Supporting Autistic Learners: working in groups



Group work can be daunting for autistic learners. The demands of navigating the social rules and social interactions when working alongside peers can lead to heightened anxiety, distressed behaviours, and withdrawal.

Preparation is important and with support and careful planning group work can be a successful route to learning new skills and knowledge.

Things to consider:

- Communicate in advance of the lesson that they will be working in a group.
- Introduce the concept of group work slowly. Initially involve a supportive person or peer and slowly increase the group size.
- Organise the groups for autistic learners and carefully select peers.
- Tell them in advance what their role and tasks will be e.g., a recorder, a leader a speaker or timekeeper.
- Provide visuals to support their role and task within the group.
- Provide details of all the roles and help them to select a role they can do successfully.
- Establish shared rules for group work and display rules in a visual format.
- Emphasise the collective goal, where everyone contributes to agreed objectives.
- Plan a review following group work to gain their views. What worked well? What support do they need next time they are working in a group?

Group Work Visual Plan Example:

(Add in title)					
Date:	**Subject:**	**Length of task:**	**Objective/s:**		
Roles	 **Leader**	 **Speaker**	 **Recorder**	 **Researcher**	 **Timekeeper**
Duties	Shares objective/s with the group. Makes sure everyone involved and doing their role. Encourages everyone to do their best. Does their best to makes sure the objectives are met. **Gets involved!**	Presents what the group has done. Shares what they have found out. Answers any questions. **Gets involved!**	Writes down the groups record discussion, findings, or decisions. Asks questions. Checks everyone agrees with what is recorded. **Gets involved!**	Responsible for finding key pieces of information. Shares key pieces of information. **Gets involved!**	Makes sure that the group is using the time well. Encourages the group to take their time or work quicker. Remind the group when it is time to finish. **Gets involved!**
Rules for the Group	**The rules can be added here once they are established:**				