

Neurodiversity 101:

It's never 'just' one thing!

Dose and pattern

In the past single screening for one Learning Difficulty has taken place e.g. for Dyslexia despite all NDs co-occurring more often than not.

We can be quick to conclude that challenges are ADHD, ASD or Dyslexia without necessarily considering the differential diagnosis and potential presence of other conditions.

- Pattern of NDs
- Degree of challenge
- Timing of adversity
- Dose (amount of adversity)
- Specific patterns of adversity (educational experiences; homelessness, in care, trauma, head injury, illness)

We are the sum of our parts

Early years

Early years experiences can have long term impacts on behavioural manifestations as a child and an adult.

Poor nutrition can impact on brain development. Use of drugs in teen years can have an impact on adolescent brain development. Lack of schooling can result in missing gaps in learning to be literate.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) can mask as many things. TBI in children can have many long-term effects and may lie dormant until adolescence⁶. Therefore, children may appear to have recovered from their TBI only to develop social and emotional difficulties years later

Growing up

Each learner's story is unique, and labels don't describe a person or how to support specific needs. Each person's challenges are often more than a specific ND; they may include their concerns over family, homes, how they see the world and how the world sees them.

Paths to success include:

- ✓ Staff training to consider and understand behaviours and have strategies to support the learner.
- ✓ Accessible information and processes at all points of the education pathway.
- ✓ Robust tools to screen and support and identify learners of concern.
- ✓ Accurate data to inform policy and practice and target intervention.

Behaviours seen don't imply causation

Do-IT>

"The society that loses its grip on the past is in danger, for it produces men who know nothing but the present, and who are not aware that life had been, and could be, different from what it is."

Aristotle