

IN A DIFFERENT KEY:
THE AUTISM UNDERSTANDING TOOLKIT

AUTISM IN THE WORKPLACE



INTRODUCTORY CONTEXT

(suggested)

One of the more discouraging autism statistics relates to employment. Close to 70 percent of people on the spectrum are reported to be unemployed or underemployed. This should not be seen as an inevitable consequence of disability. In fact, autistic people possess a range of skills that makes them valuable employees at different levels across a range of careers. In some areas, their skills can be superior. Success at work, however, depends on employers recognizing that they themselves need to make adjustments to offer the supports autistic workers need to be successful. And it is never "one size fits all." This excerpt from the documentary "In A Different Key" contrasts the work experience of Mickey, the filmmaker's autistic son, with that of Donald Triplett, the first person diagnosed with autism.

KEY THEMES

- The importance of employment for people on the spectrum
- Challenges they face in the workplace
- The role of employers in promoting success
- Job-training designed for autistic people

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

How might being autistic interfere with success in a workplace that lacks understanding?

How might it interfere with getting hired?

What conditions of employment explain Donald's success?

Can any of those be reproduced elsewhere?

How might autistic employees be a real benefit to employers?

How can workforce training about autism lead to success for autistic employees?