KINGSTON NHS TRUST

Neuro-inclusive Collaboration and Team Work

Giving you an understanding of how you can best collaborate and work with your neurodivergent colleagues.

Our Way of Doing Things!

1 Questions are encouraged, use the chat, raise your hand, engage in a way comfortable for you

2 We have a few interactive exercises throughout, please get involved if you're happy to

3 Put your camera on (if you feel comfortable enough to)

Workshop Outline

The plan for the workshop:

1

Understanding Neurodiversity

2

Barriers and Challenges

3

Practical Collaboration Strategies

4

Q&A and wrap up

Hi! I'm Steven

**I am a trainer, coach and mediator**
I have spent the last nearly-two-decades supporting atypical and neurodivergent leaders thrive in their environments and helping organisations break down barriers that diminish the return on neurodiversity.

I was diagnosed with ADHD in my early twenties

Generally made the conscious decision not to share my diagnosis.

Worked hard to understand and manage both my ADHD and my high introversion to help me in my roles.
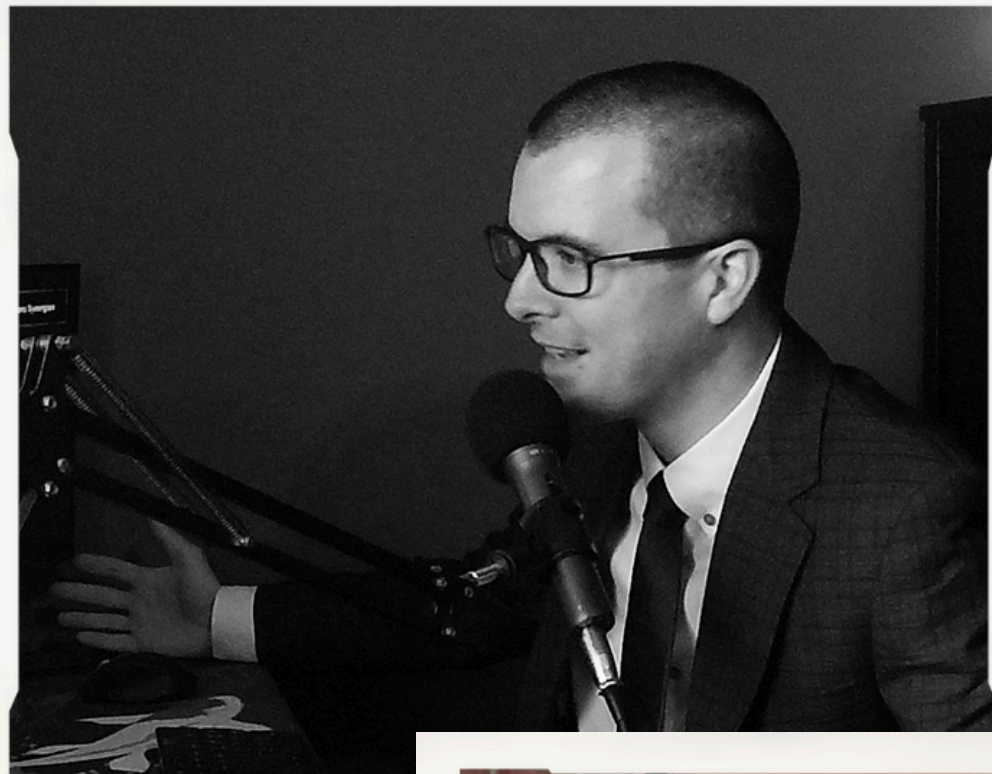
Through the chat box, think about...

How would you describe your neurotype?

Whether you are neurodivergent or neurotypical, we all have unique natural strengths and capabilities according to our neurotype. How would you describe yours?

In chat please share the following:

What do you know about your neurotype? Are you introverted? Extroverted? Reflective? Activist? Neurodivergent?

How do you prefer to communicate? Writing? Verbal? What else?

Part 1

Understanding Neurodiversity

So... what actually is neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity means that **everyone's brain works differently**.

Everybody **works** differently and everybody **thinks** differently.

These differences exist in every single team!

When we recognise and embrace them, we create workplaces where **everyone can thrive**.

Useful definitions

Neurodivergent - Someone whose brain performs differently than what society considers the norm

Neurotypical - Someone whose brain functions in the way expected by society
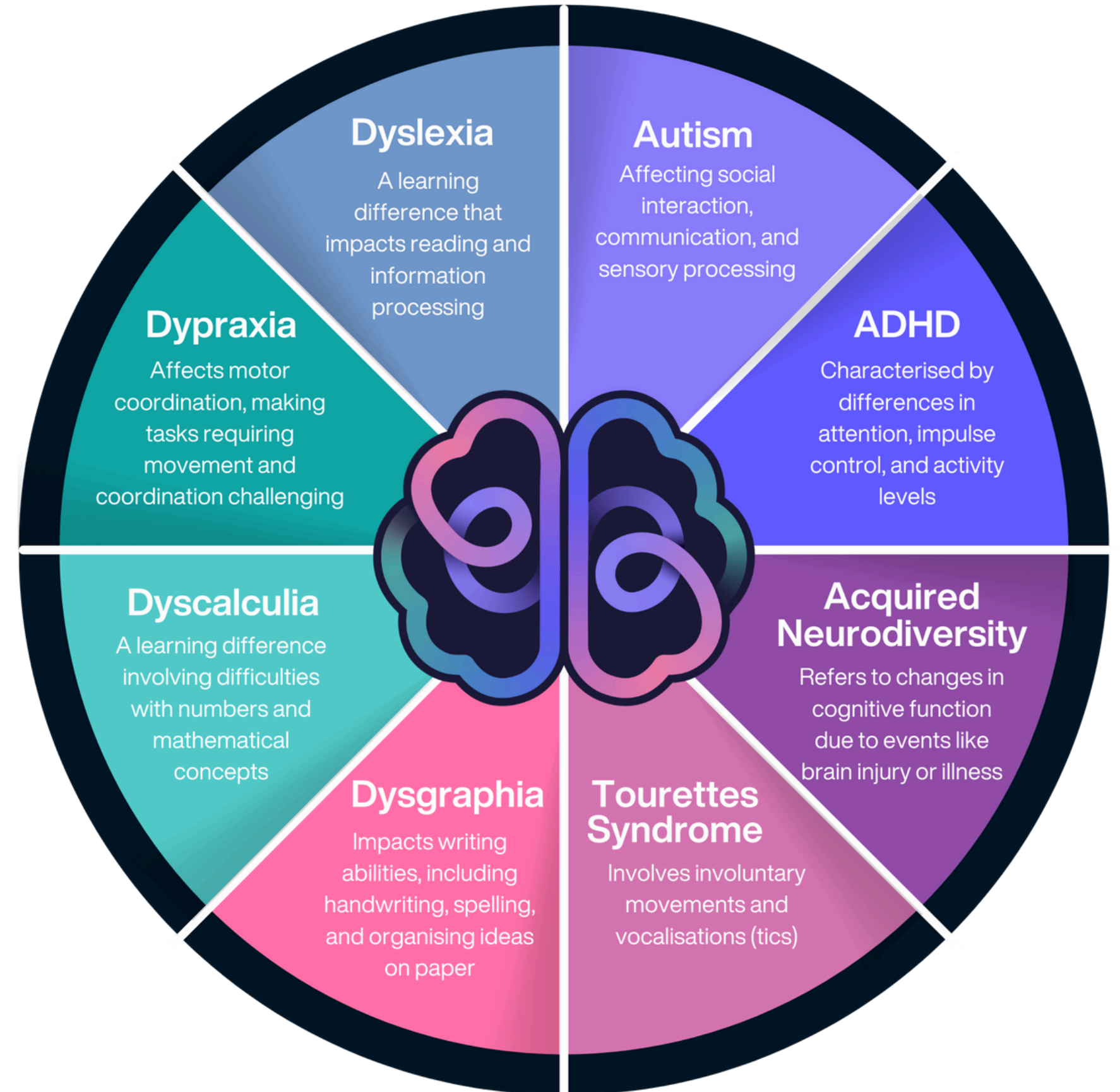
Neurodiverse – A group with both neurodivergent and neurotypical people

Neurodiversity movement – A grassroots effort advocating for improvements in how neurodivergent people are viewed and treated in society

World population prevalence estimated to be around

20%

Having more than 1 condition is called

co-occuring conditions

Dyslexia
A learning difference that impacts reading and information processing

Autism
Affecting social interaction, communication, and sensory processing

ADHD
Characterised by differences in attention, impulse control, and activity levels

Dypraxia
Affects motor coordination, making tasks requiring movement and coordination challenging

Acquired Neurodiversity
Refers to changes in cognitive function due to events like brain injury or illness

Dyscalculia
A learning difference involving difficulties with numbers and mathematical concepts

Dysgraphia
Impacts writing abilities, including handwriting, spelling, and organising ideas on paper

Tourettes Syndrome
Involves involuntary movements and vocalisations (tics)

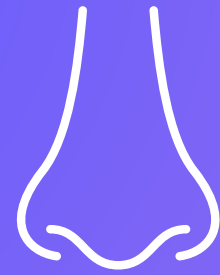# Common challenges neurodivergent people face

Information overload!

Unclear expectations

Sensory overload—bright lights, loud noises, strong smells

The pressure to respond instantly

Lack of flexibility

What are sensory sensitivities?

Smells
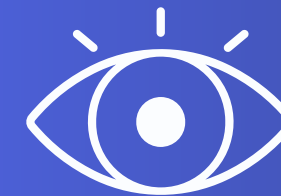
Strong or unfamiliar smells can be overwhelming

Sounds

Sensitivity to loud or unexpected noises can be distracting or anxiety inducing

Touch

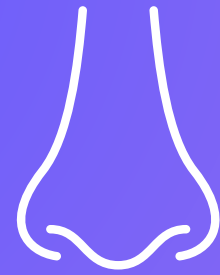Certain textures can cause discomfort or even pain

Sights

Difficulty processing visual stimuli, leading to discomfort or difficulty focusing

What are some examples in your workplace and what could help?

- Strong air fresheners
- Strong perfumes
- Strong cleaning products

Smells

Strong or unfamiliar smells can be overwhelming

Sounds

Sensitivity to loud or unexpected noises can be distracting or anxiety inducing

- Fire alarms
- Phones ringing
- Doors slamming

- Harsh furniture fabrics
- Wearing name tags or lanyards
- Crowded lifts
- Unexpected gestures - tapping on shoulder, hand shakes

Touch

Certain textures can cause discomfort or even pain

Sights

Difficulty processing visual stimuli, leading to discomfort or difficulty focusing

- Bright LED office lights
- Flickering Christmas lights
- Visual clutter - bright furniture or posters
- TV's

Part 2

Neuro-inclusive Collaboration Tips

Communication best practice

Use plain language - avoid jargons

Be clear and direct

Structure your information

Use visuals

Using the 5 W's and H technique

Is your information neuro-inclusive?

01 ## Choose a dyslexia friendly font

- Use sans serif fonts such as Arial, Verdana, Tahoma.
- **12-14 font size** with **good spacing**
- Avoid italics, underlining or fancy fonts.

02 ## Headings and structure

- Use a font size that is at least **20% larger** than the normal text.
- Create a **clear structure**

03 ## Colours to use

- Use **single colour** backgrounds
- Use sufficient **contrast** levels between background and the text.

04 ## The best layouts

- Always use **left-align text.**
- Try to write **short simple sentences** (60 to 70 characters is optimal) and break up the text using headings and subheadings.

05 ## Writing Style

- Write information **concisely** using simple language.
- **Images or diagrams** can be useful
- Consider using **bullet points and numbering** to structure text.

06 ## Designing slides and materials

- **Colourful,** high contrast design can make it easier for dyslexic people to read.
- **Images, graphics and other visuals** can create a more structured design.

What is the 5 W's and H Technique?

5 Ws and H is a technique originally used by journalists and is shorthand for the six key question areas that all reporters should cover for any solid news story: **Why, What, Who, Where, When, and How.**

For neurodivergent employees, it provides...

More certainty
More context
Improved communication

Who	**What**	**When**
Who is involved in the task, decision or project?	What needs to be done? Explain in clear, specific language.	When does it need to be done by? Explain timeframes or deadlines.

Where	**Why**	**How**
Where is the event, meeting or document located?	Why is the task or change important?	How do you complete it?

Using our inclusive meeting framework

Step Two
During the meeting

01

02

Step One
Before the meeting

03

Step Three
After the meeting

1
- Make sure the agenda is distributed at least 24 hours in advance
- Record the meeting so people don't have to take notes

2
- Make sure every person gets a chance to contribute
- Follow the agenda and stick to timings
- AI notetakers can be helpful

3
- Share the recording with attendees
- Follow up with clear actions

Neuro-inclusive brain storming techniques

Asynchronous

Use platforms like Google Docs, Trello, or shared spreadsheets where participants can **submit ideas at their own pace.**

Set a clear deadline for submissions, but allow flexibility for individuals to add ideas as they come to mind.

Digital Whiteboards

Create a virtual board where team members can add sticky notes, text, images, or diagrams.

Participants can contribute at their own pace, in real-time or asynchronously, and organise ideas visually for better clarity.
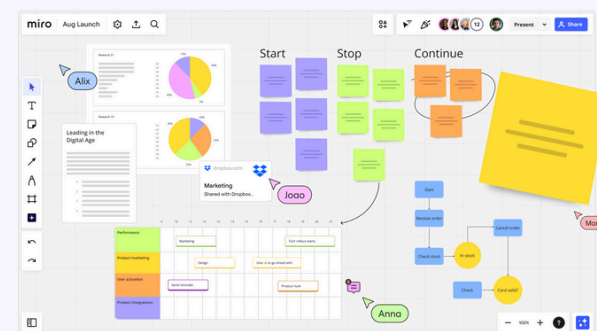
Silent

Give everyone a set amount of time (e.g., 5-10 minutes) to jot down ideas silently in a shared document or on sticky notes.

Afterward, have a group discussion where each idea is reviewed and expanded upon.

Mindmapping

Start with a central idea or problem, and have participants branch out with related concepts.

Use tools like MindMeister or XMind to create digital mind maps that everyone can contribute to and modify, either in real-time or asynchronously.

Google Docs

Understanding your colleagues

Working Styles Guide

For all employees, to increase their understanding of their colleagues and improve working relationships.

Introduction

Welcome to the Enna team's Working Styles Guide. To be happy and successful in our busy work lives, we must understand how to work well together. This guide is design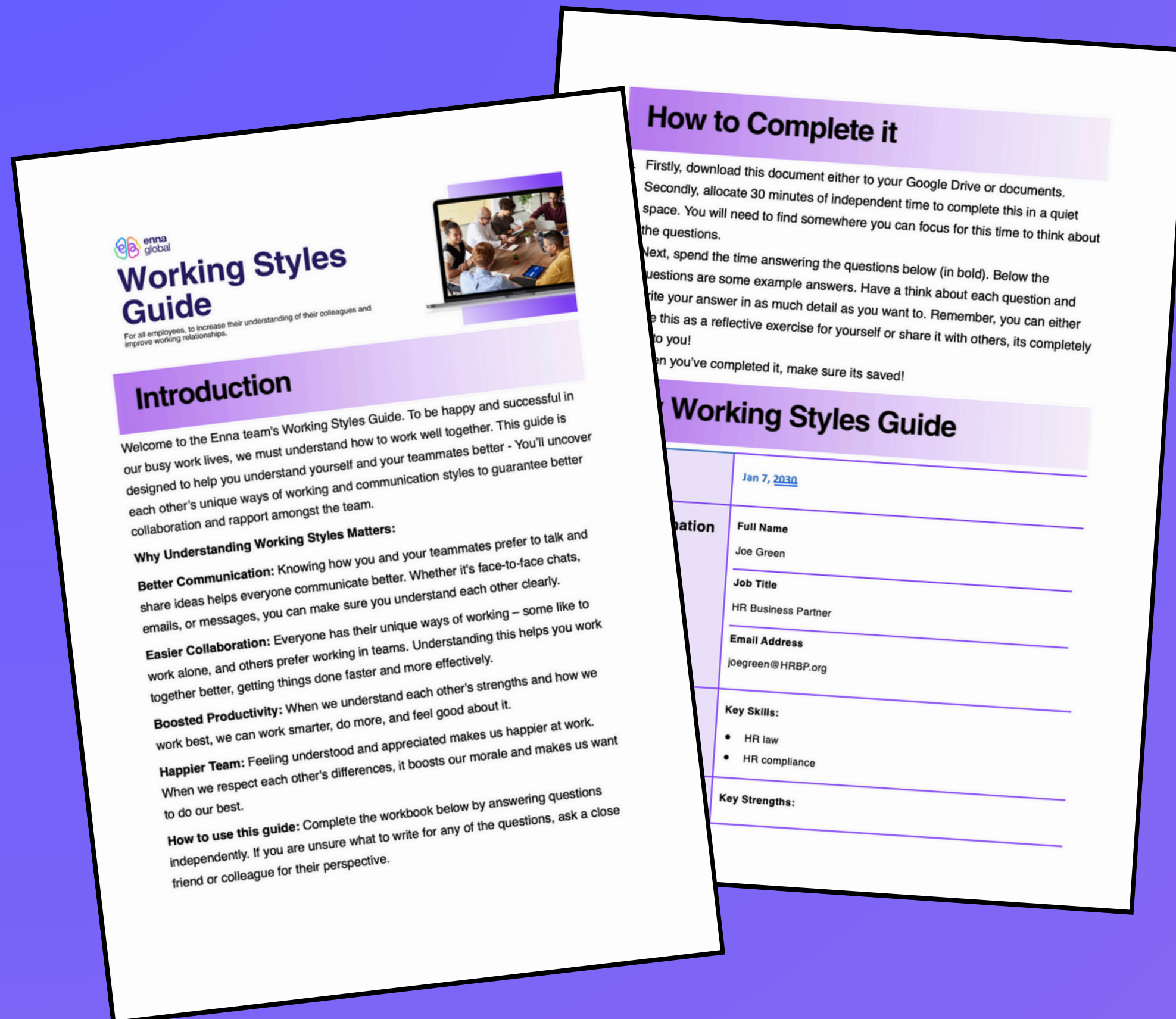ed to help you understand yourself and your teammates better - You'll uncover each other's unique ways of working and communication styles to guarantee better collaboration and rapport amongst the team.

Why Understanding Working Styles Matters:

Better Communication: Knowing how you and your teammates prefer to talk and share ideas helps everyone communicate better. Whether it's face-to-face chats, emails, or messages, you can make sure you understand each other clearly.

Easier Collaboration: Everyone has their unique ways of working – some like to work alone, and others prefer working in teams. Understanding this helps you work together better, getting things done faster and more effectively.

Boosted Productivity: When we understand each other's strengths and how we work best, we can work smarter, do more, and feel good about it.

Happier Team: Feeling understood and appreciated makes us happier at work. When we respect each other's differences, it boosts our morale and makes us want to do our best.

How to use this guide: Complete the workbook below by answering questions independently. If you are unsure what to write for any of the questions, ask a close friend or colleague for their perspective.

How to Complete it

Firstly, download this document either to your Google Drive or documents. Secondly, allocate 30 minutes of independent time to complete this in a quiet space. You will need to find somewhere you can focus for this time to think about the questions.

Next, spend the time answering the questions below (in bold). Below the questions are some example answers. Have a think about each question and write your answer in as much detail as you want to. Remember, you can either use this as a reflective exercise for yourself or share it with others, its completely [up] to you!

[When] you've completed it, make sure its saved!

Working Styles Guide

Jan 7, 2030

Full Name
Joe Green

Job Title
HR Business Partner

Email Address
joegreen@HRBP.org

Key Skills:
- HR law
- HR compliance

Key Strengths:

How do you...
- Prefer to receive information/instruction?
- Prefer to work as a team and collaborate?
- Like to learn?
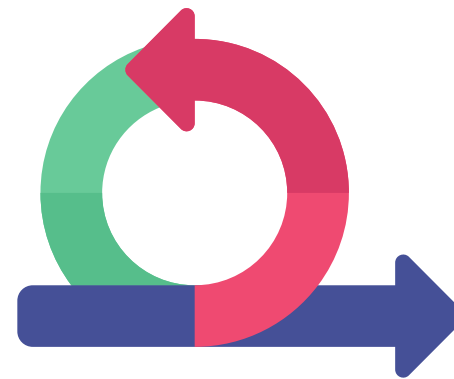- Like to organise tasks?
- Work best?

How would you...
- Like me to communicate with you?
- Like me to check in with you?
- Like me to give you feedback?

Project Work and Task Management

Project Management Tools
e.g. 2 hours of focus time at the time they're most productive.

Agile Working
Agile working is great for flexibility, collaboration and interative progress.

Using a Project Plan
Breaking down projects into smaller, clearer chunks

PROJECT TASK CHECKLIST TEMPLATE

PROJECT NAME	ALPHA PROJECT
ASSIGNED TO	John C.
DESCRIPTION	Description of project and project details …

TASKS	STATUS	PRIORITY	DUE DATE	DESCRIPTION	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
Call vendors	Complete	High	MM/DD/YY	Contact Weller Inc and Sanders Inc	George K.	Confirm deadlines
Order supplies	In Progress	Medium	MM/DD/YY	Supplies listed in database	Theresa B.	Update stock
Task 3	Not Started	Medium	MM/DD/YY			
Task 4	Overdue	Low	MM/DD/YY			
Task 5	On Hold	Medium	MM/DD/YY			
	On Hold	High				

Are you having a red, amber or green day?

Characteristics

Energy **is at its lowest; you feel drained, distracted, or unmotivated**.

Completing even simple tasks may feel overwhelming.

You might rely on **external motivators** (e.g., caffeine) to push through.

Characteristics

Your energy and focus fluctuate throughout the day.

You're not at your peak performance, but you're still **able to function** well.

Your productivity and focus isn't as long as a green day.

Characteristics

You have **high energy**, **focus**, and creativity and can sustain these.

Tasks feel manageable, and you're **enthusiastic** about tackling high-priority work or large tasks.

You feel **"in the zone"**

What activities are best to do on each of these days?

Activities in different RAG days

Activities

Light touch communication

Reflection and preparation for upcoming Green Zone work

Seeking support or delegating where possible

Activities

Non collaborative work

Admin work

Shorter meetings

Routine tasks

Independent work

Activities

Brainstorming and creative work

Complex tasks or projects

Collaborative meetings

Learning or training

How to use this in a team

Activities

Use the RAG system to inform colleagues about your status, so they know when you're available for collaborative work, need a break, or when you're in need of support.

Activities

Based on someone's RAG day status, adjust task assignments accordingly. For example, if someone is on a red day, assign them simple or solitary tasks and postpone group work until they are feeling more energetic.

Activities

Tools like Asana, Trello, or Slack can help you indicate your status for the day, letting colleagues know when you're ready for a collaborative effort or when you need individual time to focus.

Using virtual 'water cooler' meetings

✅ **The Benefits**

Low pressure as theres no formal agenda or expectations

Reduced social anxiety experienced by colleagues

Improved team bonding as informal conversations help to build relationships

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How to make them inclusive

Keep them structured but flexible - have an agenda

Keep them short - around 15/20 minutes once a week and remind everyone its fine if they need to skip one
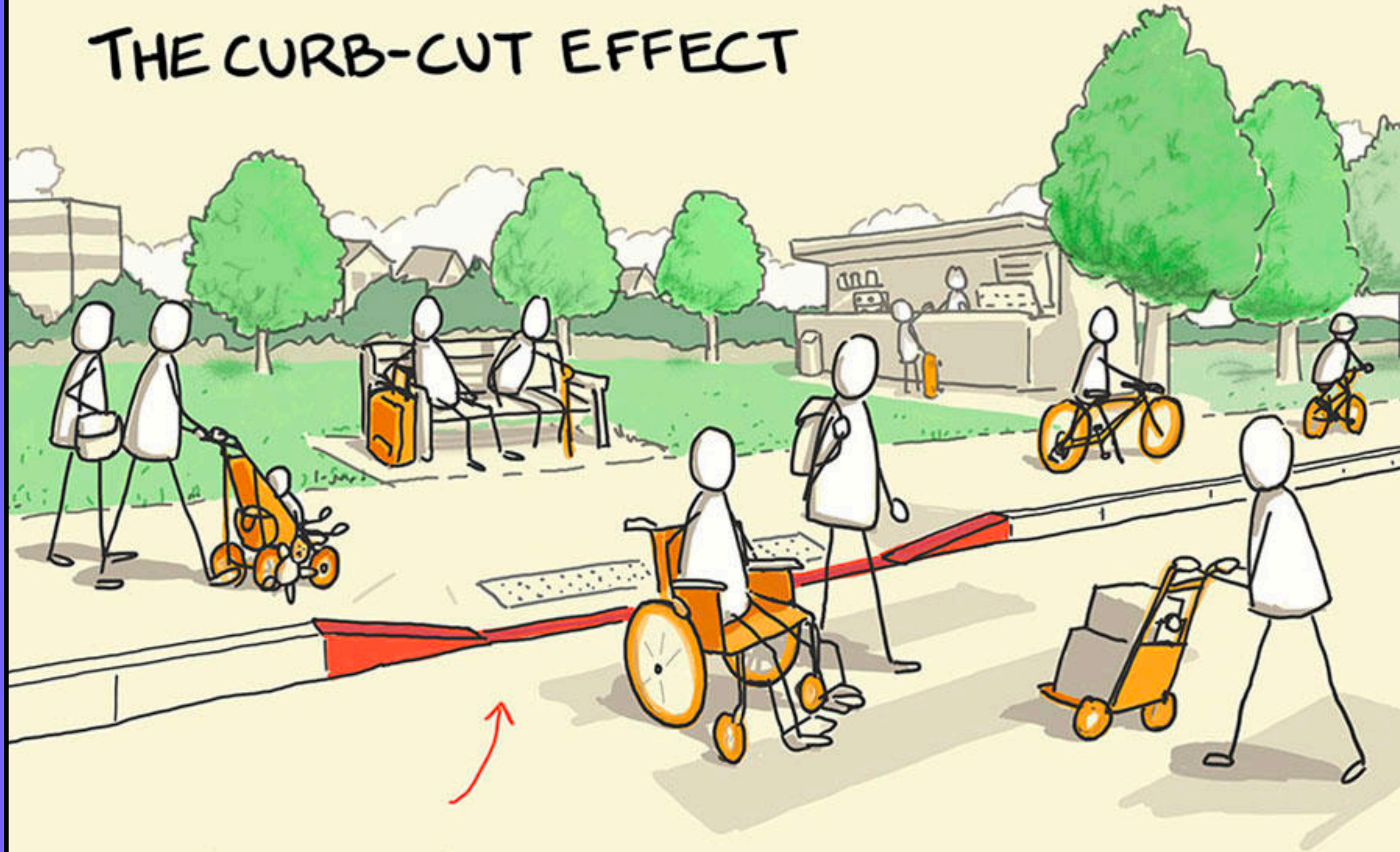
Next Steps...

I think I might be neurodivergent, what shall I do?

- Free anonymous ND tests on www.enna.org/resources
- If you think you're neurodivergent, speak to your GP who can advise

I want to learn more about neurodiversity...

- Read through our resources you get send after the workshop
- Follow us on LinkedIn
- Loads of great TED talks on youtube, white papers and documentaries

I'd like further training on neurodiversity... Great! We do training for managers as well

- Get in touch with the Enna team at hello@enna.org to receive our full training brochure

Thank you!
Q&A

For any other questions,
email us at
hello@enna.org