

# SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE

## EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

Strategies from  
Autistic Employees

## EMPLOYEE SEPARATION



Separation is inevitable; all employees will eventually leave their employer, but for different reasons. An employee may be retiring after a long, successful career, they may be moving to a new employment opportunity, they may be leaving for medical reasons, or the employer may be terminating the employee for one or more reasons.

**56%** of respondents to the autistic workers survey conducted for this project have difficulties staying employed.

### Learning from employee separation

Sometimes, an employer terminates an employee because the employee is deemed to be a “poor fit” for the company. An employee may separate voluntarily for the same reasons. If this is the case, it’s a good idea for employers to use this experience as a learning opportunity. One of the most effective ways of accomplishing this is to hold an exit interview with the outgoing employee if the employee is willing.



This section will explore questions the employer may wish to ask the former employee, and questions they may wish to ask themselves, in order to use this separation as a learning experience.

### Exit interviews

Whether an employee is leaving voluntarily or involuntarily, ask if they’re willing to participate in an exit interview. Do this not just for employees terminated by their employer. Even a long-term employee retiring after many years of happy employment with the same company will have feedback to share that an employer may learn from. However, an exit interview is especially important when an employee is leaving (voluntarily or involuntarily) because they or the employer felt they were a poor fit for the company.

Asking the right questions during an exit interview will help employers get the information they need to learn from an outgoing employee's experiences, so they can provide a better experience for the next employee.



See **Section – 14.1 Suggested Exit Interview Questions Tool** for six good questions to ask an outgoing employee during an exit interview.

If the employee offers critical feedback, this can be difficult for an employer to hear, but it is valuable nonetheless and ideally, the employer would not get defensive, but would instead be grateful for the feedback, and commit to learning from it. In order to learn from a separation event, an employer may want to reflect on their own workplace culture and practices.



Look at **Section 14.2 - Reviewing Inclusion Practices After Employee Separation Tool** for questions employers may want to ask themselves after an employee leaves, or is terminated due to being a poor fit for the organization.

It's important for employers to ask themselves hard questions, and equally important for employers to be honest with themselves. An employer may need to talk with others to get all the answers they need, including the employee's direct supervisor(s), co-workers, and the employee's mentor if they had one. This will ensure the employer has all the facts they need to learn what worked and what didn't.



**If the employers finds themselves answering no to most of their critical questions, then it's a good idea to revisit their policies and practices on inclusion and to provide their employees with autism and neurodiversity learning opportunities.**

## Conclusion

Always take the time to learn from an employee separation. Even if an employee is retiring after a long, successful career, there are always things an employer can learn from them. If an employee is leaving or being terminated because they were a poor fit for the employer, then it's a good idea for the employer to learn from the separation, and take steps to become more autism inclusive. This will reduce the costs associated with high employee turnover in the future.