

What is neurodiversity and neurodivergence?

Neurodiversity is the term used to express that individuals possess different neurotypes. Some are what is termed neurotypical – their neurotype is considered to be reflective of the majority of the population or typical – and others are considered to be neurodiverse – their neurotype differs from the norm.

Definitions:

Neurodiversity

This term was coined by Judy Singer in the late 1990s, to describe differences in neurotype in the hope that the focus of discussion would move towards a proactive understanding of neurodivergence, and away from the usual deficit, impairment and disorder approach.

Grammatically and ethically, the term cannot refer to an individual. For example, you could say that your museum is working to represent a neurodiverse community, a community of more than one neurotype, but you wouldn't say that you have engaged with a neurodiverse person. A person cannot be neurodiverse, a person is neurodivergent.

Neurodivergent

Neurodivergent refers to an individual whose brain type is atypical.

Neurodivergence includes, but is not limited to:

Autism

ADHD

Dyspraxia

Dyslexia

Dysgraphia

Dyscalculia

Tourettes

Neurotypical

Neurotypical refers to individuals whose neurotype is considered to be the most prevalent in society.

NEURODIVERSITY DEFINITIONS & TERMS

Neurodiversity	→	The natural diversity of human brains
Neurodiversity paradigm	→	The philosophy of neurodiversity
Neurodiversity Movement	→	The social justice movement
Neurodivergent	→	A person whose brain functioning differs from what's considered "normal"
Neurotypical	→	A person whose brain functioning is considered "normal"
Neurodiverse	→	A group of people with different types of brains

Why does this matter?

Because the focus is on a clinical model which is gatekept by largely non-neurodivergent individuals, meaning the route to understanding your own neurology, and therefore what your needs are and how you operate differently to neurotypical people, is often exclusionary, based on sex, and assumes certain stereotypical views.

It is based on the awareness that the reason neurodivergent people often struggle, have additional needs, and appear different is because they are living a world set up for neurotypical people. The movement believes that our current perception and approach to these differences creates artificial barriers, stereotypes, and unhelpful limitations on those who are not neurotypical.

Links:

<https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/building-on-strengths/neurodiversity-what-you-need-to-know>

<https://dart.ed.ac.uk/neurodiverse-or-neurodivergent/>

<https://neurodivergentrebel.com/>