100% ALL people are neurodiverse

**Neurodiversity**

Diversity of human minds. All brains and neurocognition vary among all individuals.

Neurodiversity includes all people, brains, and neurotypes. Inc Neurotypical people! (Wise 2023).

80% of people are neurotypical

**Neurotypical**

A person considered by society to be ‘typically developing’, and who does not identify as belonging to a Neurominority group (i.e. neurocognitive differences, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, etc.) (Radulski 2022).

20% of people are neurodivergent

**Neurominority / Neurodivergent**

Terms can be used interchangeably. A person who processes, thinks, and responds to the world in a way that is different (diverges) to the majority. (Doyle 2024).

Dyslexia 1 in 10 (ADF 2022)

Dyslexia a learning difference affecting reading, writing and spelling.

ADHD 1 in 10 (NLM 2024)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) is a neurotype affecting attention, thinking, executive functioning, processing and impulse.

Autism 1 in 36 (CDC 2023)

Autism is a neurotype impacting social interaction, communication, sensory processing and cognitive processes. Needs fluctuate and change.

Approx **20% of the population** are neurodivergent, that is **1 in 5** people. Includes:

Autism ADHD Dyslexia Dyscalculia Dysgraphia

OCD Tourettes Anxiety

PTSD/Trauma Sensory Integration Disorder

Auditory Processing Mental Health Conditions

**Social Model of Disability:**

* Views disability as a result of social, environmental, and attitudinal barriers that prevent full participation in society.
* Shifts the focus from the individual's impairment to the barriers created by society.
* Advocates for changes in the environment, policies, and attitudes to create a more inclusive society where everyone can participate fully.

Medical Model of Disability:

1. Views disability as a medical problem located within the individual.
2. Focuses on diagnosing and treating impairments/conditions to "fix" the individual.
3. Emphasizes a need for medical intervention and rehabilitation to help individuals function within existing societal norms.

**Neuro-inclusion** is an opportunity to create workplaces where everyone thrives. It means to consciously and actively include all types of information processing, learning, and communication styles.

* Creates equity
* Engenders confidence and well being in all employees
* Addresses talent shortages and staff retention

**Identity first language** Autistic person not person first – person with Autism

Autism (social) not ASD Autism Spectrum Disorder (medical)

Rainbow Infinity not puzzle piece

**Functioning labels** (e.g. "high-functioning”, "low-functioning") reduce complex experiences to simplistic terms, not fully capturing the unique strengths and challenges of everyone.

Functioning labels describe a neurodivergent person’s ability to ‘appear normal’ (from the outside). They don’t describe the way that person experiences being neurodivergent.

Use high/low support needs but remember there are Spikey profiles.

**Micro Aggressions**

ADHD “Please stop fidgeting and focus more.” “everyone gets distracted sometimes”

Implies that ADHD is a lack of effort rather than a neurological difference affecting focus and attention. Dismisses the executive functioning challenges associated with ADHD, often causing shame or frustration.

Autism “Isn’t everyone a little autistic?.” “Looking at me when I’m talking to you”

Reflects stereotypes about autism and implies that autistic traits are always visible or recognisable. Ignores the discomfort or difficulty autistic people may have with eye contact and social interactions, often leading to stress.

OCD “You’re triggering my OCD.” “Don’t be so OCD.”

Reflects stereotypes about OCD and oversimplifies the compulsions and intrusive thoughts characteristic of OCD, which are not just “overthinking.”

PTSD “It’s not that big of a deal.” Time heals all wounds.”

Undermines common PTSD triggers, which can cause intense stress or flashbacks for those with PTSD.

**Different Cognitive Styles**

Understand your employees’ different thinking styles and allocate tasks based on strengths. Consider job crafting and collaboration.

Someone with a **monotropic** mind focuses on one or a few things but in greater detail, finding it challenging to switch tasks, change environments or shift attention tunnels.

* Focus attention on one thing at a time
* Attention towards smaller number of interests
* Miss things outside of current attention tunnel

Someone with a polytropic mind can focus on multiple things at once but in lesser detail. They are also able to transition between topics, environments or situations more easily than a monotropic mind.

**Double Empathy Study**

Neurodivergent people communicate, experience emotions, interact, form relationships, and sense the world, differently to neurotypicals. This makes it difficult for neurotypical people to understand and to empathise with them. And vice-versa.

Neurodivergent people lack ‘social insight’ into neurotypical culture and communication, **AND** neurotypical people lack ‘social insight’ into **Neurodivergent culture and communication.**

**Miscommunication**

Both sides may **misread each other's intentions** due to differences in how communication is interpreted.

Straight to the point, less social padding, honest - Perceived as rude or inconsiderate

Perceived as dishonest, unclear, vague or missed - Kind, softening messages, indirect

**Reasonable Adjustments** are steps workplaces can take to improve accessibility and inclusion for Disability cohorts—including Neurominority groups! It’s about ‘Equity’ (fairness) vs. ‘Equality’ (everyone treated the same)

**What’s ‘Reasonable’?** “Reasonable adjustments are any form of assistance or adjustment that is necessary, possible and reasonable to reduce or eliminate barriers at work.” (Australian Government 2013)

**Tasking**

**Be Clear on What You Need:**

* **Specify Tasks Clearly**: Describe the task in detail, breaking it down if necessary. Avoid vague instructions.
* **Provide Examples**: Use examples or templates if possible to illustrate your expectations.
* **Encourage Questions**: Create an open space for clarifications to ensure alignment.

**Set Clear Deadlines (When You Need It):**

* **Provide Exact Dates/Times:** Rather than "ASAP" or "soon," give specific deadlines.
* **Include Interim Milestones:** For longer projects, set periodic check-ins or milestones to keep progress on track.
* **Offer Flexibility Where Possible**: Recognise individual work styles and adjust deadlines if realistic and achievable.

**Explain Why It’s Important:**

* **Contextualise the Task’s Impact**: Explain how this task contributes to team or company goals.
* **Highlight the Role of Their Skills**: Acknowledge how their strengths are particularly valuable in achieving the task.
* **Provide Connection to Broader Goals**: Link the task to larger project or organisational objectives, which can increase engagement and motivation.

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