

Neurodiversity 101:

Types of Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity

As we discussed in Part 1, neurodiversity doesn't just mean Autism Spectrum Disorders. It covers all aspects of variation (diversity) in how our brains (neuro-) work.

There are several key traits that are usually considered when talking about neurodiversity. These correspond to medical disorders, all of which are fairly common but some of which are not very well known.

Social interactivity & communication

This trait describes how well you can 'read' emotions in other people and whether and how you interact and communicate with other people.

People who are less socially interactive than the 'norm' and communicate differently may have an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Attention, activity levels & impulsivity

These traits describe how easy it is for you to focus and pay attention, how easy it is for you to think before you act and whether you are hyperactive compared to the 'norm'.

People who are less attentive and/or more hyperactive and/or more impulsive than the 'norm' may have Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

Language

This trait describes how well you can understand and produce spoken language.

People who find understanding and/or producing spoken language difficult may have Developmental Language Disorder.

Movement & Coordination

This trait describes how well you can make small and large movements (e.g. tying shoelaces or running) and how well you can balance.

People who struggle with movements and/or balance may have Developmental Coordination Disorder, sometimes also called Developmental Dyspraxia.

Tics

This trait describes whether and to what extent you have tics – sudden, involuntary, repetitive movements and/or vocalisations.

People who have tics for over a year may have a Tic Disorder.

Reading, writing & spelling

This trait describes how accurately and fluently you can read, write and spell.

People who struggle with reading, writing and/or spelling may have Dyslexia.

Intellect

This trait describes your overall intellectual functioning, i.e. your ability to reason, learn and problem-solve.

People who have difficulties with intellectual functioning may have an Intellectual Disability. Historically, this was called Mental Retardation or General Learning Disability.

Mathematics

This trait describes how accurately and fluently you can use mathematics.

People who struggle with mathematics may be considered to have Dyscalculia.