



# **Development and Retention of Autistic Staff in Hospitality**

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## **Trainer's Guide**

### **Module 2**

#### **Hospitality Management Soft Skills**

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## Slide 1: Introduction

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# DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION OF AUTISTIC STAFF IN HOSPITALITY

Project Number 2023-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000152721



### Using the PERFORM Trainer's Guide

The PERFORM Trainer's Guide has been designed specifically to support the delivery of the Vocational Education Curriculum developed in the context of the PERFORM project. The Curriculum constitutes a 1,5-day course, a total of 12 hours of training.

## Slide 2: Module Aims and Outcomes

### Module 2 : Hospitality Management Soft Skills

#### Module Aim

The aim of Module 2 is to provide the required knowledge, develop soft skills and techniques to enable an effective management and leadership for employees in spectrum.

Module 2 helps managers apply soft skills throughout the Employment Cycle: Interview → Onboarding → Development → Retention.

#### Learning Outcomes

- 1 Understand the required soft skills to manage autistic employees
- 2 Develop required skills i.e. communication skills, listening skills etc
- 3 Apply required techniques i.e. time & task management



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### Trainer's Notes:

- Introduce yourself and dedicate some time to introduce learners to the PERFORM project.
- The aim of Module 2 is to provide the required knowledge, develop soft skills and techniques to enable an effective management and leadership for employees in spectrum.
- Module 2 helps managers apply soft skills throughout the Employment Cycle: Interview → Onboarding → Development → Retention.
- Describe the learning objectives of the course. Learners will be educated to:
  - Understand the required soft skills to manage autistic employees
  - Develop required skills i.e. communication skills, listening skills etc
  - Apply required techniques i.e. time & task management
- Give learners the opportunity to introduce themselves and ask about their expectations.

## Slide 3: Introduction

### 1. Introduction

#### Supporting Autistic Employees in the Workplace

- **Autistic individuals bring unique strengths:**

- Focus, accuracy, persistence
- Attention to detail, reliability
- Technical skills (e.g., IT), strong memory

- **Small adjustments can make a big difference.**

- Clear instructions
- Flexible communication methods
- Predictable routines

- **For Managers & HR Teams:**

- Understand and support neurodiversity
- Combine soft skills (e.g., empathy, communication, teamwork) with job-specific knowledge
- Foster inclusive, supportive environments



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### Trainer's Notes:

#### Introduction'

This slide is about Supporting Autistic Employees in the Workplace.

**It is also what autistic individuals bring unique strengths such as**

- Focus, accuracy, persistence
- Attention to detail, reliability
- Technical skills (e.g., IT), strong memory

**It also shows how small adjustments can make a big difference.**

- Clear instructions
- Flexible communication methods
- Predictable routines

#### **For Managers & HR Teams:**

- Understand and support neurodiversity
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## Slide 4:

### 2. Communication Skills

#### Autistic Communication May Differ

- Literal interpretation of language
- Challenges with tone, body language, eye contact
- Overwhelm in group/social settings

#### Manager Tips

- Be clear & direct
- Avoid idioms/sarcasm
- Practice empathy & active listening
- Adapt communication format (email, chat, in-person)



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## Trainer's Notes:

### Communication Skills

- Define **communication skills** as the ability to effectively give and receive information.
- Explain different communication types: face-to-face, phone, email, and digital communication.
- Ask trainees:
  1. Why is communication important when working with autistic employees?
  2. What are common barriers to effective communication?

## Slide 5:

### Types of Communication

#### The four key communication types:

1. Verbal – Spoken language
2. Nonverbal – Body language, tone, facial expressions
3. Written – Emails, symbols, reports
4. Visual – Charts, graphs, icons



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## Trainer's Notes:

### Explain four main communication types used by managers:

1. **Verbal:** Spoken language.
2. **Nonverbal:** Body language, facial expressions, tone.
3. **Written:** Emails, symbols, reports.
4. **Visual:** Charts, graphs, images.

## Slide 6:

### Nonverbal Communication

- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Body movement
- Posture
- Personal space (proxemics)
- Paralanguage (tone, pitch, volume)
- Touch



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## Trainer's Notes:

### Explain nonverbal communication, which includes:

- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
- Body movements / Gestures
- Posture
- Personal space
- Paralanguage (tone, pitch, volume)
- Touch

Encourage trainees to demonstrate nonverbal communication techniques.

Explain the significance of nonverbal communication in comparison to verbal.



## Slide 7:

### 3. Active Listening Skills

#### More Than Hearing

- Focused attention on the speaker
- Understand meaning & intention

#### Why It Matters

- Builds trust & respect
- Helps understand different perspectives

#### Tips for Managers

- Be present, don't interrupt
- Reflect back what you hear
- Respond thoughtfully



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## Trainer's Notes:

### Active Listening Skills

Active listening involves fully concentrating, understanding, and responding to the speaker.

#### More Than Hearing

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## Slide 8:

### Tips for Active Listening

#### ✓ Do's

- Listen more than you speak
- Let others finish
- Ask open-ended questions
- Stay focused & aware
- Show engagement (eye contact, nod)

#### ✗ Don'ts

- Don't interrupt or finish sentences
- Don't jump to conclusions or get defensive
- Don't multitask or zone out
- Don't let bias block understanding



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### Trainer's Notes:

#### Do's of Active Listening:

Listen more than you talk

Let the speaker finish

Ask open-ended questions

Be aware of biases

Provide verbal and nonverbal feedback

#### Donts of Active Listening:

Interrupt

Dominate the conversation

Jump to conclusions

Mentally prepare responses while listening

Ignore or dismiss the speaker's perspective

## Slide 9:

### 4. Empathy

Empathy is foundational for inclusive leadership.

#### **Daniel Goleman's Three Elements of Empathy:**

1. Understanding Others – Tune in to emotions.
2. Developing Others – Offer support and mentorship.
3. Leveraging Diversity – Foster inclusion by valuing differences.



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## Trainer's Notes:

### Empathy

Empathy is essential when working with autistic staff. Autistic individuals may struggle with **cognitive empathy** (recognising emotions) but not **affective empathy** (feeling emotions).

### Three Elements of Empathy (Daniel Goleman):

1. **Understanding Others:** Sensing and responding to others' emotions.
2. **Developing Others:** Supporting and mentoring team members.
3. **Leveraging Diversity:** Creating inclusive workplaces by respecting differences.

## Slide 10:

### 4a. Empathy – Understanding Others

#### Key Element of Empathy

*"Sensing others' feelings and perspectives; taking interest in their concerns."*

— Daniel Goleman

#### What It Looks Like

- Tuning into emotional & nonverbal cues
- Listening with empathy, including what's unsaid
- Respecting different experiences & viewpoints
- Offering support based on emotional needs



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## Slide 11:

### 4b. Empathy – Developing Others

#### Support Growth & Development

##### How to Practice It

- Recognize & celebrate strengths
- Give constructive, helpful feedback
- Provide coaching or mentorship
- Assign meaningful tasks to build confidence

*Essential for managing diverse teams, including neurodivergent individuals*



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*Essential for managing diverse teams, including neurodivergent individuals*

## Slide 12:

### 4c. Empathy – Leveraging Diversity

#### What It Means

- Embrace and value different perspectives
- Tailor interactions to meet individual needs
- See diversity as a strength, not a challenge

#### In Practice

- Respect all backgrounds
- Support inclusive hiring (e.g., autistic individuals)
- Challenge bias and stereotypes
- Foster a culture of respect & collaboration



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## Slide 13:

### 5a. Problem Solving Skills – Applying SWOT

#### What It Involves

- Identify challenges
- Analyze causes
- Find effective solutions

Helps teams make informed, strategic decisions



#### Using SWOT Analysis

- 1. Mission & Goals** – Set clear objectives
- 2. Environmental Analysis** – Assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats
- 3. Strategy Formulation** – Choose the best approach
- 4. Implementation** – Take action
- 5. Evaluation** – Review and adjust

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## Slide 14:

### 5b. Problem Solving Skills – Decision Making

#### Key Steps (Ritchie & Thompson)

1. Define the problem
2. Gather information
3. Generate solutions
4. Weigh pros & cons
5. Choose the best option
6. Implement it
7. Review & adjust



#### Why It Matters

- Encourages clear, logical thinking
- Supports better outcomes in complex situations

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## Trainer's Notes:

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## Slide 15:

### 6. Teamwork

#### What Makes Teams Work

- Right team size for the task
- Clear roles & responsibilities
- Access to tools & support
- Level of coordination depends on task (e.g., golf vs. surgery)

#### Effective Teamwork - Key Qualities

- **Cohesion** – Unity boosts performance
- **Communication** – Clarity reduces conflict
- **Common Goals** – Shared purpose = better focus
- **Commitment** – Active, dependable members
- **Accountability** – Everyone owns results

*These traits work together to drive team success*



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## Slide 16:

### 7. Adaptability Skills

#### What It Is

- Adjusting actions or mindset in response to change
- Key in fast-moving, unpredictable environments
- Requires flexibility, resilience & quick thinking

#### Tips to Improve Adaptability

##### How to Build It

- **Stay aware** of changes around you
- **Embrace learning** – stay curious & skilled
- **Act quickly** – don't delay decisions
- **Accept change** – see it as growth, not threat



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### Tips to Improve Adaptability / How to Build It

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## Slide 17:

### 8. Time Management

#### Why It Matters


- Boosts productivity & well-being
- Reduces stress, improves focus
- Essential for meeting deadlines & staying on track

#### Key Benefits


- Less stress
- More free time
- New opportunities
- Achieve goals

#### Smart Strategies

- Set clear goals & priorities
- Use time limits & take breaks
- Stay organized with tools
- Cut distractions & plan ahead



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## Trainer's Notes:

### Time Management - Why It Matters

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## Slide 18:

### 8. Time Management

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## Trainer's Notes:

### Time Management - What It Is

- Managing tasks from start to finish
- Involves planning, tracking, and completing work efficiently

### Key Elements

- Set priorities & deadlines
- Monitor progress & status
- Assign roles & resources
- Use tools for coordination (e.g., Trello, Asana)

### Common Task Statuses

- Ready → Assigned → Started → Finished → Verified
- Other: Paused, Failed, Forwarded, Expired

## Slide 19:

### SMART Objectives Framework

Set Clear, Focused Goals with SMART:

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Summary</u>
S	Specific	Clear: Who, what, where, and why?
M	Measurable	Trackable: Use data or observable results
A	Achievable	Realistic: Within time & resources
R	Relevant	Aligned: Supports broader goals
T	Time-bound	Deadline: Has a clear timeframe



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## Slide 20:

### 10. Creativity

#### What It Is

- Involves many brain regions, not just the “right brain”
- Driven by emotion, memory & flexible thinking
- Enables **divergent thinking**—seeing problems in new ways



#### Why It Matters

- Fuels innovation & adaptability
- Key in education, tech, arts & business
- Supports problem-solving in changing environments

#### In Organizations

- Impact varies by mission & industry
- Creativity boosts effectiveness when aligned with goals

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## Slide 21:

### 11. Leadership

#### What It Is

- Inspiring and guiding others toward shared goals
- About **influence**, not power or popularity
- Focused on purpose, people, and progress

**Leadership is a skill**—built through experience, feedback & growth

#### Key Traits of Effective Leaders

- Confidence & clear communication
- Empathy & emotional intelligence
- Innovative, adaptable, and resilient
- Calm under pressure



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## Trainer's Notes:

### Soft Skills for Autistic Employees

#### Focus

Soft skills needed by hospitality professionals—especially in HR, recruitment & management—to support autistic staff across the **Employment Cycle**:

**Interview → Onboarding → Daily Work → Development → Retention**

### Why Soft Skills Matter

- Enhance communication, collaboration & performance
- Essential in service-focused industries like hospitality
- Help build inclusive, high-functioning teams



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