

Neurodiversity In The Workplace

Module Three – Awareness and Sensitivity Training



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Aims and Objectives

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.

Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.

Harvard Health 2021



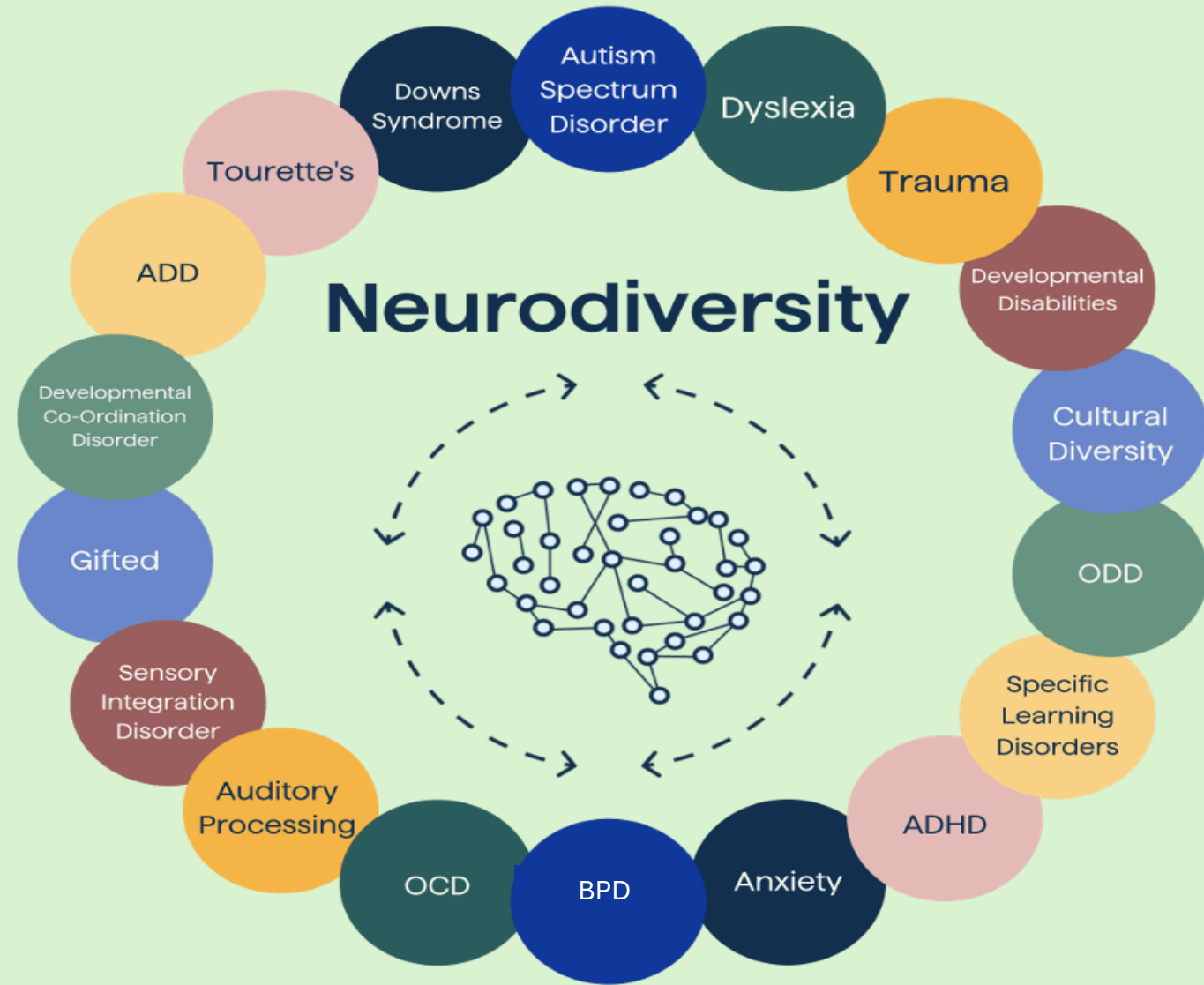
15-20% of the population are thought to be Neurodivergent

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Neurological Difference.....

•**Neurodiversity** = the diversity of all brains

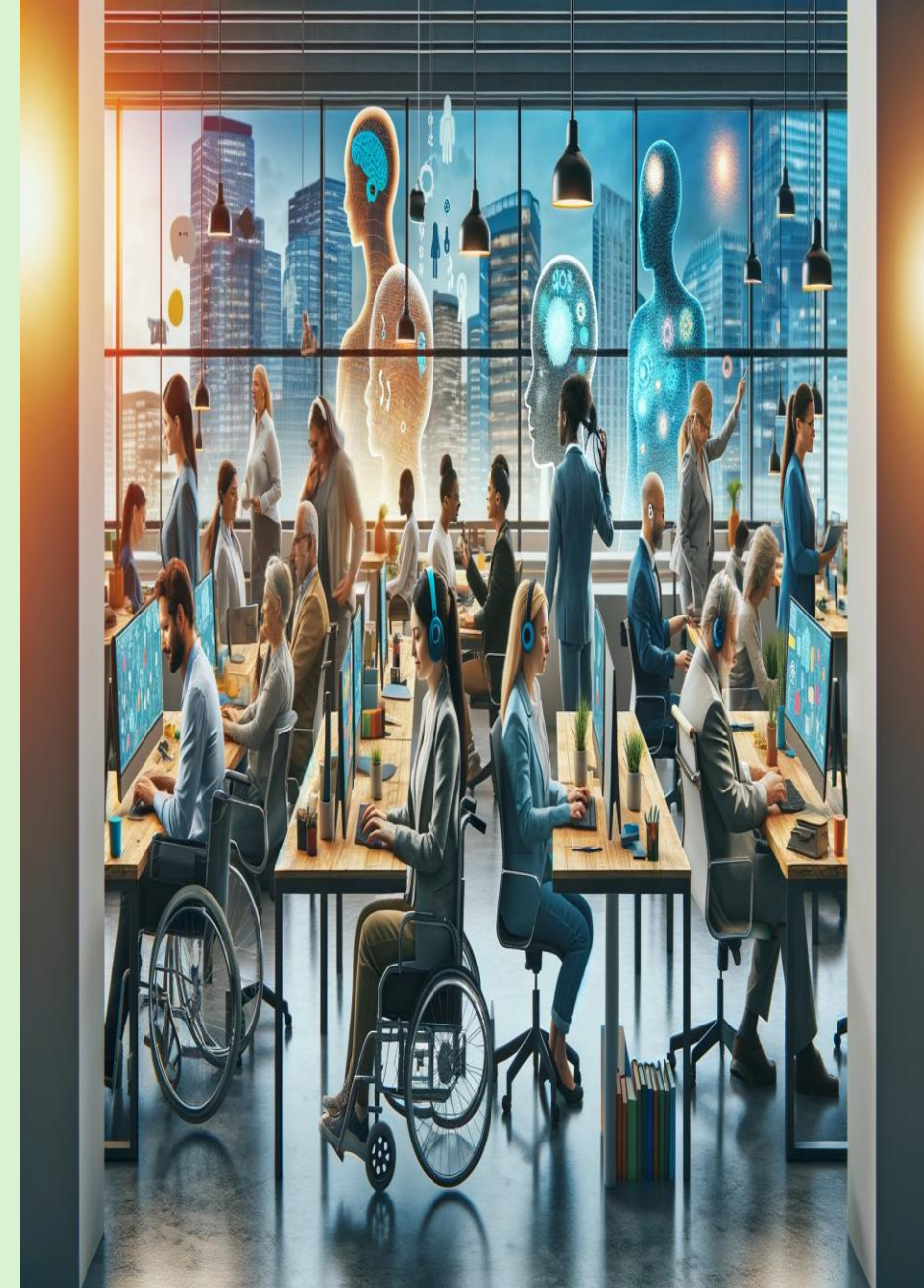
•**Neurodivergent** = a person whose brain diverges from the dominant or typical pattern.



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Stereotypes and Misconceptions



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A stereotype is a fixed general image or set of characteristics that a lot of people believe represent a particular type of person or thing.

If someone is stereotyped as something, people form a fixed general idea or image of them, so that it is assumed that they will behave in a particular way.

(© Collins 2024)

Misconception = an idea that is wrong because it is based on a failure to understand a situation :

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All Neurodivergent people are the same

Neurodivergent people can't have meaningful relationships

All Autistic people have savant abilities.

Neurodivergence is always a disability

ADHD is just about hyperactivity or lack of focus

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**Dyslexia is just about
reading backwards**

**Neurodivergence can
be 'fixed' or 'cured'**

**Neurodivergent people lack empathy or
emotion**

Only children are neurodivergent

Neurodivergent conditions are caused by bad parenting or vaccines.

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Empathy and Understanding

The ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation

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Please don't tell me to "just go and talk to them" unless you truly understand the weight of what that entails. Allow me to walk you through how many of my social interactions unfold, as an autistic person in professional settings:

- 1. First, I sift through the countless negative encounters I've had over the years when meeting new people;**
- 2. Then, anxiety creeps in about how I'll be perceived, and I meticulously script every word I plan to say (but never am able to stick to);**
- 3. Despite my preparation, I often come across as too blunt or awkward, fumbling over introductions or misgauging the amount of detail needed for a simple "How are you?";**
- 4. I start the internal countdown, keeping track of how long I've maintained eye contact, reminding myself to look away at intervals to seem "natural";**
- 5. My face begins to ache from forcing expressions meant to convey friendliness or enthusiasm, all in an effort to make the other person more at ease;**
- 6. Meanwhile, I'm mentally repeating their words, trying to stay engaged and keep up with the conversation;**
- 7. As soon as there's a pause, panic sets in as I scramble to find a link between topics — a connection my brain doesn't effortlessly make;**
- 8. I either interrupt too quickly or wait too long, both of which make me seem either rude or disinterested;**
- 9. I'm constantly working to decipher hidden meanings in gestures, expressions, and tone, applying learned knowledge where instinct is lacking;**
- 10. At some point, I'll notice that I've been misunderstood, having focused so intensely on all the above that I can't express myself clearly — or worse, I've come off as cold or rude. I know the person may now avoid me;**
- 11. Finally, I leave the conversation drained, fully aware that I'll spend the next several days replaying the interaction, picking apart every mistake, and berating myself.**

Amelia Platton

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“So, I implore you: stop oversimplifying your advice to neurodivergent colleagues. What might seem like insignificant small talk to you is an entirely different ordeal for me”.

A few gentle reminders for interacting with neurodivergent people:

1. **Be patient**, avoid jumping to conclusions, and always lead with kindness.
2. **Ask people** about their preferred mode of communication.
3. Consider the **dynamics of that method** (for example, if the conversation is virtual, some may be more comfortable with the camera off).
4. **Be mindful of the environment**, as sensory overload makes everything more difficult.
5. Don't **dismiss people** or assume they're not worth engaging based on a single interaction.
6. **Please, don't stare** — you won't learn much about me from my body language or eye contact alone.



Amelia Platton is on LinkedIn and posts under the ND Lawyer project

Creating Allies



March Each Year – click the link to access the recordings-
[NCW 2025 Event Recordings](#)



**World Autism
Acceptance Month April
2026**



BE THE REASON WHY
SOMEONE FEELS INCLUDED,
WELCOMED, SUPPORTED,
SAFE, AND VALUED.

@BRITANDCO

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**Did you know
Richard Branson
is dyslexic?**



**"Dyslexia is an
alternative way of
thinking"**

- Richard Branson, Entrepreneur

www.neurodiversityweek.com

**"Because I do read
slowly, I retain almost
everything I read. I don't
skip over things and I'm
able to appreciate the
writing"**



- Steven Spielberg, Director /
Producer / Screenwriter

www.neurodiversityweek.com



**"Neurodiversity may be every
bit as crucial for the human
race as biodiversity is for life
in general. Who can say what
form of wiring will prove best
at any given moment"**

- Harvey Blume, Journalist

www.neurodiversityweek.com

**Did you know
Lewis Capaldi
has Tourette's?**



Lewis Capaldi, Singer / Songwriter

www.neurodiversityweek.com

**Did you know
Daniel Radcliffe
is dyspraxic?**



**"It has never held me back.
Some of the smartest people
I know are people who have
learning disabilities"**

Daniel Radcliffe, Actor

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**"To be different is
not a weakness.
It's a strength in
many ways, because
you stand out from
the crowd"**



- Greta Thunberg on why her autism
is a strength

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**Did you know Chris
Packham is Autistic?**



**"Humanity has prospered of
people with autistic traits.
Without them, we wouldn't have
put a man on the moon or be
running software programs"**

- Chris Packham, Naturalist / Presenter

www.neurodiversityweek.com

The wider our variety of human neurotypes in the workplace, the better off the organization

(Aherne, Armstrong, Doyle, Silberman).

“A champion is an individual within an organisation who takes on the role of advocating for specific initiatives, such as mental health awareness, EDI, or employee wellbeing. In the context of neurodiversity, champions serve as key contacts who provide support, guidance, and information to both managers and employees about neurodiversity in the workplace.”

@wearewellbeing 21.09.2024

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Conversation Starters

Roll the die and see what to share



Discuss the unique talents & strengths that neurodivergent individuals bring to a team or community



How does having diverse perspectives enhance creativity & problem solving?



Give one example of how we can create a neuro-inclusive culture for individuals in the workplace



What support options do you have in place to empower neurodivergent individuals & what other adjustments could be beneficial?



How do you think your organisation could make recruitment & onboarding processes more neuro-inclusive?



Share stories or examples of how neurodivergent individuals have used their unique skills to achieve success, for example, problem-solving

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 Two – Creating an Inclusive Environment.

- **Physical environment** – Adapting the workspace to meet the needs of neurodivergent individuals.
- **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.

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.

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Resources and Support

Adult ADHD self-report scale -
[10852_elto_question_fhp2.PDF](#)
([adhdawarenessmonth.org](#))

Neurodiversity Celebration Week - [Neurodiversity
Celebration Week](#)

ADHD Awareness - [Expert ADHD Info -
ADHDAwarenessMonth 2025](#)

National Autistic Society - [Contact us \(autism.org.uk\)](#)

ADHD Europe - [About Us – ADHD Europe](#)

World Autism Acceptance Month - [World Autism
Acceptance Month 2026](#)

**T'ain't what you do,
it's the way that you
do it, that's what
gets results.
(Ella Fitzgerald song
1939)**



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Please take a minute to put into the chat one or two things you have valued or will take away from today's session, and any feedback – thank you.



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Thank you



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**With awareness and
sensitivity**

**“T’ain’t what you do,
it’s the way that you
do it, that’s what gets
results”.**

(Ella Fitzgerald 1939)



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