Autistic Collaboration Trust
Equipping autistic people for collaboration for life

divergent minds
deep innovation
neuro di ventures
Autistic Collaboration

AutCollab.org acts as a hub for mutual support, and encourages neurodivergent individuals and ventures to connect and establish long-term collaborations.

Collaboration can take many forms, and different people have different needs and preferences. Autistic people learn and play differently, and only have a limited (if any!) interest in competitive social games. We communicate and enjoy ourselves by sharing information and knowledge, and not by negotiating social status.

– Jorn Bettin

https://autcollab.org/about/
NeurodiVentures

NeurodiVenture: an inclusive non-hierarchical organisation operated by neurodivergent people that provides a safe and nurturing environment for divergent thinking, creativity, exploration, and collaborative niche construction.

Don’t worry if you are not yet part of a NeurodiVenture or autistic community. If you are interested in establishing a NeurodiVenture or in implementing a neurodiversity friendly operating model within your company, the open source operating model template from S23M may be a useful starting point.

https://autcollab.org/community/neurodiventures/
Prerequisites for a **neurodiversity friendly** culture

Language frames people’s thoughts and emotional response. Consistently use words that can improve our lives:

- **Niche construction** and **symbiosis** rather than **competition**
  – to create organisations and services that are fit for purpose and valued by the wider community
- **Company** rather than **business** – to focus on the people and things we care about rather than what is simply keeping us busy
- **Values** rather than **value** – to avoid continuously discounting what is priceless
- **Physical waste** rather than **wealth** – to focus us on the metrics that do matter
- **Human scale** and **individual agency** rather than **large scale** and **growth** – to create structures and systems that are understandable and relatable
- **Competency networks** rather than **leadership** – to get things done and distribute decision making to where the knowledge resides
- **Coordination** rather than **management** – to address all the stuff that can increasingly be automated, management is often the biggest obstacle to automation
- **Creativity** and **divergent thinking** rather than **best practices** – when facing the need to innovate and improve

Autistic culture

Autists are acutely aware that culture is constructed one trusted relationship at a time – this is the essence of fully appreciating diversity.

Inclusive culture is minimalistic.

https://autcollab.org/2018/04/05/what-society-can-learn-from-autistic-culture/
8 principles for value creation fuelled by **mutual trust** and zero capital

1. Clear purpose, a long term perspective, revenue sharing instead of salaries
   - resilience

2. Purpose supported by 26 backbone principles
   - an inclusive **culture of thinking and learning**

3. Employee ownership and zero debt
   - **no distractions** by stakeholders with short term motivations and hidden agendas

4. Intensive 12 month induction and on-boarding process
   - a **foundation of mutual understanding**

5. Organising around the talents and needs of specific people
   - ability to benefit from an incredible **diversity of talents**

6. Relying entirely on equitable team-oriented incentives and zero individual incentives
   - **elimination of in-group competition**

7. Operating an advice process instead of hierarchy
   - **maximising learning opportunities**

8. Open source intellectual property
   - **no barriers to flows of tacit knowledge**

https://autcollab.org/community/neurodiventures/
Collaboration in a NeurodiVenture

Aligned with the purpose of autistic collaboration:

- interaction to learn from each other
- working with others towards a shared goal

The more we help each other to question in ways we otherwise wouldn’t – and correspondingly discover new insights about the world and ourselves, the more we are able to learn from each other, and the more we start to understand each other.

The gift that members of NeurodiVentures bring to the world is the (re)generative potential of all the trusted relationships that they co-create.

https://autcollab.org/2017/09/30/social/
Collaboration for Life

intersectional community

S23M

Design Justice Network

autists

Māori communities

healthcare professionals

Autistic Collaboration Trust

SMEs

schools

the public

parents

large employers

unions

professional bodies

healthcare & IT service providers

trusted relationships
Collaboration for Life

Payments

- large employers
- unions
- professional bodies
- healthcare & IT service providers
- Design Justice Network
- autists
- Māori communities
- healthcare professionals
- Autistic Collaboration Trust
- peer support
- SMEs
- schools
- the public
- parents

S23M

creative collaboration
employee wellbeing
education

patient journey
management

education
Collaboration for Life

Donations

large employers
unions
professional bodies
healthcare & IT service providers
creative collaboration
employee wellbeing
education

S23M

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autists

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healthcare professionals

Autistic Collaboration Trust

patient journey management

peer support

SMEs
schools
the public
parents

Donations

education

Collaboration for Life
Thank you!

https://autcollab.org

We all thrive when being given the opportunity to work with our most trusted peers. In a good company everyone is acutely aware of all the collective intelligence and capability that is available in the form of trusted colleagues, friends, and family.
Creative Collaboration
Enabling knowledge to flow to all the places where it can be put to good use
S23M

S23M is a consulting, education, and software company with best-of-breed solutions based on our unique insights into human factors.

We have operated out of New Zealand and Australia since 2002. Our company has dedicated product development, operations and support teams in the Philippines, and international sales partners in Germany and Spain:

- **Creative Collaboration** – Unlocking the value of creativity, multisolving, & psychological safety
- **Ethical Change** – Producing transformative improvements by catalysing cultural transformation
- **Innovation and New Service Development** – Application of evolutionary design principles
- **Software Services** – Optimising patient journeys and networks of care
### Themes / Configurations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Sectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Collaboration (default)</td>
<td>Evolutionary design and creative thinking tools – the hugely diverse set of tools that different people tap into as part of the creative process</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Wellbeing</td>
<td>Creating and maintaining a psychologically &amp; culturally safe environment</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transdisciplinary Governance</td>
<td>Coordination and crisis management across discipline boundaries in a digitally connected world</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Factors, Security &amp; Risk</td>
<td>Human physical limits, cognitive limits such as Dunbar's number, and the impact of fear on collaboration, security and risk exposure</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise Software Advisor</td>
<td>Optimising the value of investments in enterprise software solutions</td>
<td>Healthcare, Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Data Governance</td>
<td>Clinical data governance standards, design of trustworthy and reliable federated clinical data repositories</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interoperability &amp; System Integration</td>
<td>Model oriented health information interoperability solutions based on FHIR (Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources) and IPS (International Patient Summary) standards</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-Oriented Service Co-design</td>
<td>Developing the creative thinking practices required to address the biggest issues facing coming generations</td>
<td>Healthcare, Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Human factors

Physical limits
- Implications for ergonomics, health and safety, etc.

Cognitive limits
- Implications of Dunbar’s number etc.

Psychological and cultural safety
- Diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions
- Neurodivergence (neurodiversity movement)
- LGBTQIA+ rights movement
- Disabilities (social model of disability)
- Age (children and those older than 65)
Some of our clients
Making the world a safer place for everyone

We all thrive when given the opportunity to work and connect with our most trusted peers.

In good and honest company everyone is acutely aware of all the collective diversity, intelligence, and capability that are available in the form of a trusted community that includes all contributions from all colleagues, friends, whānau, and family.

Cultural and psychological safety is about exercising the ability to act in good faith, respect, and acknowledge the diversities of people.

https://healthcare-solutions.s23m.com/employee-wellbeing/
Collaboration for Life

- Anon. (8 mins) staff surveys with > 50% participation
- Co-designed with staff from marginalised groups
- Visualisation of quarterly trends in safety
- Externally facilitated quarterly Open Space
- Access to external critical thinking tools
- Access to individual mental health support
- Independent supervision of cultural & psychological safety
- Fully transparent, all data shared with all participants
- Powered by local intersectional communities
- Peer-to-peer bullying alert and support system
- Mutual trust & courageous actions
Busyness as usual

Creating and maintaining a safe environment is fundamental for the flourishing of all staff, yet in many organisations cultural safety and psychological safety is still the exception rather than the norm.
Creating good company

Organisations are only able to deliver valuable services to the extent that they can rely on a network of trusted relationships both within the organisation and the wider community that supports and is supported by them.

No large organisation can claim to have a genuine commitment to diversity and inclusion if it does not subscribe to independent oversight by marginalised segments of the population.
The survey instrument has been co-designed with
• autistic and otherwise neurodivergent community members
• LGBTQIA+ community members
• disabled community members
• Māori community members
• members from marginalised ethnic/cultural communities
• nursing professionals in Aotearoa New Zealand
• technology professionals in Aotearoa NZ, Australia, US

This explains
• intuitive design
• average completion time of 8 minutes
• > 50% participation rates
Feedback

This is brilliant. I have just checked out the links and read the survey. It’s exciting and just so positive, intelligent and well thought out. It is such an honest approach. Rather than employers just hiring a couple of people with disabilities to get the ticks they need to be a “diverse friendly” employer etc, this actually asks the employees themselves. It will certainly separate the wheat from the chaff.

– Disability Support Service employee, working with disabled people and employers, New Zealand

I do like how your employee wellbeing questions take a look at different relationships in/around the organization and comfort levels with each. I feel like the engagement surveys we’ve been using at work don’t really get to the heart of the matter like yours do.

– Mental Health Service employee, United States

I really can’t tell you how useful it is to have real data to help us understand our current state, prioritize the dimensions we need to focus on, and assess the effectiveness of actions we take in the future.

– CEO, United States
Mutual trust and courageous actions

Regular Open Space, monitored for cultural and psychological safety

1. Valuable tacit knowledge starts to flow
2. Mutual trust increases
3. The speed of information flow increases
4. The trustworthiness of information increases
5. Error rates go down
6. The confidence and speed of transdisciplinary decision making increases
7. The need for traditional management meetings decreases noticeably
8. The ability to react appropriately to unforeseen events improves
9. Lower overhead costs

= Collective intelligence
How does it work for staff?

1. An anonymous assessment of cultural safety and psychological safety.
2. You can submit feedback on your current and past employers at any time.
3. Aggregate survey results are only made available to employers who subscribe to regular Employee Wellbeing surveys, and subject to the limitations described in the user guide.

Individual anonymous responses are never shared with employers or with any other party.
Best practice – Extending trust to employees

The results of the survey can only be put to good use if they are shared with all employees.

1. **Committing to community powered oversight and regular Employee Wellbeing surveys** is a significant first signal of genuine commitment to staff wellbeing, diversity, and inclusion.

2. **The employer can remove all “firewalls“ between the surveys and staff, so that aggregate results from each survey run are shared with all those who participated in the survey.** Such a decision visibly demonstrates that (a) the employer has great trust in staff and appreciates their contribution to workplace culture, and (b) that the organisation is fully committed to independent oversight of workplace cultures. One of our first subscribers, Ultranauts in the United States, has opted for this level of transparency, and we encourage other subscribers to follow their example.

3. Alternatively employers can run the survey once, and review the results, before deciding if and when to share them with staff and other stakeholders.

4. **Depending on the results, it may also be beneficial to visibly publicise the results to customers and suppliers, and to the local community.**
How does it work for employers?

1. Employers that are committed to providing an inclusive and psychologically safe workplace are encouraged to be proactive and to enroll in quarterly Employee Wellbeing surveys.

2. The employer actively encourages employee participation, and the employer and all survey participants obtain access to the aggregate results.

Regular Employee Wellbeing surveys create a new level of shared understanding of workplace culture amongst staff. Trends (good and bad) are made visible every three months.
A new level of shared understanding of the experienced level of safety at work

The following slides compare anonymised data from the healthcare sector with anonymised data from other companies. Note that:

1. [Lack of] cultural and psychological safety is experienced in relationships with others.

2. Often there are significant differences in the experienced level of safety depending on the different kinds of relationships encountered at work: peer-to-peer, subordinate-superior, supplier-customer, and customer-supplier.

3. Employers should be concerned about any employees who consistently feel unsafe in one or more kinds of relationships.

4. As needed customers and suppliers need to be educated about all the aspects of social interactions that impact cultural and psychological safety.
Employee Wellbeing in healthcare

- Afraid to be yourself amongst your peers?
- Afraid to be yourself amongst your superiors?
- Afraid to be yourself amongst customers?
- Afraid to be yourself amongst suppliers?

Legend:
- Green: Never
- Blue: Sometimes
- Yellow: Often
- Red: Always
- Gray: N/A

Collaboration for Life
Employee Wellbeing **in a relatively safe workplace**

- **Are you afraid to be yourself amongst your peers?**
  - Never: 40%
  - Sometimes: 30%
  - Often: 20%
  - Always: 10%
  - N/A: 0%

- **Are you afraid to be yourself amongst your superiors?**
  - Never: 50%
  - Sometimes: 30%
  - Often: 15%
  - Always: 5%
  - N/A: 0%

- **Are you afraid to be yourself amongst customers?**
  - Never: 60%
  - Sometimes: 25%
  - Often: 15%
  - Always: 0%
  - N/A: 0%

- **Are you afraid to be yourself amongst suppliers?**
  - Never: 70%
  - Sometimes: 20%
  - Often: 5%
  - Always: 0%
  - N/A: 5%
NZNO is a bicultural organisation that embraces Te Tiriti o Waitangi, best demonstrated through the partnership of NZNO and Te Rūnanga, the bicultural arm that seeks to achieve the aspirations of Māori health professionals. The commitment to improving the workplace culture across the healthcare sector in Aotearoa New Zealand, is paramount.

To demonstrate a genuine commitment to cultural safety and psychological safety, and to better understand the daily lived experience of employees in your organisation, we recommend a subscription to S23M's community-powered Employee Wellbeing service to all employers.

Kerri Nuku | Kaiwhakahaere
Mairi Lucas | Acting Chief Executive
New Zealand Nurses Organisation | Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa
Transdisciplinary collaboration hinges on psychological safety, cultural safety, and inclusiveness. These and other human factors determine the inherent social value of a company, the wellbeing of employees, and the quality of care delivered to patients.

To date the quality of social interactions and culture have been difficult to evaluate, but the emergence of their importance demands an ability to measure and evaluate these factors. The independently administered Employee Wellbeing surveys operated by S23M represent an excellent tool to assist your organisation to meet this challenge head-on.

A/Prof Terry J Hannan MBBS;FRACP;FAIDH;FACMI
Visiting Faculty Australian Institute of Health Innovation, Macquarie University International Academy of Health Sciences Informatics
Enabling knowledge to flow to all the places where it can be put to good use

With the endorsement of professional bodies and unions we can hold employers’ feet to the fire, to redress bullying & improve workplace culture

➤ Transparency of workplace culture
➤ Improved knowledge flows
➤ Facilitated Open Space = training wheels in cultural and psychological safety
➤ A collaborative approach to improve working conditions in healthcare
➤ A safer workplace culture is directly linked to better patient outcomes
Taking action – towards trusted relationships

Creative Collaboration is a subscription service offered by S23M that accelerates organisational learning with the help of three complementary workshop formats:

1. Unlocking the value of psychological safety and creativity via Open Space workshops, to power a continuous knowledge creation spiral that breaks through the barriers of established disciplines, management structures, groupthink, and physical distance

2. Unlocking the value of tacit knowledge via Model Oriented Domain Analysis workshops, to question implicit assumptions and to facilitate multisolving

3. Unlocking the full value of psychological safety via Steering workshops, to validate shared understanding, nurture mutual trust, assess risks and unknowns, overcome cultural inertia, and adjust priorities of programmes of work as needed

Feedback

“We looked at workplace trends and I hope to learn more about prosocial organisational design”
“I have learned about tools to create non-hierarchical spaces”
“The workshop has confirmed I am on the right path to creating an inclusive collaborative environment”
“Don’t speculate; remember to always ask whether we have shared understanding”
“Always try to add everyone’s voice to the conversation”
“Separate the people from the problem”
– Feedback from attendees of our Open Space Health Informatics NZ workshops

“My greatest joy is that nature has gifted me with others like me and that I am not alone. Now I am part of something far more safe and comfortable than the herd could ever have offered. I am here as part of a mosaic of explorers and teachers, of artists and builders.”
– Regular attendee of our CIIC Open Space workshops
Clients can deploy Creative Collaboration within the context of various organisational designs, in combination with any methodology and any applicable industry-specific best practices – because the service is not yet another process to follow:

- It is the opposite – it provides a space for creative freedom.
- It unlocks valuable tacit knowledge within the organisation.
- It is about releasing the handbrake to collaboration, and visibly extending trust to the people within the organisation.
- It can be used to repair frayed relationships.
- It replaces fear with courage.

In the some industries psychological safety is already recognised as an important aspect of the overarching topic of safety at work. The ability to talk about mistakes and risks, and to disagree as needed, is critical for minimising accidents – and at the same time it can assist organisations in improving collaboration and in recognising potential opportunities for deep innovation.
Thank you!

Jorn Bettin

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Enabling knowledge to flow to all the places where it can be put to good use