The “Right Fit” Discussion Guide is designed to facilitate conversation and planning when determining features of the right type of work environment for an individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The items in the guide can assist in identifying the person’s personal work style and preferences and the “fit” of that personal style to the potential employment situation and environment. Locating the perfect employment environment may be difficult at best, however that does not mean that a less than perfect environment could not be made workable by adding some accommodations or supports. Using the Right Fit Discussion Guide could help a person and the team identify the existing features that are a good match for the individual’s work style as well as aspects of the workplace that would potentially need to be adapted.

The guide can be used in multiple ways. A team may wish to review the guide prior to meeting with an individual and use it to prompt discussions and to gather information. An individual may use it to prepare for a meeting with his team or employment provider. The guide can be completed as designed, or simply used to help remember the various aspects of the workplace that should be explored. Ultimately, the user will decide how this document can be of most assistance in identifying a workplace match or making adjustments to a work environment when the person would like to pursue employment.

Making the Right Match Discussion Guide requires attention to several areas:

1. Personal work and learning style

2. Physical components and requirements of the workplace

3. Social components and expectations of the work environment

Each Section of the guide will explore different aspects of the important areas. The first section prompts open ended questions to frame the discussion and surface important information. The following sections are designed to gather details that will provide insights of a potential match or ideas for areas of accommodation and support.

1. **Getting Started with Identifying Your Personal Work and Learning Style.** Discuss and make notes on the following topic areas and questions.

* In general, identify a few of your preferred types of work tasks and work environments.
* In general, identify a few of your dislikes when it comes to work tasks and work environments.
* Are there any types of employment that you would not like or would refuse to try?
* Discuss and explain several of your most valuable talents.
* What types of jobs or work have you found to be a strength (what you are good at doing)?
* Given a choice, are you able to identify the types of jobs that you would prefer to do? (These may be the same that you have discussed previously or something different).
* Describe any hobbies or special interests.
* What time of day or night do you prefer to work? Length of day? Hours per week

1. **Your Preferred Sensory Environment**

Indicate the options that most closely fit you. In some cases, more than one choice can be used. If none are appropriate, add additional information

Personal Space

* I need a lot of personal space when I work
* I like some personal space, but can have others in my workspace some of the time throughout the day
* I am comfortable sharing my personal space with coworkers
* I need to arrange my personal space in a specific manner in order to be comfortable
* I don’t know
* Other:

Touch

* I have sensitivity to many fabrics and textures - I have difficulty wearing many uniforms
* I cannot wear gloves
* I have difficulty touching items and surfaces that are dirty
* I do not like using cleaning products and have difficulty touching the cleaners
* I have difficulty doing meal prep if it requires handling different types of food (example: raw meat, oily or sticky foods, juicy fruit )
* Wearing different types of clothing and fabrics is not a problem for me
* Touch different types of food is not difficult
* Using cleaning products is not uncomfortable
* Other:

Temperature

* I like to work in a warm environment
* I like to work in a cool environment
* I am extremely sensitive to heat
* I am extremely sensitive to cold
* I like to work inside
* I like to work outside
* Temperature does not bother me, I can adapt to many temperatures
* I don’t know
* Other:

Sound

* I cannot work where there is any noise or people talking
* I need background sounds in order to work (ex: classical music)
* I need to wear headphones regardless of the environmental sounds/noise
* Certain noises bother me while many do not. (List below)
* The pitch of the sound or the amount of of sounds/noises bother me more than the volume
* I can adapt to the noise level of most environments.
* I don’t know
* Other:

Lighting Environment

* I need bright light to work
* I prefer darker environments in which to work
* I prefer indirect lighting (ex: lamps) to overhead lighting
* Fluorescent lighting bothers me
* I need to wear sunglasses, sometimes I may need to wear them inside
* I prefer to work near windows and natural lighting
* I prefer to have windows covered and shaded when I work
* I can adapt to most any type of lighting
* I don’t know
* Other:

Visual Environment

* I need a visually organized environment in order to work (walls, desk, cabinets, counters, etc.)
* I use visual supports (example: calendars, schedules, color-coding) regularly in order to be effective in the workplace
  + Describe your visual supports:
* I prefer subtle, natural colors in the work environment
* I prefer bright colors in the work environment
* I can work in any type of visual environment
* I don’t know
* Other:

Odors

* I have certain odors (smells) that help me focus and work (example: vanilla, lavender)
* I have certain odors (smells) that cause me to become unfocused and off-task (example: food cooking, coffee)
* I cannot tolerate the smells of most cleaning products
* Smells have no impact on me and my work productivity
* I don’t know
* Other:

Movement

* I prefer work environment/tasks to allow movement about the environment most of the time
* I prefer work environments/tasks where I am able to sit most of the time
* I prefer to have a balance of sitting and movement
* I prefer not to work in a location where others will be moving around
* It helps me to complete work if I am able to stand, pace or rock occasionally
* I need movement breaks about every \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (minutes or hours)
* I enjoy moving, lifting or pushing objects as part of my work tasks (example: pushing carts or bins, lifting boxes or reams of paper, stocking shelves, mowing lawns, carrying books or files, loading/unloading equipment, etc.)
* I can accommodate to any type of movement or activity in the workplace
* I don’t know
* Other:

Do you prefer to move:

* Slowly
* Quickly
* About the same speed as everyone else

Additional Information

Do you have any specific sensory issues not discussed previously that you need to prepare for in advance of entering a new environment?

1. **Your Social Style**

To what degree do you enjoy socializing?

* A lot!
* At least a couple times every day
* Just a little or only with a few people that I know
* Almost never
* I prefer to work by myself where I do not need to socially interact
* I don’t know
* Other:

Does socializing make you anxious?

* Yes, very much
* Yes, but anxiety does not last all day long
* Yes, occasionally I get anxious or nervous when socializing
* No, I am not anxious in social situations
* I don’t know
* Other:

Do you know if you have trouble understanding other people’s words, body language or facial expressions?

* I do have trouble understanding people’s words, gestures and facial expressions
* I understand words, but have difficulty with gestures or body language (including facial expressions)
* I understand gestures, but get confused with words or facial expressions sometimes
* I get confused easily with social communication.
* Not all the time, but sometimes I do have trouble understanding people
* No, I find it easy to discuss and interact with others
* I don’t know
* Other:

1. **Your Preferred Project Style**

Do you work better:

* on your own
* with a leader/supervisor
* With a coworker
* with a group
* Other:

What size/type of group do you like to work with?

* Small group
* Medium group
* Large group
* Structured groups with clear agendas and directions
* Unstructured groups where the work can be done in many different ways
* I like to have some structured and some unstructured work opportunities
* I prefer to work alone
* Other:

Do you like:

* concrete tasks
* open-ended projects
* Combination
* Other:

If you usually work alone but then collaborate with others on a special project, would the switch be a big problem?

* No problem
* I can do it, but I need to be prepared
* I will likely have great difficulty with that type of change
* I cannot make that type of change

Do you prefer repetitive work tasks and activities?

* Yes, most of the time
* No, not usually
* I prefer some repetitive work tasks and activities, but not all the time

1. **Your Preferred Communication Style**

Do you enjoy talking to other people?

* Yes, a lot!
* No, almost never
* Sometimes and with some people
* I like being with others, but communicating is very difficult
* I do not communicate verbally
  + - Describe how you best communicate
  + Other:

Do you enjoy listening to others?

* Yes, a lot!
* No, almost never
* Sometimes and to some people
* I need help understanding others verbal information
  + - Describe what helps you understand others’ verbal communication?
  + Other:

Is conversing, formally and informally, easy or difficult for you?

* It is very hard and takes a lot of energy
* It is difficult, but I can manage for a short time
* It is easy. I can talk a lot as long as it is something I know about
* It is easy, even if it is something that I do not know much about

Are questions easy for you to answer?

* Yes, I try to answer almost every question that is asked of me
* Yes, most of the time
* Not always. It is difficult to know what people are asking me about
* No, I always have trouble answering questions
  + - Describe what could help you answer questions

Would you rather use an electronic or written format as the primary mode of communication with your boss?

* Yes, I would like to communicate using email if possible
* I like having notes written to me
* It helps to use pictures and symbols
* I like checklists from the boss for my work
* I like talking to my boss instead of notes or emails
* I don’t care. I can do either or both
* Other:

1. **Your Stressors**

Do you get easily stressed or anxious?

* Yes. Very Often during the day
* Almost daily
* Sometimes - A couple of times a week
* Rarely - Maybe once a month
* No-Never

* Are you aware of what stressors may make the anxiety occur or become worse? If so, describe those stressors.
* Have you experienced situations or environments that tend to escalate your anxiety? If so, explain
* What makes situations less anxious?