



Understanding Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity

The language and concept of neurodiversity were born of collective efforts within the online Autistic community in the 1990s as a way to describe the infinite variety of ways that human nervous systems naturally differ ([Botha et al., 2024](#)). Neurodiversity shows up in the distinctive ways we express our experiences, including how we sense, think, learn, focus, remember, communicate, move, feel, and love. We're all different; there is no "one right way" to be human, and it's normal for people to have different needs.

Neuromajority/neurotypical

People who think, feel, and act in ways that are relatively similar to most others, and whose nervous system functions according to most dominant societal norms and expectations.

Neurodiversity Movement

A social justice movement that seeks civil rights, equality, respect, and full societal inclusion for the neurodivergent ([Walker, 2022](#)). Neurodivergent folks don't need to be fixed- rather, we need to be accepted and supported!

Neurodiversity-Affirming

An approach or environment in which neurodivergence is accepted, embraced, and celebrated. Differences are valued over conformity, needs are supported, and strength-based language replaces pathologizing and deficit-based language. All experiences are welcomed.

Neurodivergent (ND)

An umbrella term coined by [Kassiane Asasumasu](#) for anyone with a nervous system that significantly diverges from typical due to genetics (innate) and/or lived experience (acquired). ND folks think, feel, move, and connect in ways that fall outside of dominant societal norms and expectations.

"Neurodivergent" is often used as a social identity label by those who have (or self-identify with) clinical diagnoses such as autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, trauma, psychosis, mental illness, and other neuro-disabilities. However, you don't need to have, disclose, or identify with any diagnosis to identify as neurodivergent.

