

# **Thriving at Work:** **Building Daily Self-Accommodation Strategies**

**Sustainable Strategy Routines in Employment  
for Students with Disabilities**



**Thursday Oct. 16, 2025**

# A g e n d a

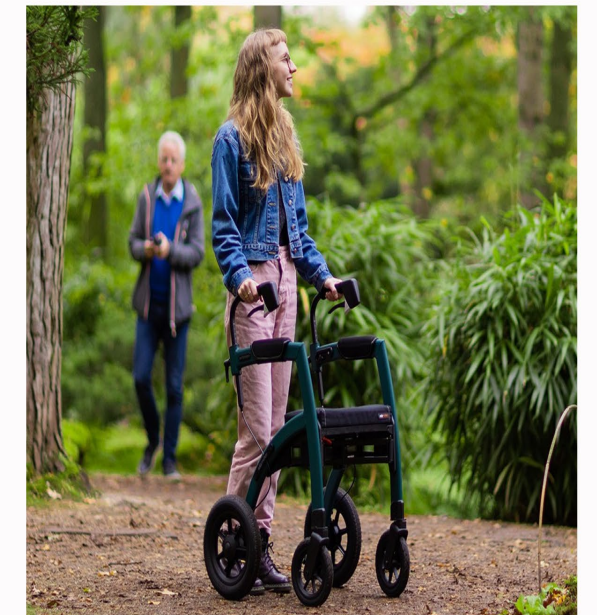
- Transition To Work Initiative
- Land Acknowledgement
- Presenting our Speaker
- Building Daily Self-Accommodation Strategies
- Q & A



# Transition to Work

Program serves people with disabilities and aims to:

- Empower self-advocacy and confidence
- Build career readiness and exploration skills
- Provide workshops and events to prepare for employment



# Transition to Work

Program serves people with disabilities and aims to

- Share guidance on disclosure and workplace accommodations
- Offer ongoing, wraparound supports throughout the career journey
- Highlight examples of successful accommodations and inclusive employers



# Housekeeping

**This session will be recorded.**

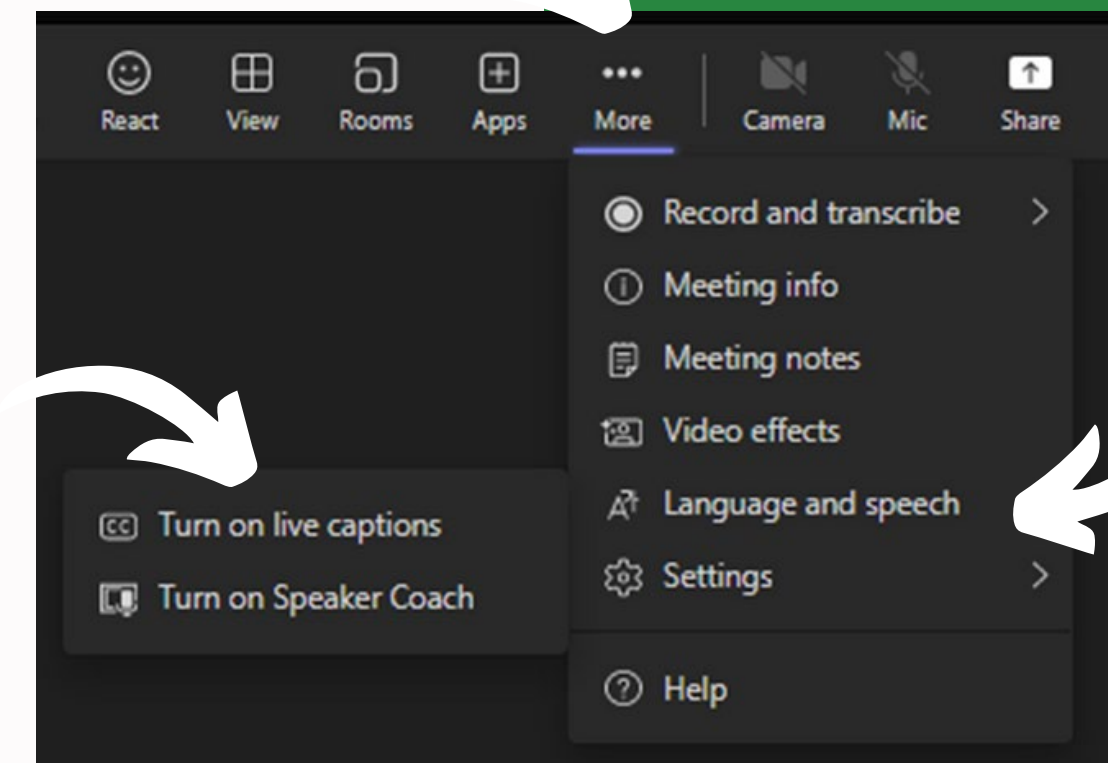
**Mute your microphone** unless you're speaking.

Use the **Chat** function for general comments or questions.

During the **Q&A**, **raise your hand** to ask a question using your microphone.

To turn on **Auto-Captioning**:

1. Select the More function
2. Select Language and speech
3. Select Turn on live captions



# Land Acknowledgement

Humber is located within the traditional and treaty lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit. Known as Adoobiigok, the “Place of the Alders” in Michi Saagiig language, the region is uniquely situated along the Humber River Watershed, which historically provided an integral connection for Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat peoples between the Ontario Lakeshore and the Lake Simcoe/Georgian Bay regions. Now home to people of numerous nations, Adoobiigok continues to provide a vital source of interconnection for all.





As an Aboriginal Kashmiri, I carry with me deep connections to land, ancestry, cultural and religious resilience.

My roots remind me that land is not just physical space—it is part of who we are. When I take part in land acknowledgements in Canada, I feel this connection resonate strongly.

For me, participating in a land acknowledgement is both a moment of respect and a personal reflection. It reconfirms my awareness of shared histories of violence, genocide, struggle and survival of aboriginal people and strengthens my commitment to reconciliation and allyship with Indigenous communities in Canada.

My own story as an Aboriginal Kashmiri reinforces my commitment to reconciliation, to learning, and to walking respectfully on this land that has been preserved to serve humanity till eternity.

# Humber Learning Outcomes



Humber's Learning Outcomes (HLO) are essential for equipping students with the skills and perspectives they need to succeed as global citizens and professionals. Today's presentation will integrate the following three mindsets to enhancing today's workshop and learning environment.



**Critical Thinking**



**Professionalism**



**Strategic Problem-Solving**

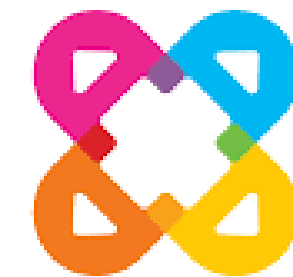


# Our Presenter



Jamie McCleary

Executive Director  
Autism Canada

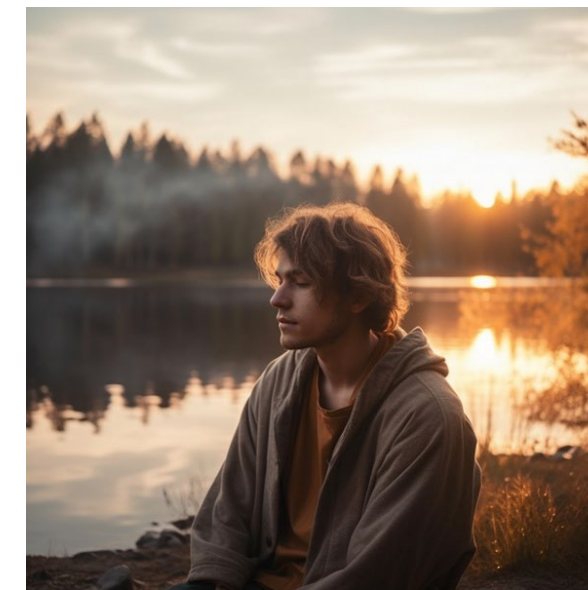


**AUTISM**  
**CANADA**  
**AUTISME**

See The Spectrum Differently  
Le spectre autrement

# Thriving at Work

Building Daily Self -Accommodation Strategies



An accredited program designed to enhance the autistic and neurodivergent community in the transition from post secondary education to the workplace.





# Meet our Development Team

- Executive Director at Autism Canada.
- Mother of three children on the spectrum.
- Late diagnosed Autistic
- Background in Psychology, Childhood and Family Studies
- Advocate and mentor for Autistics and Families



**Jamie McCleary**  
She / Her



**Dominique Chabot**  
She / Her / Elle / Sa

- Family Support Manager at Autism Canada.
- Mother of two boys on the spectrum.
- Wife of an Autistic
- Background in Psychology, Autism Behavioural Science and Linguistics

# About Canada

# Autism

For over 49 years, Autism Canada has championed a comprehensive view on the challenges faced by autistic individuals, their families, caregivers, and supporters. Our core mission is to enhance the quality of life for those on the autism spectrum through informed advocacy, education, and direct support.

Committed to excellence, we provide impactful programs and resources, including the Au-Some Conference, support for families, the pioneering Search and Rescue for Autism initiative, and extensive educational materials for all. Proudly serving Canada's autism community since 1976, Autism Canada continues to lead with dedication and inclusivity.

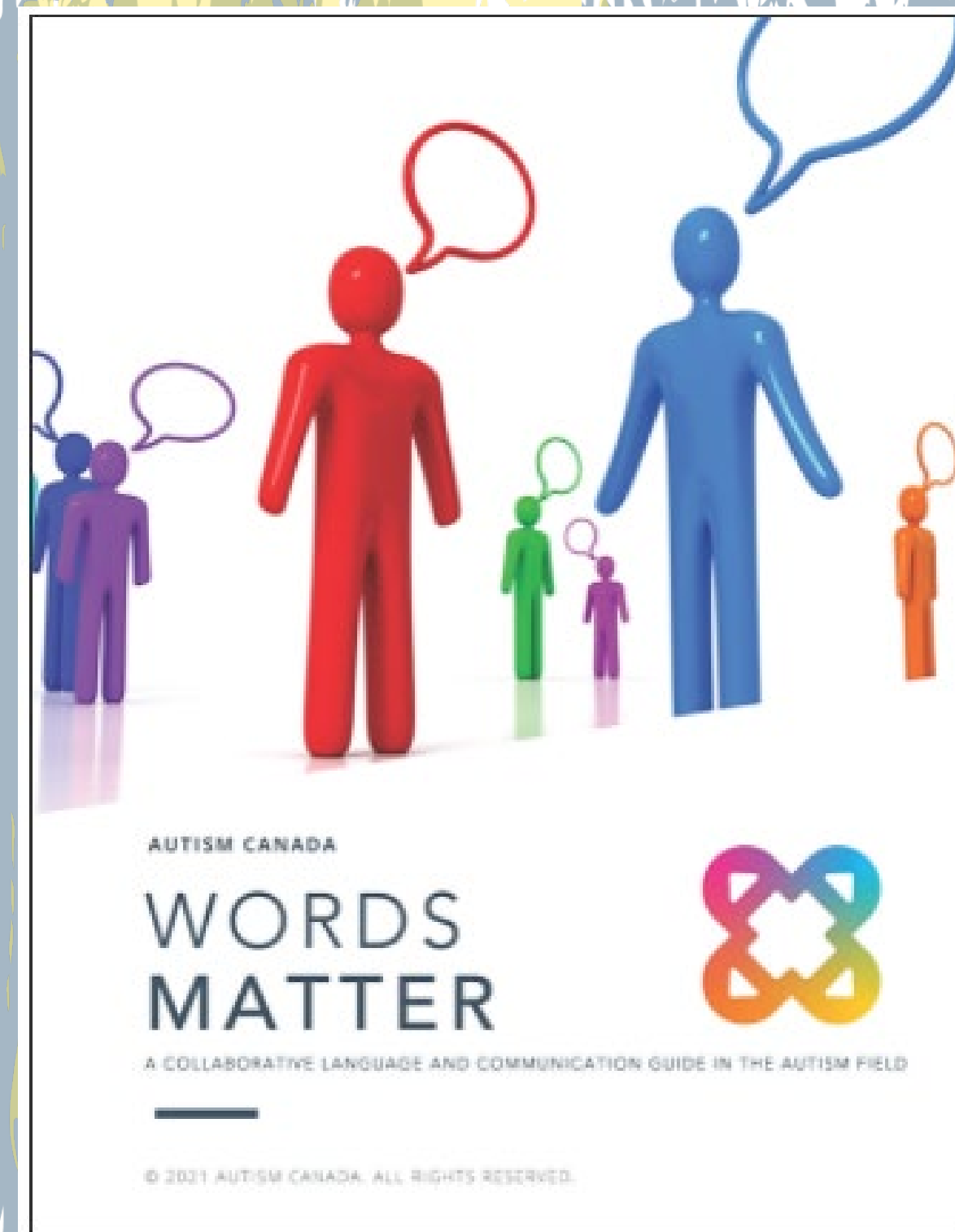




# A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Autism Canada acknowledges the diverse language preferences within the autism community. We deeply respect these preferences and interchangeably use identity-first and person-first language in our communications, ensuring inclusivity and respect for all individuals' self-identification.

[autismcanada.org/resources/publications](https://autismcanada.org/resources/publications)



# Transitioning to Work

Transitioning into the workplace can be exciting and overwhelming, especially for disabled and neurodivergent students. This session will explore practical strategies for self-accommodation that support focus, organization, and energy management throughout the workday. By learning to integrate small, sustainable practices into daily routines, students can prevent burnout, maintain productivity, and build confidence as contributing employees.

Participants will leave with tools to help them protect their limits, adapt effectively, and thrive in diverse workplace environments.





# Transitioning to Work

- Mixed feelings are natural. This is one of the greatest periods of change and adjustment.
- All accommodation from this point forward is based on self-advocacy and self-accommodation.
- Self identification becomes a choice.
- Every experience is an opportunity not only to learn but to teach.
- Be open, to the understanding and limitations of others and recognize that change takes time.

- Knowing yourself is the key to success.



# Self-Accommodation Overview

Maintaining presence and productivity are important in any workplace. Pushing to the limit, and ignoring needs results in burnout and long periods of recovery or stagnation.

- Know yourself and your limits
- Experiment with different self-accommodation practices, they will evolve along with you.
- Set routines and take breaks
- Find and use productivity tools; timers, calendar blocking, door closed period, do not disturb
- Try new physical tools often; fidgets, noise filters, lighting filters, music
- Practice daily self-reflection



# Know Yourself and Your Limits

You have learned how you feel or react in different environments and situations, that will not change. Your goal now is to find the environment that complements your needs and fill in the rest with daily strategies of self-accommodation and self-care.

Change happens over time, in small steps. You have the power to change your environment, understanding comes from observation and experience.

Working as part of a team is difficult, finding middle ground or ways to cope is the most important thing you can do for yourself.

“ —

I am not a person “*with autism*”  
or someone who “*has autism*”  
I am Autistic, and I am on the Autism  
Spectrum

— ”  
Kalem - 19 years old

*Autism isn't something an individual possesses;  
it's an integral part of their identity.*





# Sensory Processing at Work



Loud unpredictable noises



Smells



Crowds and chaos



Bright lights



Proprioception and Vestibular



Background noise



Touch



# Sensory Processing Challenges: Key

## Impacts At Work:

- Sensory overload from surroundings.
- Inconsistent performance based on environment.
- Increased stress from constant masking.
- Increased risk of burnout, meltdown or shut down.

## Setting Boundaries:

- Enforceable boundaries vs. self regulated boundaries
  - scented products, scheduled breaks
  - centralized music, ambient temperature
- Explain in non-judgemental terms why these boundaries are necessary for you.



# Environmental Self-Regulation

- Ambient Temperature: Fan or small heater in personal area to regulate body temperature
- Noise: Filtering ear plugs or curated playlist to allow for regulation of external noise
- Motion: Stationary chair, or alternative seating method for proprioception and vestibular senses
- Light: Lamps, screen filters, blue light glasses or even tinted glasses to regulate light input.
- Smell: Personal essential oil rollers, charcoal beads to absorb overwhelming scents
- Touch: Curate your workspace; ergonomics, fidgets, comfort items





# Other ways to self accommodate

## TAKE A BREAK

TAKE REGULAR BREAKS, EVEN JUST TO BROWSE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR 15 MINUTES A FEW TIMES A DAY. YOUR BRAIN NEEDS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESET.

## CURATE YOUR SPACE

USE PERSONAL ITEMS, COMFORT COLOURS, AND OBJECTS TO MAKE YOUR SPACE WELCOMING AND ENCOURAGING.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO STIM

TAKE A WALK AROUND THE BLOCK, CLIMB THE STAIRS IN YOUR BUILDING, OR JUST CLOSE THE DOOR AND DO SOME STRETCHING. RESET YOUR

## PAY ATTENTION

HEAR A SONG THAT MAKES YOUR BRAIN TINGLE, A SOUND THAT MAKES YOUR SKIN CRAWL, OR A LIGHT TONE THAT HURTS? WRITE IT DOWN.

## SELF CARE

MAKE SURE YOU EAT, STAY HYDRATED AND TAKE BATHROOM BREAKS. TAKE OPPORTUNITIES TO CHECK IN WITH YOUR BODY.

## TAKE OPPORTUNITIES

QUESTIONS ARE THE KEYS TO LEARNING. ASK AND ANSWER WITHOUT PREJUDICE. YOU WILL NOTICE OTHERS START TO ACCOMMODATE YOU IN RETURN.

# Coping During High Stress Times

## COMMUNICATE

ENSURE YOU COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR MANAGER REGULARLY. IF YOU NEED TO STEP AWAY FOR AN APPOINTMENT OR TO ADJUST YOUR SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY, LET THEM KNOW.  
ELEVATE YOUR ROUTINE

INCORPORATE NEW PRACTICES INTO YOUR ROUTINE. MEDITATION, RELAXATION BREATHING, BEING IN NATURE, CHANGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT PERIODICALLY; YOU ARE CONSTANTLY EVOLVING, YOUR SELF CARE SHOULD AS WELL.

## STAY CONSISTENT

NEVER CHECK OUT. TAKING A DAY TO REST OR RECHARGE IS FINE NOW AND THEN, BUT IF YOU FIND YOU NEED REGULAR ABSENCES, REEVALUATE YOUR ACCOMMODATION PRACTICES.  
SETTING BOUNDARIES

THIS INCLUDES YOURSELF AND OTHERS. SET CALENDAR BLOCKS FOR TASKS, REFUSE OVERTIME OFFERS, USE TIMERS TO ENFORCE BREAKS.

SOMETIMES YOU WILL BE YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY.



## BE PATIENT

YOU WILL HAVE TO EXPLAIN YOUR NEEDS, PRACTICES, TOOLS AND MORE. MOST PEOPLE ARE SIMPLY CURIOUS AND WANT TO HELP. DON'T SHUT THEM DOWN.  
BE KIND TO YOURSELF

EVERYTHING IS MORE DIFFICULT. RECOGNIZE YOUR STRENGTHS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS. WE ALL HIT ROUGH PATCHES, IT'S HOW WE GET THROUGH THEM THAT DEFINE OUR CHARACTER.



# If you are supporting a neurodivergent person with employment, consider sharing these key points with the employer.

Building a supportive work environment helps create a truly inclusive organization.

- **Fosters Loyalty:** An accessible work environment encourages employees to advocate for the Gallery.
- **Attracts Diverse Talent:** Inclusivity draws diverse candidates, boosting advocacy.
- **Boosts Morale:** A supportive environment leads to positive employee advocacy.
- **Enhances Reputation:** Employees' advocacy strengthens the Gallery's image.
- **Promotes Inclusion:** Accessibility inspires employees to champion





# What is a neuro-inclusive approach?

- **Clear communication:** Use simple language and visuals.
- **Flexible scheduling:** Offer breaks and shorter routes.
- **Sensory considerations:** Provide info on sensory-rich and quiet areas.
- **Inclusive activities:** Adapt to different abilities and interests.
- **Safe environment:** Welcome questions and accommodations.
- **Pre-visit info:** Share guides or videos about the experience.
- **Feedback loop:** Collect and use feedback to improve



# Sensory Spaces

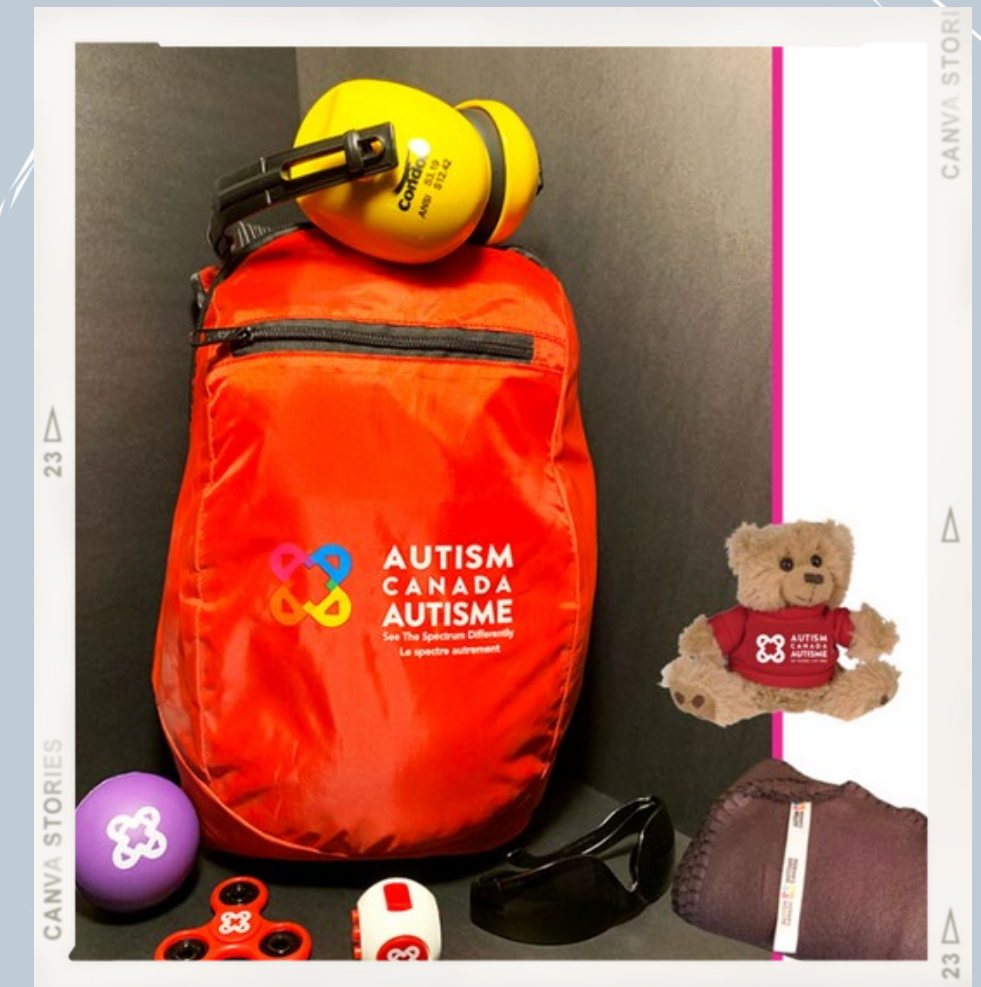
# Friendly

If at all possible, have access to a sensory friendly space in the facility.

A sensory friendly space can be somewhere where someone who is having trouble regulating their sensory input can get a chance to recover and re-centre themselves

This area should be a quiet, simple space with low levels of light.

Have a sensory support kit handy



# Thank you

[www.autismcanada.org](http://www.autismcanada.org)

[info@autismcanada.org](mailto:info@autismcanada.org)

[@AutismCanada](#)

1-800-983-1795





# Humber Polytechnic



**Accessible Learning Services** – Supports for current students with disabilities including academic accommodations, assistive technology training and disability-related funding. ([accessible-learning@humber.ca](mailto:accessible-learning@humber.ca))

**Career & Student Success Advisors** - Help to guide your academic and career journey and connect you to on-campus resources and support services. ([careers@humber.ca](mailto:careers@humber.ca))

**Career Support Peers** - One on one appointments for current students for general career development support such as resume review, cover letter review, LinkedIn profile, and mock interviews.

**Career Connect** - Job portal for full-time, part-time, contract, summer, volunteer and on-campus positions for current Humber students and recent graduates. ([careerconnect.humber.ca](http://careerconnect.humber.ca))

# Humber Polytechnic



- **Devant** - Free online career development tool that allows students to do access live workshops and events, an AI interview tool, step-by-step resume building in various formats, cover letter editing and so on. ([humber.devant.ca](https://humber.devant.ca))
- **Online and in person events and workshops** including Career Steps Workshops, Transition to Work, Career Month, Community Events and much more!
- **Website resources** - Support for students with career development, student success, goal setting, job search and more!
- **Career Advancement Services** provides support after graduation. ([humber.ca/careeradvancement](https://humber.ca/careeradvancement))

## LIFETIME SUPPORTS & SERVICES

UNIVERSITY OF  
**GUELPH-HUMBER**  
CAREER AND  
PLACEMENT SERVICES

### Supports for GH Students & Alumni

CAREER PLANNING & JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

RESUME & COVER LETTER SUPPORT

INTERVIEW PREPARATION & PRACTICE

POST-GRADUATE RESOURCES & TIPS

NETWORKING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

SCAN TO BOOK AN  
APPOINTMENT



**STAY IN TOUCH!**

[guelphhumber.ca/career/contact](https://guelphhumber.ca/career/contact)  
[career@guelphhumber.ca](mailto:career@guelphhumber.ca)

 @GHWorks  
 /showcase/ghworks



# Thank You

## Q & A and Session Survey



<https://tinyurl.com/TTWOct25>

