

Neurodiversity



What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in human brains and cognitive functioning. These differences in thinking, learning and behaving are exactly that - differences, not deficits - but impact how people perceive, process and interact with the world.

Neurodivergence is an umbrella term commonly used to describe people whose neurological functioning differs from what might be considered more 'typical'. This includes Autism, ADHD, Tourette syndrome and learning disorders.

People who are neurodivergent can experience unique challenges AND strengths.

Strengths, such as:

- Creative and unique ways of thinking
- Deep interests and the ability to hyperfocus
- Attention to detail
- Analytical thinking
- Honesty and direct communication

Challenges with:

- Sensory overload
- Unexpected changes or unclear expectations
- Time management and organisation
- Anxiety in social or unfamiliar settings
- Transitions
- Processing large amounts of information under time pressure



It's important to remember that every neurodivergent person will have their own strengths and challenges. No two experiences are the same and can vary greatly depending on the person, environment and level of support available.

Myths vs Facts...

Myth: A late diagnosis means a 'mild' diagnosis.

Fact: A late diagnosis often reflects masking, lack of awareness or limited access to assessment. Women and girls are frequently underdiagnosed or diagnosed later. Some neurodivergent individuals may never receive a diagnosis despite facing significant challenges.

Myth: Neurodivergent individuals cannot succeed in school or the workplace.

Fact: With the right support, neurodivergent individuals can *excel* in the space - offering valuable skills and providing unique, innovative ways of solving problems.

While many neurodivergent individuals attend university, the transition from school to university can be challenging! University comes with increased independence, changes in routine and new social and academic expectations. Many students choose to access additional support to manage and settle into university life.

If you or a friend are looking for additional support, or are curious about neurodiversity, please reach out to epu@sun.ac.za or call 021 808 2229



VERY IMPORTANT!

If you are in distress, contact:

Suicide Crisis Line 0800 567 567

Lifeline 0861 322 322

Mental Health Helpline 0800 456 789