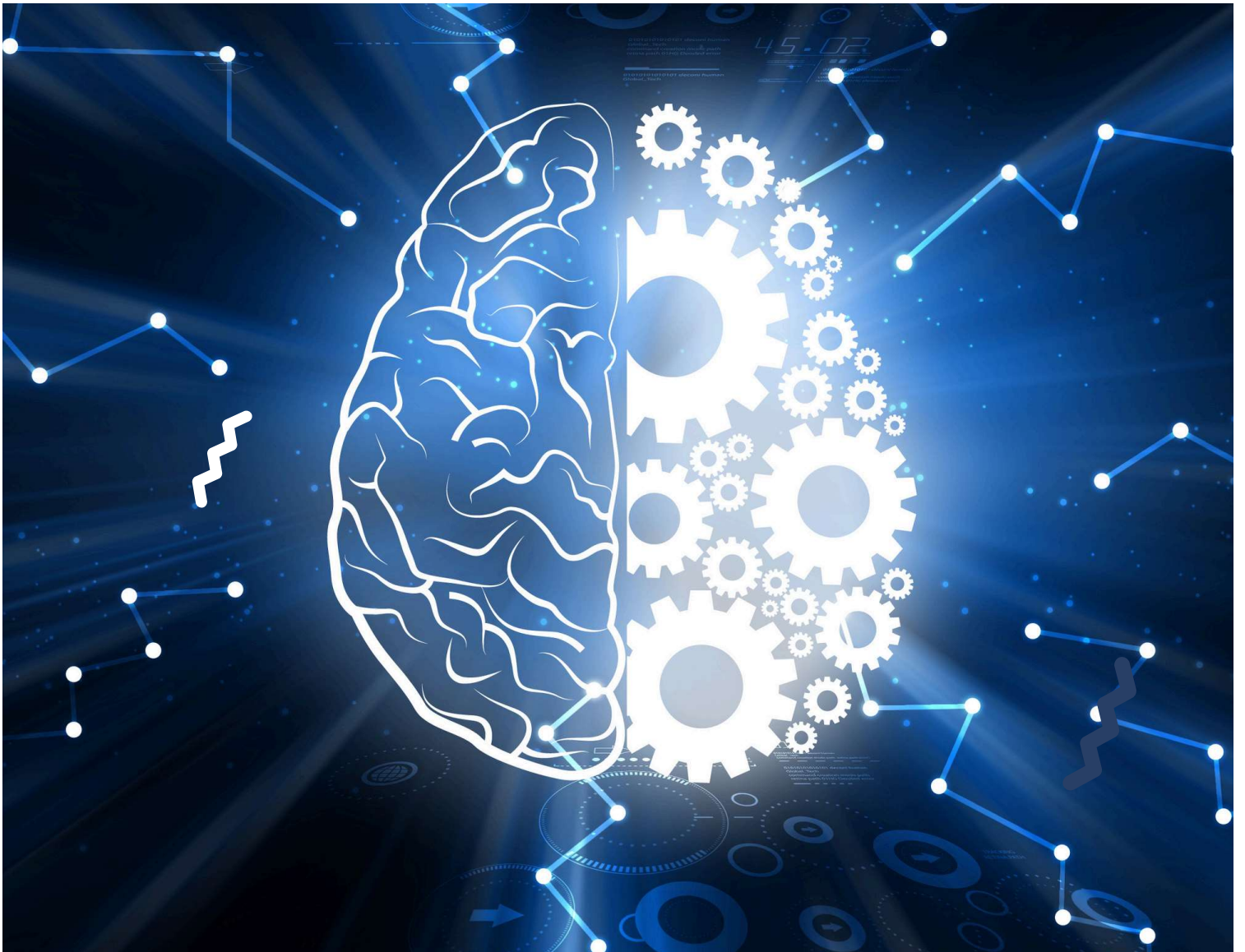


# NEURO DIVERSITY

## A GUIDE TO ADULT NEURODIVERGENCE STRENGTHS

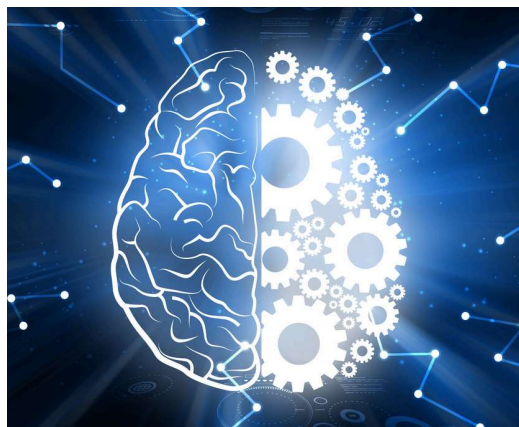


a community health education resource  
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## Can these conditions be perplexing and challenging? **Yes.**

What is *also* true is that they're imbued with hidden gifts.



These definitions stem from a positive psychology\* lens-- which looks at strengths, purpose, and meaning as closely (if not more so) than deficits.

This approach enlarges our human understanding, as well as promotes an appreciation of the unique ways people experience the world.

**\* Positive psychology is a scientific approach to studying human thoughts, feelings, and behavior, with a focus on strengths rather than weaknesses.**

**Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi are widely credited with the introduction and study of this approach to human expression and wellbeing.**

**ADD [Attention Deficit Disorder]** is a condition where a person may have difficulty maintaining focus on tasks that don't interest them but can be incredibly focused and creative when something captures their attention.

**ADHD [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder]** is a condition characterized by high energy, creativity, and a need for stimulation, which can lead to challenges with attention but also to dynamic and innovative thinking.

**ASD [Autism Spectrum Disorder]** is a condition that affects how a person perceives and interacts with the world, often leading to deep focus on specific interests, a strong sense of honesty, and unique perspectives that enrich our understanding of life.

**Dyscalculia** is a condition that makes understanding numbers and math challenging, but often leads to creative problem-solving and strong skills in other areas like language and art.

**Dyslexia** is a condition that affects reading but often enhances a person's ability to think visually, recognize patterns, and approach problems in creative ways.

**Dysgraphia** is a condition that makes writing difficult, encouraging individuals to find creative and alternative ways to communicate their ideas, often excelling in verbal expression.

**Hyperlexia** is a condition where a person learns to read at an exceptionally early age, often paired with a strong memory and analytical thinking skills.

**OCD [Obsessive Compulsive Disorder]** is a condition where a person feels compelled to perform certain routines or behaviors, often leading to a strong attention to detail, persistence, and excellent organizational skills.

**TBI [traumatic brain injury]** is an acquired neurodivergence that results from an injury to the brain that changes how a person thinks or behaves, but it often leads to incredible resilience, adaptability, and a deeper understanding of life and empathy for others.

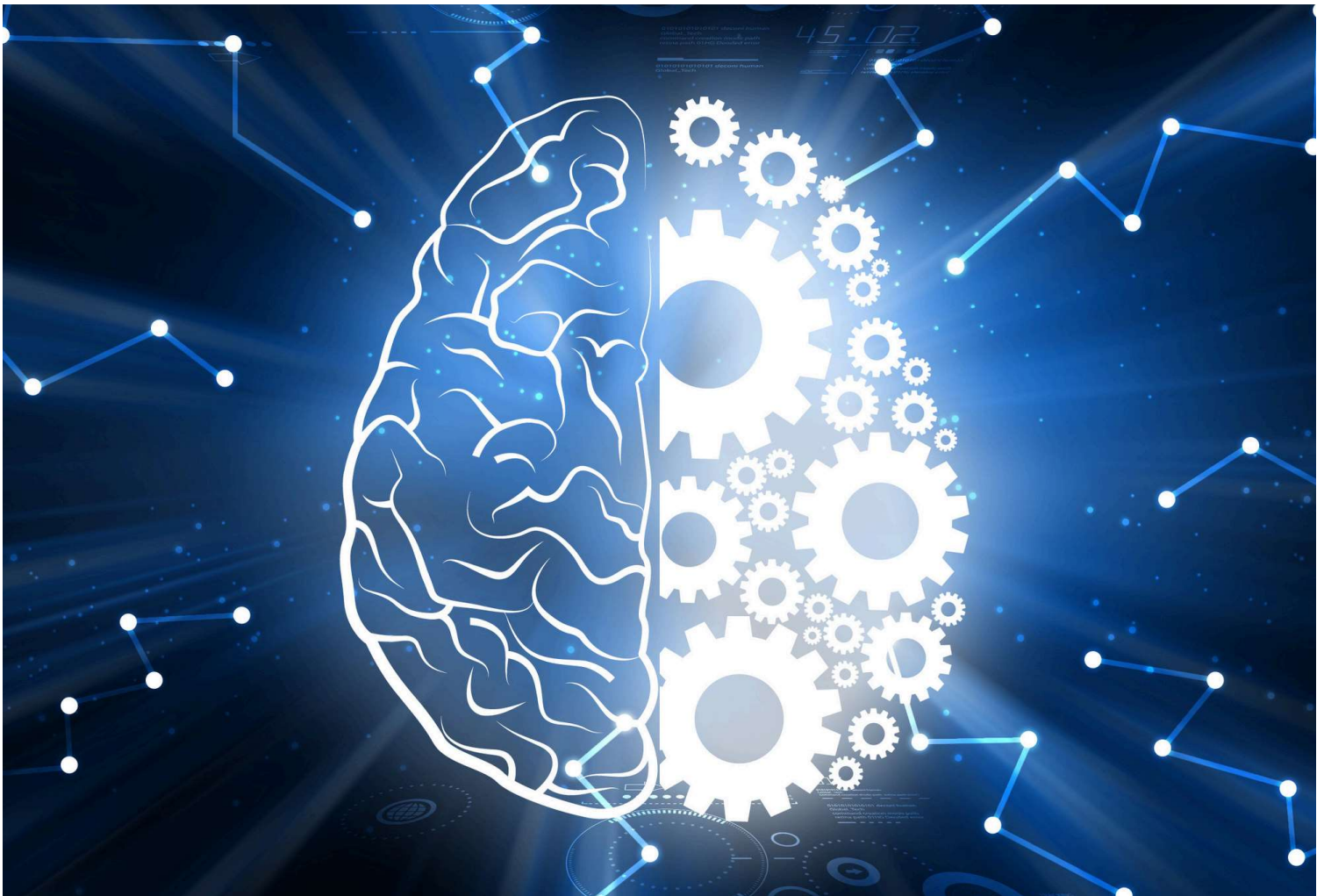
**TS [Tourette's syndrome]** is a neurological condition where a person experiences involuntary movements or sounds, known as tics.

# A GUIDE TO ADULT NEURODIVERGENCE STRENGTHS

Each neurodivergence comes with its unique challenges, but the strengths and gifts that arise from these differences can be incredibly valuable.

Embracing these strengths can lead to a more inclusive and diverse society where everyone's contributions are recognized and appreciated.

- **ADD**
- **ADHD**
- **ASD**
- **DYSCALCULIA**
- **DYSLEXIA**
- **DYSGRAPHIA**
- **HYPERLEXIA**
- **OCD**
- **TBI**
- **TS**





## ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) Strengths & Gifts

**Hyperfocus:** Individuals with ADD can enter a state of intense concentration on tasks they find interesting, leading to deep learning and creativity.

**Creativity:** Often, those with ADD think outside the box, bringing innovative solutions and ideas.

**Adaptability:** Ability to switch between tasks and adapt to changing environments or new information quickly.

## ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) Strengths & Gifts

**Energy & Enthusiasm:** High energy levels can be channeled into tasks requiring dynamism and persistence.

**Creativity & Innovation:** The ability to think quickly and make novel connections, leading to inventive ideas and problem-solving.

**Spontaneity:** A strong sense of spontaneity and willingness to take risks, which can lead to unexpected opportunities.



## ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) Strengths & Gifts

**Attention to Detail:** Many individuals with ASD have a heightened ability to notice details that others might overlook.

**Deep Focus:** Can develop intense interests in specific subjects, leading to a deep understanding and expertise.

**Honesty:** A tendency toward honesty and direct communication, which can foster trust and clarity in relationships.

## Dyscalculia Strengths & Gifts

**Creative Problem-Solving:** Those with dyscalculia often develop alternative methods for solving problems.

**Intuitive Thinking:** May rely on intuition rather than traditional logic, which can lead to novel approaches in various fields.

**Verbal & Linguistic Skills:** Often excel in areas involving language, literature, and communication.



## Dyslexia Strengths & Gifts

**Visual-Spatial Reasoning:** Individuals with dyslexia often have strong abilities in visual thinking and spatial awareness.

**Big Picture Thinking:** Ability to see connections and patterns in information, making them skilled in strategic thinking.

**Creativity & Innovation:** Dyslexia is common among successful inventors, entrepreneurs, and artists due to their out-of-the-box thinking.

## Dysgraphia Strengths & Gifts

**Verbal Skills:** May excel in verbal communication, storytelling, and oral presentations.

**Creative Expression:** Difficulty with traditional writing can lead to finding alternative ways to express ideas, such as through art or technology.

**Problem-Solving:** Often develop unique strategies for overcoming challenges, leading to strong problem-solving abilities.



## Hyperlexia Strengths & Gifts

**Advanced Reading Skills:** Often learn to read at an early age and have an exceptional ability to decode written language.

**Memory:** Strong memory, particularly for details, facts, and figures.

**Analytical Thinking:** Can excel in areas requiring analytical thinking and pattern recognition.

## OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder) Strengths & Gifts

**Attention to Detail:** Individuals with OCD often excel in tasks requiring precision and thoroughness.

**Persistence:** Strong determination to see tasks through to completion, even in the face of challenges.

**Organizational Skills:** Ability to create and maintain structured environments and systems



## TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) Strengths & Gifts

**Resilience & Adaptability:** Many individuals with TBI develop incredible resilience and adaptability, finding new ways to navigate life post-injury.

**Creative Problem-Solving:** The need to adapt to new cognitive or physical limitations can lead to innovative solutions.

**Empathy & Perspective:** Personal experiences with TBI often lead to a deeper understanding of and empathy for others' challenges.

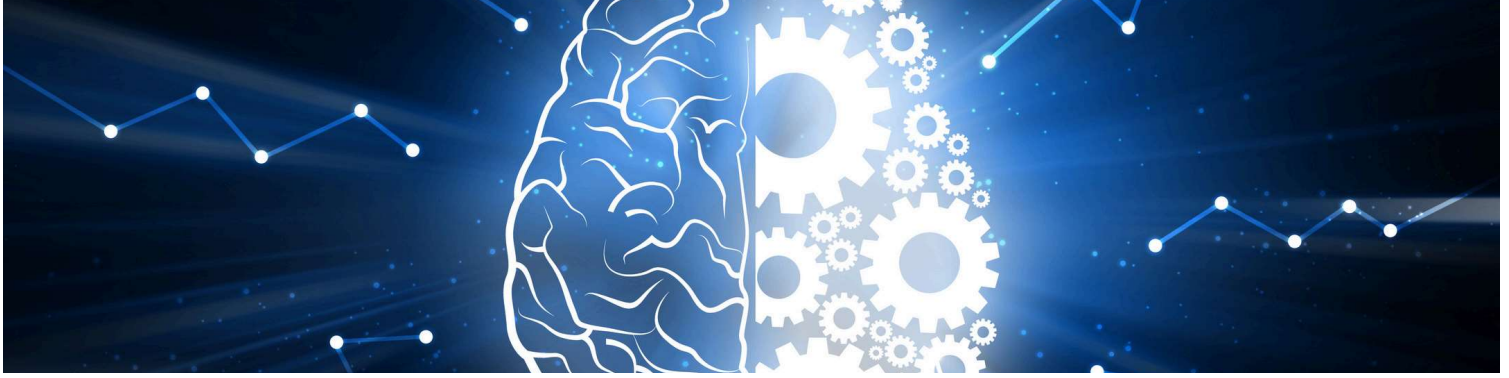
## TS (Tourette's Syndrome) Strengths & Gifts

**Cognitive control:** The constant struggle to suppress tics can improve the brain's ability to process information and adapt behavior.

**Verbal skills:** Some research suggests individuals with TS may have strengths in grammar and language processing.

**Concentration:** People with TS can demonstrate high levels of concentration, determination, and willpower.





# DEFINITIONS

## **Neurodiversity**

Neurodiversity is an umbrella term used to describe differences in the human brain in relation to a range of mental functions, such as sociability, learning and mood attention. The concept is a respectful way of thinking about our colleagues and communities. Neurodiversity aims to highlight the positive attributes of different neurocognitive functioning, rather than focus on deficits or deviations from a set standard.

## **Neurodivergence**

A person whose brain 'diverges' from the majority can be described as neurodivergent. Neurodivergence can be genetic, the result of a brain-altering experience, or a combination of the two. Neurodivergent conditions often come with pronounced strengths. However, there will typically also be areas where neurodivergent individuals struggle.

## **Neurominority**

A neurominority is a population of neurodivergent people who share a similar form of neurodivergence. Examples of neurominority groups include autistic people and dyslexic people.

## **Neurotypical**

Neurotypical describes a person who does not have a diagnosis of a neurodivergent condition and does not self-declare as being neurodivergent. Neurotypical is the opposite of neurodivergent.

**Source for these definitions:** [Neurodiversity glossary of terms](#), College of Policing, Retrieved 9/2/2024.