



# Prepare for a Candidate's Video Job Interview



The **Inclusive**  
Workplace

Video interviews are becoming more and more common. As a job coach, **you** play an important role in supporting candidates on the autism spectrum or with an intellectual disability. This is a checklist to help you work with candidates and businesses—**before, during, and after** the interview.

## Before the interview

### With the business:

- Check whether the business is new to inclusive hiring, and explain your role in supporting them
- Confirm that the business is open to your support and suggestions throughout the process
- Gather information about the job and the interview, including the interviewer's phone number and email address
- Determine who is in charge of accommodations if needed
- Provide guidance about accommodations

### With the candidate:

- Ask if they have had previous interviews. What worked well? What challenges did they experience? What will assist them to showcase their attributes and skills?
- Discuss accommodations options and provide information if necessary
- Discuss the pros and cons of disclosing disability; if the candidate chooses to do so, provide guidance on timing; discuss possible reactions
- Determine whether you will join the interview and confirm with the interviewer



- “ What **day** will the interview be?”
- “ What **time** will it start and end (and in what time zone)?”
- “ What video conferencing **tool** will you use for the video interview? What **features** will you want the candidate to use?”
- “ How **many** interviewers will attend? What are their names and roles within the organization?”
- “ How should the candidate **dress**?”
- “ What does your interview process look like?”

## Coach the business about accommodations

- Provide guidance about accommodations being an easy, positive, regular part of employment that benefits the individual, other employees, and the business.
- Note that disclosing a disability is a **personal choice**.



“As an accommodation, may I **join** the candidate during their interview as a support person?”

“Can the candidate have a list of the interview **questions** prior to the interview to allow them more time to process and consider the information?”

“As an accommodation, can the candidate be interviewed by **fewer people**, to lower their anxiety?”

## Provide context to the business

- Provide **context** around the socioeconomic status of many people on the autism spectrum or with an intellectual disability.
- Explain that the candidate may not have access to a quiet space, the latest technology, a strong internet connection, a well-decorated area behind them, or a professional wardrobe. These factors **shouldn't** be interpreted as a sign of disinterest.
- Encourage the interviewer to not make assumptions based on the candidate's appearance or living environment, but instead, to focus on the candidate's **transferable skills** for the job.
- Provide the interviewer with an understanding of **potential behaviours** that might be exhibited during an interview that could be misinterpreted. Behaviours such as awkwardness, fidgeting, aloofness, different facial expressions, a lack of eye contact, or providing short answers shouldn't be interpreted as a sign of disinterest. These behaviours may be part of the social communication differences related to being on the autism spectrum or having an intellectual disability. Encourage the interviewer to focus on the **skills that are essential for the job** the candidate is applying for. (Are smiling or sitting still *really* essential tasks of the job?)

## As a job coach, you can provide the business with suggestions

- Advise the interviewer to speak directly to the candidate, using **natural** facial expressions and hand gestures and a normal pace, tone, and volume, unless the candidate requests otherwise.
- Provide tips for preparing **inclusive** interview questions.
- Advise **minimizing** noise and distraction.
- Advise that a **second** interviewer be brought in to add diversity of thought, help reduce bias, and make the selection process more objective and reliable.



## Make the interview comfortable

- Discuss **noise sensitivity**.
- Suggest ways to reduce noise and distractions:
  - Conduct the video interview from a quiet room.
  - Reduce movement within camera view behind the interviewer.
  - Use earphones or earbuds to reduce noise.
  - Turn off notification sounds.
- Discuss how small talk can cause anxiety.
- Suggest that the interviewer not engage in small talk at the start of the interview.



Note that assistance and training are available. **Ready, Willing and Able** offers services to Canadian business, such as:

- Assistance with creating and conducting inclusive interviews
- Training for employers on inclusive hiring

## Provide tips on how to interview inclusively

- Use **plain**, simple, direct, literal language.
- Avoid using idioms, acronyms, or sarcasm.
- Ask **one** question at a time.
- Ask concrete questions instead of hypothetical ones.
- Focus on how the candidate will apply their skills to perform specific job tasks, instead of if the candidate can do the job.
- Focus on **ability**—what the candidate can bring to the role, not what they cannot.
- Use experiences listed on the candidate’s resume to build questions.
- Prepare **two to three** different ways to ask each question (get to the point of the question in a different way) in case the candidate asks for clarification.

“I see that you **worked** at a grocery distribution warehouse...”



## Coach the candidate

- Help the candidate **prepare** and **practise** answering typical interview questions.
- Address any potential areas of confusion the candidate may have about answering interview questions. A candidate may have **questions** such as:
  - Why do I have to answer questions in an interview when that information is on my resume?
  - Why are there some things I shouldn't share in an interview? (for example, why shouldn't I say my weakness is being late? Why can't I say I didn't like my last manager? Why can't I say I'm the best at what I do?)
  - Why do I need to say I'm interested in the job if I'm not sure?
  - If I am interested in the job, why do I need to repeat that during my interview and again at the end of my interview?
- Discuss which questions the candidate will ask the **interviewer**, and why. Assist the candidate with how to ask for **clarification** if needed.
- Assist the candidate in preparing and practising answers to questions about the **business**. Discuss **why** the candidate should be able to answer these questions.



“How would you answer this **question**? Do you have an answer? Can I hear it?”

“Let's learn more about the **business** so you can answer these questions. You sound interested when you can answer these questions in your interview. We can look at their website, Facebook, or LinkedIn... Let's explore this together and come up with a **plan**.”



“It’s **okay** if you don’t understand a question. If you’re asked a question during the interview and you don’t understand it, what would you say to the interviewer?”

(“Can you ask that question in a different way?”)

## Discuss the candidate’s environment and appearance

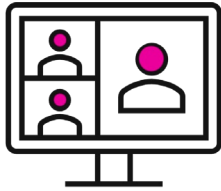
- Discuss **appearance** during the interview. Ask the candidate what they will wear and how they plan to look tidy and professional. Advise them to wash and comb their hair. Advise them to wear clean, tidy clothes, including nice pants in case they need to get up during the interview.
- Discuss the interview **environment**. Suggest a quiet/private space with either a tidy, organized background or a virtual background.
- Recommend lighting, camera height/angle, distance from the camera, and access to a power source.
- Discuss **items** to keep nearby (resume, job description, pen, paper, list of questions to ask, water glass, phone number of interviewer).



“Have you thought about what you will **wear**? Tell me how you plan to look tidy and professional. Tell me where you’ll **sit** for your interview. Why do you think that’s a good place?”

## Practise with technology

- Provide opportunities for the candidate to **practise** using the video conferencing tool that will be used during the interview.



“Have you **used** this video conferencing tool before? Can you show me how you **join** a video call? Can you show me how to turn the **audio** on and off? Can you show me how to turn the **video** on and off?”



## Assist with references

- Assist the candidate with preparing their **references**.



“Who have you worked with before who can tell the interviewer more about your skills? Let’s decide who will be your **references**, ask them if they will be your reference, and get their phone numbers and email addresses.”



## During the interview

### Support the candidate during the interview (as needed)



- Provide tech support; ask them to use the audio button to **mute** if there is background noise in their house.



- Support the candidate to showcase their **skills**.

“You have a good example that shows you’re an **organized** person. You should share that example.”



- Provide **time** for the candidate to think and respond. Avoid jumping in to fill the silence or assuming the candidate doesn’t understand the question if they pause before answering. Allow for **silence**, as they may need time to process the question.

- Prompt them to **share** relevant information.



“You shared your volunteer experience at the **seniors’ home**. You should describe your responsibilities there.”



- Redirect the candidate if needed. Provide support with asking for **clarification** if needed.

- Assist by **rephrasing** questions if clarification is needed or requested.



“Do you understand the question? Would you like it asked in a **different** way?”

## After the interview

Support the candidate to follow up after the interview (if needed)



“What can you say to let them know you are **interested** in the job?”



“What can you say to remind them of your **skills** and **experience** for the job?”



“Do you want to give your **thanks** by email or phone call?”



“Are you ready to share your **references**? Would you like some help completing the **background check** paperwork?” (if needed)

### Next steps

#### If the candidate was **successful**

- Support them to make an informed **decision** to accept or decline the job offer.
- Ask if they have any **questions** about the offer, such as hours, location, shifts, wage/salary, or benefits. Ask how they feel about it, and if they want to work there.

#### If the candidate was **unsuccessful**

- Ask if the candidate has any questions about the decision.
- Ask how they feel about it and what they learned from the experience.
- Ask if the interviewer gave them feedback, and if they would like to try anything differently next time.

- Regardless of the outcome, consider reaching out to the interviewer to ask for feedback. Ask if they have questions for you about the support and guidance you've provided to them during this process. Ask them how they felt the interview went with the candidate.

“What do you think the candidate did **well** in the interview? Do you have feedback or suggestions for how the candidate can **improve** their interview skills?”



# Checklist

## Confirm the details

- Determine if business is new to inclusive hiring
- Ask for details of video interview
- Ask interviewer for phone # and email

## Accommodations

- Discuss accommodations with candidate
- Determine who to speak to at the business to make an accommodations request
- Provide overview of accommodations to business and make request if needed
- Discuss with interviewer whether you will join the interview, and what your role would be
- Discuss with candidate whether they will disclose their disability, and if so, whether to do so before or during the interview

## Coach the business (if welcomed)

- Suggest that a second interviewer attend to reduce possible bias, but suggest a relatively small number of interviewers
- Provide interviewer with tips for preparing inclusive interview questions
- Inform interviewer that training and assistance are available
- Encourage interviewer to speak/act naturally and speak directly to candidate
- Advise minimizing noise/distraction
- Discourage assumptions about the candidate's ability to do the job
- Help interviewer reduce possible bias based on candidate's appearance, environment, language, or soft skills
- Encourage looking at informal experiences and qualifications

## Interview questions

- Assist candidate in preparing/practising answers to typical interview questions
- Address any confusion the candidate may have about answering interview questions
- Discuss questions the candidate will ask the interviewer, and how this shows interest in the job
- Discuss how to ask for clarification
- Assist with preparing references

## Set-up & practice

- Discuss appearance and environment, including items needed for the interview
- Discuss body language and soft skills
- Practise and run mock interviews

## Provide support during the interview

- Provide tech support
- Support candidate to showcase skills
- Provide time for candidate to respond
- Prompt candidate to share relevant info
- Redirect candidate if needed
- Support candidate to ask for clarification
- Rephrase questions if needed

## After the interview

- Assist candidate in wrapping up the interview (thanks, final questions)
- Assist candidate in sharing references
- Consider getting feedback from interviewer
- If candidate is successful, assist in clarifying, understanding & accepting/declining offer
- If candidate is unsuccessful, assist with learning from the experience & next steps

## Links



[Prepare for an Inclusive Video Job Interview – Employers](#)



[Prepare for Common Job Interview Questions](#)



[Accommodations for Your Workplace – Employers](#)



[Advocate for Accommodations – Agencies](#)

## Sources

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