

## Some key words

Neurodiversity simply means a range of different brain functions and traits. In reality, all of our brains are wired slightly differently from one another, so human beings are neurodiverse. There is no such thing as a 'normal' brain. The neurodiversity umbrella includes everyone.

Neuronormativity is a set of norms, standards, expectations and ideals that suggest that a particular way of functioning is the right way to function. We live in societies that continue the idea of an 'ideal' or 'normal' way of thinking and being. Anyone who does not function in this 'ideal' way is seen as defective or impaired.

Neuronormativity is the assumption that there is a correct way to exist in this world; a correct way to think, feel, communicate, play, behave and more.

(<https://stimpunks.org/glossary/neuronormativity/>).

It is those who hold the power that decide what is 'normal'. In the UK you diverge from the 'normal' if you are a female, any other gender except male cisgender, a person of colour, someone with a disability, a sexuality that is not heterosexual, or a neurodivergent person.

Because we live in a world that is geared up for neuronormativity, autistic people often refer to themselves as neurodivergent, that is we diverge from how the normative tells us we should be. Some people are multiply neurodivergent. For example, I am autistic but also have ADHD.

The general population, who have what is seen by some as typically wired brains, are often referred to as neurotypical.

Being neurodivergent just means that our brains function differently. This is not better or worse than your average neurotypical, just different. I have skill spikes – some things I'm really good at (like languages and attention to detail), other things I really suck at (I can get lost on an escalator). However, this could be said of everyone.

See below for the origins of some of these terms.

Here are only some of the conditions that come under the umbrella term of neurodivergence and which might co-occur (appear together):

- Acquired neurodiversity, for example through brain damage
- Autism
- ADHD (often with RSD)
- Down Syndrome
- Dyslexia (difficulty with reading and spelling)
- Dyspraxia (difficulty with physical co-ordination)
- Dyscalculia (difficulty understanding numbers)
- Epilepsy
- Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (Borderline Personality Disorder)
- Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD)
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Schizophrenia
- Tourette's

## Origins

Although 'neurological diversity' and 'neurodiversity' first appeared in print in the work of Harvey Blume, he states that the terms originated in the online community of autistic people. (It is often wrongly attributed to one person, the autistic sociologist Judy Singer).

The terms 'neurodivergent' and 'neurodivergence' are often misattributed and wrongly used interchangeably with 'neurodiverse' and 'neurodiversity'. They were coined by Kassiane Asasumasu, a multiply neurodivergent neurodiversity activist, in the year 2000.