



Build a stronger workforce by removing hidden barriers.

With 52% of tradespeople neurodivergent, cognitive accessibility can help Canada's construction sector recruit more people, strengthen training, improve safety and get the best from every worker.

When instructions are difficult to understand, training does not support different ways of learning, or workers are expected to cope silently with stress and overload, capable people can be left behind.

The consequences may include confusion, mistakes, injuries, lost productivity and workers leaving the industry. These problems are often blamed on the individual. But sometimes, the real problem is a system that was not designed for the different ways people process information, learn and work.

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What is cognitive accessibility?

Cognitive accessibility decreases mental load, making it easier for people to understand information, learn, remember, concentrate, communicate, plan or complete a task.

It is especially important for people who are neurodivergent or have cognitive or learning differences, including people with ADHD, autism or dyslexia. It can also help any worker affected by fatigue, stress, chronic pain, mental health challenges or unfamiliar technology.

More than 1 in 3 neurodivergent construction workers surveyed had not disclosed their condition.

In practice, cognitive accessibility can be as straightforward as using clearer instructions, demonstrating a task visually, breaking complex work into steps, providing structured feedback or offering more than one way to learn and demonstrate a skill.

Cognitive accessibility improves things for workers of all abilities.

Cognitive accessibility benefits the entire industry.

Grow the workforce and retain more workers.

Only 62% of working-age Canadians with disabilities are employed, compared with 78% of those without disabilities. Accessible recruitment and training can help onboard this overlooked source of talent. Improving cognitive accessibility can be an effective retention strategy for the a neurodiverse workforce.

Improve training and apprenticeship success.

Not every apprentice learns the same way. Accessible training and evaluation maintains trade standards while giving apprentices clearer ways to reach them. In one Canadian supported-apprenticeship initiative, 94% of participants said they were likely or very likely to continue their apprenticeship.

Make workplaces safer and more productive.

Construction work requires sustained attention, sound judgment and quick responses to changing conditions. Reducing cognitive load also reduces the risk of workplace accidents and injury. Safer workplaces are more productive. Confusing communication, cognitive overload and poorly designed processes contribute to mistakes, rework, delays, absenteeism and workers leaving the industry.

Cognitive accessibility paves the way to a larger talent pool, more effective training, safer work and a stronger construction workforce.

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