

## Supplementary Materials

### Appendix A

#### *Interview Schedule*

<b>Section</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Probe questions</b>
Personal Background/Demographic Information	Age:	
	Gender:	
	Age when diagnosed (if formally diagnosed):	
	What employment sector do you work in?	
	Are you a volunteer, part-time, full-time, or self-employed?	
	Do you have any other diagnosed conditions?	
	How many employers have you had?	
	Where are you from?	
	Where do you live?	
	With whom do you live?	
Employment Background	Are you currently looking for a job?	What is your motivation for looking for a job?
		What kinds of jobs have you been considering?
		What jobs have you applied for?
		How has the recruitment process been going for you?
	Are you currently working?	Where do you work?
		How long have you been working at your current job?
		What kinds of things do you do at your job?
		How did you find your current job?
		Can you tell me more about the recruitment process for this job?
Diagnostic Disclosure		
<i>If currently seeking employment:</i>	When applying to jobs, have you chosen to disclose your autism diagnosis?	Why did you decide to tell/not to tell potential employers that you are autistic?
		In your experience, has this had any impact on the recruitment process? In what way?

		What are some of the successes or challenges you've had during the recruitment process?
		Do you think you might have had a different experience if you had chosen to/not to disclose?
<i>If currently/formerly employed:</i>	Have you disclosed your autism diagnosis at work to your employers or colleagues?	Why did you decide to tell/not to tell your employers and colleagues that you are autistic?
		Has this had any impact on your experiences at work? In what way?
		What are some of the successes or challenges you've had at work?
		(For those who have disclosed) Have there been any adjustments made at work because of your disclosure?
		Do you think you might have had a different experience if you had chosen to/not to disclose your diagnosis?
		If given the choice again, would you choose to/not to disclose your diagnosis?
	Is there anything else you wish to share about your disclosure and employment experiences?	

## Appendix B.

*Table of Themes, Sub-themes, and Illustrative Quotes*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Illustrative Quotes</b>
1. A preference for keeping my diagnosis private	<i>1.1 Camouflaging as a means of coping</i>	<p>“Successfully hiding who I really am in order to get a job.” [P-23]</p> <p>“I do it automatically [at work], and I’ve done it since I was a child, because I realised quite early on that I was different to other children. And particularly, once I got to high school, I realised that if I didn’t want to be bullied anymore, I had to pretend I was like other girls.” [P-6]</p>
	<i>1.2 Fear of discrimination from others</i>	<p>“By not disclosing, I do not give people that weapon to use autism as a blanket reason against me—or a blanket excuse if they are trying to be kind or protect me.” [P-24]</p> <p>“My shortcomings could be attributed to my autism and therefore this would be seen negatively; I feel as though asking for accommodations might be seen as looking for an easier way in, or that it might be perceived that I am using autism as an ‘excuse’ for my shortcomings.” [P-19]</p>
	<i>1.3 Disclosure is unnecessary or not beneficial</i>	<p>“The places where I’ve worked particularly as a teacher would not be interested in making any adjustments anyway.” [P-10]</p> <p>“With respect to the majority of my colleagues who were <i>not</i> special disclosure exceptions as described above: there’s no long explanation here and there was no decision-making process. It’s none of their business and there is no reason to tell them.” [P-24]</p>
	<i>1.4 Disclosing selectively on a trustworthiness or need-to-know basis</i>	<p>“I haven’t actually told any kind of line managers or anyone in that kind of formal way, it’s just people who I’ve felt comfortable telling.” [P-12]</p> <p>“In one case the family had two profoundly autistic sons and I felt I had to disclose in case I saw them at an autism event locally.” [P-17]</p>

	<p><i>1.5 Struggling with an autistic identity</i></p>	<p>“My motivation to be normal was because I hadn’t accepted my diagnosis. I definitely masked as much as I could and avoided impossible tasks, like using the till, for as long as I could.” [P-13]</p>
		<p>“The thing is I find it very difficult, but one of the biggest issues is lots of things are a lot easier to understand once you stop viewing yourself through the prism of autism.” [P-1]</p>
<p>2. The importance of disclosure in the workplace</p>	<p><i>2.1 An expression of autistic community and identity</i></p>	<p>“I have spent most of my life under the impression that I am not a proper person and trying to hide it. There came a point when I thought this was not going to help younger autistic people. It needs to be understood that autistic children grow up/grow old and may continue to need some support to live fulfilling lives contributing to society.” [P-14]</p>
		<p>“I feel a big responsibility to the autistic community to be ‘out.’ If I am out, then I hope to change the public perception of what autism is.” [P-22]</p>
		<p>“In one way, it’s been one of the best things that’s ever happened to me, because I’m absolutely passionate about it, and this is probably the first lot of research that I’ve taken part in, but, also, I’ve done a lot of stuff at work in promoting neurodiversity and explaining to people exactly what it is, and what it’s like to be an autistic person, and what amazing qualities we have, and what we can bring to work.” [P-6]</p>
	<p><i>2.2 Negative experiences have led me to disclose</i></p>	<p>“I disclosed to my manager because I just wanted to ensure that nothing happened like in my previous job and so I thought it was best to bring it up as soon as I could.” [P-11]</p>
		<p>“I got into a situation at work where I was being bullied and I didn’t want it to be thrown at me, so I wanted it to be known that I had Asperger’s so it wasn’t just that I was antisocial or difficult.” [P-2]</p>
	<p><i>2.3 A means of obtaining workplace adjustments</i></p>	<p>“The decision was taken so as not to have any problems. Now no one asks me to go down the night before for meetings. They are organised to allow for early morning travel.” [P-15]</p>

“So yes, it is good, it is working from home Monday through Thursday was something we came to after a bit of discussion.” [P-3]

*2.4 Ensuring personal safety and legal protections*

“I feel safer because people have this knowledge about me.” [P-19]

“I think disclosure is important, because it has meant that I have the protections that go along with the Equalities Act. That is 100% absolutely crucial in my situation.” [P-3]

*2.5 Ensuring true acceptance and understanding*

“There’s no point going to work somewhere if they don’t know in advance and are not accepting and welcoming of me right from the start. I’d just encounter more problems and end up being fired probably. So at least it filters out the places that would be bad for me to work.” [P-18]

“I expect it might have prevented some misunderstandings and resentment that otherwise might have arisen, e.g., if they felt I wasn’t being sympathetic enough.” [P-19]

3. Disclosure has mixed outcomes

*3.1 Problematic stereotyping*

“I think there is a lot of stereotyping that goes on, I think the terms ‘on the spectrum’ is being used increasingly in a derogatory sense, to imply that someone doesn’t have acceptable behaviour or that they are antisocial, not quite right. I have encountered that both towards myself and to colleagues who I know have autism.” [P-10]

“Problems with unspoken assumptions, people assuming I’m good at everything because I am good at one thing, and people assuming I am terrible at everything because I am terrible at one thing. In other words, the assumption of a flat autistic profile is hugely problematic.” [P-22]

*3.2 Active discrimination in the workplace*

“The impact from disclosing was other members of staff talking and complaining about me behind my back. And me getting a warning from the store manager.” [P-13]

“[She] asked me to speak privately and told me, ‘I didn’t mean it that way, it’s just that everyone else would have understood.’ Really? Are you actually saying that you spoke to me disrespectfully because of my autistic traits? So that was direct discrimination.” [P-21]

3.3 <i>Disclosure as a disadvantage in recruitment</i>	<p>“They had been very happy with my written tasks during the application process, but the feedback I got about the interview was that I didn’t fit in there, and they were concerned I’d need adjustments to the training process. Which are both thinly-veiled code for ‘You’re too autistic.’” [P-18]</p> <p>“They were against employing autistic people. When I suggested they employ more, they said, ‘That will <i>never</i> happen.’” [P-23]</p>
3.4 <i>Improved mental health and well-being</i>	<p>“I have become much more open about it because the response to disclosure has always been positive, so I feel able to mask a little less and live more authentically, which is good for the well-being.” [P-19]</p> <p>“It screws up my mental health when I’m continuing to mask, so I made the choice. My mental health comes first.” [P-4]</p>
3.5 <i>Acceptance and support from others</i>	<p>“I’ve had some good experiences certainly as well and I feel a lot better in terms of people accepting me.” [P-9]</p> <p>“The managers were very interested in learning more about autism. The two managers supported me on the shop floor and at the tills.” [P-13]</p>
3.6 <i>Positive organisational changes</i>	<p>“I would say that success is to finally disclose the way I did last week. And then, as a result of that, we’ve set up a neurodiverse staff network. So the thing I was looking for since I joined, we’ve ended up doing ourselves. So I feel that’s quite a big achievement.” [P-4]</p> <p>“I don’t regret disclosing in that organisation because I believe it did good even for the organisation. Now they have a proper procedure where, if someone needs a disability adjustment, it is dated, it is in black and white, it can be followed.” [P-21]</p>
4. Factors associated with disclosure outcomes	<p>4.1 <i>Understanding of autism</i></p> <p>“And my manager, actually, she volunteers for an organisation [that does] therapy with children with autism and other difficulties. So, as soon as I mentioned it to her, she said, “Yes, I’ve always thought you were” – and she had been my manager for about three years at that point. So, she was absolutely brilliant.[P-6]</p>

“A colleague I was working quite closely with said, ‘I understand, my son has autism’ so that was really encouraging, that was a positive experience.” [P-7]

“The third job didn’t show any understanding at all. They were busy and short-staffed and the manager was only temporary. There was a high staff turn around there. So, the disclosure had no effect at all.” [P-13]

“I had a period of about six months where things were really difficult because the people that were managing me really didn’t understand. And one of them just didn’t want to understand. He didn’t care. So, I think it’s a very personal decision.” [P-6]

#### *4.2 Willingness to make adaptations*

“Some adaptations have been made without me asking. Employer is tolerant of my bad memory, which I really appreciate and need. She reminds me of some things.” [P-22]

“Initially I was asked where I needed support and they listened. Offered for me to see a counsellor and occupational health.” [P-20]

“On their part they told me that they didn’t know and then when I did disclose it in an HR meeting, I said that I would like some special agreed adjustments to be put in place but they refused.” [P-11]

“They were mainly private organisations, independent sector, and following a business model and they were not interested in making any kind of adjustment.” [P-10]

#### *4.3 Organisational culture*

“Because I am a disabled, I now get to work on our disabled resources! So, when the people in the office or the advisors come across someone that has additional needs, they will redirect them to me.” [P-3]

“The university that I worked for had an autism centre so I felt that the culture was accepting, I think much more than perhaps in a different workplace, so that was positive.” [P-2]

“I think unfortunately there are certain negative attitudes towards people with disabilities and it’s depending on the culture of where you work. You might make your

own employment position less secure by disclosing so I would advise people to consider whether or not it is a good idea according to the culture of the organisation in which they work.” [P-9]

“I’m aware that those members of staff aren’t particularly open-minded, don’t have a particularly positive view of autism.” [P-1]

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