



Five Ways to Engage Neurodivergent Folks in Yoga Classes

Because neurodivergence is not widely accepted or supported by society, many environments feel unsafe and unsupportive for neurodivergent folks. We may mask our differences in an effort to navigate and survive environments not made for us, and the stress of constantly suppressing and hiding our natural ways of being takes a serious toll on our wellbeing. Affirming communities where we feel safe to unmask, tend to our needs, and express joy in our differences can be profoundly healing!

Offer and encourage using props for sensory comfort and stimming

Support sensory needs! Think fidget toys, plushies, cool rocks, furry friends, cozy blankets etc. For in-person events, bring extras to share if you have them.

Create Sensory-friendly, low-demand spaces with flexible expectations

Let folks know that it's okay to wear socks (or even shoes!), to make some noise, to leave the mat for a break, and to say NO to practices that don't serve them. Avoid bright lights, loud music, heavy scents, etc.

Embrace your own differences (we all have them!)

Learn about your nervous system, use neurodivergent lingo (like stimming, special interest, hyperfocus, etc.). Show how you accommodate your own needs, and demonstrate acceptance by using strengths-based language.

Make space for learning and asking questions

Instead of rushing through a sequence, create mindful pauses for reflection, sharing, and questions. Get comfortable with long silences while folks consider how to respond.

Make it SUPER CLEAR how to receive support before, during, and after class

Offer reminders (more than once and in multiple ways!) for how to navigate the space, how to access and use props, and how to ask for help or request an accommodation.