



DIVERSITY PROJECT

NEURODIVERSITY GLOSSARY

15 January 2019

Neurodiversity is a relatively new aspect of overall workplace diversity. Therefore, definitions around the topic may evolve over time. The definitions below aim to provide an overview to facilitate discussions around the topic.

Neurodiversity	The biological reality of infinite variation in human neurocognitive functioning and behaviour, akin to 'biodiversity' in the natural world. The term 'neurodiversity' is now also being used to describe the fast-emerging sub-category of workplace diversity and inclusion that focuses on including people who are neurodivergent.
Neurotypical	Given the biological fact that there is no such thing as a 'normal' brain, neurotypical is best thought of as within parameters of neurocognitive style that have not been either medically defined as 'disorders' or culturally defined as 'neurodivergent'. It's important not to draw simple lines in the sand between 'neurotypicals' and neurodivergent people - human neurodiversity is a highly complex spectrum, in which everyone sits.
Neurodivergent	Having cognitive functioning different from what is seen as 'normal' - while the term appears to reflect the 'medical model' above, it is a term that most neurodivergent people are comfortable with. The Diversity Project's neurodiversity workstream focuses on neurodivergence that is largely or entirely genetic or innate - such as dyslexia - other forms of neurodivergence can be acquired, such as via an incidence of brain trauma.
Neurodiverse	This term is sometimes used instead of 'neurodivergent', yet is potentially problematic. A group can be neurodiverse - an individual is likely better described as neurodivergent.
ADHD	Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder, sometimes also the subtype which is ADD, i.e. without hyperactivity. ADHD is characterised by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity. Contrary to popular perception, the brains of ADHDers are actually understimulated. ADHD is largely genetic and therefore, contrary to stereotypes, people usually do not grow out of it. Prevalence is estimated to be around 3.4% in adults.
Autism	A condition characterised by three main criteria: social communication difficulties, repetitive and restricted behaviour. Most people on the autism spectrum also experience some form of sensory sensitivity due to functional hyper-connectivity across multiple brain regions, which, when experienced, may make the individual prone to feeling overwhelmed and anxious. For too long autism has tended to be defined only in negative terms, with a focus solely on the challenges people face. However, the neurodiversity paradigm - and the successes of autistic people in the workplace - is helping to change this. Autism, like other forms of neurodivergence, may be more constructively viewed not as a 'disorder' but as a neuroprocessing style that results in a fundamentally different experience of the world.
Dyscalculia	Specific difficulty conceptualising numbers, size, distance and shape.
Dysgraphia	Difficulty with writing, distinct from other forms of fine motor control.



Dyslexia

Literally means difficulties with words but main symptoms include literacy difficulties, short term memory and organisational difficulties.

Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)

Literally means difficulties with movement. This can be fine motor movements (like writing or tying shoelaces) or gross motor (like riding a bike or driving a car). Also affects the planning and sequencing of movement. Also affects short-term memory and organisational difficulties.

Executive Functions

Refers to the pre-frontal cortex activities of planning, decision-making, attention capacity and attention switching and inhibition control.

Sources:

'**Neurodiversity at work**' Guide by CIPD and Uptimize, February 2018

'**Psychology at work**' Report by The British Psychological Society, October 2017

