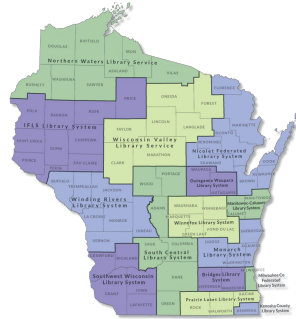
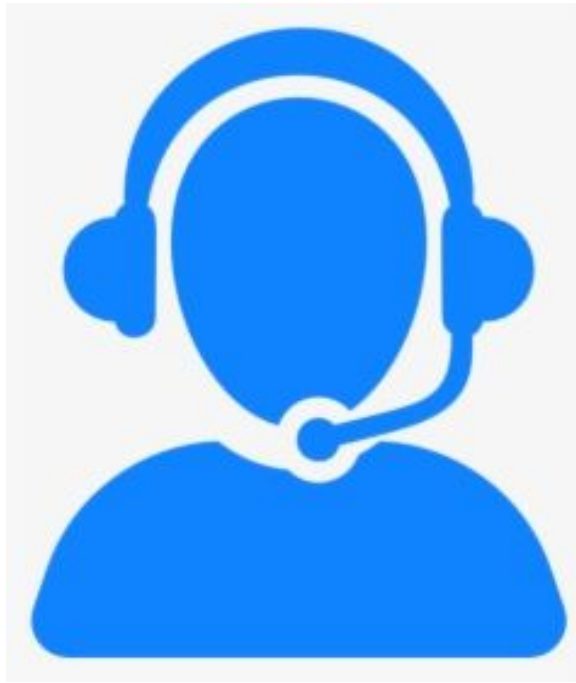


# For Managers & Supervisors: Cultivating an Inclusive Workplace for Neurodivergent Staff



Presented by Renee Grassi  
Library Accessibility Consultant and Trainer



Introduce yourself! Type your name, position, and library in the chat box.

# Topics We'll Discuss

- Disability, Neurodiversity, Executive Functioning and Sensory Processing
- Inclusive Hiring
- Strategies for Inclusion with Teams
- Providing 1:1 Support
- Further Learning & Resources
- Q&A



First, let's do a quick poll.

Type YES or NO in the chat.

Have you ever supervised anyone who identifies as *neurodiverse*?



Have you ever been asked to make  
an **accommodation** for a  
neurodiverse employee?

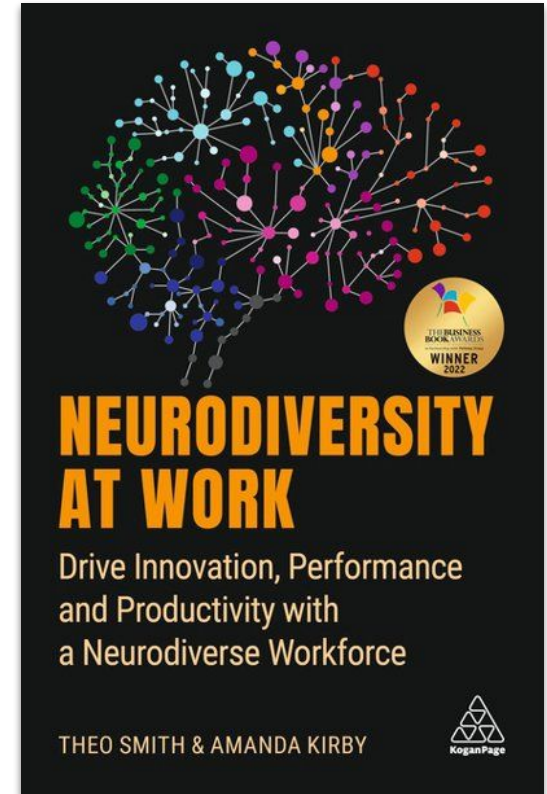


What's one thing you know about neurodiversity? Type it in the chat.



***“That’s the power of having a neurodiverse world.***

*If we can crack the cognitive enigma code, we can truly and positively transform the world of work for the better, enable true inclusivity and all live and prosper in a world where we can have a sense of belonging.”*





**DISABILITY RIGHTS**

**ARE CIVIL RIGHTS**



## **DIVERSITY**

of people,  
perspectives



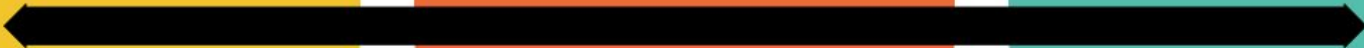
## **EQUITY**

in policy, practice  
& position



## **INCLUSION**

via power, voice &  
organizational culture



# Disability Impacts ALL of US

COMMUNITIES



HEALTH

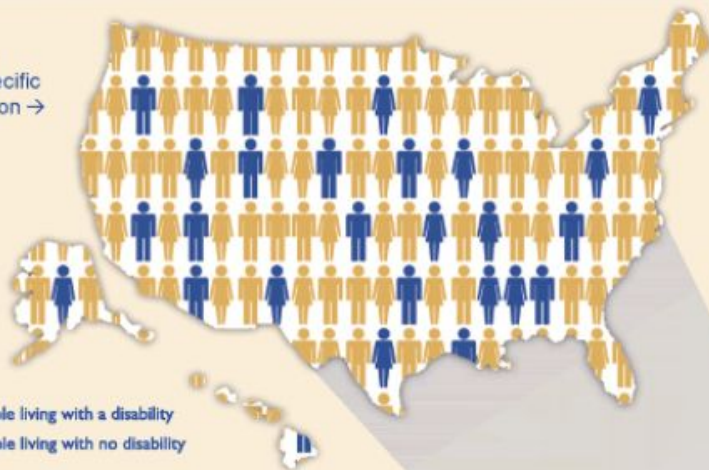




ACCESS



61 million adults in the United States live with a disability

Click for  
state-specific  
information →



 People living with a disability  
 People living with no disability

**26%**  
(1 in 4) of adults in  
the United States  
have some type  
of disability

The percentage of people  
living with disabilities is  
highest in the South





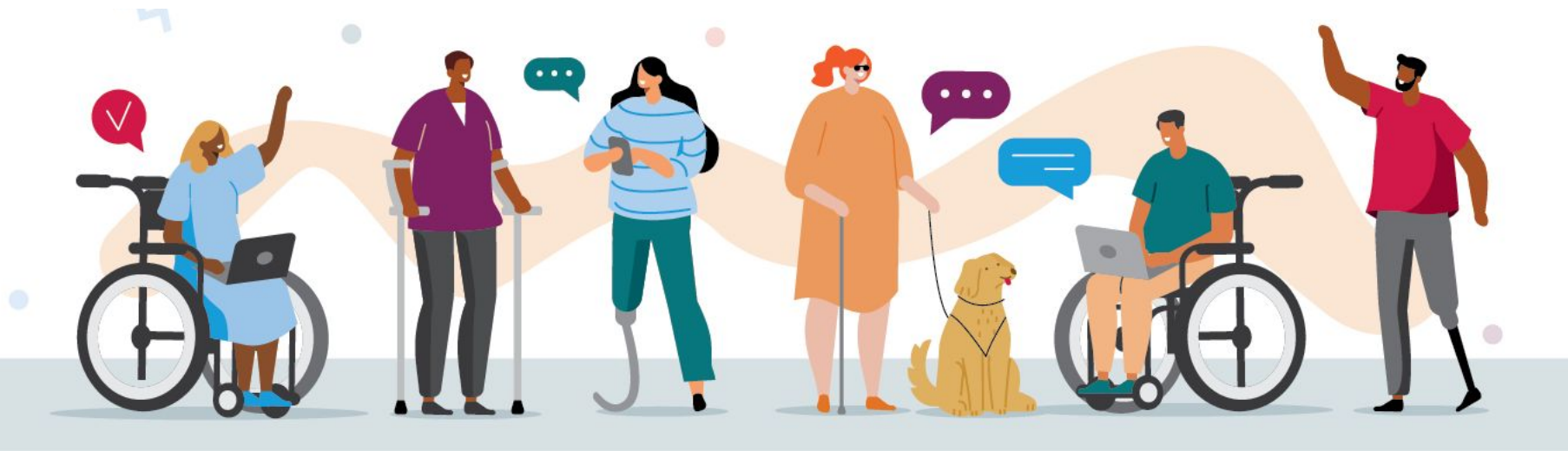
**Disability is natural.**

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albino\\_redwood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albino_redwood)

“Disability is difference - not deficiency.”  
Judith Heumann, Civil Rights Leader and Activist



# Disability is not a monolith.



# DISABILITY <sup>is</sup> <sub>an</sub> INTERSECTION

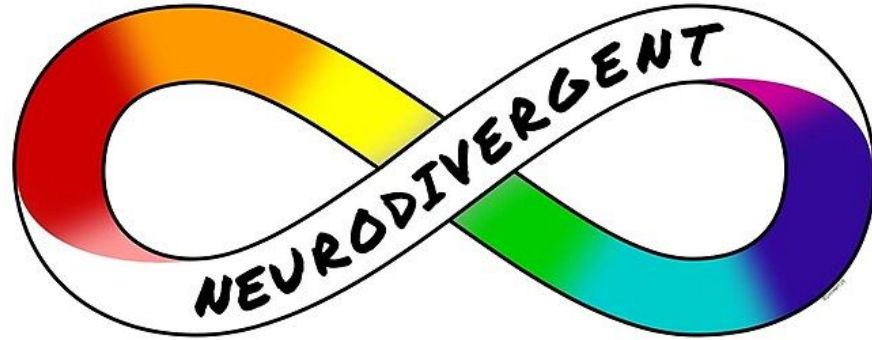


# “Visible” and “Invisible” Disabilities



NOT ALL  
DISABILITIES  
ARE VISIBLE  
#THINKOUTSIDETHECHAIR





# Neurodiversity

The range of differences in individual brain function and behavioral traits, regarded as part of normal variation in the human population



# Let's talk about neurodiversity.

"Neurodiverse (ND) and neurodiversity refer to the infinite variation in cognitive functioning that can lead to differences in thinking, attention, and memory."

-Creative Differences Handbook

# There is no standard brain.

-Thomas Armstrong, PhD,  
author of "The Power of Neurodiversity"

# DIVERSITY IS NATURAL NEURODIVERSITY\* IS NATURAL



PLANT DIVERSITY



ANIMAL DIVERSITY

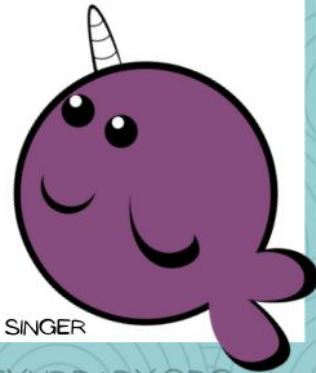


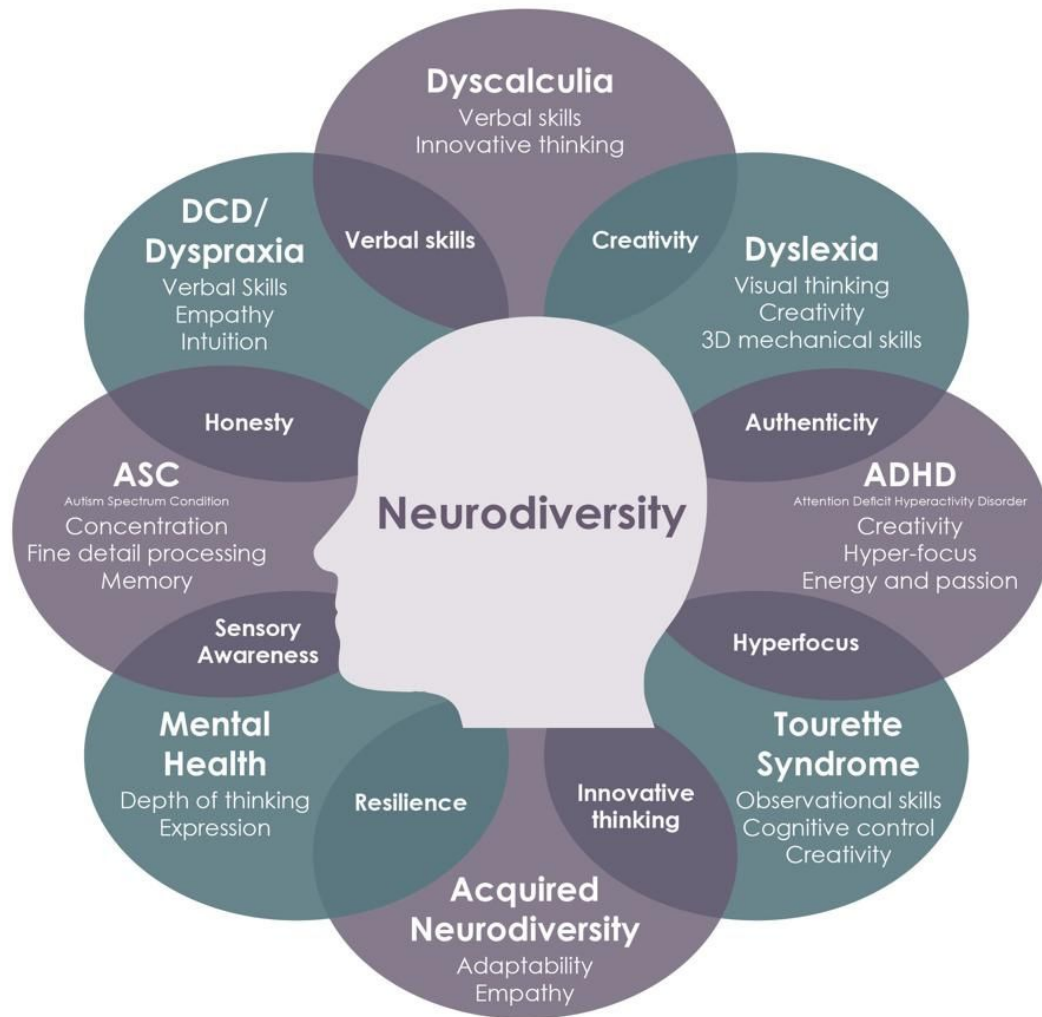
HUMAN DIVERSITY



BRAIN DIVERSITY = NEURODIVERSITY!

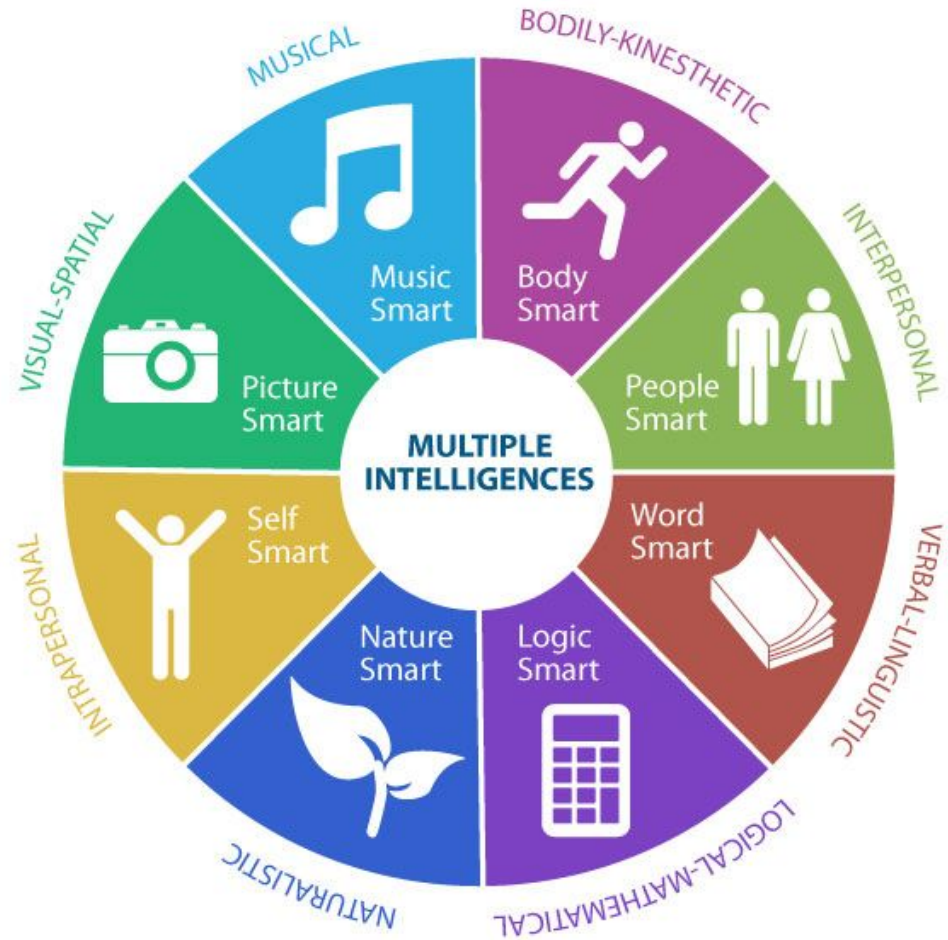
\*"NEURODIVERSITY" IS A WORD COINED BY AUTISTIC SCHOLAR JUDITH SINGER





# Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

proposes the differentiation of human intelligence into specific types of intelligence, rather than defining intelligence as a single, general ability



# Benefits of Neurodiversity in the Workplace



# Benefits of Neurodiversity

- Innovative and out-of-the-box thinkers
- Creative and imaginative
- Technical and design strengths
- New ways to solve problems
- Challenges norms and seeks improvement
- High levels of concentration



# Benefits of Neurodiversity

- Keen accuracy and ability to detect errors
- Pattern recognition and makes connections
- In tune with their environment and surroundings
- Strong recall of information and detailed factual knowledge
- Reliability and persistence
- Ability to excel at work that is routine or repetitive in nature
- Highly empathetic





# Differences in Neurodivergent Thinkers

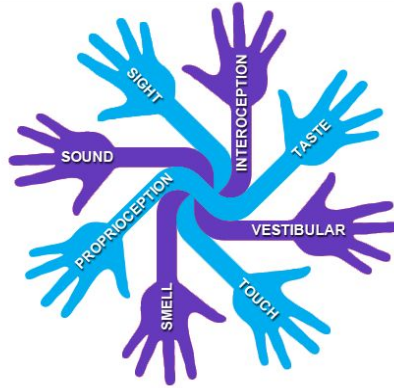


**Set of mental processes that helps connect past experiences with present action; foundation for cognitive and social skills**

## Executive Functioning Differences

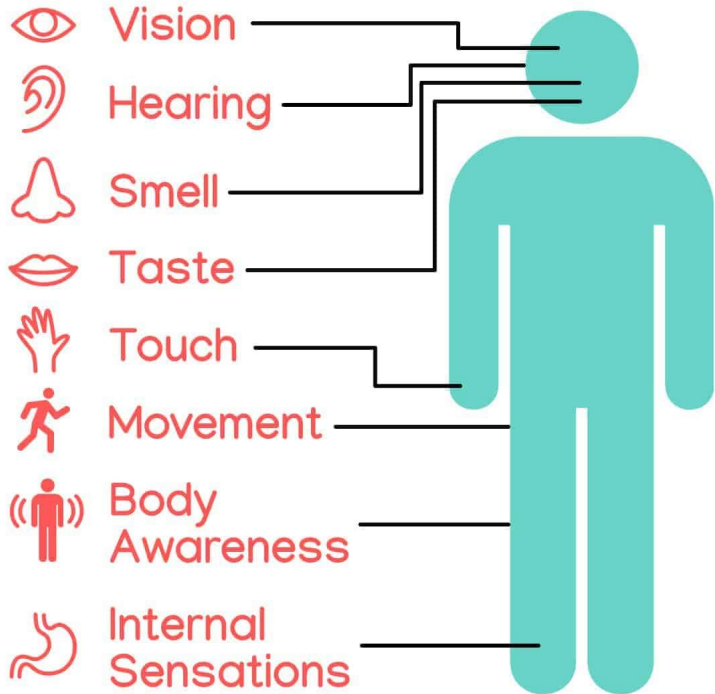
- Time Management
- Communication
- Memorizing and retrieving information
- Initiating activities or tasks
- Generating ideas independently
- Multitasking

# Differences in Sensory Processing



Process that organizes sensations from one's body and the environment, so the body can be used effectively within its environment

# Differences in Sensory Processing



**Hypersensitivity** (too much)

**Hyposensitive** (not enough)

# Hiring Equitably and Inclusively





There is no perfect candidate.  
Perfection is a distraction from the  
reality of what we need and  
what will work.



There is increased productivity and innovation in a diverse workforce.

Reliance on “cultural fit” won’t help your organization succeed.



Standardizing the hiring process too much can backfire. Gain information about applicants to make fair and equitable decisions, while also allowing applicants to showcase skills.

# Strategies for Inclusive Hiring



- Send interview questions 24-18 hours in advance
- Share your pronouns up front
- Consider various communication strategies
  - Resume and cover letter
  - Interview
  - Provide printed copies of related documentation
  - Provide structure with time checks, if needed
  - Offer additional time to think
  - Offer to rephrase a question



# Strategies for Inclusive Hiring



- Share and discuss job descriptions during interview
- Be flexible in the interview process to allow individuals to showcase their abilities and skills.
- Provide a statement of your organization's commitment to inclusive hiring practices and supporting a diverse workplace environment.

# Strategies for Inclusive Hiring



- Offer to provide feedback to applicants who are not offered the position. Focus on both successes and opportunities for growth.
- Once hired, review the job description and discuss.
- Review and revise job descriptions annually with the employee.
  - Review qualifications and essential duties to ensure the employee continues to be qualified in the position.

# Review & Update Personnel Policies

- Emergency Leave Policy and Procedure
- Telecommuting Policy and Procedure
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Anti-Harassment Policy
- Accommodations Policy



# Reasonable Accommodations in the Workplace



Information, Guidance and Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act:

<https://adata.org/factsheet/reasonable-accommodations-workplace>

# Learn about Reasonable Accommodations



EMPLOYERS INDIVIDUALS ADA LIBRARY A TO Z LISTS ACCOMMODATION SEARCH PUBLICATIONS & ARTICLES ABOUT JAN

## EMPLOYEES' PRACTICAL GUIDE TO REQUESTING AND NEGOTIATING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Home / Publications / Individuals

Review a summary of some of the most frequent issues that employees have regarding accommodations and ADA compliance. Learn more about JAN's practical ideas for resolving them.

Source: <https://askjan.org/publications/individuals/employee-guide.cfm>

# Providing 1:1 Support



# Work Towards Building Trust

- Set concrete expectations and guidelines from Day One
- Inquire about preferred communication style
- Ask about areas of interest, support and/or learning needed
- Support disclosure on their terms and timeline
- Provide person-centered support



# Gather Input During Onboarding

- Desk and furniture
  - Sit/Stand desk
  - Balance mat
  - Fidget chair
- Lighting
- Desk accessories
- Other supports
  - Fidgets
  - Noise Cancelling Headphones
  - “Calm” or “Amazing Marvin” apps
- Breaks and/or Work From Home Status
  - Frequency
  - Location
  - Length





# Accessible Communication: What To Say

Person First



Identify First



Person First and Identity First Language: [asklearn.org/page/people-first-language](https://asklearn.org/page/people-first-language)

# Strategies for Inclusion with Teams





What are examples of best practices you apply to everyone in managing your team?

# Accessible Communication: What To Say

Schedule regular check-in meetings with direct reports.

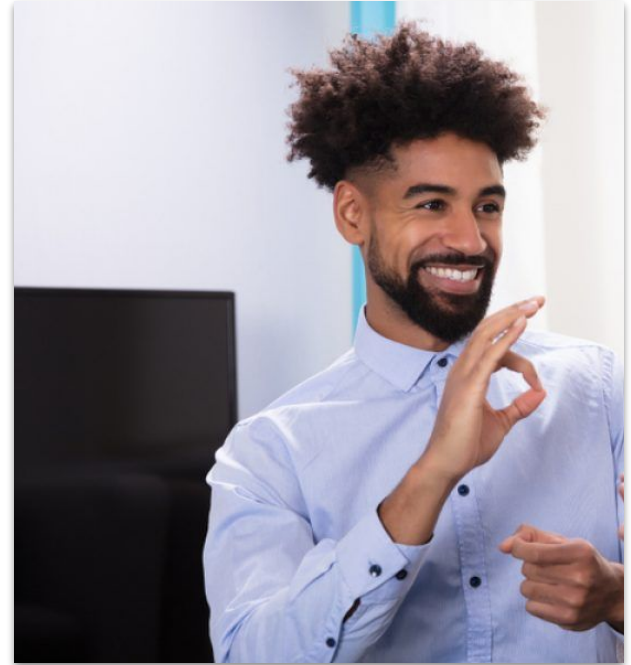
Don't single people out only for performance issues.



# Accessible Communication: How to Say It

Adjust your communication.  
Try alternative methods to  
ensure hearing and  
understanding.

Be patient and flexible.





# Develop Accessible Staff Communication

**Welcome back to the library!** 

**Drop by during open hours for express services:**

-   
Pick up holds
-   
Find items on the shelf
-   
Use a computer
-   
Check out items

**Remember to follow our library safety guidelines:**

-   
Wear a mask
-   
Keep visits brief
-   
Stay 6 ft apart
-   
Use hand sanitizer

- Use plain language
- For staff procedures and guidelines, assess reading level of vocabulary used
- Combine pictures and symbols with text
- Use whitespace to break up visual clutter
- Design with high color contrast

# Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences





# Use Visuals in Meetings and Presentations

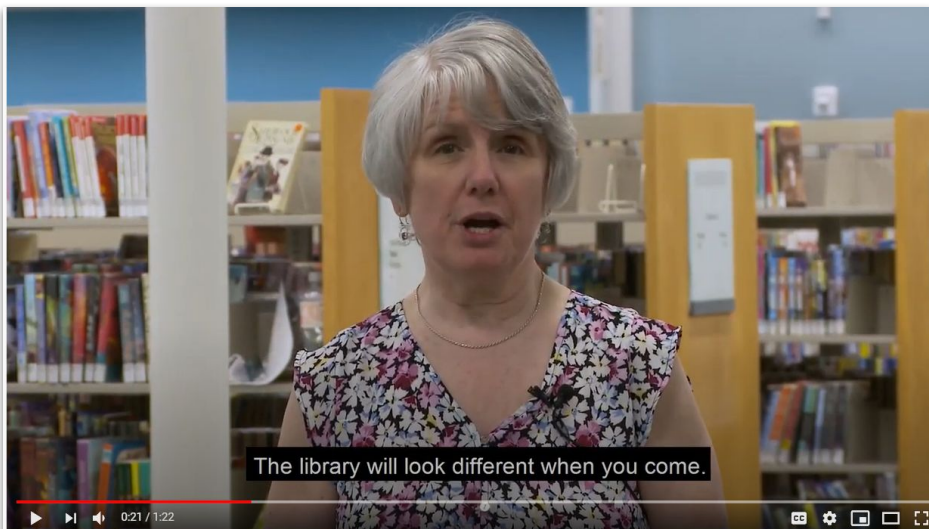


PowerPoint



Props

# Create Staff Training Videos



Dakota County Library Express Service

2,508 views · Jul 8, 2020

36 2 SHARE SAVE ..



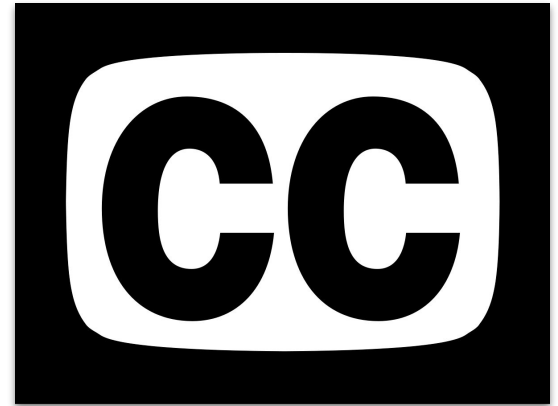
Dakota County Library Express Service

2,508 views · Jul 8, 2020

36 2 SHARE SAVE ..

# Use Closed Captioning in Virtual Meetings and Videos

- Research shows more online content accessed by CC users
- Make it a standard; don't require people to ask or disclose
- Supports Deaf and Hard of Hearing, English Language Learners, ADHD & other neurodiverse needs



# Offer Sensory Supports in Collaborative Work Spaces



Noise-canceling  
Headphones



Mirror



Single use ear plugs

# Normalize Fidgets During Work



# Share Resources

- Promote your organization's Employee Assistance Program
- Supporting attending any Employee Resource Groups
- Provide an ergonomic assessment, if available
- Share info about *Ask Jan*



# Strategies for Inclusion

- Ask for additional support needs for any large gathering of staff
- Share agenda ahead of time
- Allow sitting, standing, fidgeting, moving around the room
- Integrate breaks during meetings
- Disclose if you are comfortable
- Recognize Mental Health Awareness all month long



# Workplace accommodations I've made for neurodiverse staff:

- Relocation of desk further away from public space to decrease noise distractions
- Purchased a set of Loop ear plugs
- Developed a schedule of telecommuting 2 days per week for full time employee
- Booked meeting room to provide space for staff whose desk is in public area
- Developed a Return to Work plan with additional leave time after 12 week emergency leave was taken; scheduled weekly 1:1s during transition period
- Offered 1:1 job coaching from paid job coach
- Taught the Pomodoro technique
- Approved longer shifts for staff to take longer midday breaks
- Funded subscription based purchase of productivity app for their personal device
- Reduced workload and modified responsibilities; temporarily re-assigned work to others
- Created text and visual instructions for counting money in change drawer
- Delegated responsibilities short and long term; job restructuring



# NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US.



**DISABILITY  
VOICES  
FOR LIFE**

# Further Learning

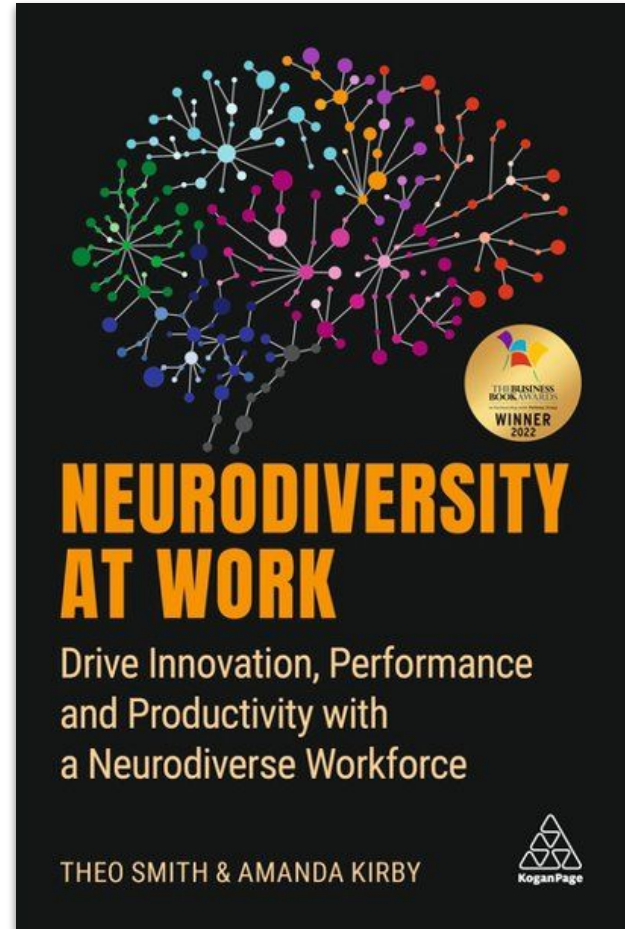


[www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org)

# Further Learning

Neurodiversity at Work: Drive Innovation, Performance and Productivity with a Neurodiverse Workforce

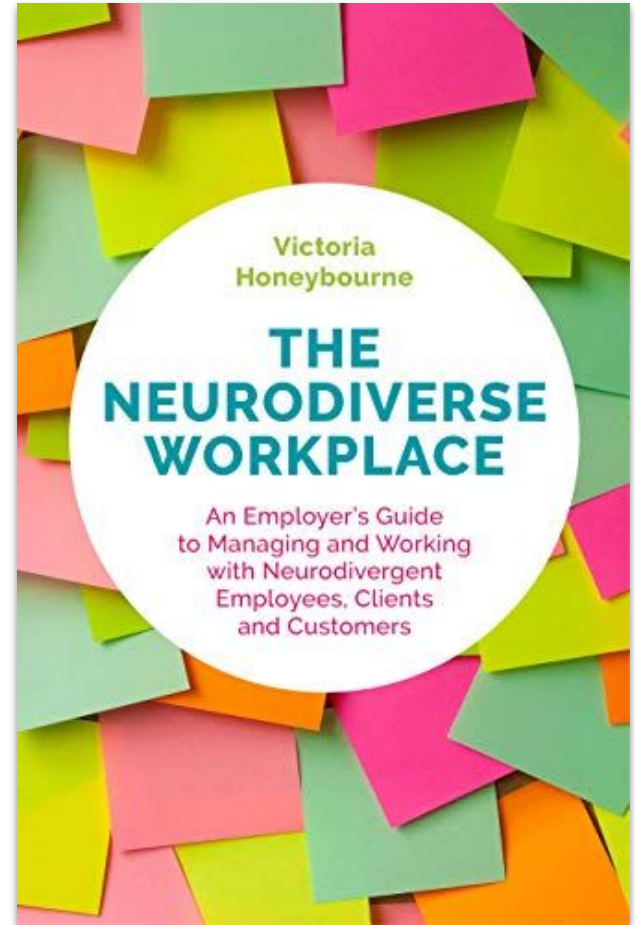
Theo Smith and Amanda Kirby  
(2021)



# Further Learning

The Neurodiverse Workplace: An Employer's Guide to Managing and Working with Neurodivergent Employees, Clients and Customers

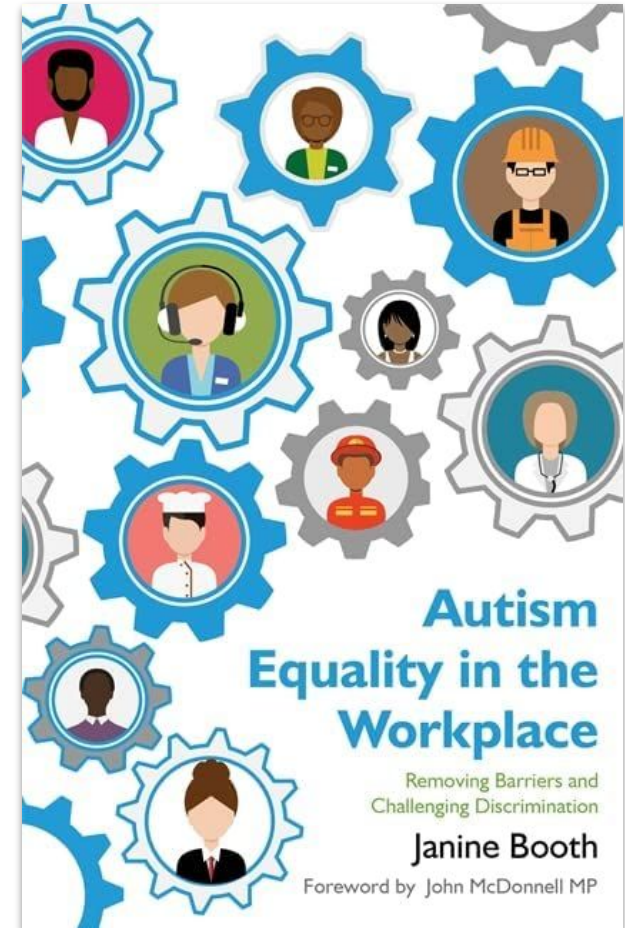
Victoria Honeybourne  
(2020)



# Further Learning

Autism Equality in the Workplace:  
Removing Barriers and  
Challenging Discrimination

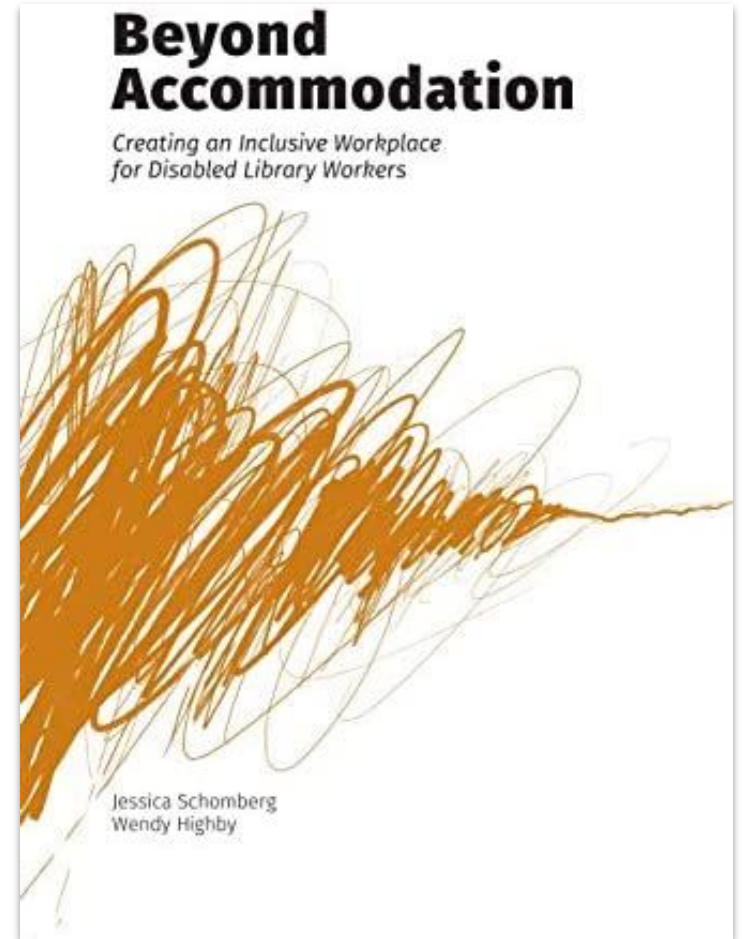
Janine Booth  
(2016)



# Further Learning

Beyond Accommodation:  
Creating an Inclusive Workplace  
for Disabled Library Workers

Jessica Schomberg and Wendy Highby  
(2020)



# Further Learning



Project Enable: Expanding Nondiscriminatory  
Access by Librarians Everywhere

<https://projectenable.syr.edu/>



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