

Liam - Accessing workplace supports and adjustments.

Liam: My name is Liam and I'm 32. Currently I'm working as an admin assistant at a large WA enterprise. I am permanent part-time, largely doing data entry.

Liam: I believe a good disability employment service or DES is really important for inclusive employment.
My first DES was not autism specific, and they didn't really understand my needs.
They had low expectations of my abilities and failed to recognize my strengths.

Liam: I chose to change my DES to one that was autism specific.
There were a few false starts with employers who didn't really understand my need for accommodations.
Such as written instructions, occasional breaks, and access to computers. My new DES tried unsuccessfully to convey my needs.
In the end, I left those jobs.

Liam: After two years of trying different jobs, my current employer heard about the voluntary work that I've been doing.
They came to me.
They knew from the start that I would need support and were keen to develop my strengths.
They asked me to provide a list of, list of accommodations and supports required.

Liam: One, important support was having two contact people designated, so that I always know who to go for help.
I asked them if my DES could come in, make observations and help me to find efficient ways of working.
At first, I needed a lot of support, from a DES but this had changed considerably.

Liam: Over time, we worked out additional accommodations.
These included reducing the daily package of work to reduce the overwhelm factor, prior warning about unusual events, gradual introduction of changes, and refining a workspace with reduced visual and auditory stimulation.

Liam: As my role changed and my competency grew, so my need for support varied.
My DES was able to change the level of support according to my tasks and my needs.
Over the years, my supervisors had changed, and I needed to explain to my people about my needs.

Liam:

I'm lucky to have a DES that knows about autism, and employer who's amenable to accommodations.

Over the years, I've learned so much about how I work best and have been more active in negotiating with my employer.

Thanks for your time.

I hope this is helpful.