



Neurodiversity Language & Terminology Guide

Why Language Matters

The words we use shape how people feel, how included they are, and how well we work together. Clear, respectful terminology helps avoid misunderstanding and creates psychologically safe environments where everyone can contribute.

Neurodiversity: The concept that all human brains are different, encompassing all brain types.

Neurodiverse: A group of people with a range of different brain types and ways of thinking. The word neurodiverse should be used when talking about teams, organisations or society as a whole. It describes groups that include neurodivergent **and** neurotypical people.



Examples:

- “Our organisation is neurodiverse.”
- “We aim to build neurodiverse teams to improve creativity and problem-solving.”

Neurodivergent (ND): An individual whose brain functions, learns, and processes information differently from the societal "standard".

This may include people with:

- Autism
- ADHD & ADD
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia
- Tourette’s
- Dysgraphia
- Aphantasia
- And others

Use Neurodivergent when talking about:

An individual person whose brain functions, learns, and processes information differently from the societal "standard".

Example:

- “She is neurodivergent.”
- “We support neurodivergent employees with tailored adjustments.”

Neurotypical: (NT): An individual whose brain functions in ways considered standard or typical.

Ask, don’t assume, as individuals may prefer not to follow the language stated above.

Use identity-affirming language where appropriate, e.g., “autistic person” vs “person with autism”. Preferences vary.

Focus on strengths as well as support needs and avoid deficit-only framing (e.g., “suffers from” or “is afflicted by”).

Most importantly, listen to people’s lived experiences and preferences.