

Neurodiversity – an easy read guide by Dynamite

Some important terms

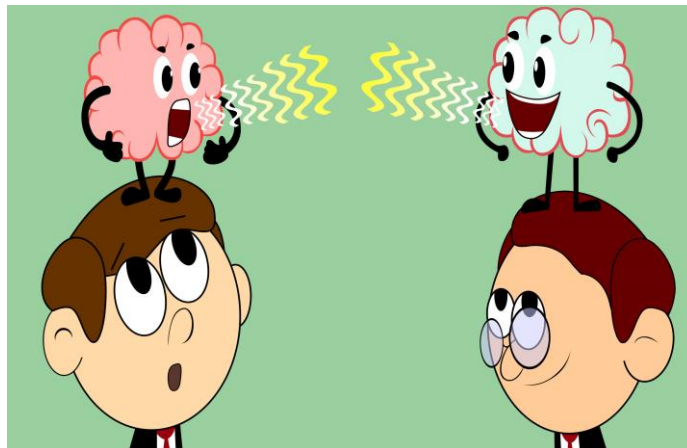
Neurodiversity – The idea that everyone’s brains are organised in a different way.

Neurodiverse – This describes a group of people with differently organised brains. For example the pupils in a school might be neurodiverse. No one can be neurodiverse on their own.

Neurotypical – People who have brains which are organised in the most typical sort of way.

Neurodivergent – People who have brains which are organised in a different way. Sometimes these people may have a diagnosis like Autism, Learning Disability, ADHD, Dyslexia etc

What is Neurodiversity?



Neurodiversity is the idea that everyone’s brains are organised in different ways.

In the same way that our fingerprints are unique, our brains are unique too.

Some people have brains which are organised in a very different way, sometimes people may have a diagnosis like Autism, Learning Disability, ADHD, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia, but sometimes the differences don’t fit neatly into a diagnosis.

In **neurodiversity** people with differently organised brains are called **neurodivergent** and everyone else is called **neurotypical**.

On average one in seven people are **neurodivergent**.



It is a good thing for society to have people with very differently organised brains.

Lots of important people from history have achieved great things because they were **neurodivergent**.



For example the scientist Alan Turing helped to invent computers because his brain was able to focus on numbers in a way lots of **neurotypical** people couldn't.

For this reason Neurodiversity does not see conditions like Autism, Learning Disability, ADHD, Dyslexia or Dyspraxia as illnesses which should be treated. They are part of who someone is.

What does neurodiversity say about diagnosis?

Neurodiversity does not stop people getting a diagnosis.

However it says that diagnosis doesn't tell you everything about a person.

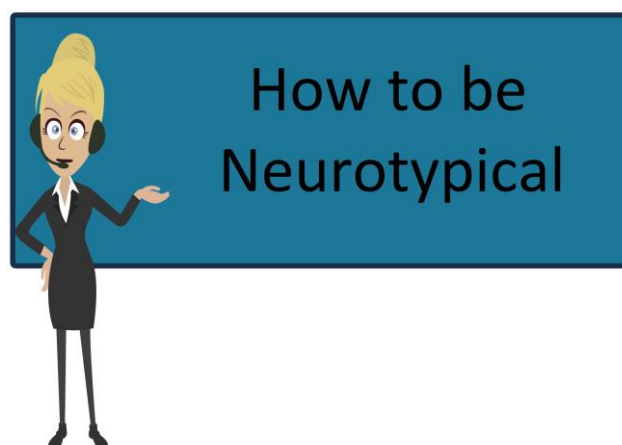
For example two autistic people could be completely different from each other even though they have the same diagnosis.



There are also some **neurodivergent** people who don't have a diagnosis, and they should still get the support they need.

What does neurodiversity mean for schools and young people's services?

In the past the focus has been on teaching **neurodivergent** people to be more like **neurotypical** people.



Neurodiversity focuses on supporting **neurodivergent** people to achieve and be happy without trying to change who they are.

Neurodivergent people can often struggle to work, make friends and achieve the things they want from life.

Neurodiversity says that this is not because there is something wrong with **neurodivergent** people, there is something wrong with how society has been set up to mainly support **neurotypical** people.

Neurodiversity challenges professionals who work with young people to think about how expectations to be **neurotypical** can make life difficult for **neurodivergent** young people.

For example a school having rules about making eye contact with staff can be stressful for young autistic people and isn't necessary for them to learn.

Schools should also try not to assume what support a young person might need because of their diagnosis because two people with the same diagnosis may not have the same support needs.

Schools should never assume that someone isn't able to do something because of their diagnosis.