

Neurodiversity In The Workplace

Module 2-Creating an Inclusive Environment



**Support and solutions
for you and your employees**



Aims and Objectives

Module 2 – Creating an Inclusive Environment.

- . **The Role of leadership:** understanding the importance of leadership in fostering a neuro-diverse friendly workplace.
- . **Communication strategies** – Effective communication techniques to accommodate diverse communication styles.
- . **Physical environment** – Adapting the workspace to meet the needs of neurodivergent individuals.

Support and solutions
for you and your employees

ENERGY



BEEP

LEVEL-1



HEART RATE



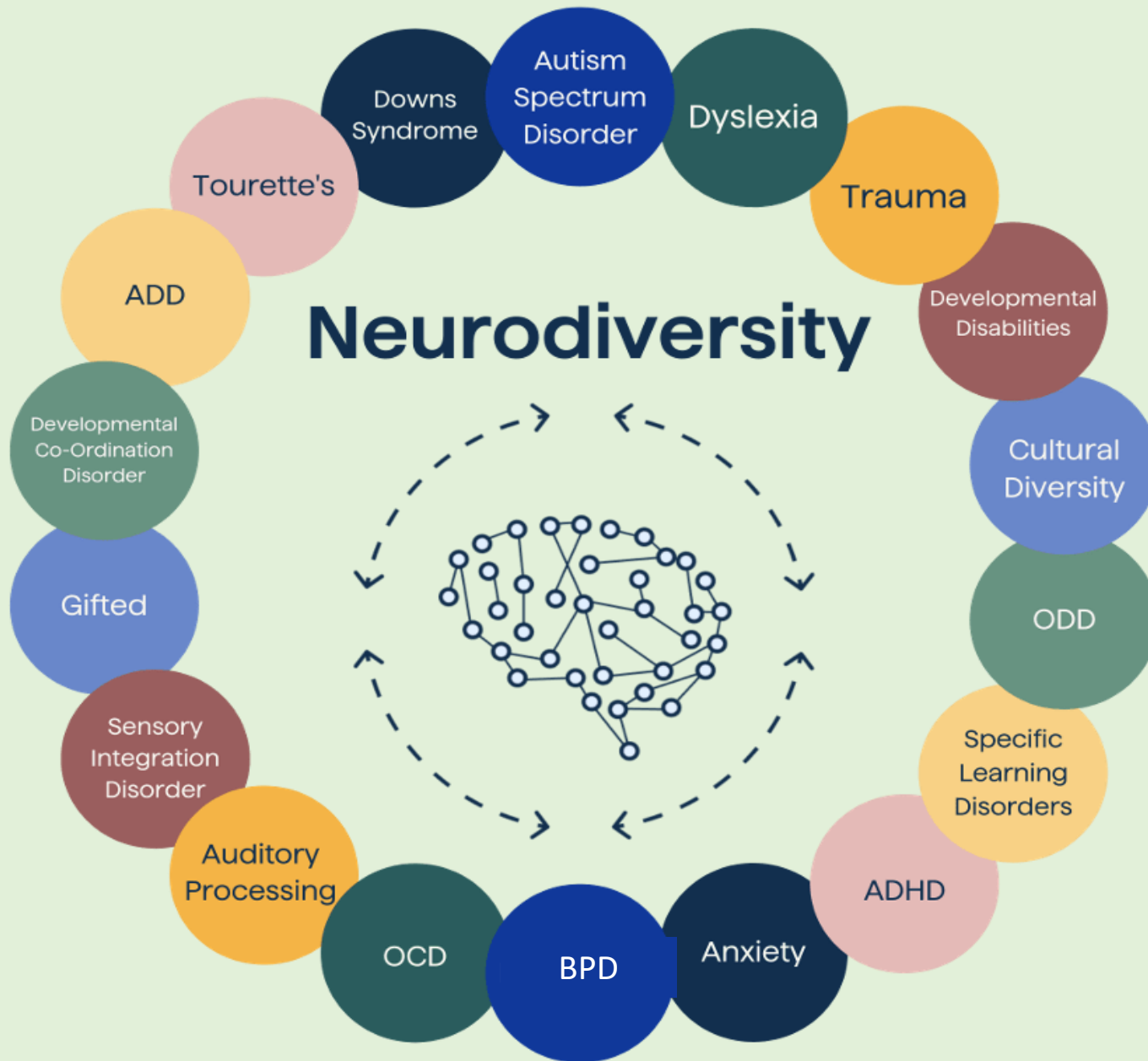
The Role of Leadership



**Support and solutions
for you and your employees**



LEADERSHIP



How many people are neurodivergent?



Current estimates suggest **20%** of people are knowingly or unknowingly **neurodivergent**

Over 1 million

UK public sector employees

Recognition

Retention and Wellbeing

Be curious

Education

Assistive Tools





Leadership

- Set the vision and commitment for your organisation.
- Lead by example.
- Promote education and awareness.
- Creating supportive environments.
- Consider working patterns.
- Empower Neurodiverse employees to have a voice.



**Support and solutions
for you and your employees**

Leadership (cont.)

- Career development.
- Build a culture of inclusion/willingness for cultural change.
- Measure and monitor.
- Engage with external partners and commissioners.
- Recognise and acknowledge / reward.

**Support and solutions
for you and your employees**



Communication Strategies



Support and solutions
for you and your employees

Every Autistic person is unique

Autistic

No eye contact

Doesn't understand sarcasm

Struggles to read facial expressions & body language

Dislikes trying new foods

'Monotone' voice

Dresses colourfully

Also Autistic

Internal struggle to work out when to make eye contact

Uses sarcasm to cope

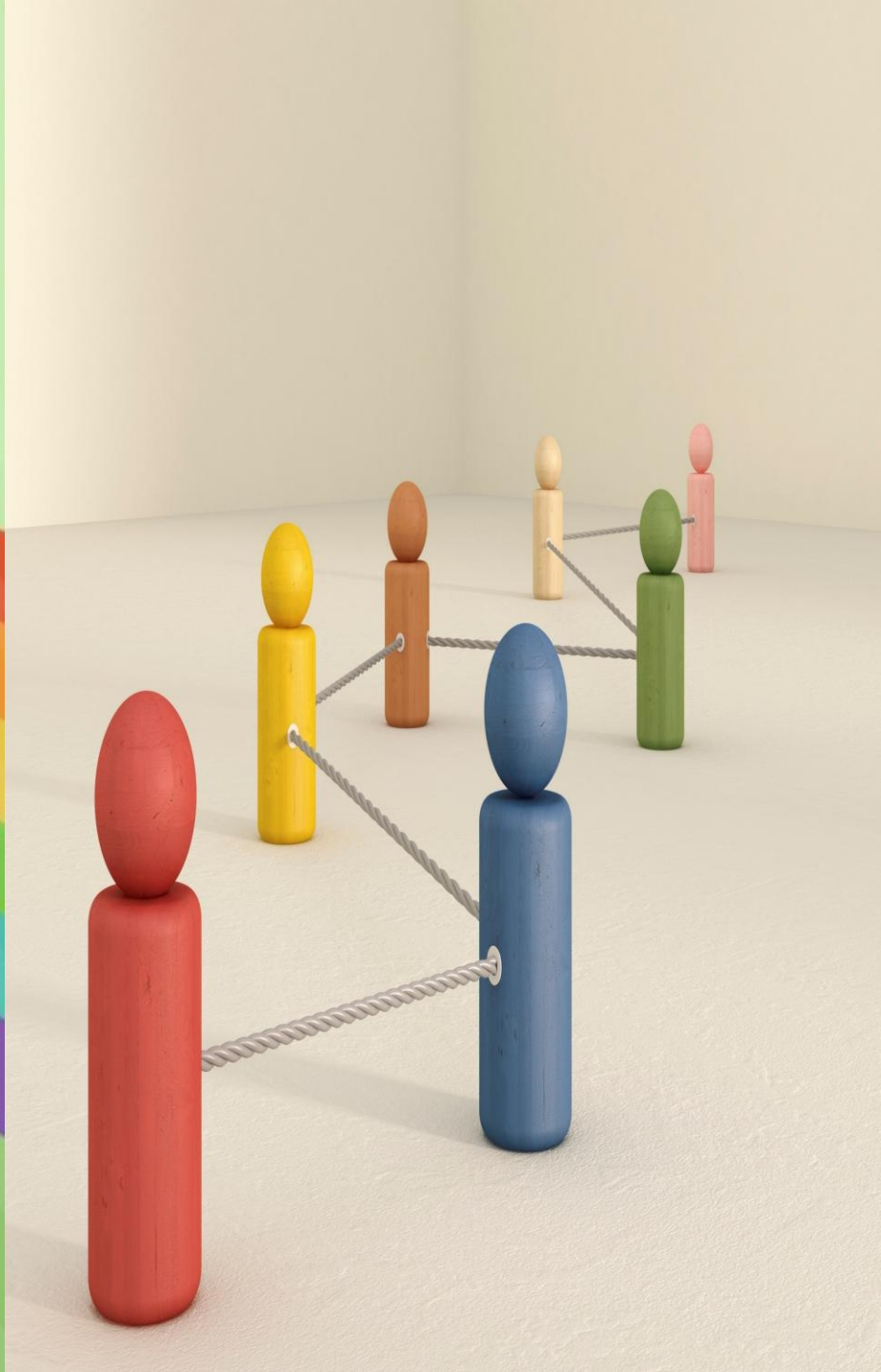
Hyper aware of facial expressions & body language

Loves to try new foods

Hyper expressive voice

Camouflages clothes to 'fit in'

@Colourblind_Zebra



ND vs. NT communication is **HARD**. The biggest thing gets me into 'trouble' at work. Some days it's all good, other days it's not but it can be really tiring having to watch everything you say or type in case you get it 'wrong'.

Expecting autistic employees to consistently communicate in neurotypical ways is like asking employees in a wheelchair to stand all day. We may be able to do it for a short time, but it causes extra stress and we're going to burn out fast.

For impromptu conversations, I follow up with an email that recaps the conversation because I need clarification in written form, and I know other people need it verbally.

Realise open plan offices are the 9th circle of hell!

I know I'm sometimes perceived as 'being 'difficult' when I'm just seeking clarity/understanding

Oh, my goodness, the agendas. For the love of all holy things, make an agenda. It makes me so nervous to feel like we aren't going to accomplish what we set out to in a meeting!

A neurotype is not something we can really change. If you are born neurotypical, great! If you are born neurodivergent, great! Now, let's figure out how we can communicate without having to change who we are no matter what neurotype we have.

Throughout my life, I've faced many challenges, from struggles to fit in with societal norms to difficulties in understanding and communicating my needs. It's been a long and arduous journey, filled with self-doubt, anxiety, and depression.

Do you want to give your neurodivergent colleagues the warm fuzzies? Loudly implement and ask for things like:

- Agendas for all meetings
- Meeting-free time blocks for deep thinking
- Instructions in both written and verbal form
- Time to process before agreeing to a decision

Take some of the burden of self-advocacy off our shoulders
(and *bonus* see how much these practices also help you!) (Lizzie Somerfield)

Clear and Direct Communication

Active Listening and Patience

Multi Modal Communication

Encourage feedback

Preparation and Advance Notice

Flexible Communication Style

Sensory Considerations

Inclusivity

NT PERCEPTION ≠ ND REALITY



DISORGANISED? CREATIVE.

HYPERACTIVE? PRODUCTIVE.

SLOW LEARNER? UNDERESTIMATED.

NON-VERBAL? COMMUNICATES CAREFULLY.

INTROVERTED? CONSIDERATE.

DISRUPTIVE? HIGHLY MOTIVATED.

POOR EYE CONTACT? DEEP THINKER.

NOT LISTENING? BRAIN OVERLOADED.

DEFIANT? STRONG MORALS.

INATTENTIVE? BRAINSTORMING.

Support and solutions
for you and your employees

Physical Environments



Support and solutions
for you and your employees

Flexible Seating Arrangements / Adjustable Furniture

Flexible Work Schedules and Remote Work Options

Inclusive Technology and Tools

Private Spaces for Personal Time

Sensory Considerations

Clear Signage and Visual Cues

Dedicated Break Areas

Individualised Work Plans

Case study



Meet **Sarah**, a talented data analyst at a medium-sized marketing firm.

Sarah has recently received an Autism diagnosis. She has been with the company for two years and joined an established team.

While she excels at her job, she has been struggling with overstimulation in the office, due to noise, bright lights, and what she often feels are unclear communication methods.

There are no other spaces to work in the office, and staff don't work from home, as the Manager likes to see people in the office each day.

The team leader often calls impromptu 'brainstorming meetings' to solve problems or 'create solutions.' As a small team, people have got used to these meetings, even though they often interrupt other work. 121's with Sarah's manager are often cancelled or cut short due to work pressures.

Sarah often finds it challenging to focus in an open-plan office and has expressed to a colleague that she sometimes feels very much 'out of the loop' and often worries that she will lose her job.

Questions

- What challenges do you feel Sarah may be impacted by?
- What do you feel may help Sarah?
- What adjustments do you feel may assist here?



Challenges Identified	Solutions Implemented
Feeling she was impacted by the bright lights and noise of the office...	Sarah was able to move to a desk in a quieter area, to minimise visual and auditory distraction, and was provided with noise-cancelling headphones. Desk lamps were provided to all staff and lights were sectioned so some could be turned off / left on.
Lack of quiet / other spaces to work.	A quiet room was established, where all employees could take a break. The room does have a sectioned workspace with noise-cancelling materials, but additionally an area with comfortable seating, plants, and a variety of lighting options.
Short-notice meetings.	Where possible short-notice meetings have been replaced with scheduled ones, with an agenda sent out 24 hours before. If short notice, a written summary is provided with the opportunity to provide feedback in written format after the meeting.
Limited 121's with Manager.	Sarah's Manager has regular 121's to check in on how she is doing, and anonymous feedback channels were developed, so employees didn't feel singled out.

Take Away Thoughts.....

- ✓ Understand and Respect Individual Differences...
- ✓ Flexibility in Communication Methods ...
- ✓ Clear and Structured Communication ...
- ✓ Create an Inclusive Meeting Environment ...
- ✓ Encourage a Feedback Culture ..
- ✓ Build a strength-based support system – actively identify all teams strengths and support utilisation
- ✓ Invest in Training and Awareness ...
- ✓ Leverage Technology ...
- ✓ Consider environmental factors from an inclusive perspective and what reasonable adjustments will be helpful for all team members.

**Support and solutions
for you and your employees**

Resources and Support

- [Branches \(autism.org.uk\)](https://autism.org.uk) Find a local branch of the National Autistic Society near you (children and adults)
- [AADD-UK | The site for and by adults with ADHD \(aadduk.org\)](https://aadduk.org)
- Autistica - <https://www.autistica.org.uk/about-us/about-us>
- [Workplace support -Landmark review calls on employers to boost support for autistic people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [The Buckland Review of Autism Employment: report and recommendations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [ADHD UK Welfare Pack | ADHD UK](#)

**Support and solutions
for you and your employees**

Media Clip Links

BBC Clip ND Mode - Neurodiversity in the Workplace – YouTube
<https://youtu.be/2MezgTHUoyc>

The Role of Leadership – Network Rail – <https://youtu.be/pjgQqxAtvKk?t=45>

HSBC, Neurodiversity, Work, and Me. [Neurodiversity & Me - HSBC on Vimeo](#)

Support and solutions
for you and your employees

Module One – Understanding Neurodiversity

- **Introduction to Neurodiversity:** Defining and exploring the spectrum of neurological differences.
- **Neurodivergent Conditions:** an overview of common neurodivergent conditions such as ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, and others.
- **Benefits of neurodiversity and neuro-inclusivity:** Exploring how embracing neuro-inclusivity can enhance creativity, problem-solving, communication, and innovation within the workplace.

Module Three – Awareness and Sensitivity Training

- **Building Awareness:** Educating employees on neurodiversity and breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions
- **Sensitivity Training:** Developing empathy and understanding towards neurodivergent colleagues.
- **Creating Allies:** Empowering employees to become advocates for neuro-inclusion in the workplace.

Module Four – The Role Of The Line Manager and Organisation

- **Legal Framework:** An overview of legal requirements related to neurodiversity in the workplace.
- **Ethical considerations:** Ensuring a respectful and inclusive environment while respecting privacy and individual rights.
- **Recruitment and Retention** – attracting neurodivergent talent, interviews, and reasonable workplace adjustments.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** Learning from the experience of companies that have navigated neurodiversity inclusion effectively.
- **Creating lasting change** – key takeaways to continuing to foster a neurodiverse and inclusive workplace culture.

Neurodiversity in the Workplace – Modules 1 to 4

Support and solutions
for you and your employees



Please put any feedback into
chat and **one or two** things
you will **take away with you**
from today's session.

Thank you



www.akswellbeing.com



**Support and solutions
for you and your employees**

References

- BBC, I'm neurodiverse and this is how I see the world [online] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Mez9THUoyc&t=8s> [Accessed 16.8.24]
- Colourblind Zebra image [online] Accessed 9.9.24 <https://www.tumblr.com/my-autism-adhd-b>
- Communication strategies picture - search Microsoft 365 stock images [Accessed 16.8.24] [log/721313268565721088/autistic-people-are-unique](https://www.microsoft.com/log/721313268565721088/autistic-people-are-unique)
- Doyle, N. (2020) Neurodiversity at work: a biopsychosocial model and the impact on working adults. British Medical Bulletin 135(1), 108-125 [Accessed 16.8.24]
- Havard Business School- Why diverse teams are smarter <https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter> [Accessed 12.9.24]
- HSBC, Neurodiversity, work and me. [online] Neurodiversity & Me - HSBC on Vimeo vimeo.com/414345656?msockid=3afc206452a26ff801ef35be53696ee7 [Accessed 29.5.25]
- Leadership boats - search Microsoft 365 stick images [Accessed 16.8.24]
- Leadership image- stock images free images (microsoft365)[accessed 68..24]
- Making recruitment in government more neuro-inclusive (apolitical. co) [Accessed 16.8.24]
- Neurodiversity image by [Suzanne Goh, MD] via [What is Neurodiversity? (corticacare.com)]<https://prompta.ai/en/neurodiversity-is-an-asset-in-the-workplace/> [Accessed 5.6.24]
- Neurodiversity work cloud [online] <https://line25consulting.com/neurodiversity-workplace/> [Accessed 29.08.24]
- Sarah image - search Microsoft 365 stock images [Accessed 9.9.24]
- The power of neurodiversity in the workplace [online] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjgQqxAtvKk&t=56s> [Accessed 6.8.24]

**Support and solutions
for you and your employees**