



Information Paper



Understanding Common Neurodiversity Terms

Language and terminology continue to evolve, and individuals may have different preferences about the language they use. The definitions provided reflect commonly accepted usage at the time of publication and are intended to support understanding rather than provide definitive clinical or diagnostic definitions. Wherever possible, use the language a person uses to describe themselves.

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity refers to the **natural diversity of human brains** and minds. Every person thinks, learns, and processes information differently, and these differences are a normal and valuable part of human diversity.

Neurodivergent

Neurodivergent **describes an individual** who has a naturally different way of thinking or processing the world compared with what is considered 'typical' within society.

Neurotypical

A neurotypical person has a style of thinking and processing information is widely seen across the general population. It is simply **one way of being, not a standard for others** to be measured against.

Neurodiverse

A group is neurodiverse when it includes **people with different neurotypes**. Workplaces benefit from neurodiverse teams because a mix of perspectives strengthens problem solving, creativity, innovation, and inclusion.

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Examples of common neurotypes may include:

Autism: A lifelong neurological variation shaping how a person experiences the world. Autistic people may think, feel, communicate, connect, and experience their environments differently.

ADHD: A lifelong neurological difference impacting how people process information, manage attention, and regulate activity levels. People with ADHD have distinct thinking patterns and approaches to tasks that reflect their neurodivergence. They demonstrate remarkable creativity, energy, and innovative problem solving abilities.

Dyslexia: A specific learning difference characterised by difficulties in word reading and/or spelling. These difficulties may affect accuracy, speed, or both and is often accompanied by strengths in reasoning, creativity, and visual thinking.

Dyspraxia, also known as Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD): A neurological condition affecting movement, coordination, and organisation. It impacts fine and gross motor skills, spatial awareness, and executive function, often leading to difficulties in everyday tasks.

Dyscalculia: A specific learning difference that can impact a person's ability to understand numbers which can lead to a diverse range of support needs in mathematics. This is not indicative of their overall intelligence or capacity of excel in other subjects. Strengths include good verbal communication skills, innovative problem solving, strategic thinking and holistic approaches, and strengths in art, music, design, architecture, and engineering.

Tourette Syndrome: A neurological difference that may cause sudden, unwanted, and uncontrolled rapid and repeated movements or vocal sounds called 'tics'.

These examples are not exhaustive, and no two people will share the same profile of strengths, preferences, or support needs.

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Key Takeaways

- ▶ Neurodiversity refers to the natural diversity of human brains and minds.
- ▶ Neurodivergent describes an individual, while neurodiverse describes a group of people with different neurotypes.
- ▶ Terminology and language preferences can vary between individuals and communities. Terminology and preferences may also continue to evolve over time.
- ▶ Avoid making assumptions about a person's strengths, preferences, or support needs based on their neurotype.



Scan QR code for more resources from the Neurodiversity Works toolkit, designed to create inclusive workplaces.

**Autism Queensland is here to help—
get in touch to learn more:**

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