



Best Practice Model for Employment Support Services: *Creating Sustainable Career Pathways for Autistic Talent*

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Specialisterne Australia

Specialisterne Australia branch was established in 2015 with the goal to enable 12,000 careers for people on the autism spectrum by 2030. We are one of the first companies in the world to highlight the benefits of a neurodiverse workforce.

WHAT WE DO

Specialisterne Australia assist organisations in recruiting & providing autistic & neurodiverse inclusive workplace practices & cultures. We recognise that autistic individuals offer a range of skills that can be of benefit to any job.

We also recognise that the traditional recruitment process disadvantages those on the autism spectrum.

WHO WE WORK WITH

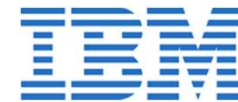
We work with a range of organisations to assist in the recruitment of a range of positions (with individuals of all ages). To date, we have helped to recruit employees in roles in information technology, records management, agriculture & engineering.

HOW WE WORK

We use a unique process to assess potential employees that aims to remove the barriers experienced by autistic adults in the traditional recruitment process.

We then work to support the individual & employee in their transition & build the capacity of the employer to support their autistic staff members.

We help managers to understand the unique strengths of their employee/s on the spectrum & implement strategies to help them thrive in the workplace.



Autism and Unemployment

1 in 54
people are on the
autism spectrum
(CDC, 2020)

34%
Unemployment
rate
for autistic
Australians
(ABS, 2018)

**Overeducated &
Underemployed**
(Baldwin, 2014)



Job Advertisements

- Often containing confusing jargon and terminology
- Stipulating unnecessary qualifications
- Exceptional communication skills and team working skills
- Offer limited transparency on the actual role



Interviews

- Rely on rapport building
- Emphasis on non-verbal language
- Require 'selling' oneself as a good future employee
- Require individual to verbalise skillset (fast!)



Employment challenges

- Disengaged talent pool
- Some have NDIS plan and DSP
- Sick of attending interviews and being measured for social skills/cultural fit
- Recruitment processes cause stress, anxiety, PTSD
- Underemployed
- Seen as disabled
- New manager = loss of job

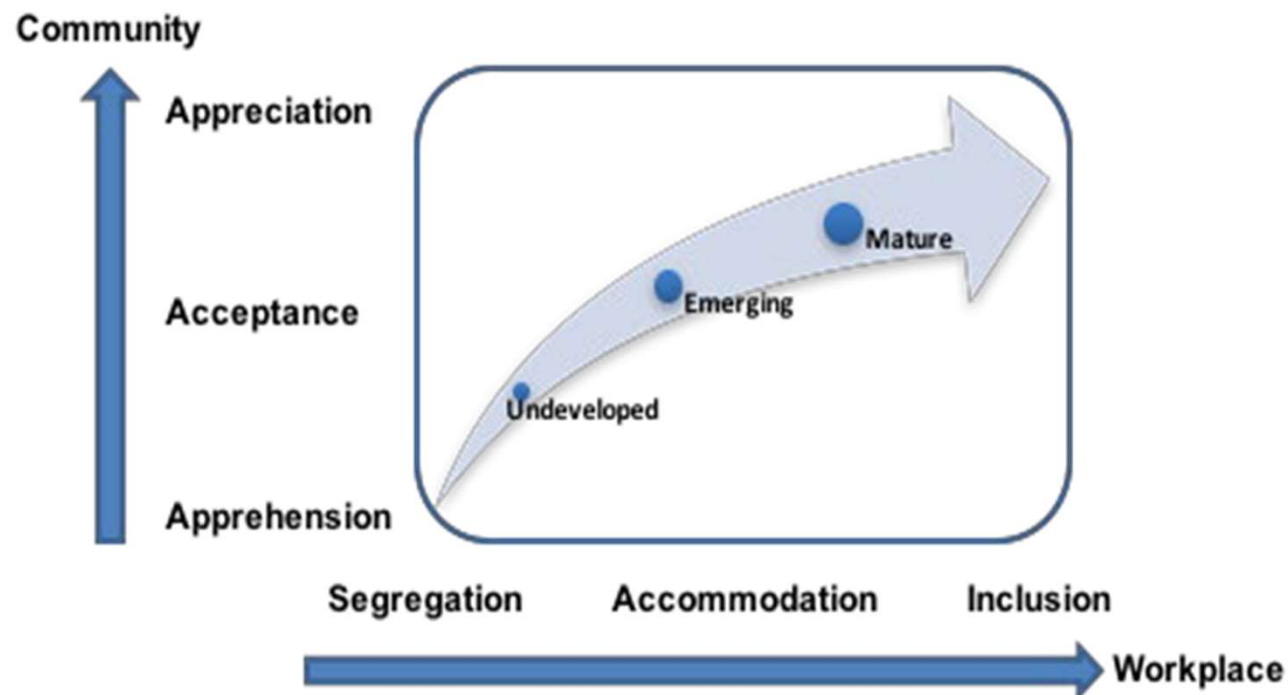
Strengths model

- Those placed via supported programs outperform, those without fail
- High staff engagement
- High productivity
- Low turn over – 94-96%
- Full range of roles
- STEM – strength but stereotype

Systemic Approach – Sustainable Culture Change and Practice

Specialisterne's social impact enterprise model uses a two-pronged approach focusing on both businesses & neurodiverse candidates to enable & harness their talents to pursue meaningful & successful careers where they can thrive & add value.

Business enablement & engagement approach



Why Business Education and Enablement is critical

Business education & enablement is essential to enable workplaces that actively include & engage the talents of neurodiverse individuals.

The most significant barriers that autistic individuals experience in pursuing open market employment opportunities is the experience & processes involved in the traditional recruitment process & the preconceived or unconscious biases we hold about an individuals personality, behaviour & communication style.

Employers Engagement in the Program

- Our aim is to enable employers to support autistic & neurodiverse employees
- Awareness training is delivered to the entire organisations
- Focus on debunking myths & common misconceptions
- Discuss what common challenges may look like & provide strategies to assist
- Development of Tailored Support Plans
- Ongoing Coaching & Mentoring for the employer



4500+
Employees
trained on
Autism
Employment
General
Awareness
training

SHIFTING LEADERSHIP MINDSET

First impression	Strength	Likely to be good at...
Skeptical	Inquisitive	Finding errors
Loner	Independence	Working independently
Pessimistic	Alternative perspective	Identifying risks
Obsessive	Tenacious / Passionate	Completing tasks/New solutions
Pedantic	Detail oriented	Following/managing processes
Insensitive	Objective	Analysis of information or events
Rude	Honest / Direct	Showing problems others would not

Positives to Specialisterne Alternative Pathways for Autistic Talent:

- Unique & Patient approach
- Develop skills & confidence with like-minded individuals
- Establish social connections
- Demonstrate your skills to Employers
- Assessed on skills that are relevant to the role
- Work with employers who understand Autism
- Ongoing coaching & mentoring if offered a role at the end of the program



94%
Retention
rate for
candidates
placed

An alternative to the interview

STAGE 1

Identify roles & understand workplace



Preparation & Design phase where we work with employers to understand their workplace & role requirements

STAGE 2

Sourcing candidates



1. We run sourcing & advertising campaigns for the upcoming program
2. We conduct pre-assessment workshops & screening to confirm candidates

STAGE 3

Training & Assessment



1. We run tailored assessment & training programs (classroom or online)
2. Initiate autism at work capacity building & enablement training for the employer
3. Provide candidate reporting to the employer outlining the assessed candidates skills & abilities for the roles available

STAGE 4

Onboarding



1. Candidates commence.
2. Regular coaching & mentoring touch points with the new employee, their Manager, Supervisor & buddy to ensure long term success.
3. Identify & problem solve any obstacles to ensure a positive work environment

Our alternative approach to sourcing and finding talent

Specialisterne uses multiple pipelines and networks to identify and engage with autistic and neurodiverse jobseekers. These individuals are unlikely to be found or to pursue work through traditional recruitment & employment channels.

- **Disability Employment Services (DES Providers)**
- **Pre-assessed Candidate Database**
- **Social Media Platforms**
- **Community and Key Network Engagement**

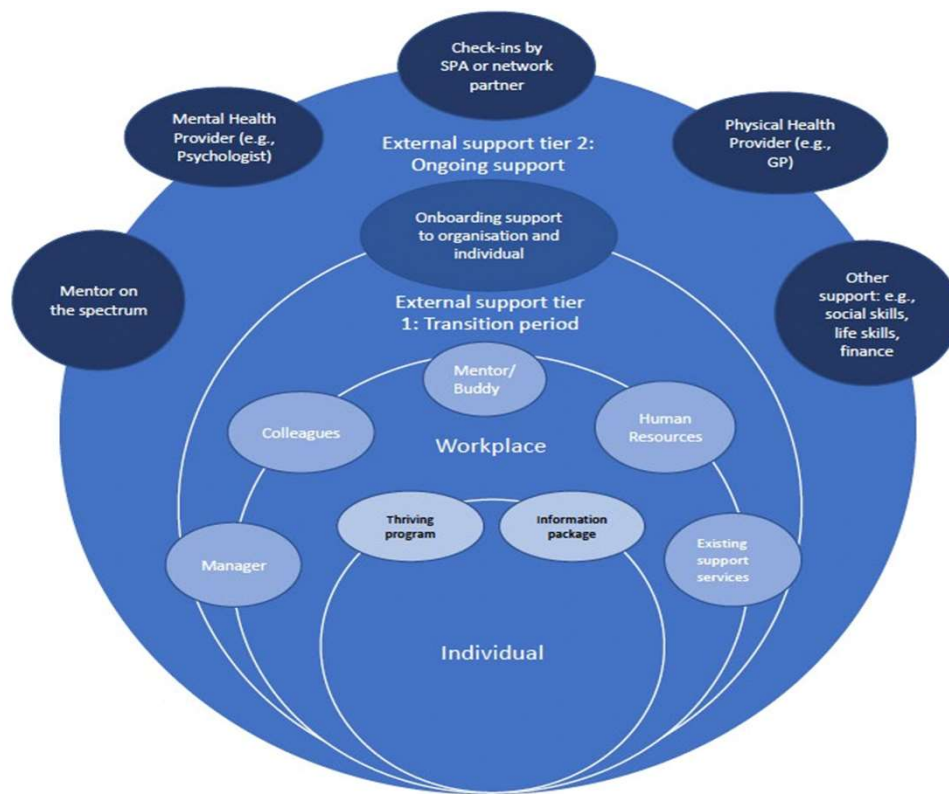


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Employee Support model

The key to the programs success is a strong ecosystem of support. By supporting the individual, team and organisation to develop each parties skills and knowledge. The program can have a more profound impact to ensure the ecosystem is sustainable.

Autistic and Neurodiverse employees support ecosystem



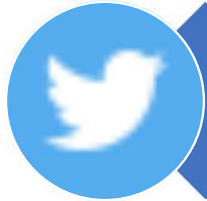


Questions

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Thank you!

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