloud or writing responses in bullet points can help with recall. If you can, ask someone else to take on the role of interviewer and go through these types of questions with you. Interview questions can be difficult to answer, but if you can find ways of breaking them down – for instance, if you’re asked what your strengths and weaknesses are you could ask if it’s ok to provide a specific example of when you displayed a strength – it can make the process far easier.

### 4. **Prepare Your Own Questions**

Having questions ready can show interest and also help you determine if the workplace is a good fit for you. This is a great opportunity to show that you have researched the business and have some pre-prepared questions about what you’ve learned.

### 5. **Plan Your Energy Management**

If interviews are draining, schedule downtime before and after. If possible, choose a time that works best for your energy levels and make sure you’ve had enough downtime beforehand so that you can focus fully on the interview.

### 6. **Ask for Feedback**

Hearing anything potentially negative about ourselves is never pleasant or easy, but if you have someone you trust to give you constructive, supportive feedback, ask them what they feel about the way you answer questions. Do you tend to talk at length, or interrupt, or give very short answers? There’s nothing wrong with any of these communication styles, but they can make it difficult to get your point across in an interview. Following feedback, see if you can focus on responses that more clearly demonstrate your skills whilst staying on track.

## **7. Arrive early**

Neurodivergent people often face all types of issues around getting to places on time. Getting easily lost is a common issue that people face, which can make it hard to arrive on time even if you've left an hour early. For people with ADHD and executive function issues, time management can be extremely difficult. Autistic people sometimes worry a great deal about not being on time and have a need to control the situation by being early for most events. If you make sure you're there early, you can take control of the situation (it might be that you can take the train, or park your car, and go for a walk or to a café to spend some time decompressing before the interview).

## **During the Interview: Managing Interactions**

### **8. Masking vs. Authenticity – Find Your Balance**

You don't have to pretend to be someone you're not, but if you have certain communication habits that might be misinterpreted (e.g., avoiding eye contact, taking extra processing time), consider small adjustments that feel comfortable. One of the big problems people make is trying to be "perfect" during an interview and allowing themselves to feel confused and anxious rather than, for instance, asking for clarification or looking away while they formulate an answer.

### **9. Use Active Listening Strategies**

If you need time to process a question, say, "That's a great question, let me think for a moment."

If you don't understand, ask for clarification: "Could you rephrase that? Or "Can I check that I've understood that correctly?"

### **10. Ask if you can provide examples**

If you're asked a question that feels too vague to answer, ask if it's ok if you provide an example from your own experience. In this way, you're taking control over the interview and interpreting the question in a way that makes sense to you.

### **11. Manage Eye Contact in a Way That Works for You**

If direct eye contact is uncomfortable, try looking at the interviewer's nose, eyebrows, or another part of their face. If you find it hard to speak and make eye contact, focus on only making eye contact (or looking at their nose, forehead etc.) whilst they are talking and feel free to look away while you're talking, otherwise it can be almost impossible to formulate an answer.

### **12. Regulate Stimming or Fidgeting Subtly**

If stimming helps regulate your focus, try discreet ways like pressing your thumb and forefinger together, using a fidget ring, or placing a textured object in your pocket.

### **13. Ask whether you need to communicate more or less**

If you're aware that you tend to go off on a tangent, or find it hard to fully answer a question, ask the interviewer whether they'd like you to add anything else, or whether you've fully answered their question. Otherwise, you're second-guessing whether you've provided them with the information they need.

### **14. Use Scripts or Notes as a Backup**

If allowed, bring a small notepad with key points or questions you want to ask. If an online interview, use sticky notes or a document to remind yourself of key responses.

## **After the Interview: Follow-Up & Self-Care**

### **12. Send a Follow-Up Email**

A brief, polite email thanking the interviewer and reiterating your interest can make a positive impression.

### **13. Debrief Yourself**

Reflect on what went well and what you might adjust for future interviews. Don't dwell on perceived mistakes—most interviewers forget minor awkwardness quickly.

### **14. Give Yourself Recovery Time**

Interviews can be mentally and emotionally exhausting. Plan a calming activity afterward, whether it's listening to music, taking a walk, or just decompressing.

## 15. Ask for Feedback

If you're up for it, ask the interviewer to give you honest feedback about where they think you did well during the interview and any areas where they feel you came across less well. In some cases, you don't get a job simply because someone else had more experience or skills and it has nothing to do with how you came across, so asking for feedback can be reassuring. On the other hand, if they felt that you didn't communicate your experience clearly – despite being well-qualified for the position – this is something you can learn from.

Being in an interview situation is difficult for anyone, and more so if you're neurodivergent. Recognising that you're starting from a different point to many people can be helpful in putting into place a clear plan – and accessing support to put that plan into place – that helps you recognise those areas you might struggle in and find practical solutions to help you overcome any problems you've encountered in the past. And remember, whilst interviews can feel completely overwhelming and we can convince ourselves that we're bad at everything, if you take some time to fully review what's been problematic in the past, you'll realise that there are some areas that you come across great and specific points that you can work on. Tackling it in advance, in this way, makes the whole experience seem far more manageable.