Understanding Workplace Barriers

Notice how environments, systems and expectations can affect access at work.

Barriers are not personal shortcomings

A workplace barrier is something about a setting, process or expectation that makes participation more difficult. Barriers may change across tasks and situations.

Where barriers can appear

Physical access: entrances, seating or layout.
Sensory demands: noise, lighting or temperature.
Communication: unclear instructions or inaccessible formats.
Work practices: inflexible schedules, meetings or task changes.

Which workplace situations feel more difficult?

Consider tasks, spaces, meetings or everyday routines.

When do things work better for me?

Notice conditions, approaches and existing support that help.

A useful principle

Focus on what can change in the environment or working arrangements, not only what an individual is expected to manage.

Recognising Barriers in My Workplace

Use this checklist to notice patterns, not to judge your abilities.

How to use this check

Mark any areas that may be relevant. You can leave items blank, add your own examples or revisit the checklist as circumstances change.

Area to consider	What I notice in my workplace
Physical access	
Sensory environment	
Communication	
Working practices	
Technology and tools	
Workplace culture	

A situation I would like to look at more closely

What currently helps in this situation?

Understanding the Impact

Describe what happens and how a barrier affects your working day.

A clear description can help

Try noting the situation, the barrier and its effect. For example: “In meetings with overlapping conversations, I miss information and need extra time to check decisions.”

Situation	Barrier	Effect on my work or wellbeing

What happens most often or has the greatest impact?

What would a more accessible experience look like?

Identifying Helpful Adjustments

Consider practical changes that could reduce the barriers you have noticed.

Think barrier, adjustment, benefit

Barrier: several verbal instructions at once.
Possible adjustment: a short written summary.
Potential benefit: clearer priorities and less reliance on memory.

Barrier	Possible adjustment	How it might help

Which adjustment would I like to try or discuss first?

Adjustments can be individual

Options may involve equipment, communication, environment, working patterns or support. A useful adjustment depends on the person and the role.

Recording My Workplace Needs

Create a practical record without needing to share medical details.

Working conditions that help me

For example, predictable schedules, quieter spaces or clear priorities.

Communication formats and approaches I prefer

Tools, equipment or environmental changes that help

Support that already works well

Additional support I would like to consider

Your information, your choice

This worksheet is for your own use. You can choose what to share, with whom and when. Focus on work-related needs and possible changes.

My Workplace Barriers Action Plan

Bring your observations together into manageable next steps.

Priority barrier	Adjustment or support to discuss	Next step

Who could I speak with or ask for support?

How could I explain the impact and what may help?

What outcome would I like to review, and when?

A supportive next step

You do not need to solve every barrier at once. Start with what matters most and revisit your plan as needs or circumstances change.