



Kent and Medway  
Pathology Network

Network Virtual Conference  
02.11.22

# Neurodiversity in the Workplace

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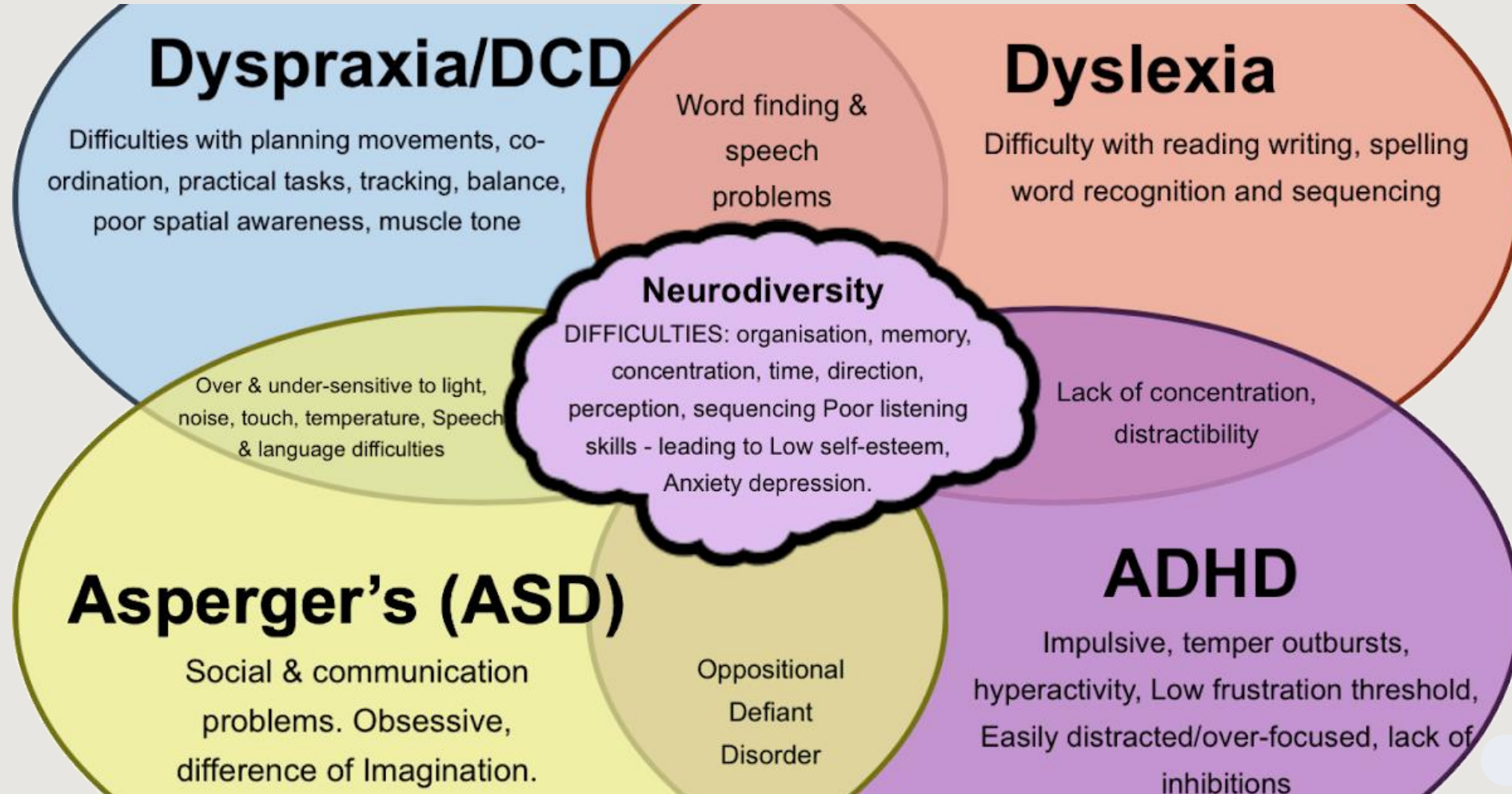


Southern Counties Pathology

Maximising value, quality and efficiency  
locally where possible, centrally where necessary

# Common types of neurodiversity

*Do you think there is anything wrong with this image?*



# Neurodiversity

- We often only look at what the problems are and what people can't do
- We forget to look at what people can do
- It makes us feel comfortable to put people in boxes
- We may assume that neurodiverse people are abnormal and require a diagnosis
- Neurodiversity simply means there are differences in the way people's brains are wired from what is considered neurotypical
- Neurodiverse people interpret, think, process & feel differently to neurotypical people
- Right vs left-handed??? It's partly about genetics!



# Types of Neurodiversity

Clinical	Applied	Acquired
A person is born with it	A person is born with it	A person is not born with it
Considered a health condition	Not considered a health condition	Can develop as part of a health condition or injury
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	Dyscalculia	Can worsen or resolve as health changes (transient or chronic)
Autism	Dyslexia	Acquired brain injury
Tourette Syndrome	Dyspraxia	Illness, e.g. stroke, Parkinson's Disease
Learning Disability, e.g., Down's Syndrome	Dysgraphia	Mental health, e.g., anxiety, depression, OCD, trauma
	Highly Sensitive Person (HSP)	

[Neurodivergent & Neurodiversity: Meanings & Examples \(exceptionalindividuals.com\)](https://exceptionalindividuals.com)

[Passionate about Neurodiversity - Genius Within](#)

# Autism

[Autism - What is Autism? - Exceptional Individuals](#)

[Eeo7gz9XYAAxGQi.jpg \(1080x691\) \(twimg.com\)](#)

## What is autism?

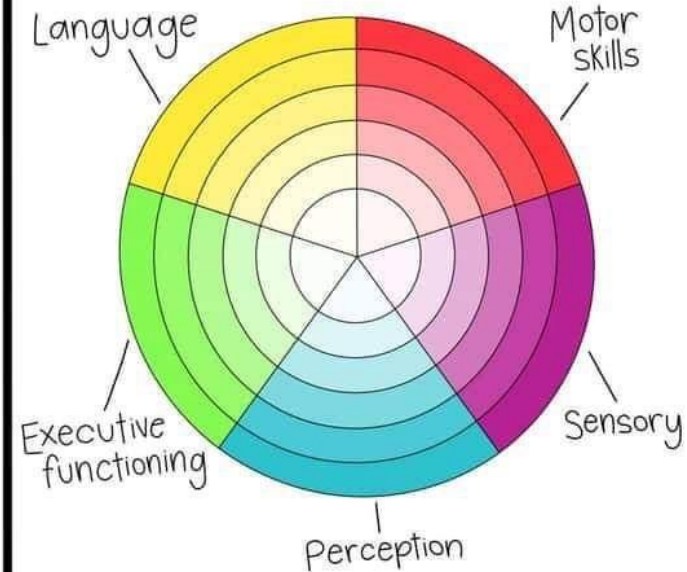
Characterised by repetitive patterns of behaviour & difficulties with social communication

Struggles to deal with change, mandatory action or other points of view

What People THINK the autism spectrum looks like:



What it CAN actually look like:



## Challenges

- Speech & articulation
- Sensitivity to light, sound & touch
- Perception of others emotions
- Information processing
- Multi-tasking



## Strengths

- Attention to detail
- Efficiency – following rules & sequences
- Logical thinking
- Retention of knowledge

# Dyslexia

[DyslexiaCharacSingle.png](#)  
(1197x1268) (familyzone.co.za)

[Dyslexia - What is Dyslexia? - Exceptional Individuals](#)

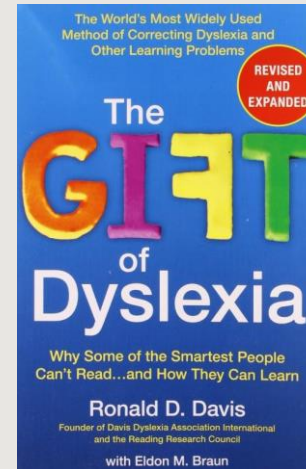
## What is dyslexia?

Affects the skills involved in accurate & fluent word reading & spelling

Can include challenges with information processing, short-term memory & timekeeping

Due to altered brain function, not a deficiency in language, word processing or motor-control

Verbal vs visual learning style



Difficulty telling time, managing time or being on time

High in IQ, yet may not test well academically

FAMILYZONE  
LEARNING

# DYSLEXIA

## Characteristics

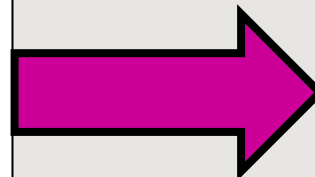


Thinks primarily with images and feeling, not sounds or words

Difficulty sustaining attention seems "hyper" or "daydreamer."

## Challenges

- Memory
- Organisation
- Writing
- Reading
- Time management



## Strengths

- Creativity
- Problem solving
- Design & spatial awareness
- Communication
- Ability to see the bigger picture

# Dyspraxia

<https://i0.wp.com/www.dyspraxicfantastic.com/wp-content/uploads/Positives-of-Dyspraxia-v3.0.gif?fit=2415%2C1778&ssl=1>

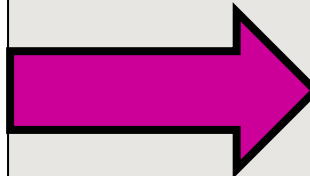
[Dyspraxia - What is Dyspraxia? - Exceptional Individuals](#)

## What is dyspraxia?

Affects co-ordination, movement, balance & organisational abilities, e.g., hand to eye co-ordination & spatial awareness

## Challenges

- Hand-eye co-ordination
- Spatial awareness
- Organisation
- Short term memory
- Expressing thoughts clearly



## Strengths

- Leadership
- Empathy
- Strategy
- Problem solving

**THE POSITIVES OF DYSPRAXIA**

- GREAT SENSE OF HUMOUR** (Yellow smiley face with sunglasses)
- UNIQUE THINKERS** (The Thinker statue)
- CREATIVITY** (Rainbow diamond pattern)
- EMPATHY** (Thought bubble with heart, star, and lightning bolt)
- DETERMINATION** (Blue train on a ramp)
- MOTIVATION** (Gold trophy with #1)
- PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS** (Five colorful puzzle pieces)

[www.DyspraxicFantastic.com](http://www.DyspraxicFantastic.com)

# Highly Sensitive People (HSP)



- HSPs experience acute physical, mental or emotional responses to stimuli
- Stimuli can be **external** (surroundings, people) or **internal** (thoughts, emotions, reflections & realisations)
- We all react to stimuli to some degree, but HSPs experience it to greater extent & it can sometimes be overwhelming
- HSPs often have a wellbeing toolkit and a place of refuge to process their reactions

[Neurodivergent & Neurodiversity: Meanings & Examples \(exceptionalindividuals.com\)](https://exceptionalindividuals.com)

[21 Signs That You're a Highly Sensitive Person \(HSP\) \(highlysensitiverefuge.com\)](https://highlysensitiverefuge.com)





# Highly Sensitive People (HSP)



- Being an HSP is a normal genetic trait
- Thought to be due to polygenetic & environmental factors
- Evidence suggests genes relating to dopamine & serotonin (neurotransmitters -> mood)
- HSPs tend to be empathetic, artistic, intuitive & highly aware of the needs of others
- Because HSPs often seek refuge, people assume they are introverts
- HSPs may be introverts, extroverts or somewhere in between
- Society continues to define sensitivity as a **weakness**, and this can lead to feelings of exclusion and anxiety

# What are some of the characteristics of HSPs?

Can be hurt by the words of others

Conscientious & reliable

May withdraw when overwhelmed or processing

Empathy

Loud, noisy environments can be overwhelming

Can find it difficult to process criticism

Time pressures & speed tests can cause anxiety

Over-emotional responses

Over-stimulation

Absorb the feelings of others

Good mentors & coaches

May be mislabelled as 'overly sensitive' or 'antisocial'

Strive to make things better for others

Hate conflict

Curious

Good at listening and hearing others

# Some resources

[Are you too sensitive? Should you change? | Marwa Azab | TEDxOakland - YouTube](#)



The gentle power of highly sensitive people | Elena Herdieckerhoff | TEDxIHEParis

views • 24 Jun 2016

👍 132K    🗨️ 2.3K    ➦ SHARE    ≡+ SAVE    ...

[The gentle power of highly sensitive people | Elena Herdieckerhoff | TEDxIHEParis - YouTube](#)

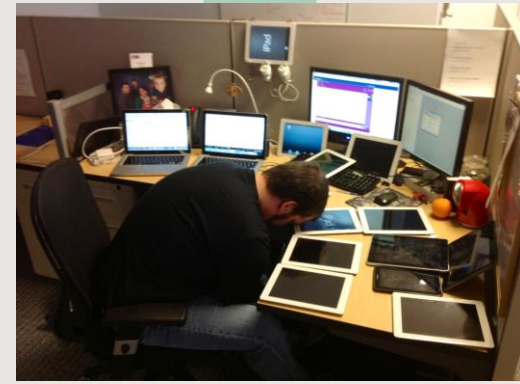


Are you too sensitive? Should you change? | Marwa Azab | TEDxOakland

184,970 views • 20 Dec 2017

👍 6.7K    🗨️ 116    ➦ SHARE    ≡+ SAVE    ...

# Neurodiversity & technology



## SOME IT PROBLEMS

- **Technology can be overwhelming**
- Screen reading can cause visual strain & it can be difficult to interpret the information
- The Chat function on Teams can be overwhelming
- Multiple devices with a variety of ways of contacting people can be overwhelming
- Being on camera all the time can be overwhelming

## SOME SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

- Turn on dark mode in settings
- Ensure non-screen time
- Mute Chat function
- Don't expect answers straight away, especially if the person is also in a meeting
- Mute notifications
- Turn off your own video from time to time
- You can now turn off others videos in Teams

# How can we do things differently?

Example	What the neurotypical workplace sees	What we could see and do
ADHD	Difficulty paying attention; difficulty staying focused; less control over behaviours & emotions; difficulties being organised	Understand that behaviours are normal characteristics for that person, which may not need to be 'diagnosed'
Autism	Poor communication, intense focus, rigid & repetitive behaviours	Don't just expect neurodiverse people to adjust to the neurotypical workplace
Dyslexia	Difficulty reading, writing or organising letters	Get the best out of people – utilise strengths for roles that will help people thrive (e.g., organisational, creative) Provide an appropriate environment (light, noise) Workplace adjustments – support the person where it is needed – do it with them, not to them!
HSP	Quiet in large discussions; video sometimes off on Teams; declines in-person social events; appears over-sensitive	Understand that behaviours are normal and not avoidance. HSPs will contribute differently & require quiet time to gather energy

# How teams can support their neurodivergent members

By default, workplaces support neurotypical people

Neurodiversity is often overlooked at work

Neurodiverse people bring strength & diversity to organisations

Neurodiverse people often have to advocate for themselves

Neurodiverse people benefit from reasonable adjustments

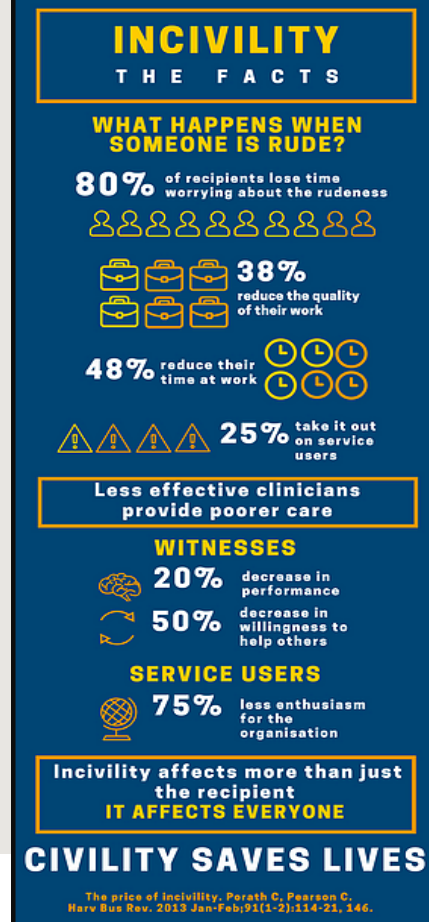
Scientific careers are attractive to neurodiverse people

Supporting diversity in the workplace has positive benefits for everybody in terms of happiness, productivity and innovation

1 in 7 people are neurodivergent  
One person's weakness is another person's superpower....  
Isn't the workplace the perfect place to embrace thinking differently??

# How can we support our neurodiverse colleagues?

- Start with an understanding of what neurodiversity is
- Don't expect people to tell you they are neurodiverse - they may not know and/or they may not wish to disclose to you
- Openly talk about neurodiversity as part of normal EDI conversations
- Support and respect different ways of working & communicating
- 9-5 vs early mornings/evening work – productivity is key
- Identify best ways of communicating, e.g.,
  - Ways of explaining things*
  - Clear instructions when asking a colleague to do something*
  - Verbal conversations & e-mails*
  - To do lists & spreadsheets*
- Be an ally to others
- Be mindful that words are powerful, and they can hurt other people
- Don't make assumptions and/or judgements about behaviours or the person's ability to deal with situations or tasks – create a psychologically safe space so people feel OK to be open & honest with you



# How can managers support neurodiverse colleagues?

- Understand neurodiversity
- Look at the potential rather than the problem
- Know what resources are available to support colleagues, and tell everybody
- Normalise conversations about neurodiversity
- Help to take the burden off individuals
- Encourage flexible working – to get the best out of people
- Consider using Workplace Adjustment Passports – especially useful for when people move departments within the same organisation
- Make interviews and applications neurodivergent-friendly – e.g., giving questions in advance
- Be part of the change (policy, culture....)



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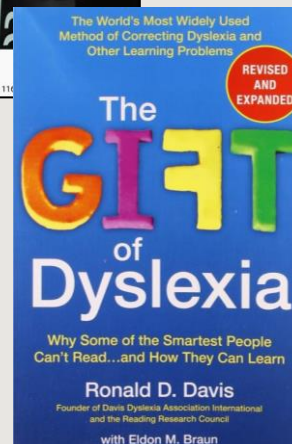
# Examples of doing things differently

Home | OpenDyslexic

## OpenDyslexic: A typeface for Dyslexia

OpenDyslexic is a typeface designed against some common symptoms of dyslexia. If you like the way you are able to read this page, and others, then this typeface is for you!

OpenDyslexic is free to use: The newest version of OpenDyslexic now uses the SIL-OFL license, giving you freedom to use it for personal use, business use, education, commercial, books, ebook readers, applications, websites, and any other project or purpose you need.



### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please tell us your understanding of effective leadership and its importance within an organisation.
2. How has your leadership approach developed over time?

...

### Training grant availability for candidates in England on the Advanced Specialist Diploma (ASD) in Histopathology Reporting (July 2022 Update)

Since November 2020 the IBMS and the National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS) in Health Education England (HEE) have been supporting scientists working in England to undertake IBMS/Royal College of Pathologists (RCPath) histopathology qualifications. The funding is having a direct and positive impact on IBMS members. It demonstrates a tremendous mark of confidence in the Institute's professional examinations and underlines their value in the training of scientists to undertake advanced and consultant roles.

The candidates who are currently eligible for support includes those **employed in England** who:

- were enrolled on the ASD in Histopathology Reporting as of 1 November 2020
- have commenced the ASD in Histopathology Reporting since 1 November 2020 and start before the 31 December 2022

If sufficient monies remain funding will also be made available to those who commence the Reporting qualification in 2023.

Candidates who at the time of the start of the project in November 2020 who were on Stage A or B of the ASD in Histopathology Reporting or have commenced the qualification since that date, were, or have been, allocated a budget of £9,000 to support their training. Candidates who were on Stage C in November 2020 were allocated a budget of £3,000 to support their training.

### New Process from 1 August 2022 for Claiming Funding

From this date funding will be provided prospectively to the employer upon the commencement by the candidate of each stage of training. The IBMS will provide a training grant to the employer of £3,000 when the candidate starts each stage (A, B and C) of the qualification. The employer will use the grant to support the candidate through the stage. There is no funding support for candidates who are enrolled on Stage D.

The Stage A grant will be paid when a candidate is accepted on to the qualification and the employer has presented an appropriate invoice to the IBMS. The Stage B grant will be once a candidate has



### Step by Step Implementation Guidance

If employers/candidates have received some of their individual grant prior to August 2022, employers can claim the difference between the £3000 for each stage and any funds already claimed. The IBMS will be writing to candidates individually to inform them how much their employer can claim funding for so far.

#### Dissection qualifications – new candidates

The £1000 funding for either of the dissection qualifications can be accessed in a single instalment for new candidates at the start of training, as follows:

```

    graph LR
      A[Candidate accepted onto DEP or ASD dissection qualification] --> B[Employer sends an invoice for £1000 to the IBMS]
      B --> C[IBMS pays £1000 to the employing organisation]
  
```

#### Dissection qualifications – existing candidates

For existing candidates with the training logbook, but who are yet to complete the qualification:

```

    graph LR
      A[Candidate identified who is already working towards the DEP or ASD dissection qualification] --> B[Employer sends an invoice for £1000 to the IBMS]
      B --> C[IBMS pays £1000 to the employing organisation]
  
```

#### Reporting qualification – new candidates

The £9000 funding for the reporting qualification can be accessed in three separate instalments, as the candidate progresses through each stage of the qualification, as follows:

```

    graph TD
      subgraph Stage_A [Stage A of training]
        A1[Candidate accepted onto Stage A of training] --> A2[Employer sends an invoice for £3000 to the IBMS]
        A2 --> A3[IBMS pays £3000 to the employing organisation]
      end
      subgraph Stage_B [Stage B of training]
        B1[Candidate accepted onto Stage B of training] --> B2[Employer sends an invoice for £3000 to the IBMS]
        B2 --> B3[IBMS pays £3000 to the employing organisation]
      end
      subgraph Stage_C [Stage C of training]
        C1[Candidate accepted onto Stage C of training] --> C2[Employer sends an invoice for £3000 to the IBMS]
        C2 --> C3[IBMS pays £3000 to the employing organisation]
      end
  
```

UHS Pathology


### REGISTRATION PORTFOLIO ACTION PLAN

Candidate name	Next portfolio meeting					
	Wed 26 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2022, 10.30am					
<b>Current progress: 30%</b>		Wed 26 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Thurs 27 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Fri 28 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Sat 29 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Sun 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct
Mon 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Tues 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	Thurs 3 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	Fri 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Sat 5 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Sun 6 <sup>th</sup> Nov
Mon 7 <sup>th</sup> Nov Send work to Jo	Tues 8 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Wed 9 <sup>th</sup> Nov Portfolio meeting 10.30am				


Evidence no.	Evidence name	Work to do	Date to send to Jo
1	Activity – informed consent	Add in the consent form, annotate it and write a little about the consenting process.	Mon 7 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2022

# Why does it matter to me?

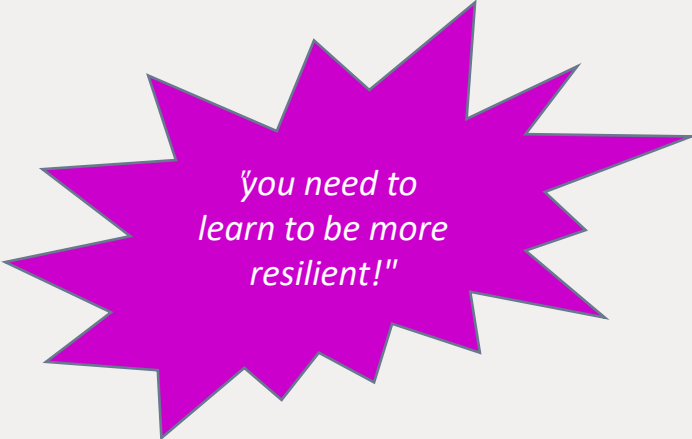
- I have neurodivergent traits
- These are normal and don't require 'diagnosing'
- I see, feel & process things differently to other people
- When I see another HSP or empath I am drawn to them
- Some things don't affect me, others profoundly so
- My experiences working within the NHS haven't always been easy, but they have shaped who I am today
- I didn't realise until a couple of years ago that this is my superpower



*"you're being over-sensitive!"*



*"You take things too personally"*



*'you need to learn to be more resilient!'"*

# Why should it matter to you?

- Neurodivergent individuals bring an amazing skillset to the workplace
- Neurodiversity is part of Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity
- There is still stigma within society – which can lead to discrimination & marginalisation
- Neurodivergent people are 3-6 times more likely to experience a mental health problem than a neurotypical person
- The menopause may exacerbate neurodivergent characteristics
- We need to do more to understand neurodiversity in order to get the best out of our people
- The best workplaces are made up of diverse teams
- Workplace adjustments are key



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team - People Directorate - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform



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@hornej13

Thank you!  
Diolch yn fawr!



Thank you!  
Diolch yn fawr!