

Guest Blogs

ADULT BLOGS**“DEI – and Neurodivergence – Are Under Attack”**

“Neurodiversity is an often-forgotten aspect of DEI programs, and the obliteration of these initiatives will spell disastrous consequences for Americans with ADHD, autism, and other forms of neurodivergence.”


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The following is a personal essay that reflects the opinions and experiences of its author alone.

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The invisible string connecting so many neurodivergent entrepreneurs today is this: Many of us never intended to become entrepreneurs; we just didn't find the average workplace to be hospitable to the way our brains work.

Before I became self-employed in 2010, I always felt like a square peg in a round hole. I changed companies and career paths regularly in search of the elusive place where I could thrive. Based on the stories I hear from other neurodivergent adults, I know this is the norm.

Even though it's been glamorized for those of us who are neurodivergent, the entrepreneurial lifestyle is not right for all of us. Many of us would love to find a workplace where we could be ourselves — without the stress of [masking](#) or worrying about whether we truly belong or are just being tolerated. We ache for a place where we could allow our unique contributions and talents to shine.

While awareness of [neurodiversity in the workplace](#) has expanded in recent years, the future appears grim as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs have come under attack. Workplaces, it appears, will become increasingly inhospitable to neurodivergent talent over the coming years.

DEI – and Neurodivergence – Under Attack

A day after taking office, President Donald Trump [signed an executive order](#) to systematically dismantle DEI programs across the public and private sectors, claiming that these programs are “dangerous” and “discriminatory.” Prior to the order, major companies, from Meta to Target, had already started rolling back DEI initiatives.

[Read: [How ADHD Inclusivity Drives a Key Competitive Advantage](#)]

Neurodiversity is an often-forgotten aspect of DEI programs, and the obliteration of these initiatives will spell disastrous consequences for Americans with [ADHD](#), [autism](#), and other forms of neurodivergence. While legal protections for neurodivergent employees exist under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA), DEI programs are still critical. They display a company's commitment to attracting and retaining neurodivergent talent and to creating the kind of supportive environment that enables employees to actually access their workplace rights.

Why DEI Matters

Fueling anti-DEI efforts is the false narrative that neurodivergent individuals are under-qualified or incompetent. The opposite is true. [Neurodivergent employees contribute valuable perspectives, often excelling in areas like pattern recognition, innovative problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and creative thinking.](#) It's also often the case that this potential is only unlocked in inclusive environments where neurodivergent employees feel secure enough to speak up about what they need to thrive. Without robust DEI practices, many neurodivergent employees will surely face an impossible choice between struggling in silence or risking stigma (or worse) through [disclosure](#).

DEI initiatives transform abstract legal rights into practical workplace realities. The rollback of DEI policies threatens this delicate ecosystem. While the ADA provides a legal framework for [accommodations](#) like flexible schedules and a quiet workplace, DEI practices create the cultural foundation that makes requesting these adjustments feasible (or, even better, simply built into company operations, without the need for disclosure). Companies that recognize natural variations in how people think, learn, and process information are at an advantage.

[DEI initiatives in the workplace, with a focus on neurodiversity, can lead to enhanced productivity and greater innovation.](#) Sixty-three percent of employers who are taking some action to create a more neuroinclusive organization say they've seen a positive impact on employee wellbeing. Sixty percent also say they've seen a positive impact on employees' level of comfort in talking about neurodiversity.

[Read: "Great Leaders Foster a Positive Work Environment for All Employees"]

Organizations must recognize that DEI initiatives, contrary to what critics say, are about putting qualified people on an even footing, regardless of any aspect of identity. DEI programs are about creating conditions where all employees can fully utilize their talents. As neurodiversity awareness expands — and as more people learn about their own neurodivergence — companies will need to catch up to remain competitive.



Despite attacks on DEI, companies can maintain inclusive practices by training managers in neurodiversity awareness, normalizing accommodation requests, and fostering a culture where different working styles are valued rather than merely tolerated.

We are standing at a crossroads with respect to human rights. We can either retreat to a world where legal protections exist in isolation, or we can maintain the DEI practices that make these protections meaningful. For neurodivergent professionals, this isn't about politics — it's about the fundamental right to bring their full capabilities to work. The future of business excellence depends on our willingness to bridge the gap between legal rights and lived realities.

DEI and Neurodiversity in the Workplace: Next Steps

- Read: [How to Gauge Diversity, Equity & Inclusion — Key Questions to Ask in an Interview](#)
- Read: [5 Hallmarks of a Neurodivergent-Inclusive Workplace](#)
- Read: [ADHD Is a Protected Disability... But I Still Face Discrimination](#)

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