

Neurodiversity Awareness

BECOMING A
NEUROINCLUSIVE EMPLOYER



Session outcomes

- What is neurodiversity?
- Workplace impact
- Inclusion
- Becoming a neuroinclusive employer

With thanks to Genius Within who provided the information for some of these slides.
<https://geniuswithin.org/>

What is neurodiversity?

- Neurodiversity is the concept that we are all different in terms of our neurocognitive abilities. It covers autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, Tourette syndrome and other conditions.
- Most people have neurotypical brains. Others have brains with pronounced strengths and weaknesses.



What conditions are included?

Applied

- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia

Clinical

- ADHD
- Autism
- Tourette Syndrome
- Learning disabilities

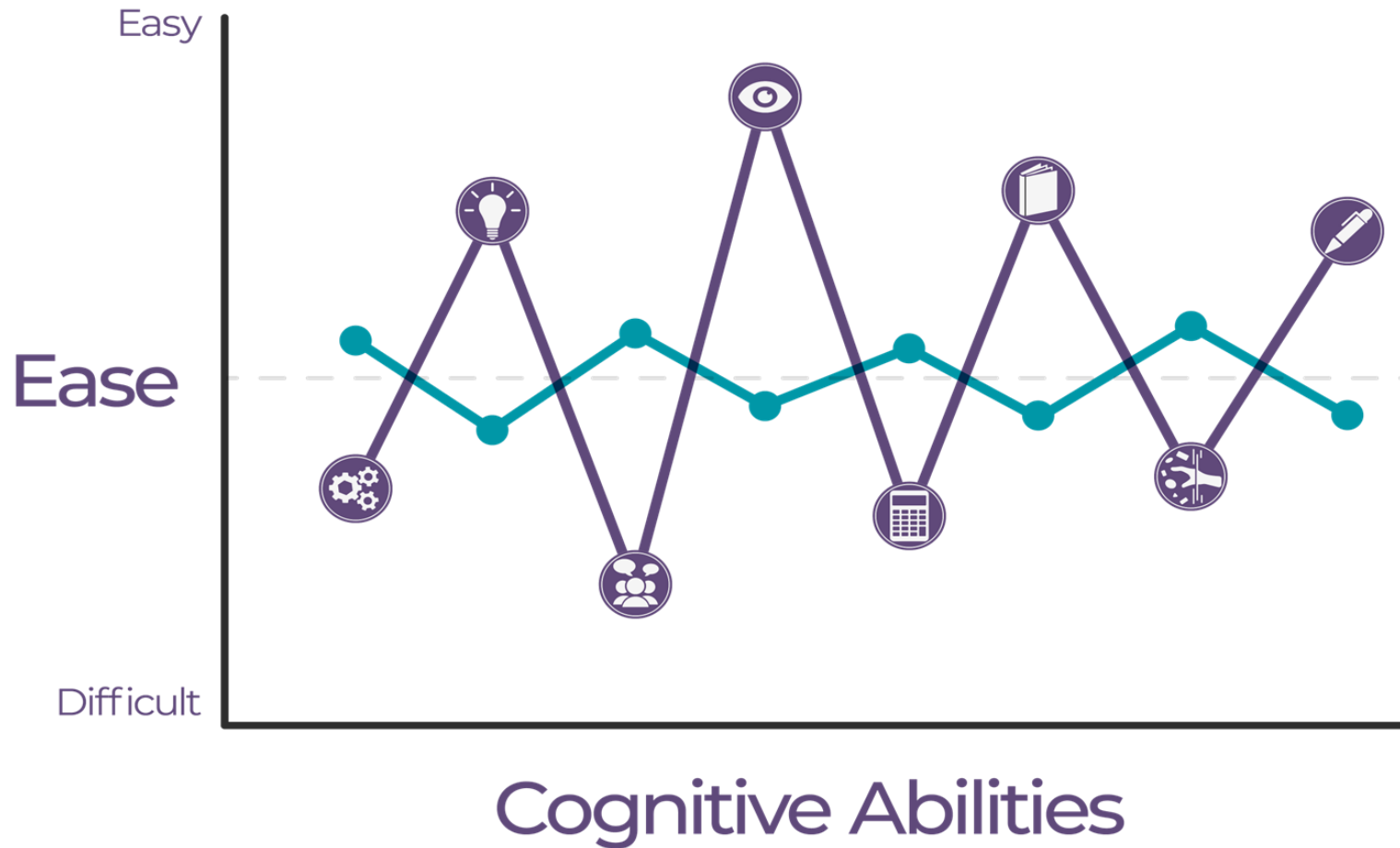
Acquired (transient)

- Anxiety
- Depression
- OCD
- Phobias
- And more...

Acquired (chronic)

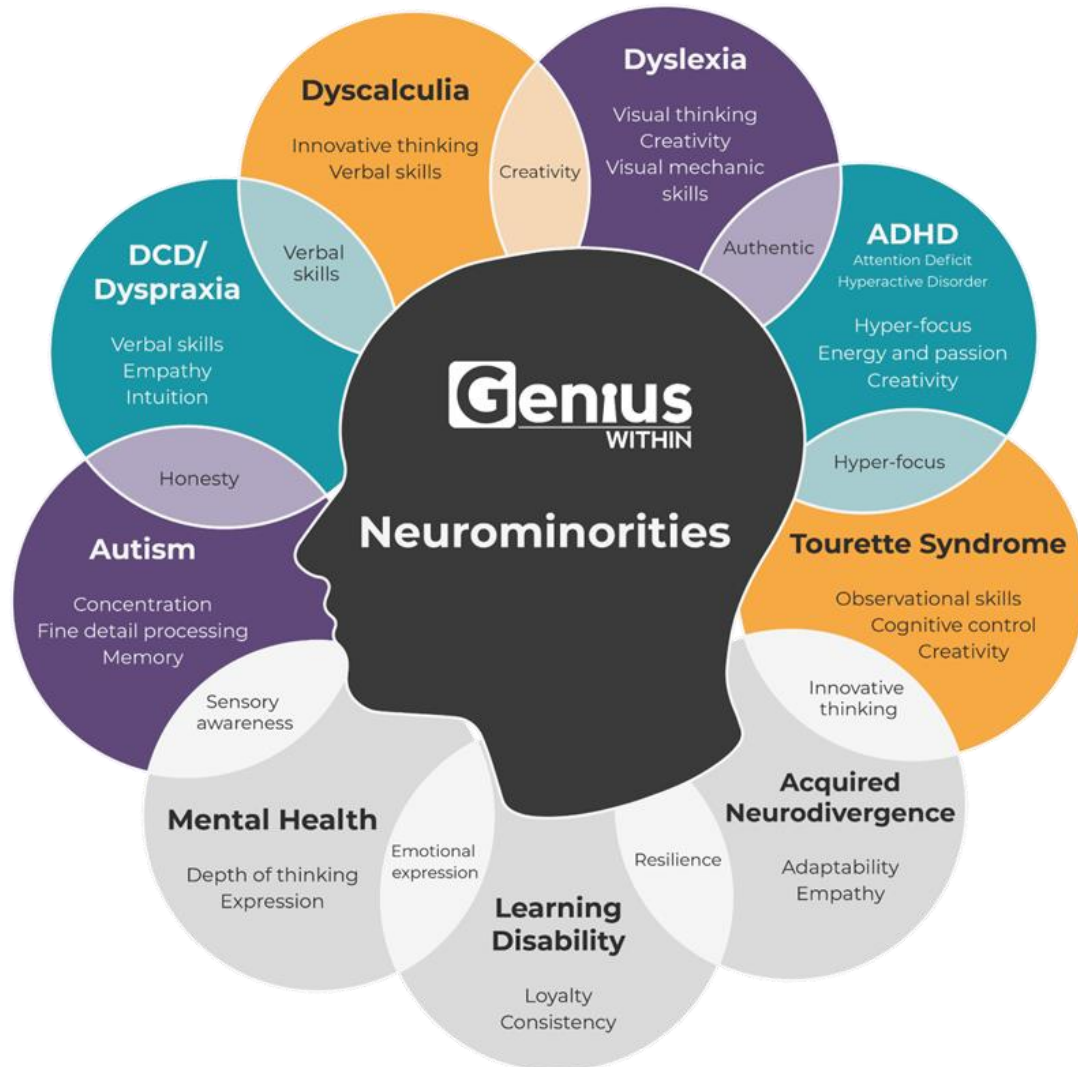
- Neurological illnesses, eg, long Covid, MS, chronic fatigue
- Brain injury
- And more...

The common thread: a spiky profile



**'Specialist'
versus
'Generalist'
Thinkers**

Neurominorities



WHOLE WORLD
PREVALENCE
ESTIMATED TO BE
AROUND
15-20%

ADHD

Strengths

- Alertness and ability to hyperfocus
- Passion and enthusiasm
- Problem-solving abilities
- Strong 3D visual skills

Challenges

- Taking on too much
- Lacking attention to detail
- Difficulty with people (appearing rude)
- Difficulty concentrating

Autism

Strengths

- Information processing and memory
- Detail conscious
- Tenacity and honesty
- Creating and finding patterns

Challenges

- Over-focus and becoming stuck in detail
- Difficulty following non-specific instructions
- Difficulty with verbal communication
- Overstimulation and stress

What autism looks like

What people think autism looks like:

Less autistic

More autistic



What it can actually look like:

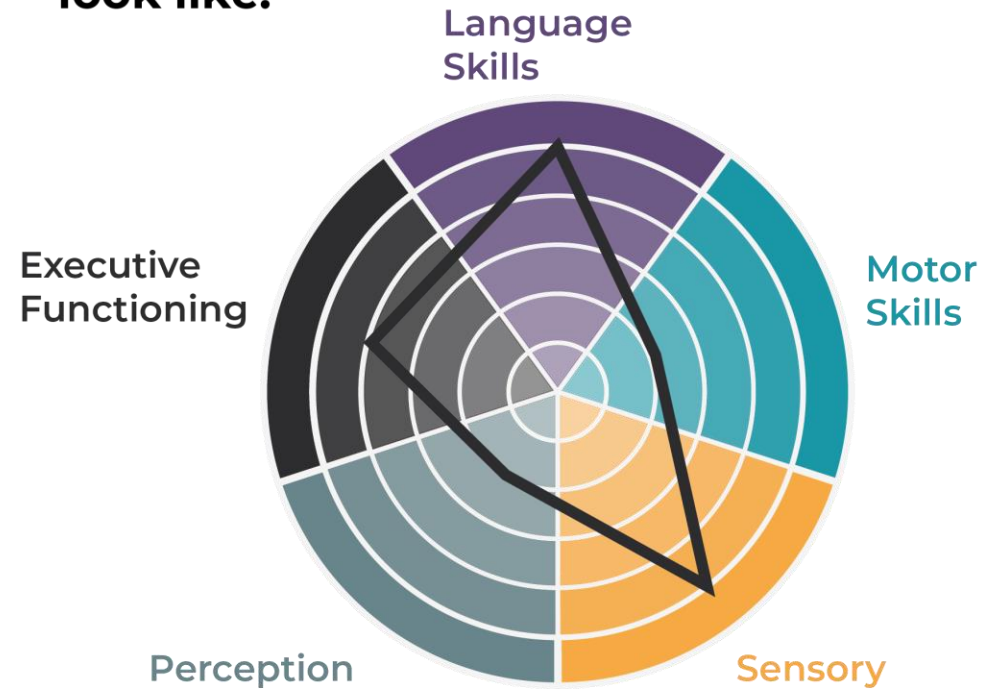
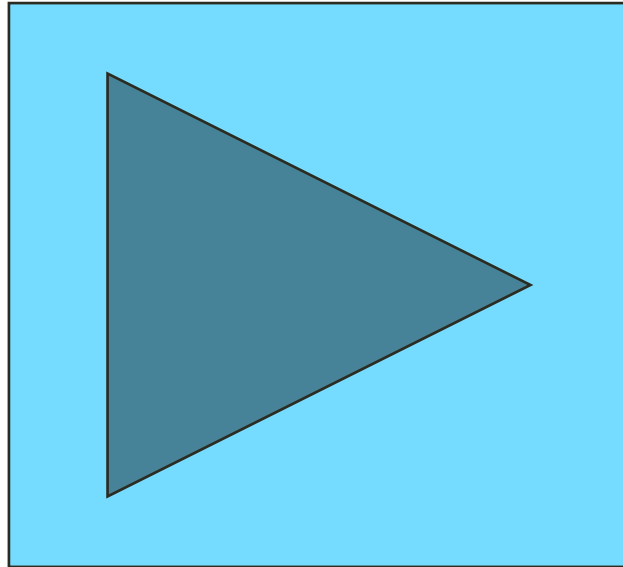


Image based on the highly creative work of Rebecca Burgess @theorah



Aileen Carson
COACHING

Autism simulation



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2arNKLWYu40>

Dyslexia

Strengths

- Great long-term memory
- Communication skills
- Problem solving
- Strong 3D visual skills

Challenges

- Difficulty remembering sound
- Difficulty putting detail in order
- Difficulty processing sound
- Difficulty reading and writing

Dyspraxia

Strengths

- Tenacity
- Verbal communication skills
- Problem solving
- Strong creativity and empathy

Challenges

- Stress
- Time management and organisation
- Difficulty learning new processes
- Difficulty following sequences

Tourette syndrome

Strengths

- Creativity
- Strong verbal communication skills
- Empathy and resilience
- Ability to hyper-focus

Challenges

- Needing to let out suppressed tics
- Stress
- Commonly co-occurs with ADHD
- Hyper-arousal

Intersectionality

Girls less frequently diagnosed, diagnosed in later life, so miss scaffolding in adulthood.
Misdiagnosed with anxiety, depression and eating disorders.

People marginalised by poverty, race or ethnicity are more likely to be missed as neurodivergent and instead treated as wilfully disobedient or criminal.

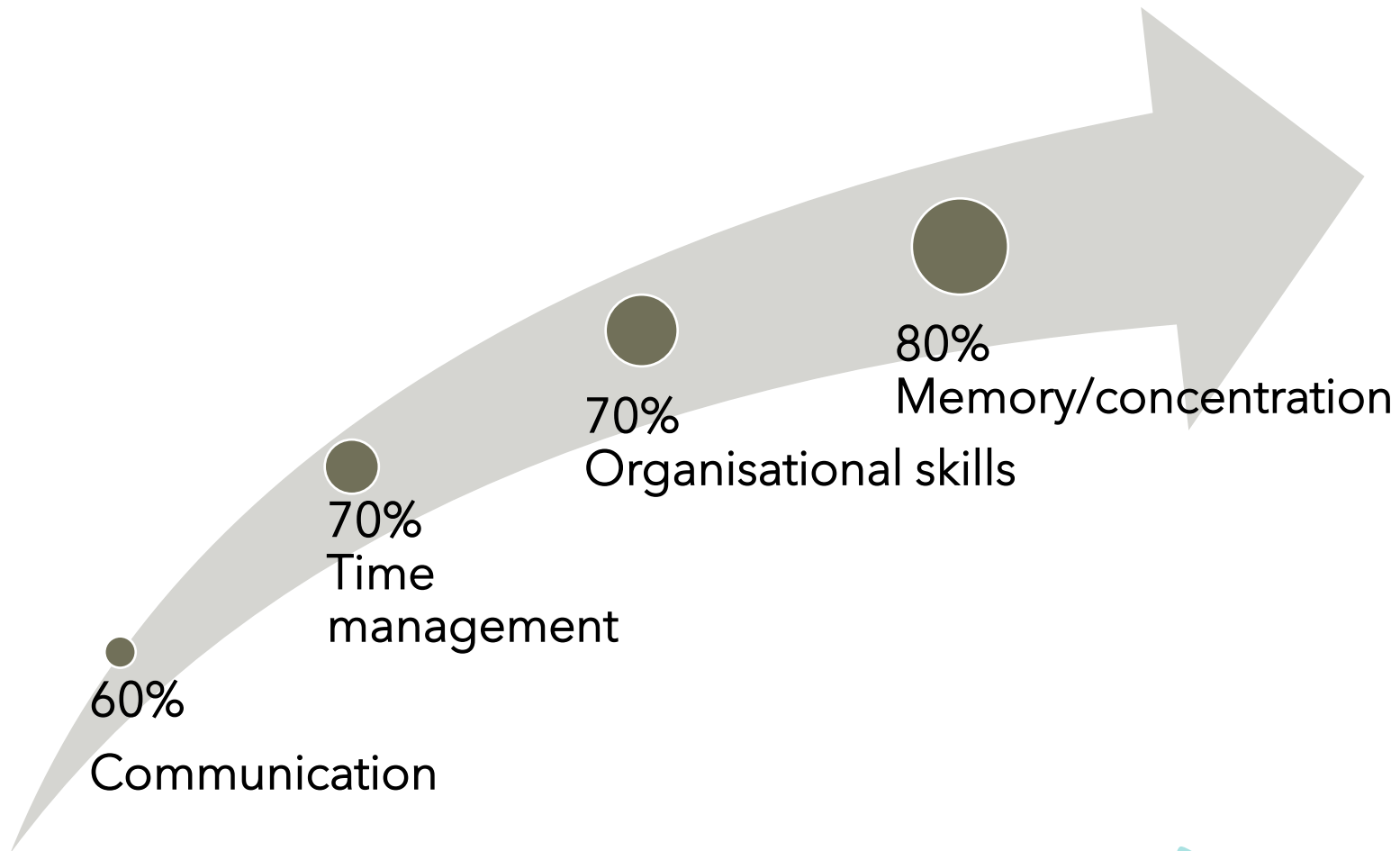
Higher rates of neurodivergence in transgender communities.

Intersectional marginalisation leads to double and triple masking, which leads to higher rates of burnout for neurominorities.

Psychological safety

- Disclose conditions to managers/colleagues
- Request adjustments/support
- Less likely to mask
- Avoid burnout
- Acceptance of differences
- Training and policies
- Culture of respect and inclusion

Executive functions



Legal definitions

- A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has substantial and long-term (12 months+) adverse effects on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- ❖ There is no need for a diagnosis, it is the effect, not the cause, or the impairment that matters...
- ❖ ...employers are required to make reasonable adjustments to enable employees to meet their potential.

The Equality Act 2010

Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Levels of inclusion



Indirect discrimination



Here the spectators are being treated equally



This shows equitable treatment of the spectators



This image shows that everyone attending will be able to see the game.

Adjustments - what works?

- Schedule flexibility
- Literacy coaching
- Assistive technology
- Workstation adaptation
- Executive functions coaching (memory, concentration, time management etc)
- Formal training (in-house or commissioned)
- Manager input (regular specific feedback, co-coaching)

Adjustments

The vast majority of adjustments can be implemented for little or no cost

Examples of adjustments

Communication	Meetings	Environment
Use bullet point summaries - 12pt fonts minimum	Provide an agenda	Awareness of noise, light, smell, colour which can overwhelm
Highlight key words in Bold , not CAPITALS or <u>underlined</u> .	Provide slides/notes/data beforehand if there is data to digest	Consider remote and hybrid flexibility
Be specific with instructions and make it clear that people can ask questions	Email meeting minutes afterwards	Allow flexible hours so that people can work at their peak hours.
Provide the wider picture	Give people choice regarding screen on/off in videos	Allow people to have quiet time, use meeting rooms or wear ear defenders.
Explain hidden rules	Give alternatives, eg, update via 1-1, video call chat for Q&A	Allow dual screens, whiteboard to provide additional space for memory aids

Recruitment

- Review job descriptions and job adverts - be specific
- Encourage applicants to ask for reasonable adjustments at all stages of the recruitment process
- Give clear guidance on the recruitment process
- Choose a quiet environment with no distractions for interviews
- Use skills-based questions rather than hypothetical questions
- Offer breaks and extra time
- Share interview questions in advance
- Remove behavioural expectations from your evaluation of neurodivergent applicants

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Questions

