



Neurodivergent Accommodations Guide

Design your dream experience with this personal supports tool

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Summary

USE CASE: Collaborative Accommodations are necessary to employ a social model approach, where we consider how to individually differentiate by removing barriers to create inclusive environments that effectively support divergent minds. When implemented, these adjustments remove barriers to equity and access so that individual strengths can shine while protecting limited energy with a focus on sustaining well-being in concert with deliverable expectations.

BACKGROUND: This guide was built to support your journey of creating equity and peace for yourself in school and at work. Below, 6 categories of accommodations are defined and outlined, which were initially formulated for workplace but may be adapted to scholastic contexts/experiences (i.e., assistance in developing an ND friendly class schedule with sufficient breaks/days with less sensory input for neurodiverse self-care/mental wellness).

Individuals with invisible disabilities are able to request reasonable accommodations in order to be afforded equal opportunity to learn, work, grow and thrive alongside non-disabled colleagues.

The goal is to reduce stressors like ambiguity, overload and role confusion, that make it hard for anyone to be productive and mentally healthy at work.

While the wider world may take time to adjust to the needs of today, you can use this list to build your own personal accommodations plan, developing your dream world right NOW!

INSTRUCTIONS: Read through collaborative accommodation categories and scan the examples. Select the items that best fit your circumstance, determine which you could implement without support, and which will require collaboration. Document them in the 'My Selections' section. Present this document to the appropriate leadership (i.e., manager/professor) for validation.

Communicative Support:

Providing alternate means of communication along with expectations regarding topic context.

- Alternative forms of communication (written vs. verbal)
- Provide an agenda and talking points prior to any verbal conversation
- Simplify and break down abstract concepts. Assign clarity to ambiguity.
- Provide increased processing time vs. requiring an immediate answer.

Individual Support: Reminders for self-care focused on maintaining well-being through creating a sustainable pace of work.

- Micro-breaks (like 10 mins transition time)
- Provide notice and context before changes.
- Allow rest at signs of overload/distress
- Provide opportunity and access to self-advocacy by prompting and checking in
- Monthly/quarterly meetings to re-evaluate satisfaction with current personal working plan

Instructional Design: Aiding in the completion of work by adapting instructional style such as prioritization, context and chunking.

- Provide job instructions in writing
- Provide job instructions orally/dynamically in conversation
- Provide a written resource in addition to a verbal instruction (using whiteboard/type in chat), providing focus time to create a written resource while dynamically discussing.
- Clarify prioritization and order of tasks
- Provide flexible deadlines based on deliverable goals, collaborative process and reasoning.
- Mono-tasking: assign a new project or step once the previous work/step is complete.
- Be transparent about the goals/why's of an assignment - it will provide meaning and motivation.
- Provide timely, supportive and consistent feedback that actionable and job-related.
- Highlight/bold/simplify important information, instructions and actions.
- Allow the individual to record/rewatch meetings that provide context for job tasks.

Job Design: Adjustments to the job itself that allow goals to be met without changing the essence of the job.

- Designated meeting-free time (days/work-blocks)
- Modified work schedule (not 9-5) to support individual flow and productivity.
- Meeting cut-off limit daily (3-4 max) - with option to cancel or reschedule.
- Provide flexibility and choice around methods of completing tasks.
- Structure work style and flow to support long periods of work vs. several interruptions.
- Intersperse preferred and non-preferred work tasks to provide meaning and motivation
- Allow the individual choice/input in designing their own work scope and vision.

<p>Sensory Support: Changes to the work environment to meet the sensory needs of the individual.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work from home/hybrid work schedule. ● Reduce harsh lighting. ● Provide a private workspace/quiet area ● Allow the individual to listen to music and/or other methods of sensory regulation (toy, gum, movement). ● Provide noise cancelling headset/headphones. ● Provide a white noise machine.
<p>Visual Support: Providing visual or written instructions in addition to verbal examples of expected work and images of task steps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide visual or written instructions in addition to verbal examples of expected work and images of task steps. ● Written reminders, checklists and/or written schedules ● Support the individual in creating a process flow/visual table or schedule for mapping process/task instructions. ● Provide templates/written expectations for forms and documents.

ND Student/Staff Support Needs

<p>Support needs as reported by neurodivergent students and staff (Milton, 2020).</p> <p><i>This information applies to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Entering employment as an ND faculty/staff member. 2) Entering undergraduate university as an ND student. 3) Entering a graduate program as an ND student. 4) Preparing for post-graduate employment as an ND student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment process (ex: ask for questions in advance, ability to spend time preparing a verbal answer, ability to provide written answers) ND and I/O Q: Will the process be unbiased - popularity based or competency driven? ● Orientation/onboarding process (ex: clear and unambiguous information, provided schedule, ease of access to disability support/process to obtain supports is clear and unambiguous, point of contact for clarifying questions). ● Administrative systems (ex: clear unambiguous information and access to instructions, POC to assist with completing and filling out forms accurately). ● Promotional opportunity (ex: is the process for upping skill and pay clearly defined, will I be pigeonholed if I do not follow/understand unwritten rules/participate in office politicking). ● Entering university and selecting an optimal longitudinal plan (ex: career vs. independent work, information around courses and applications beyond scholastic, obtaining resources and support financially, point of contact for assistance in completing forms, preview visit to campus to view grounds and dorms). ● Discussing and reviewing assignments (ex: context for feedback and takeaways moving forward, clear and unambiguous feedback, option to ask clarifying questions) ● Planning and completing dissertation (ex: assistance in deciding on an optimal longitudinal project, assistance in finding suitable working plan and workflow - i.e., structure among years of ambiguous free time, assistance in prioritization and decision making where needed).
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- **Finding a job** (ex: deciding on a suitable career which matches ND individual brain-flow, such as alternate options to FT corporate work, or assistance in finding/selecting ND affirming companies, approaching a career change/resume help and identifying/describing transferable skills)

My Selections



In assessing the above recommendations, and expanding to develop your own supports per each category, separate where you may be able to accommodate yourself from where you need support, to be met in the middle.

Name: _____

<p>Communicative Support: Providing alternate means of communication along with expectations regarding topic context.</p>	<p>Self-accommodations:</p> <p>Support needed:</p>
<p>Individual Support: Reminders for self-care focused on maintaining well-being through creating a sustainable pace of work.</p>	<p>Self-accommodations:</p> <p>Support needed:</p>
<p>Instructional Design: Aiding in the completion of work by adapting instructional style such as prioritization, context and chunking.</p>	<p>Self-accommodations:</p> <p>Support needed:</p>
<p>Job Design: Adjustments to the job itself that allow goals to be met without changing the essence of the job.</p>	<p>Self-accommodations:</p> <p>Support needed:</p>
<p>Sensory Support: Changes to the work environment to meet</p>	<p>Self-accommodations:</p>

the sensory needs of the individual.

Support needed:

Visual Support: Providing visual or written instructions in addition to verbal examples of expected work and images of task steps.

Self-accommodations:

Support needed:

My Experiences and Needs



In assessing the Neurodivergent Student/Faculty/Staff recommendations, and expanding to develop your own supports per each category, separate where you may be able to accommodate yourself from where you need support, to be met in the middle. Take this idea beyond just school and work, and identify your anti-dotes to self-sabotage (what motivates you to keep you going?) and your personal friendship preferences (what friend styles empower you instead of draining you?) Affirming our neurodivergence goes far beyond our academic and work lives, it is deeply personal, and important to learn to live in alignment with your needs and authentic self to find happiness.

Name: _____

Support needs identified throughout my personal scholastic experience

(understand that your needs may change over time, so please don't just do this once and call it done!)

Adjustments: based on my support needs, what kind of support do I need from my environment?

<p>Are there a few ways you might be sabotaging your divergent life possibilities by faking neurotypical? Use this list to assess:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Comparing self to others2. Dismissing my needs and feelings3. Lacking boundaries4. Overworking5. Maintaining toxic relationships6. People pleasing7. Fear of what others think8. Perfectionism
<p>What are your antidotes to self-sabotage? I'll go first!</p>	<p>Alex's Antidotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Self-care (EXTREME - I'm sensory seeking, so it is face mask + hair mask + bath + scrub + + + anything to get out of my head, and into my body)!● Self-accommodation (how can I choose myself more today? In each moment, can I pick my real needs?)● Self-knowing and exploration (how can I know and understand these parts of me better? How can I create grace for myself to quiet my perfectionistic mind? Where can I find empathy for myself?)● Self-acceptance (how can I love all of these parts of me that are different? How can I shift my life to accommodate for my needs instead of feeling ashamed and unworthy of love/support?)● Vision for the future (what does a life look like if I actually choose me, and what I want, in harmony with my needs? Can I shift my expectations to be more inclusive of myself as I am?) <p>My anti-dotes:</p>

What kinds of situations and friendships bring you the most peace? Think about your 'friendship love languages' (what makes you feel excited and seen in a friendship). Ask yourself: am I adapting too much to others because my personal love languages aren't recognized in the friendships I'm selecting?

Alex's real-est friendships:

1. Are **infodump heavy**, we share a lot of information about topics we both obsess about. Lots of topic hopping too.
2. Involve **parallel play** (hanging out next to each-other doing different things, also called 'body-doubling' or activity-based hang-outs (less pressure on just solo socializing).
3. **Support swap**, where we both love to learn about each other and help the other important things, allow the other space to process and feel the real things out loud, and check-in on self-care. There isn't pressure, it is just very real and authentic feeling. We simply meet each other where we are and are supportive.
4. Are **sharing-centric**, we love to share laughs, ideas, small gifts, cool things, show and describe the things we have and love, just lots of sharing.

My realest friendships look like:

A New Model of Accommodations ✨ ✨

There are only four steps between your experience as it is now and your personal working plan of the future. Why not start living authentically, in alignment with your needs, today? Prioritize your productivity while creating peace and clarity for yourself, in collaboration with your leader (professor/manager).

An inclusive leader (professor/manager) is an advocate for their team members and works to ensure all can contribute in their areas of strength. They partner with individuals, to design a learning experience that is

motivating, inspiring and understanding of diverse human needs and experiences. Delegating personal working preferences to individuals and collaborating on a mutually supportive plan provides individuals with autonomy, motivation and inspiration.

If you feel safe and supported, please share this guide with your leader (professor/manager), as they may not have experienced this new model of accommodation, and have an opportunity to practice inclusive leadership/professor-ship through this experience.

Identify: understand your divergent support needs by using the checklist

Select: develop a personal accommodation plan, separate self-accommodations from where you need support using the above template.

Discuss: Hold a conversation with your Manager/Professor to collaboratively validate your personal plan.

Affirm: Continue to learn understand the strengths of your divergent mind and ensure supports are providing comfort and access (if no, repeat process and adjust).

(P.S. - GET CREATIVE! Did you know you can implement ND accommodations with your friends and family, too? One of mine is 24 hours notice before any sort of phone call or 'hang out').