

SUPPORTING WORKPLACE COGNITION

# Accommodations for generalisation, learning & memory difficulties



Working effectively depends on being able to learn new information, retain it, and use it at the right time to carry out tasks.

## Generalisation

One way of learning new tasks and activities or build on previous knowledge and skills is by generalising. This involves applying skills and knowledge learnt in one setting to other settings. Cognitive difficulties can make generalising harder for people with FASD.

### Poor generalisation includes:

- Difficulties seeing how information and skills learnt previously can apply to new situations, tasks and contexts.
- Slowness in learning new tasks and activities despite similarities with previously learnt tasks.

### To make learning new tasks more efficient, employers should:

- ✓ Not assume that a person with FASD is able to just “jump” right into the job simply because they have done a similar job in the past.
- ✓ Point out similar elements of the new and old task to build confidence in their abilities.
- ✓ Have the individual perform one or two components of a new task and once this has been mastered, then add new components.

## Memory & learning

Whilst moments of forgetfulness are commonplace, memory problems can be more problematic when they occur too often, causing frustration, embarrassment, and low productivity at work.

### Persons with FASD can have difficulties with learning and remembering information and this may look like:

- Being slow at taking in new information.
- Difficulties remembering tasks and how to conduct them day to day.
- Difficulties remembering instructions.
- Frequently asking the same questions.
- Taking longer to complete tasks and,
- Misplacing items.

By providing the right supports, employers can improve the ease with which employees with FASD learn new skills and knowledge and apply those over time.

### The following are simple strategies to overcome memory problems:

- ✓ Establish and maintain a routine of daily tasks.
- ✓ Provide information both verbally and visually.
- ✓ Chunk information and instructions into shorter, more manageable bits of information.
- ✓ Pair new information with items that the person is already familiar with and able to recall.
- ✓ Encourage rehearsal and practice of new information and new skills.
- ✓ Provide and encourage the use of memory aids such as notebooks, calendars, checklists, pictures, calendars, calculators, etc.
- ✓ Colour code checklists to promote easy identification of items.
- ✓ Encourage coworkers to write down/type any information they need to provide to the person with FASD.
- ✓ Provide cues to facilitate recall.
- ✓ Directly fill in any gaps in memory.
- ✓ Provide typed meeting minutes when possible.

1. noFASD. (2021). Memory. <https://www.nofasd.org.au/parents-carers-and-families/supporting-adults-who-have-fasd/>
2. Northeast Alberta FASD Network. (2021). Hiring someone with FASD.
3. FASD Hub Australia. (last updated 2021). Memory. <https://www.fasdhub.org.au/fasd-information/managing-fasd/>
4. Neafan. (2021). Hiring Someone with FASD.