

Terms and Definitions

Neurodiversity

The diversity of human minds, the infinite variation in human neurocognitive functioning.

Neurodiversity Paradigm

A philosophy that views neurodiversity as natural and valuable (views one "normal," "healthy," or "right" type of neurology is a social construct). It recognizes social power inequalities associated with neurodiversity, but emphasizes the strength in it.

Neurodiversity Movement

A social justice movement seeking civil rights, equality, respect, and inclusion for neurodivergent individuals.

Neurodivergent

Describes a person or group of people whose brain functions in ways that are different from the statistical norm. It is a broad term, as neurodivergence (the state of being neurodivergent) can be genetic and/or a result of a brain-altering experience.

Neurotypical

Describes someone whose brain function aligns with the statistical norm, i.e. someone who is not neurodivergent.

Non-Autistic or Allistic

Terms used to describe someone who is not autistic. (Neurotypical and non-autistic are not synonymous, as someone can be non-autistic but neurodivergent in another way.)

Neurodiverse

A group of people in which multiple neurocognitive styles are represented (e.g. a group is neurodiverse if some members are neurotypical while others are Autistic).

Ableism

Discrimination or prejudice that devalues and disadvantages people with disabilities, including those who are neurodivergent. It encompasses negative attitudes, environmental barriers, and lack of support and accommodations.

Neuronormativity

The assumption that everyone's brain functions (or should function) in a way that is considered "neurotypical." It creates a set of unspoken social norms and expectations, privileges the neurotypical experience, creates barriers, and reinforces ableism.

Neurodiversity-affirming

A way of thinking and acting that recognizes and values the natural variations in human brain function. It emphasizes acceptance, embraces strengths and differences, and aims to create inclusive and supportive environments for neurodivergent individuals.