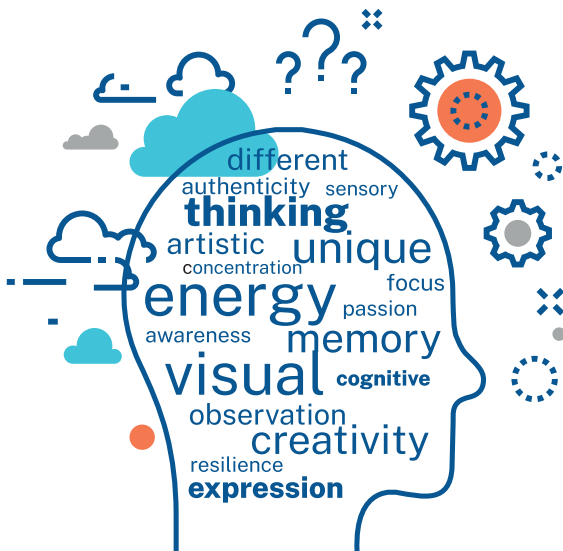


# Neurodiversity

## Pocket guide



Neurodiversity acknowledges that each person's brain is unique. Our brains work and interpret information differently and we all bring individual experience, strengths, and assets to a situation. Neurodiversity can manifest in mood, behaviour and other cognitive functions.

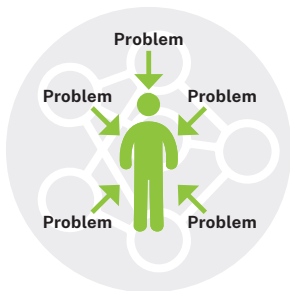


For this pocket guide, we are including those with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, attention deficit hyperactivity condition, ADHD, attention deficit disorder (ADD) and autism as neurodiverse but this is not an exhaustive list. Often those who are neurodivergent have more than one of these conditions.

The term 'specific learning difference' refers to a difference/difficulty that an individual has with a particular aspect of learning. The most common specific learning differences are dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADD, ADHD, dyscalculia and dysgraphia. Autism is the term used within this guide to include autistic spectrum condition (ASC) and Asperger's syndrome following consultation with members.

At the heart of neurodiversity is the idea that individual differences are not weaknesses, but that society imposes expectations based on a majority neurotypical population. When not met, this can lead to challenges.

## The Medical Model



## The Social Model

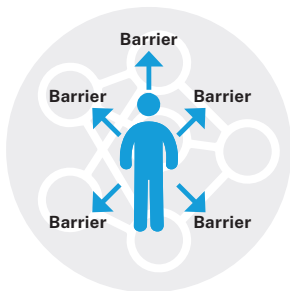


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By applying a social model approach, we can appreciate that individual differences are not the problem but rather external barriers. By removing these barriers, we build a more inclusive society that values individual strengths and differences.

Neurodiversity is experienced differently by different people and experiences are influenced by other factors such as race, cultural background and gender (this interplay of factors is referred to as intersectionality).

These lists of effects and strengths are not exhaustive and there is overlap, especially as co-occurrences are very common.

## Dyslexia

### Effects/difficulties

- Difficulties with spelling and fluent word reading.
- Slower verbal processing speed.
- Slower reading.
- Reduced verbal memory and working memory.

### Strengths

- Can view things from a different perspective.
- Problem solving skills.
- Empathy.
- Creativity.
- Visual/good pattern recognition.

## **Dyspraxia/developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD)**

### **Effects/difficulties**

- Poor motor control/co-ordination.
- Clumsiness.
- Poor time management/ organisation.
- Difficulty finding right words.
- Difficulties with left/right orientation.

### **Strengths**

- Can view things from a different perspective.
- Problem solving skills.

## **Dyscalculia**

### **Effects/difficulties**

- Difficulty understanding numbers.
- Poor sense of estimate of numbers.
- Slow to perform calculations.
- Forget mathematical procedures/maths facts.
- Difficulty counting backwards.

### **Strengths**

- Can view things from a different perspective.
  - Problem solving skills.
  - Strategic thinking.
  - Empathy.
-

# Autism

## Effects/difficulties

- Difficulty interpreting verbal and non-verbal language eg, tone of voice and facial expressions.
- Literal in understanding of language.
- Difficulty reading other people.
- Sensory sensitivities.
- Repetitive/routine behaviours.
- Anxiety.

(National Autistic Society 2016)

## Strengths

- Attention to detail.
- Good at following and developing protocols and guidelines.
- Can view things from a different perspective.
- Problem solving skills.

# ADHD

## Effects/difficulties

- Poor attention (or hyper focus on stimulating tasks) or attention to detail
  - Hyperactivity or restlessness
  - Poor time management/prioritisation
  - Impulsiveness
  - Overworking, difficulty relaxing
  - Forgetfulness
  - Excessive talking.
- (Katzman et al., 2017)

## Strengths

- Can hyperfocus on tasks and be extremely productive.
  - Can be very creative and entrepreneurial.
  - Can view things from a different perspective.
  - Problem solving skills.
  - Empathy.
  - Energetic.
  - Enthusiastic.
  - Hard working.
  - Interested in new things.
  - Sensitive.
-

## My strengths





## My reasonable adjustments



Please use this pocket guide in conjunction with our *Neurodiversity Guidance* publication (010 156) available at: **[rcn.org.uk/publications](https://rcn.org.uk/publications)**

Further information is also available at: **[rcn.org.uk/neurodiversity](https://rcn.org.uk/neurodiversity)**



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