



The importance of dispelling misconceptions

a quick-reference resource

There are many misconceptions that persist in relation to the neurodivergent conditions that perpetuate and maintain harmful stereotypes and misunderstandings.

Recognising and addressing these misconceptions and their impact is crucial for promoting wellbeing, raising awareness, and fostering more inclusive environments for neurodivergent individuals.

The impact of misconceptions

- Misconceptions about neurodivergence can be hugely impactful, leading to increased anxiety, depression, and a negative impact on overall well-being and self-esteem.
- They foster societal stigma, resulting in bias and discrimination, while harmful stereotypes obscure the unique strengths of neurodivergent individuals.
- Misunderstandings also create barriers to accessing necessary resources and support, leaving many without the help they need. In workplaces, these misconceptions can cause neurodivergent talent to be overlooked, and policies shaped by inaccurate beliefs may fail to address the actual challenges neurodivergent individuals face.

The importance of awareness

- Helps create a sense of belonging for neurodivergent individuals
- Empowers neurodivergent individuals to embrace their identities and advocate for themselves
- Creates neuroinclusive environments that value diverse perspectives and contributions
- Breaks down barriers that hinder access to opportunities and accommodations
- Recognising strengths encourages personal development and careers progression
- A deeper understanding fosters strong collaboration which can lead to innovative solutions
- It can reduce stigma, supporting better mental health and well-being for neurodivergent people
- Increases awareness, leading to better support systems
- Supports the development of more equitable policies and practices
- Helps combat misinformation that perpetuates stereotypes and biases

Common misconceptions

- Only males are neurodivergent
- Neurodivergence can be cured
- Neurodivergence is just a modern trend
- Self-diagnosis of a neurodivergent condition is invalid
- It's expensive to support neurodivergent employees in the workplace

Facts

- Neurodivergence affects people of all genders and identities. However, women and girls are often underdiagnosed
- Neurodivergence is not something to be "cured" as it represents the natural variation in the human brain. The focus should be on understanding, acceptance, and support to help neurodivergent individuals thrive
- Neurodivergent traits represent natural variations in the brain and have existed throughout history but were often misunderstood or overlooked until increased awareness and better diagnostic tools emerged
- While a formal diagnosis from a professional can be important for accessing support, self-diagnosis can be a valid step, especially when barriers like cost or access make formal diagnosis difficult
- Supporting employees does not have to be costly. Many accommodations, such as flexible working hours, quiet workspaces, or assistive technology, can be low-cost or free

Misconceptions

How to tackle them

- Educate yourself and learn about different neurodivergent conditions
- Provide mandatory training to help people understand neurodivergent conditions including strengths and support needs too
- Be a good ally by speaking up against stereotypes and misconceptions when you hear them
- There are many ways to learn from and engage with neurodivergent experiences, like accessing resources and following reputable sources
- Adopt and engage with policies that promote neuroinclusion
- Learn about individuals' unique strengths as this will challenge the deficit-based viewpoint
- Recognise an individual's unique needs and preferences, moving beyond one-size-fits-all assumptions about neurodivergence
- When discussing neurodivergence, using accurate and respectful language is crucial in breaking down harmful misconceptions
- Share positive case studies and promote neurodiversity-focused events as opportunities to learn

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