

## ADHD and me

*Neal Mankey, the lead on our Health team, has opened up about his diagnosis of ADHD at the age of 41. If you missed them, please click [HERE](#) for part one and [HERE](#) for part two – do take a read as Neal talks candidly about his struggle and how it has affected him throughout his life.*

*In this segment, Neal concentrates on living as neurodivergent in the corporate world...*

### PART 3

Being open and honest about the diagnosis has been vitally important, especially with my immediate family. Knowing why I am the way I am has answered many questions and we're all still in the process of learning, but the change in me has been quite dramatic – as confirmed by my partner. I delayed telling people at work at first; I was afraid that it may be viewed negatively, but that was, again, me thinking the worst. ADHD is still unexplored territory in my organisation (and the corporate world in general) but my MD was incredibly supportive, which was a real boost for my confidence.

As an employer considering ADHD and similar conditions, it's so important to know what to look for, gain knowledge on the subject and understand what adaptations can be made to ensure both employee and employer have the best experience in the working environment. I used to try and get to the office earlier than most so I could choose where to sit - tucked away, no distractions, to be able to focus on the job in hand. Hot-desking is certainly not ideal for many with neurodivergent traits. For me, working from my home office, just me and my laptop, has been a game changer. I can concentrate, I have the flexibility to get fresh air and exercise in the day, and comfortably focus on one or two projects. I do not miss the four day per week commute.



People with ADHD often talk about lack of support from their employer as a reason for leaving a job; this was certainly me prior to being diagnosed. With support, understanding and some small adjustments to capitalise on strengths and talents, and to get around difficulties, they are likely to be a great asset to any organisation.

Many people with ADHD are often noted for assets such as:

- Ability to 'hyperfocus' on things they are interested in (concentrate for long periods and won't usually register external distractions)
- Willingness to take risks
- Spontaneous and flexible
- Good in a crisis
- Creative ideas – thinking outside the box
- Relentless energy
- Being optimistic
- Being motivated by short term deadlines – working in sprints rather than marathons
- Having an eye for detail

# VEREDUS TALKS

Everyone with ADHD is different, and the condition affects different people in different ways, but it's important to remember that people with ADHD are, in most respects, the same as people without ADHD – they have the same broad range of skills, interests and intelligence as the rest of society. It's vitally important to communicate openly with your employer so that you can find out what support would help most and ask them any questions you may have.

My ADHD journey has encouraged me to take an interest in what organisations are doing to assist employees with any neurodivergence, what knowledge do they have on how this affects the individual and how they can adapt the workplace to accommodate us accordingly? Yes, there are a lot of challenges that come with having ADHD, but there are also lots of positives. By understanding how these energies can be impactful in a working environment, we can harness and direct them.

Making small adjustments for those with neurodivergences can make a MASSIVE difference to how the individual feels and, as a result, how they perform. My own diagnosis has inspired me to start working voluntarily with a relatively new charity called ADHD UK, whose mission it is to help change the world of work for people with ADHD. In order to do this, we are speaking directly to organisations to increase their knowledge and understanding of ADHD, the effects on both employee and employer, the subtle adaptations that can be made to make life easier and increase impactful employment relationships.

From our research so far, it's fair to say that many organisations don't have measures in place to support a diagnosis of ADHD or other neurodiverse conditions either, during hiring or for their existing staff. From my own experience, I can assure you that being diagnosed has been life-changing and, whilst the last twelve months have been challenging for most of us, they have made me appreciate what is truly important.

People with neurocognitive differences have talents, perspectives and skills that can be distinctly beneficial in many work environments. Employers are beginning to understand these benefits and develop hiring initiatives that encourage recruiting a neurodiverse workforce. Hiring inclusively can provide companies with a competitive edge that brings measurable benefits, both financially and in terms of workplace culture.

By working collaboratively to embrace neurodiversity by raising awareness, knowledge and impact, we can surely only all win together and drive a more inclusive working environment?

*We would like to thank Neal for his honesty and openness. There remains a huge amount of stigma attached to mental health issues and cognitive differences, and the only way for us to overcome these is to learn about them and make changes.*

*#inclusionbeginswithi*

If you struggle with ADHD, here are some helpful resources:

Jessica McCabe's TED talk 'This is what it's really like to live with ADHD' - link [here](#)

Delivered from Distraction: Getting the most out of life with attention - John R Ratey

Scattered Minds: The Origins and Healing of Attention Deficit Disorder - Dr Gabor Maté

[ADHD UK](#)

