

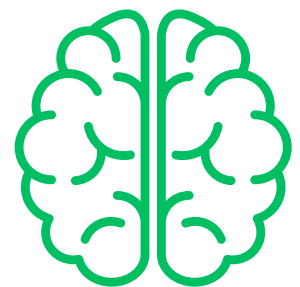
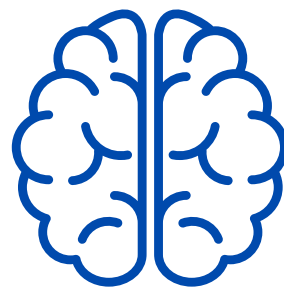
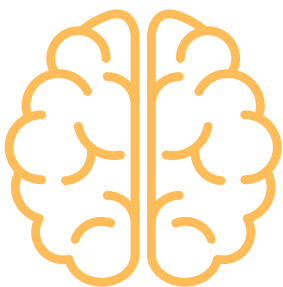
UNDERSTANDING NEURODIVERGENCE

Take a moment to look at your hand. Notice how each of your fingers is unique, with different lengths, patterns, and maybe even a mark or two.

Isn't it amazing how each finger has its own special ability? Your thumb tackles tasks head-on, and your pointer finger precisely highlights what you want to focus on. They all work together to make your hand function as a whole.



Our brains are kind of like that, too. Everyone's brain is wired differently, but this doesn't mean that one brain is better than another. In fact, together we form a society where everyone has something special to contribute.



What is Neurodivergence?

Neurodiversity is a way of celebrating these incredible variations in our brains. It is based on the fact that some people's brains process information or experience the world in ways that are different from what's considered "typical". This can lead to differences in areas such as social interaction, communication, learning and day-to-day functioning.

Some examples of neurodivergence include *attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)*, *autism*, *dyslexia*, *dyspraxia*, *obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)*, *giftedness*.

Imagine your brain as a **control centre**, but instead of a standard set of dials and switches, it has a whole toolbox of unique tools. Some brains might have amazing magnifying glasses, allowing them to focus on details with incredible precision. Others might have super-powered kaleidoscopes, helping them see connections and patterns that others miss. There are even brains with built-in dimmer switches, helping them filter out overwhelming sensory input.



What does it mean to be Neurodivergent?

Being neurodivergent means having a brain that uses these unique tools. However, sometimes those special tools can make things a bit tricky. For instance:

- A brain with a magnifying glass might get stuck on tiny details, making it hard to see the big picture.
- A brain with a kaleidoscope might struggle to follow conversations because it's busy making fascinating connections that jump from topic to topic.
- A brain with a dimmer switch might find crowded places overwhelming, needing quiet spaces to recharge.



Neurodiversity isn't about saying some brains are better than others. It's about recognizing the **unique strengths and challenges** that come with different brain toolkits.



Did You Know?

- **Albert Einstein**, the brilliant physicist, is thought to have had Asperger's syndrome. This neurodivergent condition can involve challenges with social interaction, but also an incredible capacity for focus and concentration.
- **Whoopi Goldberg**, the award-winning actress, has dyslexia. This condition can make reading difficult, but it can also lead to strong visual-spatial skills and creative thinking.
- Singer-songwriter **Billie Eilish** has spoken openly about her Tourette's syndrome. This condition involves involuntary movements or sounds (tics).

Why is it important to understand Neurodiversity?

For way too long, there's been a stigma around neurodivergent brains. They are sometimes seen as deficient, impaired or needing to be fixed.

But the truth is: neurodiversity is a **normal part of the human experience**. This idea acknowledges that neurodivergent brains should be seen alongside 'neurotypical' brains, without judgement.

Additionally, while neurodiversity does not deny the challenges faced by neurodivergent individuals, it recognises that a lot of these challenges stem from living in a world that does not make room for neurodivergence. Recognising this can encourage us to make **accommodations** in spaces like education, infrastructure, healthcare to better suit the needs of neurodivergent folk.



Imagine a classroom where everyone has to use the same left-handed scissors. Frustrating, right? The same goes for living in a world that assumes everyone thinks, perceives and engages with their environments in the same way. By embracing neurodiversity, we can build a world that inclusive and supportive of each individual.

If you, or someone you know is looking to seek professional help, reach out to us at **The Mood Space** <https://www.themoodspace.com/getstarted> and our Care Team will get back to you within 24 hours.

Not looking for professional help just yet? We understand, keep browsing through our Care Space tools and explore our self-help handouts and worksheets to navigate mental health-related challenges in a better manner.