

CPD: Neurodiversity in Education

Overview:

It has been estimated that up to 20% of the population could be neurodivergent (National Autistic Society). However, unfortunately this natural variation in cognitive functioning has not been recognised in our education system or many other areas of our lives. Some conditions that are labelled such as dyslexia, ADHD or autism are regarded negatively and seen as inferior rather than a natural diversity in humans that is accepted and expected.

The aim of this session is to give a brief overview of neurodivergence and some of the ways it may be supported within an educational setting.

Audience: Teaching staff, TAs, SMT, Governors

Class Resources Required: None

Proposed Session Plan: 1.5 hour session

Learning Objectives	Learning Activities
<p>By the end of the guest talk, staff will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LO1: Identify some of the main variants of neurodiversity. • LO2: Demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the history of neurodiversity and its recent development, considering cultural perspectives, stigma and lived experiences of neurodiversity. 	<p>Welcome and Introduction (10mins)</p> <p>Introduction to Neurodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of supporting and acknowledging neurodiversity in society. • Recognition that neurodivergence and neurotypical are not the same thing. • Identify some of the conditions which fall within the term. <p>Starter – Discussion (10mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you understand about neurodiversity already? 2. What characteristics do you associate with someone who is neurodiverse? 3. Where do these ideas come from?

- LO3: Identify some of the key challenges within an educational setting for a student / member of staff with neurodiversity.
- LO4: Evaluate some of the potential adjustments that could be made to support neurodivergent children within the classroom.

Quick Quiz (15mins) in groups discuss

Fact or myth?

1. All neurodivergent individuals have the same needs and challenges.
2. Neurodivergent individuals are less likely to succeed in creative industries.
3. Tourette Syndrome only involves vocal tics.
4. Neurodiversity is a modern trend.
5. Neurodivergent People lack empathy .
6. Neurodivergent reasonable adjustments are too costly .

History, present, and perception

Inspiring people in the field of neurodiversity (5mins)

1. Which neurodivergent celebrities / influential figure do you know? (can be past or present)
2. How have they used their platform to raise awareness?
3. Who has inspired you and why?

So, what about in schools? (5mins)

Debate: *How useful are diagnostic labels in informing assessment of and provision for educational needs? What can a setting do for the child who is NOT diagnosed?*

History (10 mins)

- Education Act & segregated education
- Eugenics
- Inclusive education – should all children be educated under the same roof?

Inclusion (Group task, 5mins)

1. What is needed to ensure the wellbeing for neurodivergent learners in your schools?
2. Identify some barriers and enablers to implementing your suggestions.
3. Who Is Included
4. How Are They Included?
5. Where Are They Included?
6. When Are They Included?

Challenges (10mins)

School Readiness

- Low school readiness more prevalent amongst neurodivergent entrants
- 'Socially aware' autistic children choose to mask within school

Environmental Elements

- Many learners on the ASD spectrum are reported to have hypo and hyper-sensitivities which can be a major barrier to learning in the inclusive classroom.

Opportunities (10mins)

Team Role

- Attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions
- Teacher burnout
- Support staff

Adaptations

- Design considerations for inclusive classrooms
- Inclusive resources in classrooms
- Destigmatising adaptations

Discussion – *what do you think?* (10mins)

Summary & Next Steps (5mins)

- Recap of session objectives
- Encourage participants to explore ways to adapt existing practice
- Future prospects - For participants wanting to know more there is the option of the PGCert in Neurodiversity, which is a Level 7 programme of study, accredited by the National Autistic Society. We often take on students who have not followed the usual academic route – relevant experience is more important.