



Curtin University



**CSMP**

*Student Success*

# **Transition to Employment: embracing your neurodivergence**

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# Facilitators

**Emma Lovegrove – Presenter**  
Student Employment Consultant



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Joint Program Coordinator - CSMP





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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We would like to acknowledge the Whadjuk Nyungar people whose land we are standing on, and recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of the Nyungar people where Curtin University is situated.

# Housekeeping



Comfort breaks



Emergency exits



Copy of slides  
and activity  
workbook



Questions  
throughout the  
workshop



Phones on silent  
please



Introductions

# CDL Hub Project - NCSEHE

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- National hub for career development resources for students with disability
- Would like to evaluate this workshop as an example of a targeted career development workshop, to use as a case study for other universities
- If you consent to participate you will be invited to:
  - sign a consent form
  - complete an evaluation questionnaire on the workshop
  - participate in a short focus group (10–20 min) about the value of the workshop

Your de-identified information may be used in reports.

# Schedule

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**10 am – 11 am**

Strengths, adjustments, gaps

**Comfort break – 5 min**

**11.05 am – 12 noon**

Sharing, coping, further support

**Comfort break – 5 min**

**12.05 pm – 12.20 pm**

Optional - feedback

You can take comfort breaks at any time. Supporting material is available should you need to leave.

# Ice-breaker

- Introduce yourself to your group members: share your name, study area, your dream job as a child
- Identify commonalities in the group and unique differences, write them down
- Team up with another group to see if they can guess who has what unique difference (trait or interest)

# Learning goals today

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- Understand your **strengths and unique characteristics** – why hire me?
- Understand what **adjustments you can ask for** in the recruitment process
- Confidently **address gaps** on your resume
- Explore the **pros and cons of sharing** your needs
- **Get help** – make use of your networks and seek career counselling or disability employment support





# Strengths and characteristics

Identify your unique strengths in relation  
to your neurodivergent characteristics

# My strengths and characteristics



Identify your  
interests and  
hobbies



Listen to  
feedback and  
ask others



Understand when you work  
best/feel productive



Complete a  
strengths-based  
questionnaire



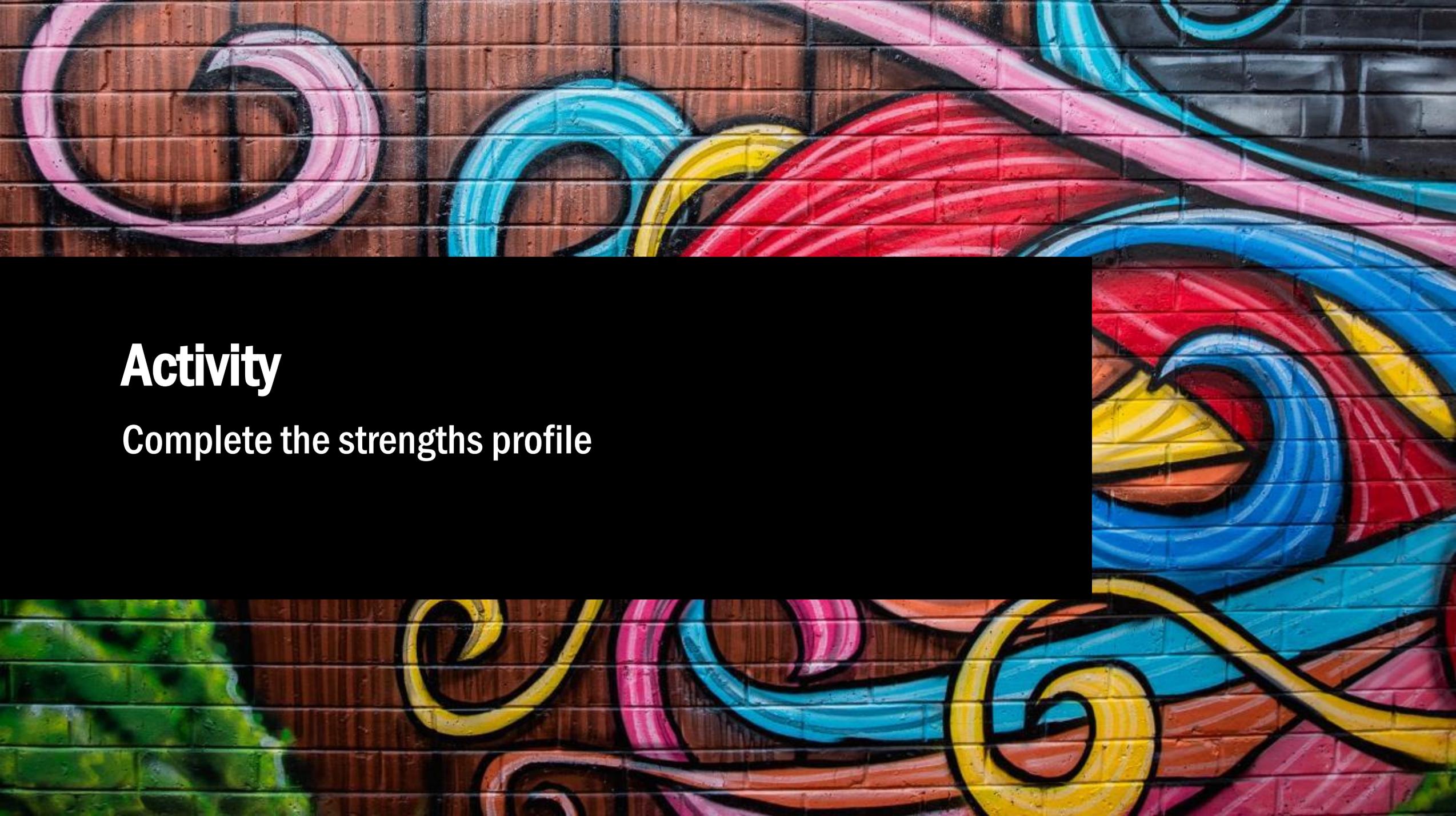
Seek new  
experiences

# My strengths and characteristics

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nae\\_pWStWzw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nae_pWStWzw)



# Activity

Complete the strengths profile

# Strengths due to your unique challenges

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Additional strengths or skills developed from managing your neurodivergent condition might include:

Resourcefulness

Flexibility

Determination

Problem solving

Organisational skills

Written  
communication

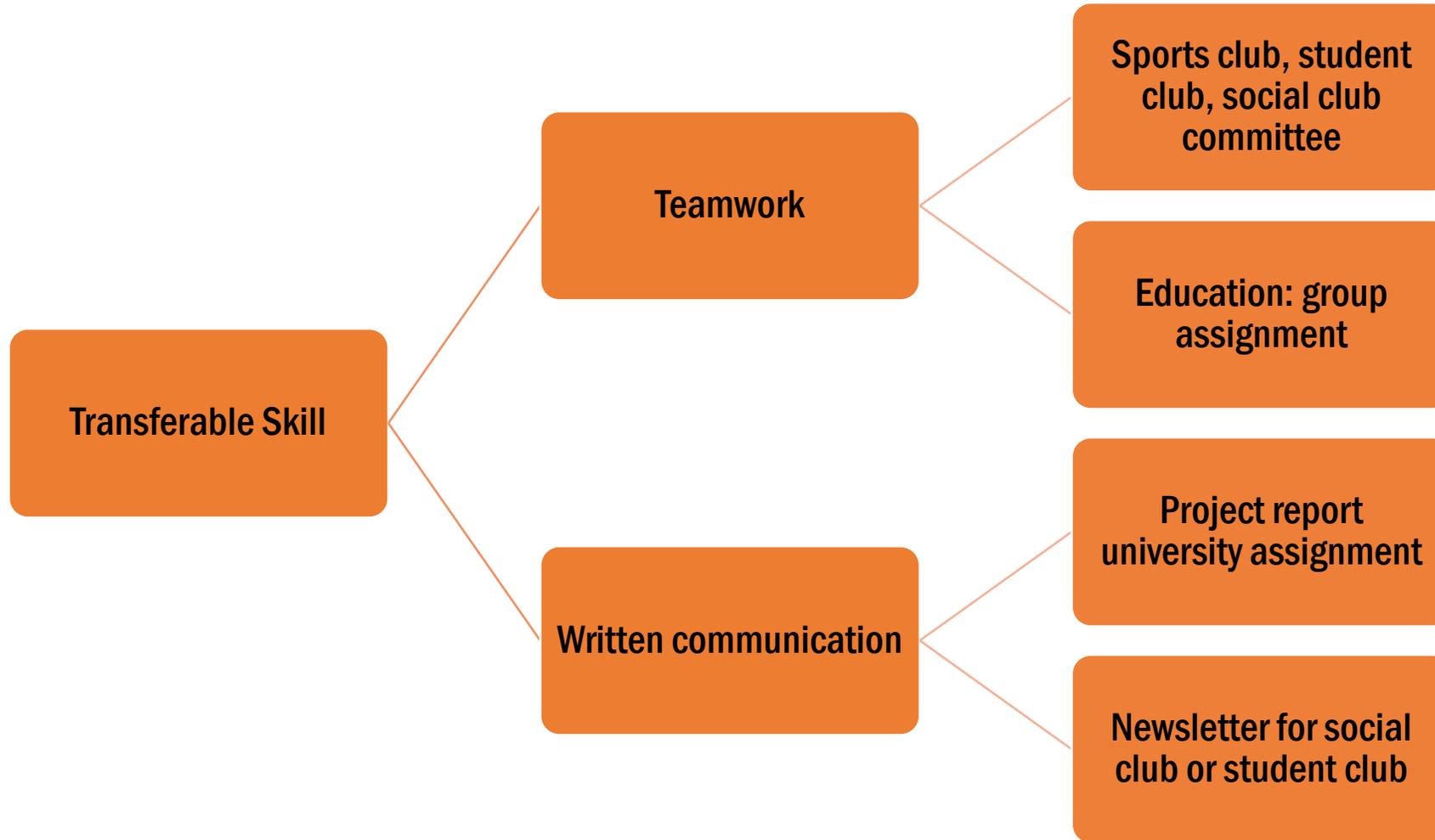
Innovation

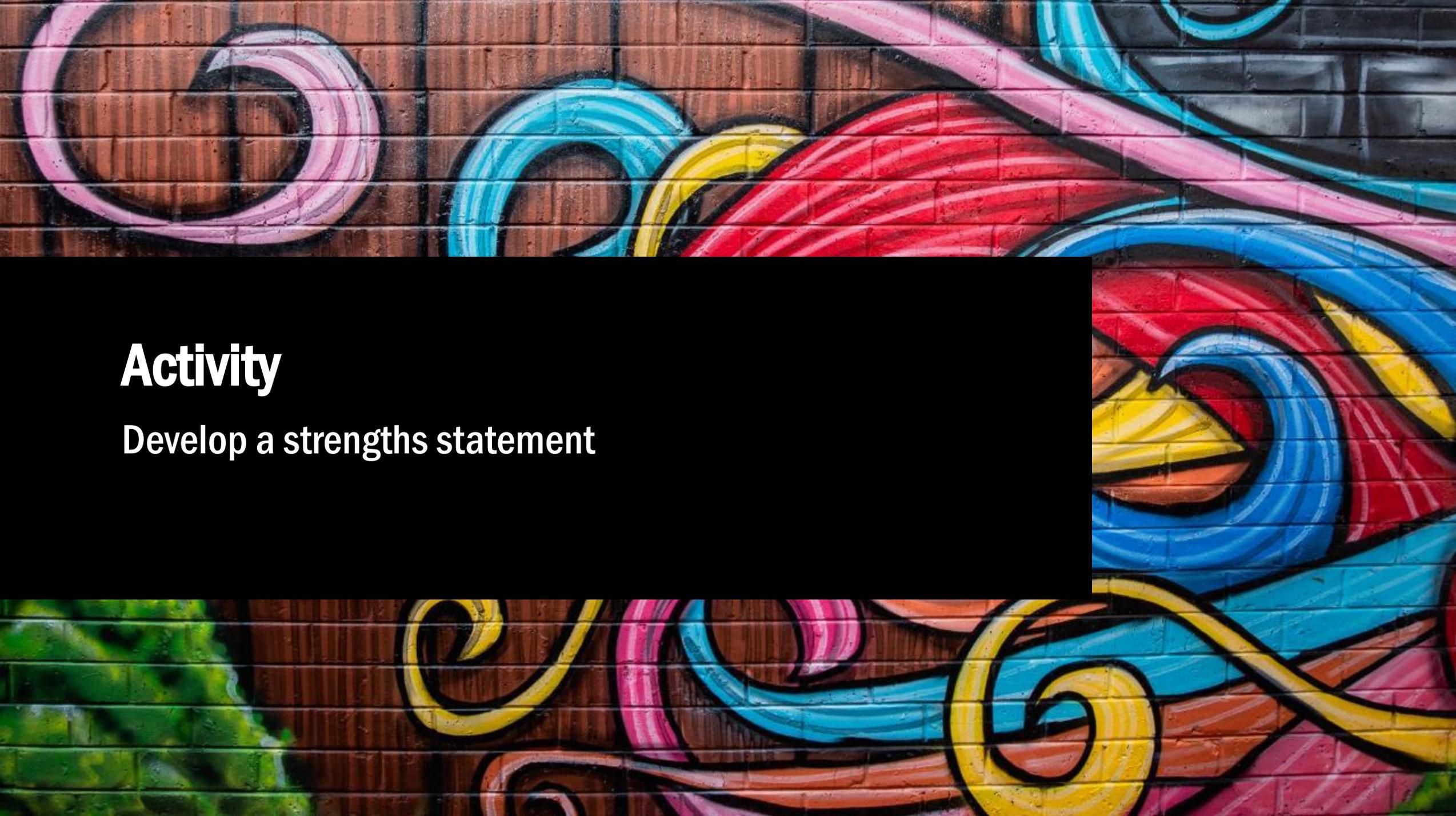
Interpersonal skills

Helen Cooke calls this your 'MyPlus' <https://myplusstudentsclub.com/>

# Transferable Skills

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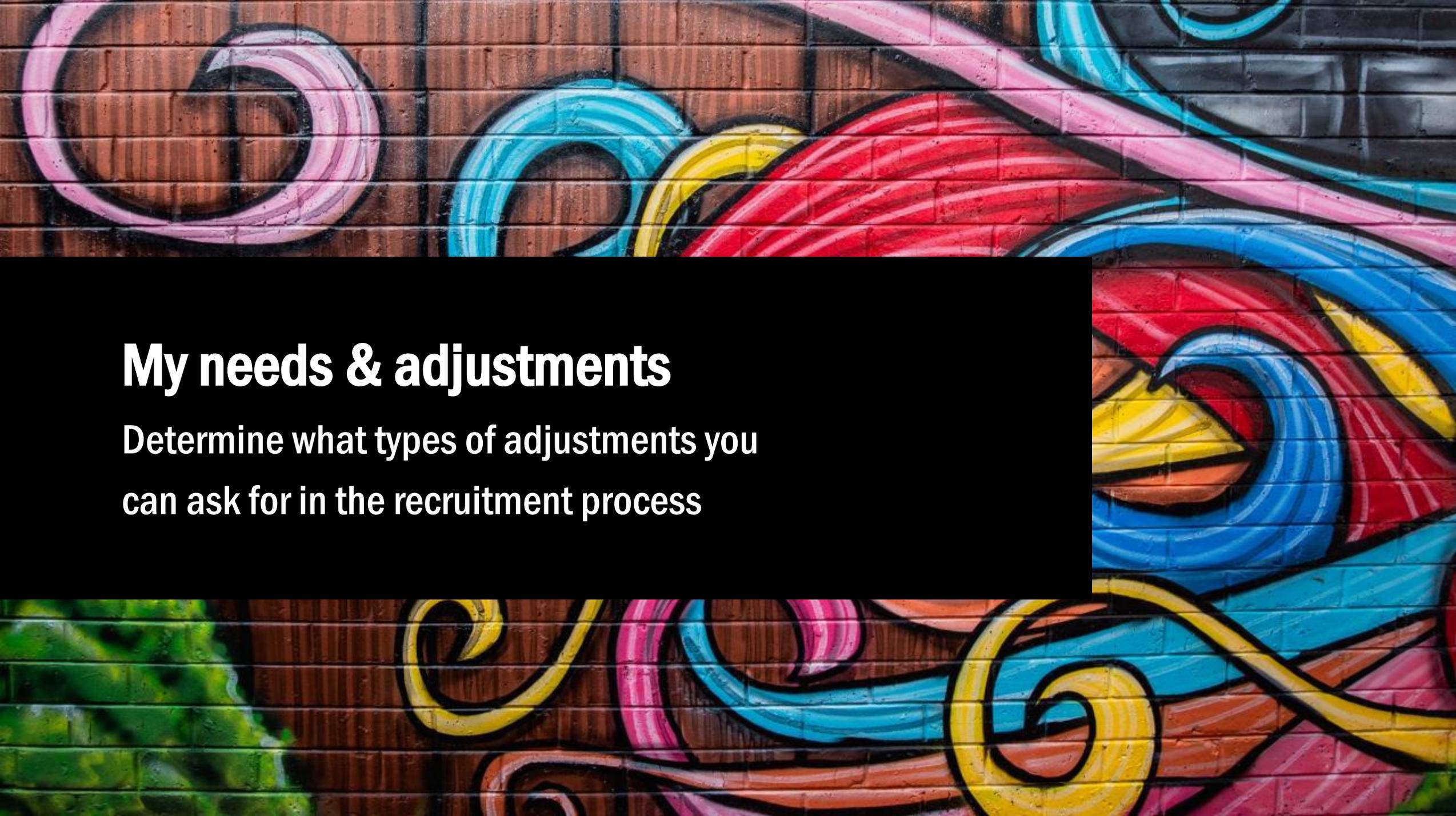
# Activity

Develop a strengths statement

# Develop your own strengths statement

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- Pick one strength or positive characteristic you have identified today and write or draw a story to demonstrate this strength.
- Create a Hero Story starting with the strength:
  - “My **strength** is that I am ...”
  - Set the scene and explain the **challenge** (“Having a neurodivergent condition means that ...”)
  - Explain what **action** you take to manage this.
  - What is the **outcome** of this?



## **My needs & adjustments**

**Determine what types of adjustments you  
can ask for in the recruitment process**

# Adjustments to the recruitment process

- Understand what the recruitment process involves and how to share your needs.
- Understand what a reasonable adjustment is.
- Consider what areas you need support for – this can help you find the right assistance or reasonable adjustment.
- Think about what already works for you.

# What does a recruitment process involve?

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Job application documents



In-person, video or group interviews



Online tests, or in-person tasks or assessments



Medicals, references, police checks

# What is a reasonable adjustment?

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- **How can I request adjustments?**
  - Application form
  - Write an email to the recruitment team (prior to application or prior to interview) with requests or communication preferences
- **What is meant by “reasonable”?**
  - Affordability; practicality; does it remove disadvantage?; health & safety of others

# Understand unique needs & preferences

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I find new and unfamiliar situations overwhelming.

I would like permission to bring a support person to help me if I do not understand a question.

Can I please request an informal meeting prior to the interview to meet the interviewer and view the room?

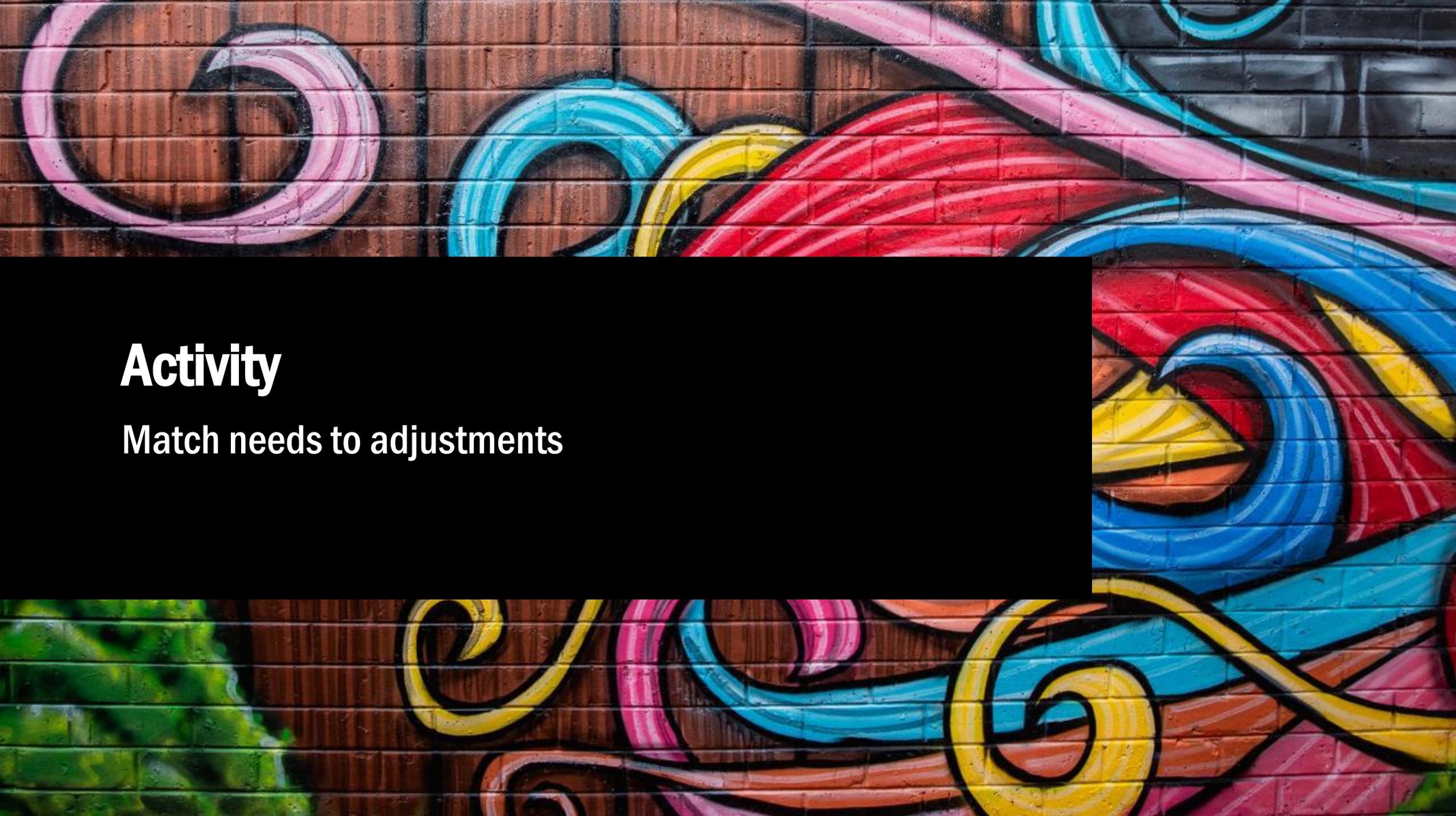
# Understand unique needs & preferences

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I require written information and task instructions.

I need clear, written explanations of the application process.

Please make interview questions available ahead of time, in writing.



# Activity

Match needs to adjustments

# Need → Adjustment

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Match the needs and characteristics to the adjustments



Identify your communication preference (i.e. email, text, phone call, face to face)

# Accounting for gaps or differences

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Accounting for gaps or differences positively to mitigate employer concerns



Gaps can be explained in:

- \* Résumés
- \* Cover letters
- \* Application Forms

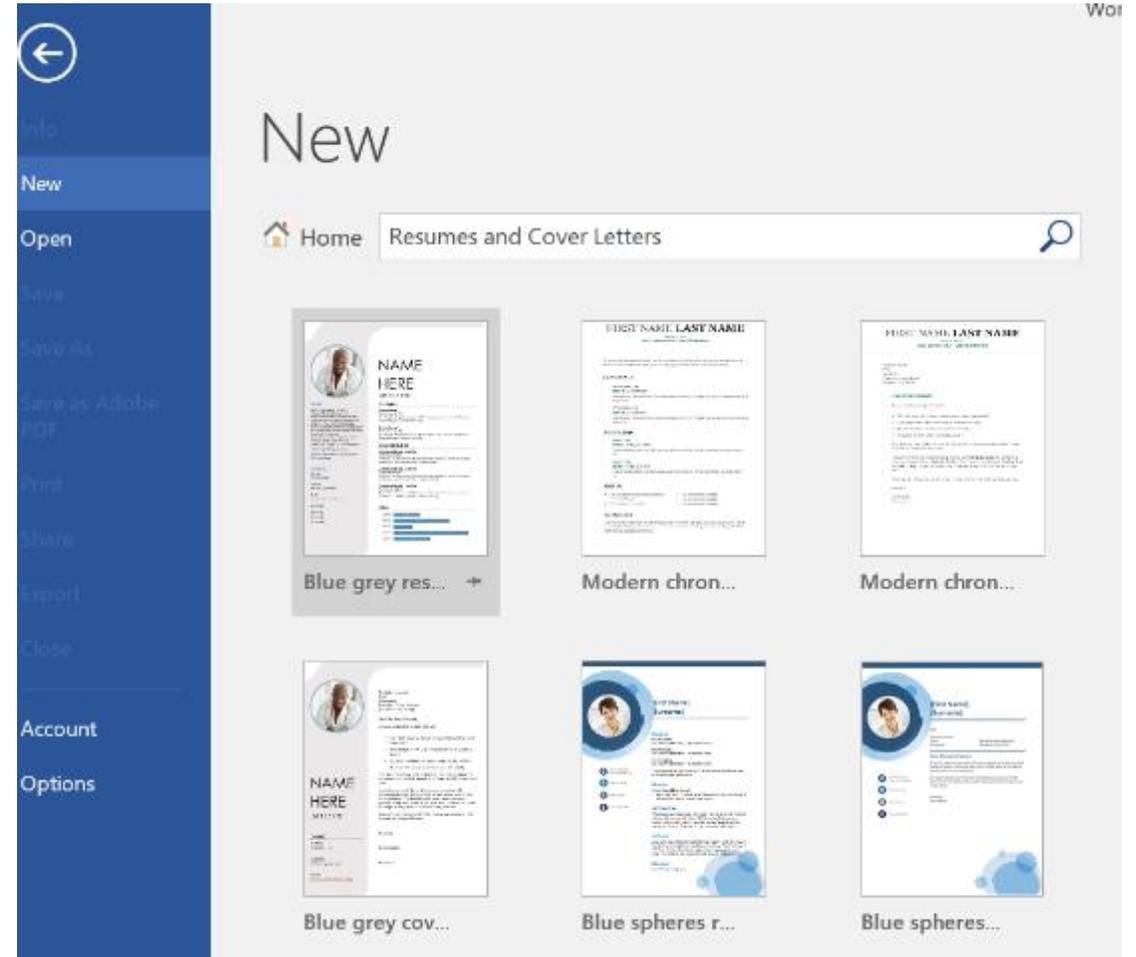
## EXAMPLE

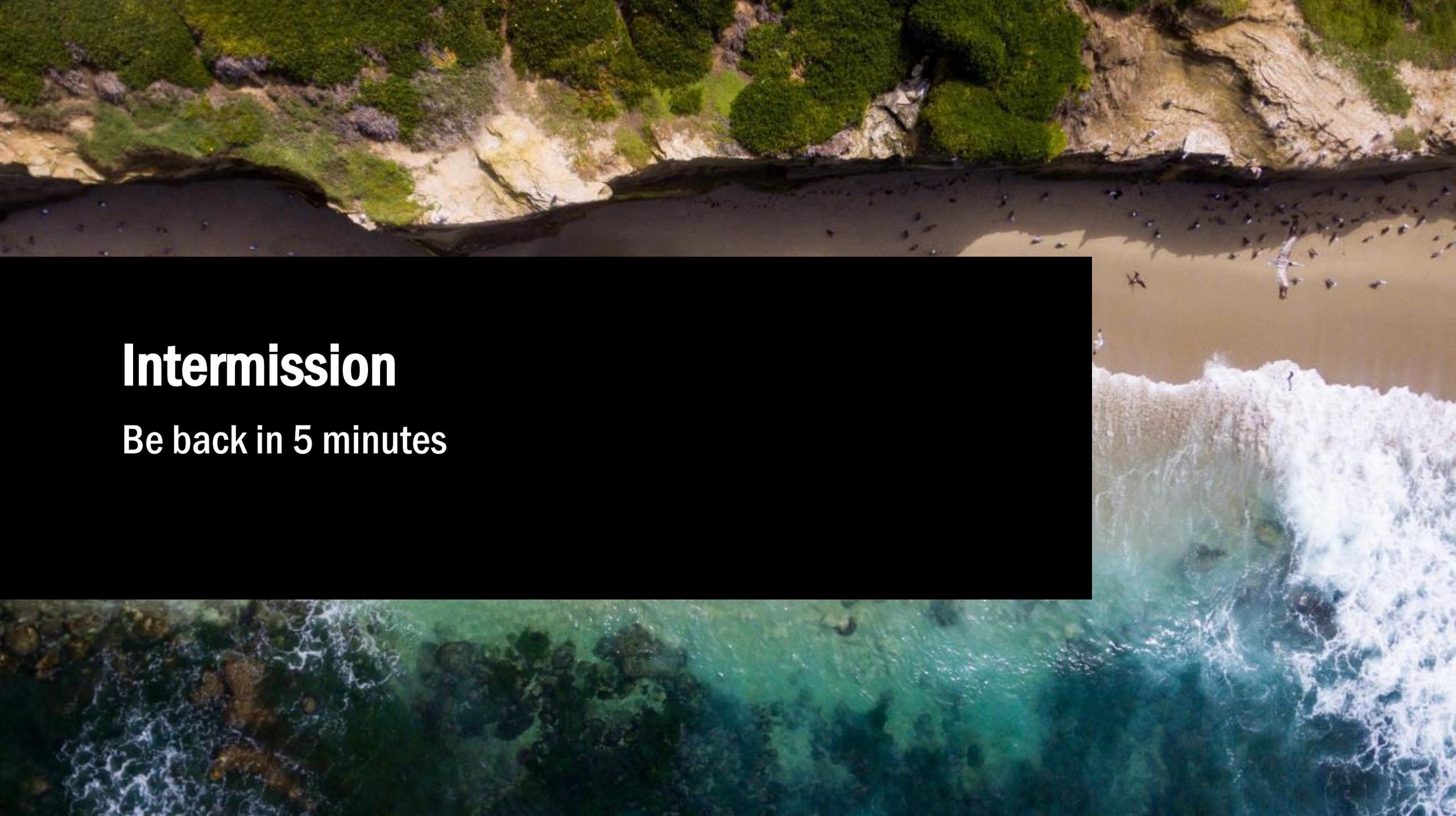
Due to [personal/health/medical/caring] reasons/commitments, I was required to take some time out from [work/university]. During this time I [highlight other personal development activity]. I was able to return in ... and have since achieved ...

# Further help

## Résumé templates

- [https://www.canva.com/en\\_au/](https://www.canva.com/en_au/)  
/
- <https://www.vmock.com/curtin>  
(résumé checker and also provides a suggested template)
- MS Word



An aerial photograph of a coastal scene. At the top, a cliffside is covered in dense green vegetation. Below the cliff is a wide, sandy beach. The beach is populated with numerous dark birds, likely terns, some standing and some in flight. The ocean waves are breaking onto the shore, creating white foam. The water is a clear, vibrant blue-green color. A large black rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

# Intermission

Be back in 5 minutes



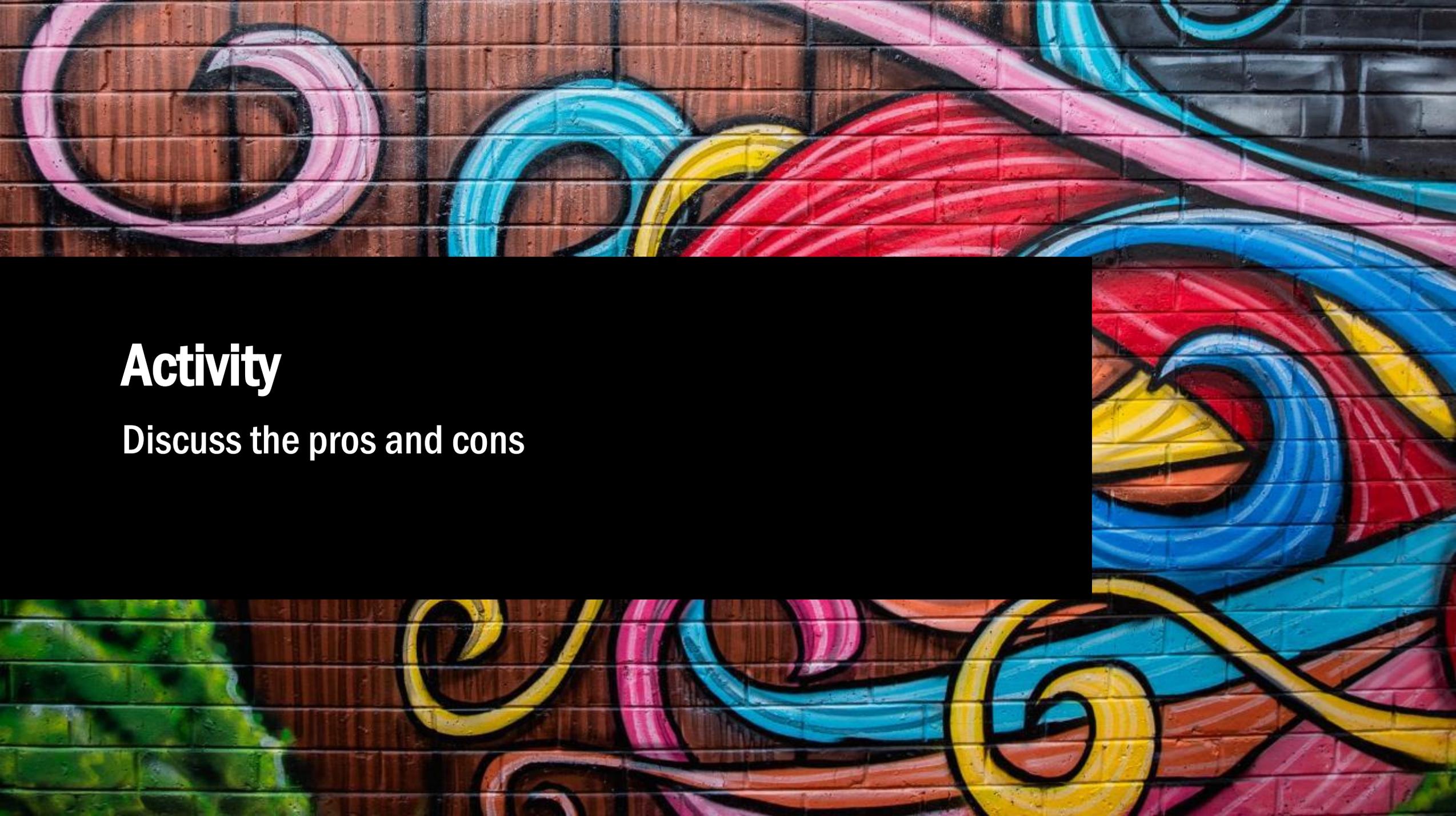
## Benefits of “openness”

Understand pros and cons of sharing  
your needs with employers

# Pros and cons of sharing

- "The more ND [autism] is openly discussed, society's understanding of ND [autism] will improve and stigma regarding ND [autism] should reduce." AsIAm.ie
- Sharing information about my disability or ND condition will help my employer be more understanding and mitigate issues that cause me anxiety.
- Sharing information about my disability or ND condition will lead to discrimination in the recruitment process.





# Activity

Discuss the pros and cons

# Pros and cons of sharing

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## Pros

- Access specific support programs employment initiatives
- Help people understand you and adjustments such as flexible work conditions, tasks
- Colleagues and employer more of your behavior or issues that cause anxiety

## Cons

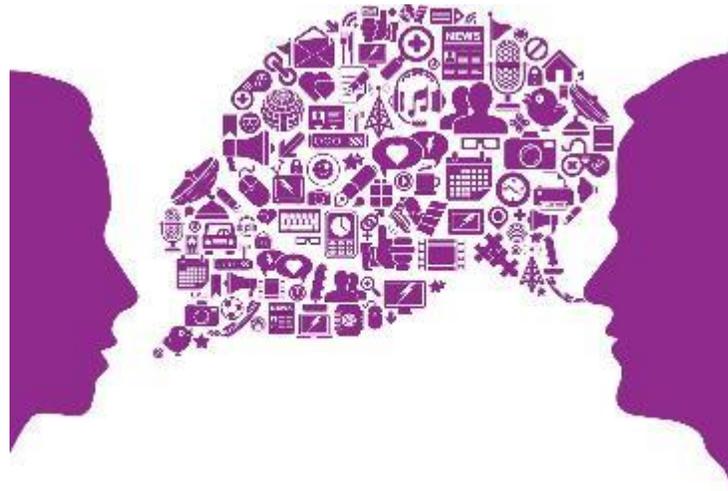
- Masking who you are can have a negative impact on mental health
- Discrimination leading to non-selection or dismissal
- Prejudice
- No adjustments made anyway
- Privacy

# Something to consider

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“In a study of 254 American autistic adults, Ohl et al. (2017) reported that those who disclosed their condition to their employers were over three times more likely to be currently employed ... compared to those who did not ...”

([www.neurodiversityhub.org](http://www.neurodiversityhub.org), Holly Bainbridge)



# Why do employers ask, anyway?

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FOR THE PURPOSE OF INVITING  
APPLICANTS TO IDENTIFY ANY  
ADJUSTMENTS REQUIRED



LEGAL OBLIGATIONS



PERSONAL DECISION –  
ONLY YOU KNOW WHAT'S BEST  
FOR YOU

# What are my rights?

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Disability Discrimination Act 1992  
UN CRPD  
WA Equal Employment Act 1984



Employer HR/complaints department



Australian Human Rights Commission  
(<https://humanrights.gov.au/>)



Fair Work (<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/>)

# Take control of your search

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Is the location suitable?

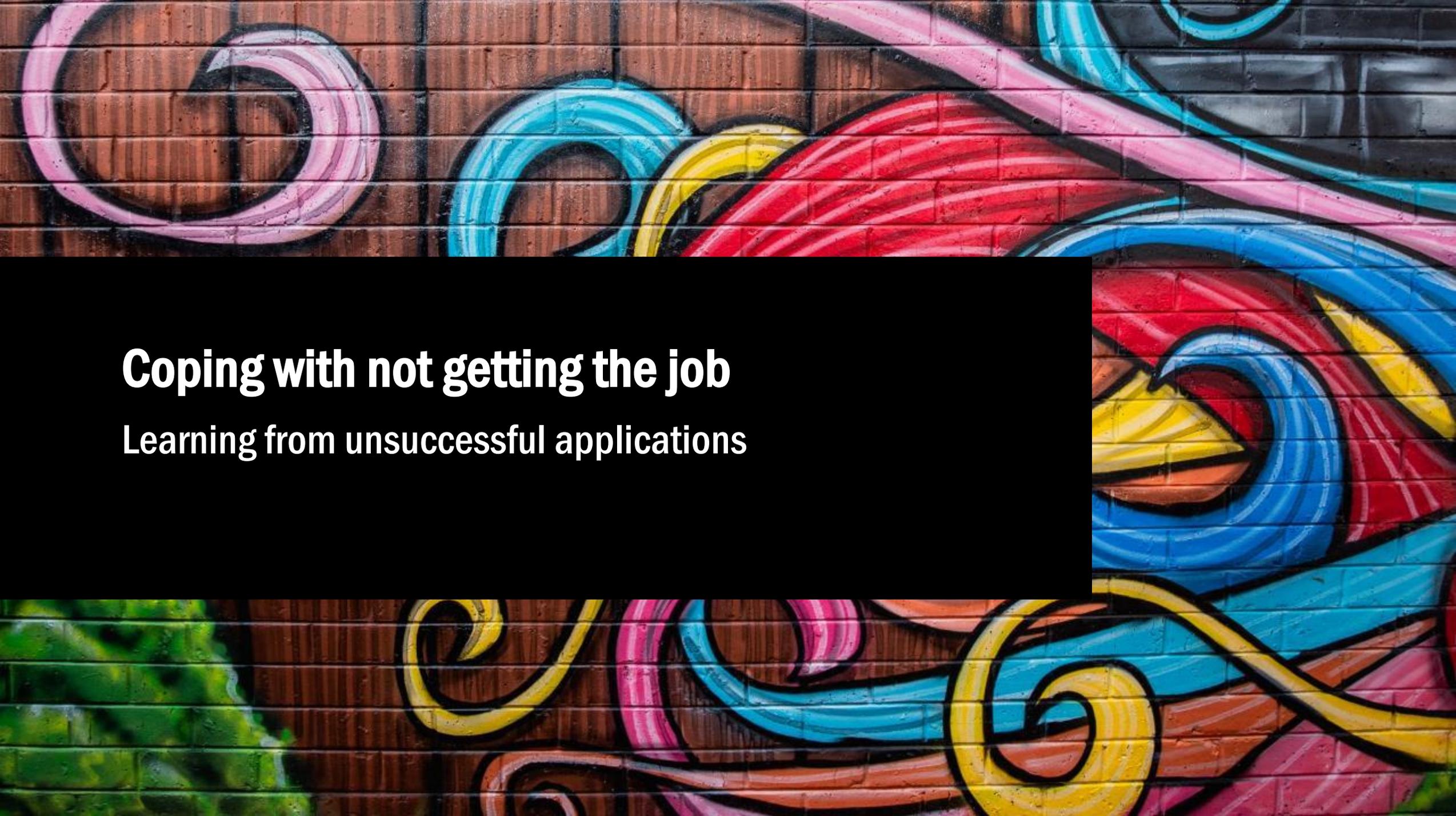
Do the hours meet your requirements?

Are they members of the Australian Network on Disability, Diversity Council, or offer any autism-specific programs?

Does the position match your interests?

Would you be happy doing those duties on a day-to-day basis?

Do they offer flexible working conditions or additional benefits such as employee assistance programs?



# **Coping with not getting the job**

**Learning from unsuccessful applications**

# Didn't get the job?

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1. Give yourself a few days to reflect. Assess what you thought went well and what you would like to work on for next time.
2. If something didn't go well on the day, make a note for next time.
3. Respond to the "Unsuccessful" email and thank them for their time.  
Ask for feedback on what you did well and what you can improve on.  
Check out this template: <https://www.themuse.com/advice/this-is-the-email-smart-people-send-when-theyre-rejected-for-a-job>
4. Talk to someone about the experience, especially if you're upset.

# Evaluation tool/checklist

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**Description of experience**

**Reflect on the experience as a whole**

**Understand your values, beliefs and assumptions**

**Relate what you have learned to other contexts  
(personal, professional, other)**



# Further support

For careers and employment advice

# Informal & formal: network mapping

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# Curtin University support

- **University Specialist Employment Partnership**  
Maxima Employment Services: meet Nichola
  - Book an appointment via UniHub  
(telephone, video or in person)  
Available every Wednesday from 10 am to 2 pm
  - Can provide advice or initial consultation  
meetings even if you are not eligible for DES yet



# Supported Employment Services

- **National Disability Insurance Scheme**  
Transition to Employment funding
  - Eligibility criteria: severe and ongoing disability substantially reducing capacity to perform daily living skills
- **Disability Employment Services**
  - Eligibility criteria: diagnosed injury, illness or disability; able to work at least 8 hours per week; studying part-time or close to graduation; age 14 to 65 years, receiving an income benefit
- Australian Permanent Resident or Citizen

# Curtin University support

- Careers advisor appointments – book via UniHub
- Résumé clinic and Vmock (<https://www.vmock.com/curtin>)
- Curtin Careers advice website
- UniHub – resources and workbooks
- Curtin Challenge – online learning modules
- UniHub – internships, part-time/casual jobs, graduate jobs, employer events
- Australian Network on Disability – internships and mentoring

# Other support services

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## Curtin Connect, Building 102

- Student wellbeing
- Enrolment assistance and course enquiries
- Student ID cards, fee enquiries, OASIS enquiries
- Directing your enquiry to the right area

## AccessAbility Services

- Curtin Access Plan (CAP), managing your studies, exam arrangements
- <https://www.curtin.edu.au/students/personal-support/disability/>



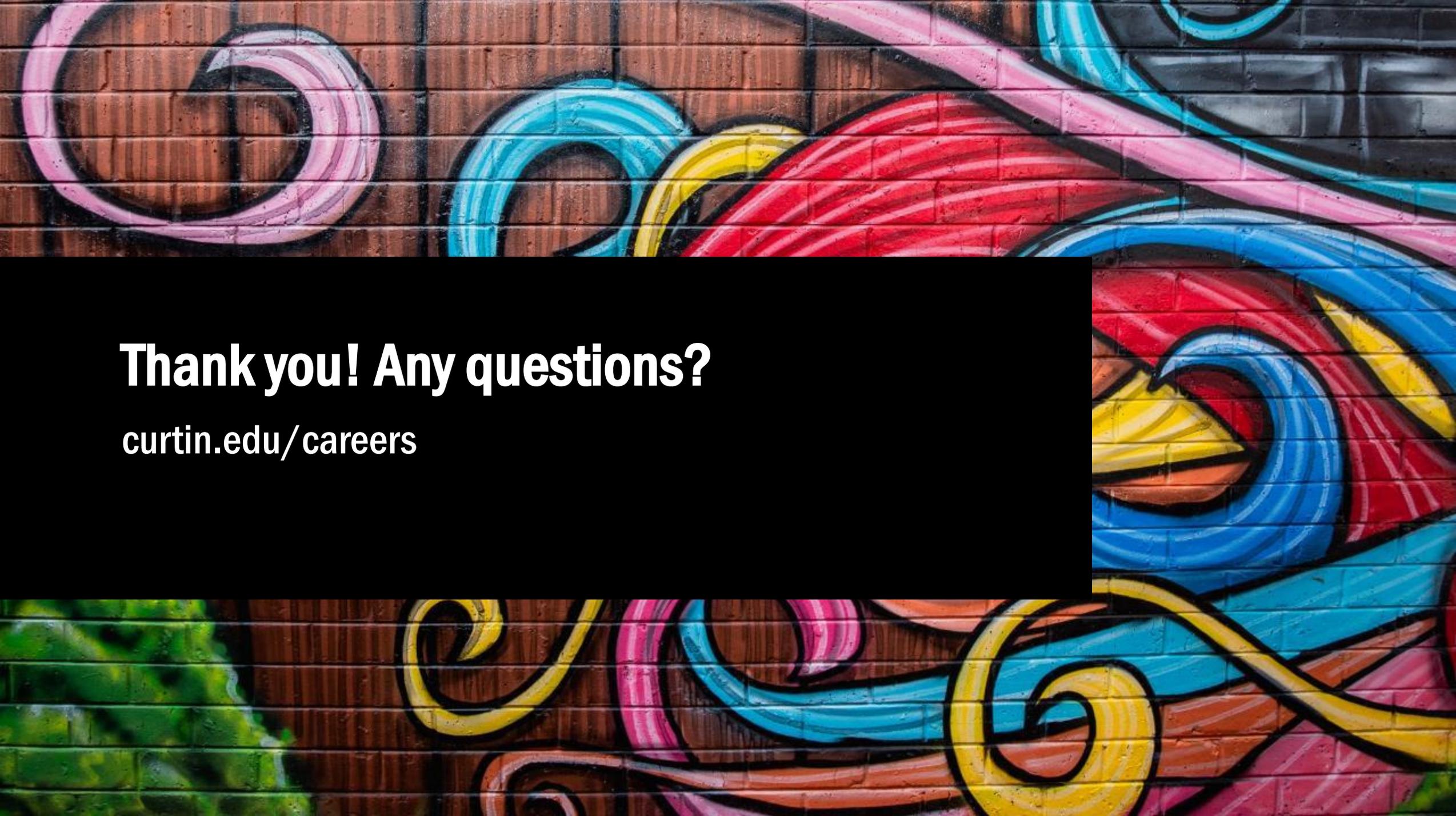


# Student Success

Building 101, entrance near the koi pond

+61 8 9276 7802

[curtin.edu/careers](http://curtin.edu/careers)



**Thank you! Any questions?**

[curtin.edu/careers](http://curtin.edu/careers)

# Feedback form

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[https://curtin.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0VQI1pZIBQfPHyC](https://curtin.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0VQI1pZIBQfPHyC)