

Early Risk Signals in Neurodiversity-Related Workplace Situations

A quick reference for HR Directors and People Leads

Purpose: To help HR identify **early warning signs** that a situation may escalate and intervene proportionately, before risk increases.

This is not a diagnostic tool. It is a **pattern-recognition guide**.

Why this matters

Neurodiversity-related issues rarely escalate suddenly.

They escalate when:

- uncertainty goes unaddressed
- responsibility becomes blurred
- decisions are delayed

Spotting the **early signals** allows HR to act calmly and preventatively.



The 3 Early Risk Signals

Manager Avoidance

What this looks like:

- Performance or adjustment conversations are delayed or softened
- Managers express concern about “saying the wrong thing”
- Issues are discussed repeatedly but not resolved

Why this matters:

- Avoidance increases inconsistency
- Inconsistency increases organisational risk

HR question prompt: *Is this situation being delayed because the manager lacks confidence, not intent?*

Adjustment Drift

What this looks like:

- Adjustments are agreed informally but not clearly documented
- Different stakeholders have different understandings of what’s in place
- Adjustments vary between teams or managers

Why this matters:

- Drift creates confusion and contestability
- Contestability is difficult to defend if challenged

HR question prompt: *Is there a shared, written understanding of what's reasonable and why?*

HR Holding the Risk Alone

What this looks like:

- HR mediates ongoing issues without clear organisational ownership
- Managers escalate situations they feel unsure handling
- HR becomes the primary interpreter of what's "reasonable"
- Similar situations keep recurring with limited change

Why this matters:

- When HR holds the risk alone, **learning stalls** and **inconsistency grows**
- Teams become dependent on HR presence to make difficult decisions
- HR carries emotional and legal responsibility without structural backup

This isn't failure. It's a signal.

It often means HR has stepped in to protect people - but now needs organisational structure to protect them in return.

HR question prompt: Is this a situation where you've stepped in repeatedly - and now need the organisation to hold it with you?

When to pause and intervene

- Early intervention is appropriate when:
- One or more risk signals are present
- Managers are unsure how to proceed
- HR is compensating for lack of structure

Intervening early is:

- Responsible
- Proportionate
- Less disruptive than escalation

What early intervention is

Early intervention IS:

- Structured
- Time-bound
- Organisationally owned
- Focused on clarity and stability
- Supportive
- Impactful



The core principle to hold - **Escalation usually means clarity arrived too late - not that someone failed.**

This guide is intended to support informed HR decision-making.

If You'd Like to Explore Early Intervention Options

This guide is part of a wider framework we use to help organisations reduce neurodiversity-related risk through structured, preventative support.

If you'd like to explore what this could look like inside your team - or start with a comprehensive diagnostic - I'd love to invite you to have a exploratory conversation. Click [here](#) to book your call, or scan the QR code



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