



**My Workmate
has an Autism Spectrum
Disorder**

MY WORKMATE HAS AN AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

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DELETREA
TEAM

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ADMINISTRACIÓN PÚBLICA

El INAP

The Public Administration is a key part of an advanced society, and a modern, agile and efficient Public Administration is a determining factor if we wish to obtain a society with greater degrees of well-being and quality of life.

The desire of INAP (National Institute for Public Administration) (Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública) is to be a leading institution in generating knowledge, with the goal of stimulating organisational learning for teams in the public sector, and thereby create a good Administration, oriented toward the common good and in harmony with society's needs and expectations.

Its mission is to create transforming knowledge in the public sector through transversal teams able to draw ideas, people and innovative projects in hiring and training processes to attain high-quality democracy and citizens. To this end, INAP will draw its base on the following principles: efficacy in team learning, being oriented toward citizens, transparency, being exemplary, rendering accounts, independence, responsibility and social cohesion.

The authors



The **Deletrea Team** is made up of a group of professionals with ample experience in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Its director, Juan Matos, along with the rest of the team's founding members: Raquel Ayuda, Sandra Freire, Ana González and María Llorente, have practised as clinical and psycho-educational professionals in Deletrea since its foundation in 2001.

With the intention of improving the quality of life of people with ASD and their families, Deletrea offers a wide range of services: diagnosis, intervention, training, family counselling, research, and awareness and dissemination about the disorder. With this in mind, the professionals working at Deletrea have participated in multiple conferences, postgraduate degrees and courses, taught both in Spain and abroad. They have also published many books about ASD, and have written articles for numerous scientific journals and outreach publications.

The Deletrea Team's publications include: *Los niños pequeños con Autismo. Soluciones prácticas para problemas cotidianos* (Young Children with Autism. Practical Solutions for Everyday Problems. 2008), *El síndrome de Asperger: Evaluación y tratamiento* (Asperger's Syndrome: Evaluation and Treatment. 2012), *Trastornos del Espectro Autista de Alto Funcionamiento. Otra forma de Aprender* (High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders. Another Way of Learning. 2012) and *Síndrome de Asperger: una guía dirigida a familiares, profesores y compañeros* (Asperger's Syndrome: A Guide for Family Members, Teachers and Classmates. 2009).

Innap Inserta



The Public Administration must reflect the complexity, plurality and diversity of the society it serves. This principle, which is engraved in letters of fire on the frontispiece of the mission of INAP (Spanish acronym, National Public Administration Institution) as a public organisation, does not only refer to democratic participation mechanisms for decision making, the integration of groups in which citizens participate to defend their interests, or the empowerment of inter-governmental relations in complex States such as ours; it refers, particularly, to a way of understanding the Administration's relationship with its environment, with society in general, with the people it serves and caters to, on occasion in a somewhat cold, dehumanised way. In brief, we are creating a socially responsible Administration, to use an evidently tautological, pleonastic expression, because either it is socially responsible or it is not.

That responsibility demands that we change our paradigm. The Administration's goal is to guarantee the rights and liberties of its citizens and to maintain social cohesion and integration, and that goal is non-transferrable: only the Public Administration can meet it. Nobody else. And to do this we need all the talent generated by society to work for the common good, for the general interest. This immense task requires new capabilities in public servants, as well as new abilities and new attitudes, some of which were displayed in our previous collection, Innap Innova, a brand that has brought about a startling transformation in the way public organisations understand their mission in this society of

permanent and accelerated evolution. We need all of society's talent to bloom, be shared and be focused on the common good. Wherever it is, and wherever it comes from, for talent is talent, and needs no adjectives.

A democratically advanced society, such as our own in Spain, has assumed that its ethical and moral progress will only be feasible if it places all of its potential at the service of equal opportunities, the defence of fundamental rights, the protection of the environment or the care, protection and development of the weaker members of society. And among the latter, we can find the huge group of people with some sort of disability. The worst disability a society can suffer from is not guaranteeing the equality of all of its citizens. And not just legal equality, since in most cases it is not the disability itself that encumbers the lives of so many people, but the thoughts and attitudes others have towards them.

The Administration must have a crucial role in the change of values related to the understanding, treatment, protection and valuing of disabilities, no longer as a discriminatory factor, but as a potential for the development of organisations and the ethical commitment of people with their fellow men and women. We no longer talk of disabled people, but of people who have some form of disability, some impediment that does not allow them to do, say, hear, see, behave, react in some specific situations, but does not hinder them at all in others.

Approximately 10% of the Spanish population has some type of disability. The unemployment rate for this group of people may be as high as 40%. According to recent studies, around two thirds of people with functional diversity who are of working age have quit or been excluded from the most common and normal form of economic inclusion for

this stage in their lives: remunerated employment¹. The INE (Spanish acronym, National Statistics Institute), in its “Empleo de Personas con Discapacidad 2011” (Employment of People with Disabilities 2011) Survey, points out, among other conclusions, that less than 5% of the working age population has a certificate of disability (4.1%); that the activity rate of this group is almost 40 percentage points lower than the rate for the population with no disabilities; that, in addition to gender and age, employment participation is highly dependant on the type and intensity of the disability, so that people who have disability associated with hearing loss are the most actively employed, with an activity rate double that of those with mental disorders, which are in turn the least active group (54.4% compared to 25.5%). Likewise, this survey highlights the importance of training as an integrative variable for social and occupational integration. Due to this, activity and employment rates increase as the training and education levels increase, to the point of being 20 percentage points above the average for people with disabilities and higher education.

It is precisely the achievement of social and occupational inclusion that demands the direct intervention of the public powers in terms of the fight against the discrimination these people face. The Administration —and society as a whole— cannot afford to waste all the talent these people possess, not in economic terms, but in ethical terms.

Due to this, the INAP, as the benchmark institution for matters of disability and public employment —we must remember that 89.22% of people with disabilities who joined the Administración General del Estado (General Administration

¹ Colectivo Ioé (2013): “Diversidad funcional en España. Hacia la inclusión en igualdad de las personas con discapacidades”, “(Functional Diversity in Spain. Towards Equal Inclusion of People with Disabilities), in *Revista Española de Discapacidad*, Spanish Disabilities magazine), I (I): 33-46.

of the State) between 2003 and 2011 have done so into organisms and hierarchies whose selection processes were entrusted to the Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública — (INAP; National Public Administration Institute). As a generator of transformative knowledge, the Institution has decided that it must place all of its capabilities, all of its knowledge and all of its innovative will at the service of the employment inclusion of people with disabilities, both as a project in itself and as a value that must impregnate all the organisms of the Spanish Administration.

One result of this commitment is this Innap Inserta collection, whose main objective is to spread information about certain types of disabilities to the people who work in the Administration, and provide mechanisms for a better understanding of the problem, tools to support the employment inclusion of people with disabilities in the work environment, and provide knowledge to help them effectively react, relate, serve, aid and integrate these people from their different positions as co-workers, bosses or subordinates.

In order to do this, we continue along the intended path of the Innap Innova collection, with the decision to create prominently practical materials, available in pocket book format, that enable people to approach the subject in a short period of time, offering options to examine the issues at hand at greater detail, and capable of generating didactic material that can aid further educational activities.

And so the INAP, in order to fulfil its mission of creating transformative knowledge in the public sector to benefit society, in order to promote social cohesion and a high-quality democracy, wants to make it known to all public employees that these goals cannot be met until the culture of our organisations is not impregnated of values such as those this

collection intends to transmit, and management strategies and systems do not understand and integrate people with disabilities across the board.

Companies that are applying diversity policies benefit greatly, with the consolidation of cultural values within their organisation, an improved company reputation, a greater capacity to attract and retain talent, an increase in the motivation of their personnel, a greater capacity for innovation and creativity, or an improvement in the services they provide. We must not forget that people are not disabled; a disability appears or does not, depending on the activity and circumstances. A person is not disabled; he or she has a disability. Thus, **if a disability does not limit someone, don't be the one to do so.**

Innovation, collaborative learning, and fostering talent are principles that inform our will to change. As public employees, we can transform ourselves. We hope this initiative helps with your transformation.

Manuel Arenilla Sáez
INAP Director