



Neurodivergence

Sharing Student Healthcare Initiative for
Neurodiversity and Equity

Learning Outcomes


- By the end of the presentation, you should be able to:
 - understand **what is meant by neurodivergence**, and **some of the challenges** reported by neurodivergent students and staff in the NHS.
 - confidently **have conversations** with neurodivergent students and staff about their experiences and challenges they may be facing.
 - **identify resources, services, and actions you can take** to support neurodivergent students and staff.

Introduction

(Hello, my name is) James Eames
Diagnosed ADHD and ASD
2nd Year Student MH Nurse, University of Derby
Previously worked in domiciliary care, 2019 – 2023

Contact (happy to answer questions and share resources!):

 james.eames.sshine@gmail.com

 @ja_eames



What is SSHINE?



Sharing **S**tudent **H**ealthcare **I**nitiative for **N**eurodiversity and **E**quity.

Neurodivergent students; **experts by experience.**

Multidisciplinary team from a wide range of Nursing and Allied Health professions.

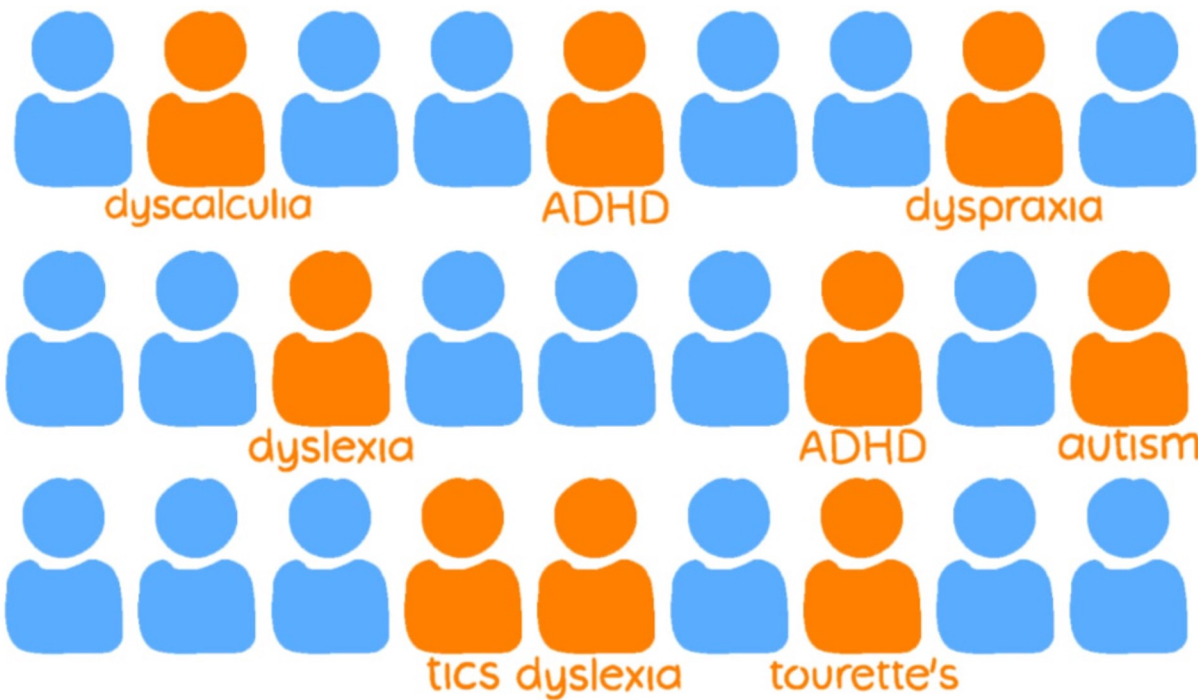
Created the **Guide to Practice-Based Learning (PBL)** for Neurodivergent Students with Health Education England



@SSHINE_students

What is **Neurodiversity**?

Language



<p>Neuro-divergent</p>	<p>Anyone who diverges from the typical mental functioning of the majority</p>
<p>Neuro-typical</p>	<p>An individual with typical neurological development or functioning</p>
<p>Neuro-diversity</p>	<p>A movement that argues differences in mental functioning between humans is normal</p>

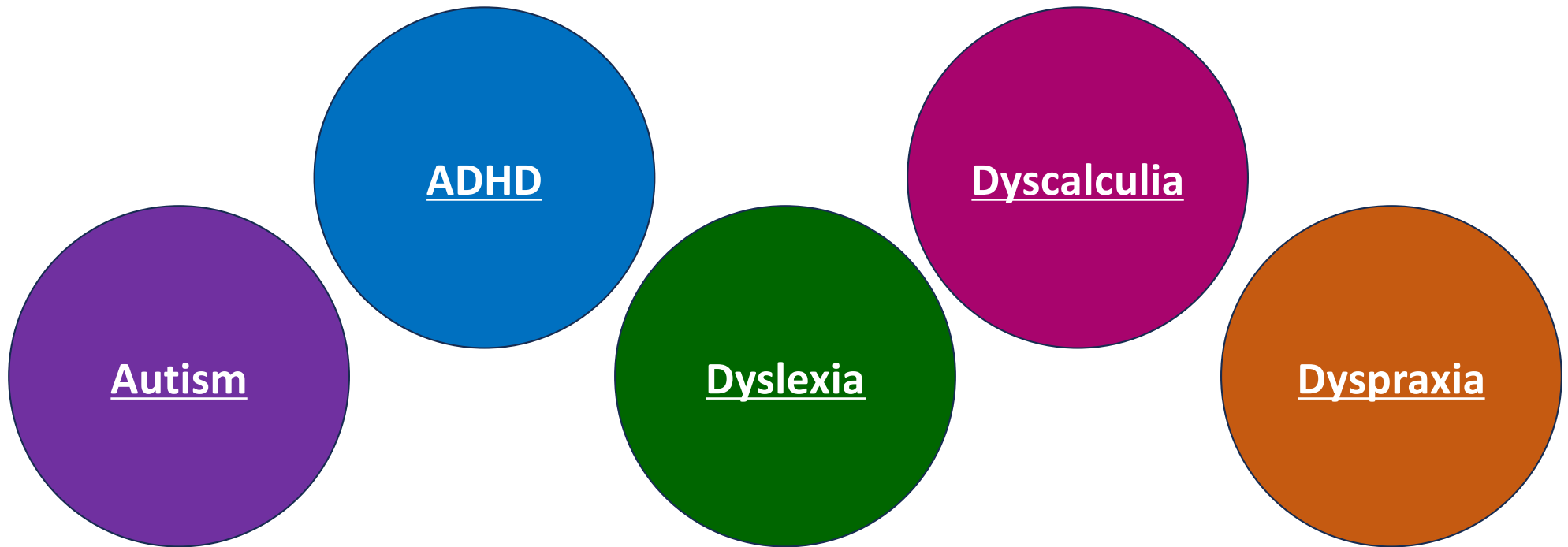
Neurodivergence

- There are **many** diagnoses that are considered **neurodivergent**.
- Understanding each one may be difficult – a more effective approach is to understand some of the **challenges** experienced by people with **different** conditions, and support students based on their **specific strengths** and **challenges**, rather than their diagnosis.



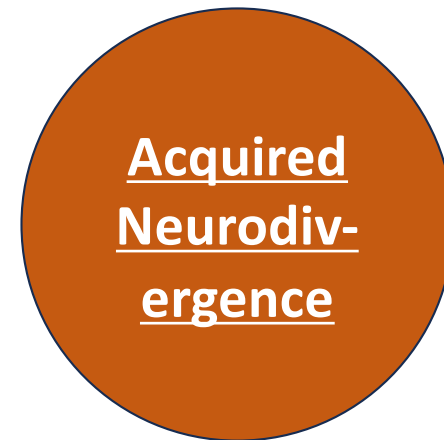
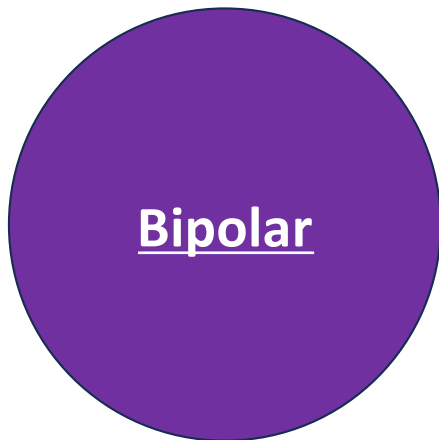
Examples of Neurotypes

- When thinking about **neurodivergence**, most people think about the 'neurodevelopmental conditions', which include:



Examples of Neurotypes

- **Neurodivergence** refers to anyone who **diverges** from **typical mental functions**. This **isn't limited** to neurodevelopmental disorders. It is often down to the **individual** with the diagnosis whether they consider themselves **neurodivergent**. This includes things like:



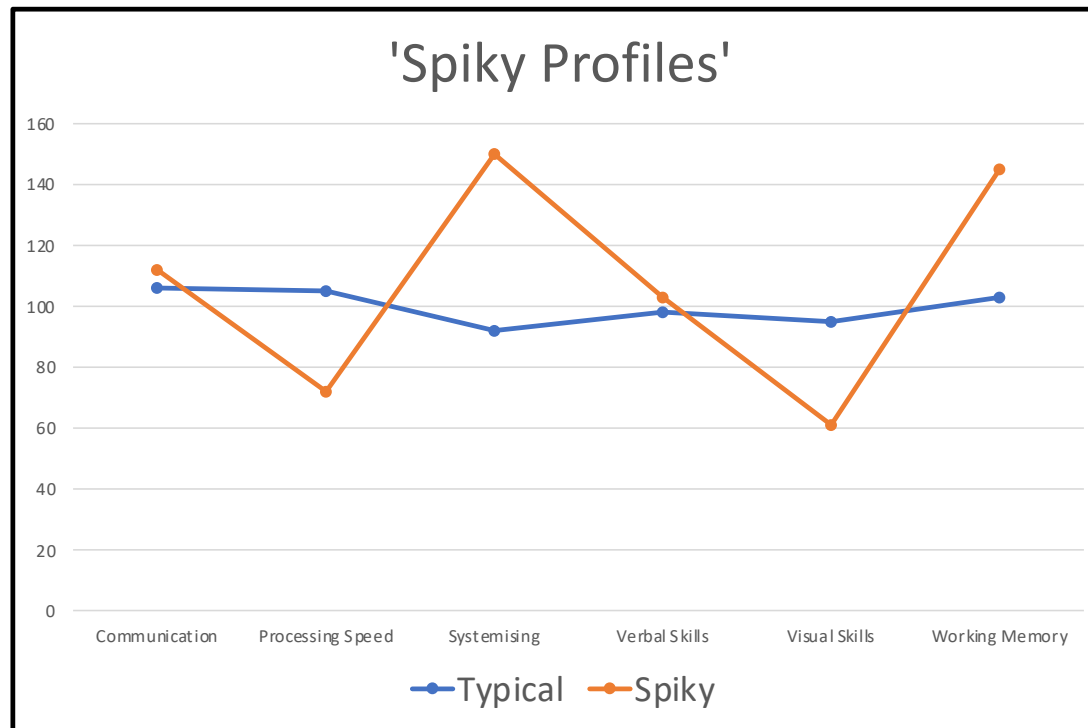
How Challenges Present

What do we look for?

Identification

- Some healthcare students (and professionals) can be adept at **hiding** neurodivergent characteristics, whether **consciously** or **unconsciously**.
- The **first step** in determining if someone may have challenges associated with being neurodivergent is to **ask**.
- However, diagnosis in **adulthood** is **common**, especially for individuals who have learnt to '**mask**' neurodivergent traits.
- There is a **high likelihood** that you will work with neurodivergent students who are **not aware** that they're neurodivergent.

Strengths and Challenges



Challenges in Practice

- The **specific challenges** faced by neurodivergent students and colleagues will **differ from person to person.**
- However, there are some **shared barriers** faced by neurodivergent people.
- Themes:
 - **Identity**
 - **Attitudes and Perception**
 - **Enabling and Disabling Environments**

(Evans, 2013; Evans, 2014; Godfrey-Harris and Shaw, 2023; Morris and Turnbull, 2005; Murphy, 2010; Ridley, 2011; White, 2007)

Talking about Neurodivergence

What do we say?

A.R.C.C.

arc - a complete story or the story of one character, especially one that is part of a larger story

(Cambridge Dictionary)

Ask
Respond
Collaborate
Check in

Ask

Each person is the **expert** on their own life. This is as true for colleagues and students as it is for patients.

Whether a student **discloses** that they're neurodivergent or **not**, it is **best practice** to **ask** whether they usually have or believe they would benefit from **reasonable adjustments**. This achieves **two** main things: beginning a **conversation**, and demonstrating an **inclusive environment**.

- It can be **difficult** to know how to **approach** conversations about neurodivergence.
- You need to be able to strike a **balance** between letting the student **explain** their **experience** and **offering support** and **guidance**.
- The **ARCC framework** can help **structure** a conversation about neurodivergence and ensure it's **positive** and **productive**.

A.R.C.C.

arc - a complete story or the story of one character, especially one that is part of a larger story

(Cambridge Dictionary)



Ask

- **Adjustments**

- Whether you know that a student **is** neurodivergent or **not**, you can ask if they **have** (or **need**) any **adjustments**

- **Strengths**

- Don't **only** focus on challenges – ask the student what they've done **well** at or **enjoyed** thus far, and **incorporate** these into any **plans** made

- **Knowledge**

- If you don't know much about their **neurotype** or specific **challenges**, it's fine to ask how it **affects** them **on placement**, and if there's any **resources** they might think you'd find helpful to better support them


Support for Neurodivergent Learners

What can we do now?

Support for All Learners

- As mentioned previously, **not** all students will have a **diagnosis** (or personal **recognition**) of a neurodivergent condition.
- **All** learners can benefit from some provisions while on placement. These include:
 - A pre-placement visit
 - Induction
 - Process guides (How-Tos)
 - **Routes of support**

St Somewhere Placement - Welcome Email

 c.h.l.o.e.-using-mini-biogs-fo...
309 KB

 Induction - St Somewhere X-...
96 KB

2 attachments (405 KB)  Save all to OneDrive - University of Derby  Download all

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning,

My name is Nate, I'm one of the Senior Clinical Educators in the Practice Learning Support Team at St. Somewhere Hospital. We've been advised that **your induction for clinical placement is on [date], from 09:00 to 16:45. Please arrive at X-Ray Main Reception for 08:50.**

Attached is our **student induction booklet** which provides information about the different departments, their structures, and shift times.

You will also find attached a blank **C.H.L.O.E. Form**, and guidance for filling this in. This is your opportunity to let us know about your **specific goals, challenges, reasonable adjustments, care commitments**, or any other information that ~~can help us support you on placement. Once you have completed the form, please reply to this email and attach the form, and I will reach~~ out to confirm support where needed. If you have an **Occupational Health Plan or Placement Support Plan** in place from your university, please also share this if you feel comfortable doing so. Any information you provide will remain **confidential unless you give specific consent** for us to share this with members of the wider team.

If you would prefer to arrange a **pre-placement visit**, to familiarise yourself with the department, discuss your support, and answer any questions you may have, please let me know in a reply to this email.

Setting up your IT access: [link or email address]

Booking in your [Computer System] Training: [link or email address]

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me or with the team at [shared inbox email address].

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Kind regards,
Nate Harley
Senior Clinical Educator
Pronouns: He/Him
PLST | St Somewhere Hospital

What Are Adjustments?

- **Reasonable adjustments** are outlined in the **Equality Act 2010**.
- The **Equality Act** says there's a **duty** to make reasonable adjustments if an individual is placed at a **substantial disadvantage** because of their disability **compared** with non-disabled people or people who don't share their disability.
- **Adjustments** can include:



And who pays for this?

Funding:

- **Students:** Disabled Students Allowance
- **Staff:** Access to Work
- **Apprentices:** Access to Work, Apprentice Learning Support Fund

Specific Challenges and Adjustments

Memory	Sensory Processing	Fatigue	Communication and interaction
Disclosure of differences	Concentration	Reading and writing	Organisation and time-keeping
	Co-ordination	Information processing	



Support for someone with memory challenges:

- Receiving a **combination** of **verbal** and **written** information/feedback.
 - **Protected time** to write **notes** or create a **to-do list** of tasks for the day.
 - Receiving an **email** from supervisor containing **important points** following a **meeting**.
- Support from supervisor to **create flash cards, memory aids, or visual prompts**, or these resources provided.
 - Receive an **orientation** of the clinical area **prior** to placement and with **time** given to make notes.



Support for someone with **sensory processing** challenges:

- Opportunities for **breaks** away from **overwhelming sensations**.
- Discussion of adjustments to the **environment, uniform**, etc to accommodate someone's **sensory profile**.
- Supervisor to provide information about the **level of noise** to expect in certain settings (e.g., **before** entering an MRI department).
- Minimal **environmental auditory/visual noise** when communicating information when possible.
 - If **certain senses** are more affected (e.g., visual processing):
- **information** can be provided in **alternative formats** (e.g., identify **elearning modules** (if needed) that offer **video** and **text-based** information)
- **equipment** can assist in tasks where that sense is **necessary** (e.g., an **amplified stethoscope** for someone with **auditory** processing disorder).



Support for someone who experiences fatigue:

- Opportunities for **rest breaks** during the day; an agreement can be made for time to be recovered, if needed.
- **Flexibility** in timings of **shifts** or **tasks** through the day where possible to fit the better time for someone's fatigue.
- Where a placement has **multiple sites** or the option to **work from home**, allocation to sites **closest** to their home.
- If fatigue arises more from **certain tasks** (e.g., physical activities, reading and writing, etc), these could be **broken up** and **interspersed** throughout the day rather than to be completed consecutively.



Support for someone with **communication** and **interaction** challenges:

- Instructions given **clearly**, and the person given enough **time** to **process** them.
- Agreement with supervisor that the student will **repeat information back** to confirm understanding.
 - Using **written cues** if appropriate. **Bullet points, step-by-step** instructions, and **lists** can be particularly helpful.
- If there's difficulty interacting with **service users**, helping to create a '**social script**' for common encounters can both **improve performance** and **reduce anxiety**.



Support for someone disclosing differences:

- The meeting should be arranged in a **private** or **safe space** where the student feels safe to discuss their challenges.
 - The supervisor/assessor must have an **open, positive, and non-judgmental attitude** to discussing someone's **differences** and how to **support** them.
- They should take time to **research** the student's specific diagnosis, and if appropriate, **ask** the student how it affects **them** specifically.
- **All staff** should be **flexible** and **open** to adapting how they work in order to create an **inclusive** and **supportive** learning environment.



Support for someone with **concentration** challenges:

- **Quieter** and **less busy** workspaces should be made available to students.
- Students should be offered regular **brief rest breaks** where needed to **refocus**.
- Brief **breaks** can be scheduled in to manage **transitions** between **tasks**.
 - Students **shouldn't** be given **multiple tasks** to complete simultaneously unless necessary, e.g., questioning a student on theory or knowledge while they're carrying out a task with a patient.



Support for someone with reading and writing challenges:

- **Additional time** should be given to complete **written tasks** or **notes**.
- Supervisors should not put **extra pressure** on someone with written work e.g., **looking** over their **shoulder** or **rushing** them.
- The student should be given **access** to **samples/templates** for **case notes**, **letters**, and **reports** to help with structuring written work.
- If the Trust uses **handwritten notes**, students should have the **option** to complete a **rough draft** of clinical notes **before** writing in patients' notes.
- **Assistive software** (e.g. Grammarly, text-to-speech technology) can be installed on some **computers** in the office, or use of this software on the **student's mobile** could be allowed to help with reading and structuring written work (the student cannot be made to pay for this as per the Equality Act 2010).



Support for someone with **organisation and time-keeping** challenges:

- Students should receive **clear timetables** or **rotas** as far in **advance** as possible.
 - **Tasks** that need to be completed should be set out in a **clear** way, with **deadlines** and **priority levels**.
- Supervisors can **check in** frequently with students to ensure they are aware of **upcoming deadlines** and **important events**.



Support for someone with coordination challenges:

- Students should have the opportunity to **physically practice** doing an activity or assessment **slowly** before doing it with a **patient** or **under observation**.
- If possible, the student should be allowed to work in an **area** which has **more space** to minimise **risks**.
 - If there are **multiple ways** to complete a process/procedure, supervisors should work with the student to find which **method** the student finds **easiest**.



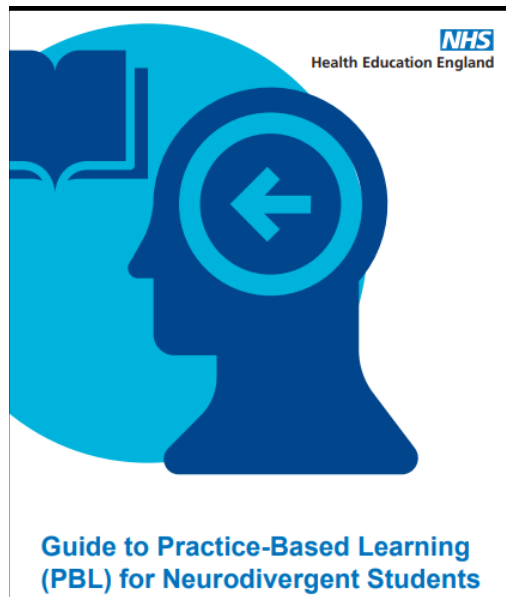
Support for someone with information processing challenges:

- **Information** and **instructions** should be presented both **verbally** and in **written form**.
 - Instructions should be **clear** and **concise** – if the student is having difficulty understanding the instructions, the supervisor should try **alternative methods** to communicate, such as providing a **demonstration**.
- Students should be given **time** to process information provided, and supervisors should be willing to **repeat things** as needed.
- Supervisors should **break up** information into **smaller chunks**, to avoid giving too much information all in one go.





Further resources



<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/guidance/health-disability-and-becoming-a-health-and-care-professional.pdf>

<https://sshinestudents.wordpress.com/resources/>

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/Royal-College-Of-Nursing/Documents/Publications/2022/May/010-156.pdf>

The image shows the top part of a document cover. It features the 'hcpc' logo in blue and black, with 'health & care professions council' written in smaller text to its right. Below the logo, there is a line of text: 'A guide for disabled people about becoming a health and care professional regulated by the HCPC – includes information for education providers'. The bottom half of the image is a solid purple rectangle with the title 'Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional' written in white text.

