

Social Work Online Team Training (SWOTT) toolkit - Facilitator Notes

An Introduction to Neurodiversity

CASE STUDY 2: SUPPORTING A **NEURODIVERGENT ADULT - JAMES**

Learning Objectives

- To develop strategies for empowering neurodivergent adults to advocate for workplace accommodations and navigate disclosure decisions.
- To examine methods for supporting neurodivergent individuals in building life skills, managing isolation and accessing workplace support.

Q&A

1. What assumptions might someone who has not had any neurodiversity input or training make about James based on his appearance, behaviour or circumstances? With knowledge, what might be observed instead?

- Observed: James' visited his GP in the first instance for additional health challenges.
- Reality: Such health concerns could be related to medication or fatigue or other concerns that means James struggles to maintain his own wellbeing and his home.
- Observed: James is struggling to maintain employment and manage day-to-day responsibility. He also appears to miss appointments.
- Reality: James is experiencing executive functioning challenges, which could be compounded by stress. Working memory is linked to executive functioning challenges. Furthermore, challenges with executive functioning is common for ADHDers.
- Observed: James struggles to maintain a job and has lost his job in the past
- Reality: James might now be worried about disclosing he has challenges in the workplace, fears losing his job again and may lack confidence in himself.
- Observed: James' home is messy and disorganised.
- Reality: This could also be linked to executive functioning and being able to break down tasks, like tidying up.
- Observed: James appears to be intoxicated during the visit
- Reality: James could have substance misuse challenges, which has been linked with self-medication for ADHD. However, such behaviour could also be linked to proprioception challenges, and potential dyspraxia.



2. What specific challenges related to ADHD is James experiencing, and how have they impacted his life?

- The challenges James has discussed relate to a number of ADHD traits, such as time management, organisation, impulse control and physical movement challenges.
- Generally, when under stress and pressure, executive functioning is affected and as such, James could be experiencing additional challenges in this area due to his ADHD.
- James has lost his job on a number of occasions. This is due to his time management and organisational skills, which is an indication of ADHD. This could also link to impulsivity.
- Missing his appointment with the social worker could also indicate this.
- His presentation generally could suggest potential traits of ADHD, for example his scattered and disorganised thoughts.
- Delays in returning the form could be due to time management challenges.
- If there are potential substance misuse challenges at play, consider that ADHD relates to dopamine and stimulation, and substances can contribute to this. There might be a reason why James has found substances as a way to self-medicate everything that he is going through.

3. Could James' challenges and behaviour be connected to past trauma? How can the social worker approach this case with sensitivity and avoid re-traumatisation?

- Though it might not be seen as a trauma, James is overwhelmed by the demands of daily life.
- Having lost his job a number of times, struggling to maintain the quality of his home, not to mention actually keep his home in general, could all be regarded as trauma.
- Furthermore, if James has co-occurring mental health conditions and possibly physical health concerns, this could be as a result of past trauma.
- He has recently seen a GP about ADHD, which is no small feat, and may have opened up lots of concerns for James moving forward, particularly when having to consider going through a diagnosis and taking medications.
- It is important to remember that even though James does not have a diagnosis, he has lots of characteristics that would indicate he has challenges (associated with ADHD), therefore it is best to err on the side of caution and treat him as such.
- Ensuring that James has a support plan in place and that any professional supporting him has read that support plan means that James does not have to keep going over the details of his experience.

4. How can communication with James be improved and made more accessible?

- Work with James to complete paperwork in the future, for ADHDers in particular, completing paperwork is incredibly under-stimulating and leads to excessive executive functioning challenges. Co-working can assist.
- Provide James with reminders about appointments so that he does not have to rely on his working memory.
- James might feel additionally stressed if people visit his home, therefore consider finding another location for meetings (also considering the sensory environment of doing this).

5. How might a focus on strengths support James' situation and outlook moving forward?

- The case study does not comment specifically on James' strengths, which is reflective of most cases related to neurodivergence.
- Having a conversation with James' about his strengths and how to get the best from him might assist in working with potential employers, and other stakeholders. Consider his spiky profile.
- Acknowledging how his ADHD traits might assist him might support his wellbeing.
- Neuroinclusive access to workplaces: look at the best ways to disclose and participate in job interviews.

