

Neurodiversity 101: A Person-Centred Approach

What do we mean by ‘person-centred’?

‘Person-centred’ is an outlook or philosophy that (as you might have guessed) puts the person or learner in question at the centre of all plans, discussions and interventions. This is in contrast to a traditional model where the focus is on a disease or health condition.

A biopsychosocial approach

A person-centred approach is often seen as a **biopsychosocial** one, taking into account all aspects of a person – their body (bio-), mind (psycho-) and their environment (social) and the ways these interact –and considering how best to support the learner

‘health’ and ‘wellbeing’ depend not only on the biology of illness but on **the whole person** (body and mind) **and their social environment** (family, friends, socioeconomic background, etc.). To ensure good health, you need to look at the whole person and their environment. It aligns to ICF approaches (www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/).

For example, a person’s neurodiversity might cause them to struggle with maths. They may therefore think themselves ‘stupid’ and have low mood, which affects their work and social life. To improve the health of this person, their underlying poor maths skills and maths anxiety need to be considered. Simply medicating their depression would not necessarily be effective.

The biopsychosocial model states that

