

Here are some key facts surrounding neurodiversity.

What is neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is a fairly new term. It recognises the fact that our brains (neuro-) naturally vary from person to person (are diverse).

It moves away from medical words such as 'disorder', 'disability' and 'difficulty'. Instead of just looking at what someone struggles with, it encourages us to think about each person as an individual.

What conditions are included in neurodiversity?

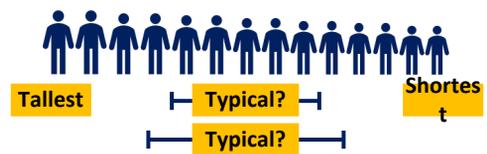
Neurodiversity is more than another word for Autism or Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).

Although people on the Autism Spectrum are generally considered to be neurodiverse, lots of other conditions also come under the neurodiversity umbrella. These conditions are sometimes referred to as Neurodevelopmental Disorders (NDDs).

What do we mean when we say that neurodiversity is dimensional not categorical?

Some features of humans are **categorical**: they fit into neat 'boxes' or categories. For example, your blood type can be categorised as A, B, AB or O. There are no other blood types and you can't be half-way between Type A and Type O (or any of the others).

Other features of humans are **dimensional**: they do not fit into neat boxes. Instead, people sit somewhere on a scale or **spectrum** for that feature. For example, some people are shorter than others. There is a spectrum of height. However, whilst it's easy to pick out the tallest and the shortest people, it's hard to say exactly where the dividing line is between being short and being 'typical' height or between being 'typical' height and being tall.



Neurodiversity is somewhat like height. It is dimensional. Therefore, some people will have many traits that relate to a condition. Others will have fewer traits. Some will have different combinations of these traits and not fit within a given condition's parameters.

Whilst it's easier to classify people (if required or wanted) at each end of the neurodiversity spectrum, there is a grey area in between where there is no clear cut-off between 'neurodiverse with a few traits' and 'neurotypical but with some traits of neurodiversity'. This is often heavily debated in terms of what and who defines a condition.

