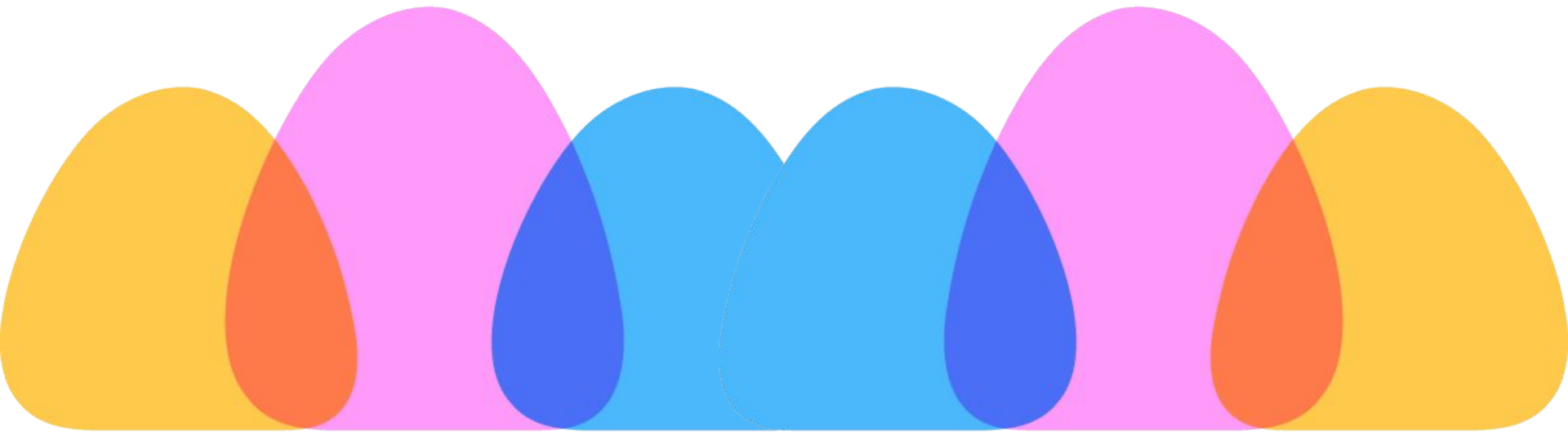




AuDHD at Work

What you told us





AuDHD at Work: Summary

We spoke with ~17 AuDHDers about their experiences of work, which revealed a number of common themes.

What we did

17

interviews

4 topics

Doing the job

Career progression

Work environment

Connection with others

What we found: key themes

Unmet needs

Autism vs ADHD tensions

Boredom vs overwhelm

Burnout

Disconnection

Loneliness

Myths and stereotypes

Masking

Underutilised strengths

Autism x ADHD strengths

Non linear work and careers

Great ideas (but not being heard)

Leadership challenges

Scope overwhelm

Managing others

Politics



AuDHDers have unique strengths

The AuDHD drive for both novelty AND thoroughness makes you a **natural explorer** and **inventor**.

Insights

- You have a diversity of skills and experiences that makes you less T shaped and more star-shaped
- You're a natural systems thinker, able see structural issues and potential solutions right away
- You excel at creative and complex problem-solving, especially if it involves deep research
- You're a great manager, leveraging hyperempathy to get the most out of diverse teams
- You come alive in urgent situations, such as a tight deadline or a crisis
- You have a very high work rate when you have the right work set up (flexibility on time, sensory-accessible spaces, etc.)

What you said

“I enjoy learning new things and repeating them until they become a creative process.”

“I’m a systems thinker and can see things on the big scale.”

“I love to apply research to real-world problems.”



There is an AuDHD-NT gap at work

Being AuDHD at work often means being a **star-shaped peg trying to fit into a round hole.**

Insights

- Roles require you to be an all-rounder, making it hard to acquire and succeed in a job
- Your many strengths - especially your ideas - are often underutilised, unrewarded, even punished
- You rarely have the freedom to shape roles to your growing strengths and changing interests
- Ignorance and ableism can lead to the refusal or 'forgetting' of your adjustments and boundaries
- Neuronormative social expectations can make you vulnerable to ostracism and political games
- You're penalised for harmless AuDHD traits, unrelated to performance, holding you back in your career

What you said

“I always struggled with my CV not fitting into neat boxes.”

“I did some extra work and was told I was overstepping.”

“We’re not speaking the same language, which causes conflict and misunderstanding”



This harms AuDHDers and employers

A neurologically uninclusive work experience risks productivity, performance and wellbeing.

Insights

- Long stretches of unemployment, underemployment or working at level, wasting your talent and earnings potential
- Role dissatisfaction from both the boredom and stress of not having a lot of control over your work
- Inconsistent productivity and performance as a result of your not being set up to succeed
- Feelings of loneliness and rejection due to not fitting in, not having a voice and/or being treated badly by others
- Regular meltdowns and periods of burnout from the exhaustion of accommodating neuronormative work expectations, without the support in return

What you said

“From the age of 30, all my bosses have been younger than me.”

“I never felt liked by anybody.”

“My history is a repeating pattern of burnout and overwhelm.”



What can AuDHDers do?

Here are some ideas from the community (and us!) that can help you create a joyful and fulfilling experience at work.

Work on yourself <i>Work in a more authentic way</i>	Access support <i>Know your rights and explore options</i>	Understand the system <i>Inform your decisions</i>
Clarify and better utilise your purpose, values and strengths as an AuDHDer	Get reasonable adjustments, apply for Access to Work	Understand that recruitment and promotion will be harder for you as an AuDHDer
Leverage nonlinear working and manage exec functioning challenges	Find a mentor to guide and advocate for you	Acknowledge that your role is unlikely to change
Recognise and regulate your sensory and emotional needs	Partner with someone who has complementary skills	Be prepared for others to deny and hold onto their biases
Practice habits to build connection with others in a neuroinclusive way	Work with manager/ HR to improve education around neuroinclusion	Recognise that sometimes your mental wellbeing is worth more than the job



What we will be taking forward

Your input has highlighted three key themes, around which we will build training and coaching provisions. **Let us know what you think!**



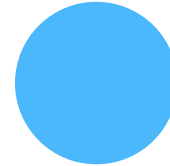
Supporting strengths

- Turning AuDHD tensions into strengths
- Managing your cognitive, sensory and emotional needs
- Using the system to get adjustments



Connecting with others

- Building trust and belonging with colleagues and managers
- Getting your ideas heard
- Spotting and circumventing toxic behaviours in others



Leading, your way

- Managing broadening scopes of work
- Strengthening connections and credibility
- Managing politics and stigma
- Looking after your health



Thank you for getting us here

We've learnt a lot from the AuDHD community and we hope you continue to join us on this journey!

Thank you

- We want to thank all those who have contributed to this work so far.
- Your stories and insights have shone a crucial light on how AuDHDers experience work, the challenges we face, and what we can do to become happier at work.
- We look forward to moving to the next stage of this work, which couldn't have happened without you!

A reminder of who we are



[Matthew Bellringer](#) is a neurodiversity and innovation specialist. They love supporting work that addresses problems from a unique perspective.



Hel Straker ([AuDHD Joy](#)) is a coach and trainer who uses her background in talent strategy and DEI to empower clients to create AuDHD joy at work.



Join us for our LinkedIn Live event!

Matthew and Hel will be [hosting a webinar](#) where we will be discussing the research to explore how we can shift the AuDHD conversation from the problems of 'autism vs ADHD' to the strengths of 'autism x ADHD'.

Join us on Wednesday 5th March - Looking forward to seeing you there!

