

University of New Hampshire

University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository

M.S. in Leadership

College of Professional Studies Online

2024

Neurodiversity in Workplace

Jacqueline L. Zindell

jacqueline.zindell@unh.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.unh.edu/ms_leadership

Recommended Citation

Zindell, Jacqueline L., "Neurodiversity in Workplace" (2024). *M.S. in Leadership*. 128.
https://scholars.unh.edu/ms_leadership/128

This Capstone is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Professional Studies Online at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in M.S. in Leadership by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact Scholarly.Communication@unh.edu.

Neurodiversity in the Workplace

Jacqueline L. Zindell

MS Leadership, The University System of New Hampshire

College of Professional Studies

LD850 Leadership Integrative Capstone

Professor: Dr. Joseph Mews

Spring, 2024

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement	3
Dedication	4
Abstract	5
Chapter 1: Introduction	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review	7
Introduction	7
Defining Neurodiversity and terminology.....	7
Gaining Insight into Neurodivergence	10
Struggles in a Neurotypical Workplace.....	12
Mental Health	14
Ethical & Discrimination Considerations	16
Employer Responsibility & Accommodations	17
Benefits of Neurodiversity in the Workplace	19
Supporting Neurodiversity in the Workplace	21
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	23
Research Method	23
Data Collection Method.....	24
Chapter 4: Data Analysis	25
Chapter 5: Conclusion	30
References	31
Appendix A.....	40

Acknowledgement

Embarking on a master's program is a journey not for the faint of heart. I owe a debt of gratitude to my husband Jason, for his support and understanding. His willingness to shoulder extra responsibilities, handle cooking duties, and retire to bed alone as I burned the midnight oil writing, did not go unnoticed. Additionally, I am thankful for the comforting presence of my beloved companions, Quinn and Ziva, they have been a lifeline. Lastly, a big shoutout to my dad for his constant availability, always just a phone call away during the toughest of times.

I am deeply grateful to the outstanding faculty at Granite State College, now the University System of New Hampshire, for their contributions to my academic journey. Dr. Julie Moser, Dr. Michelle Newsome, Dr. Joseph Mews, Dr. Kathy DesRoches, and Professor Christopher Brooks, thank you for pushing and enhancing my skills throughout this past year. Your coursework has driven my academic and professional growth and success. Special thanks to Bette Papa for her support and assistance in keeping me on track. Her friendly demeanor and willingness to help, even with repetitive questions, made staying on track that much easier.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my classmates who have become friends. During our time together in our educational journey as Granite State College and UNH students, thank you for your guidance and encouragement along the way. Together, we have reached the finish line!

Dedication

To my beloved son Kyle,

You're my greatest motivation and inspiration. Every obstacle I faced, I've overcome with you as my driving force. As a single mom, I've always strived to make you proud. I hope you feel a sense of pride seeing me become the first in our family to earn a master's degree. I have no doubt that you will follow in my footsteps and become the second! Your dream of attaining three master's degrees will become a reality, and I will be there cheering you on every step of the way. Now go get it!

Abstract

This research paper explores the intricate relationships between neurodiverse and neurotypical individuals within the workplace. Through an exploration of the literature, the research focuses on the specific challenges faced by neurodiverse individuals, including those with conditions such as autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and dyslexia. The topic of neurodiversity will provide support to leaders in navigating interactions with neurodiverse individuals and fostering inclusivity in the workplace. This research serves as a foundational step towards creating a toolbox for the workplace. A survey was conducted using Survey Monkey to gauge respondents' familiarity with the concept of Neurodiversity and to identify effective strategies for workplace inclusivity, particularly among leaders. Discrepancies revealed in the survey shows potential gaps in support systems, highlighting the need for enhanced support for neurodivergent individuals. Notably, all respondents expressed the belief that leadership training programs should incorporate education on effectively supporting neurodivergent individuals. This finding indicates the eagerness among leaders for greater education and resources to cultivate inclusive workplaces.

Keywords: Neurodiversity, Neurodiverse, Neurotypical, Autism, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Dyslexia.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of neurodivergent integration within the workplace, specifically focusing on the dynamic relationships between neurodiverse and neurotypical individuals. We live in an increasingly diverse world that is an evolving melting pot of distinctive talents and perspectives. Neurodiversity has become a popular concept at work and is increasingly popular within the business, following the promotion of targeted inclusion programs (Doyle, 2020). There is this idea of neurodiversity that being diagnosed with an illness is disempowering, diminishing, and demeaning (Morehead, 2023). By implementing policies and practices, it can ensure the integration of individuals with the following neurological conditions into mainstream employment: Attention Deficit Disorders, Autism and Dyslexia (CCM Professional, 2023). The urgency is to create a workplace that actively supports neurodiversity, helps to overcome challenges and reduces the stigma associated with neurological conditions. Misunderstandings, stigma, and a lack of accommodations often hinder the full utilization of neurodiverse talents. Neurotypical and neurodiverse collaboration can contribute to a more compassionate and understanding workplace culture.

In acknowledging the presence of neurodiversity within the workplace, this literature review evaluates the obstacles experienced by neurodivergent individuals in conventional work settings. Neurodiverse people may face specific challenges in the workplace or in performing certain tasks, with the right adaptations, they can become valuable and provide unique strengths for the company (Brinzea, 2019). Optimistically, this literature review will present opportunities for comprehension and, fostering inclusion, such as tailored accommodations, awareness training for neurotypical colleagues, and creating supportive organizational policies. Throughout the literature review you will find the following topics in greater detail: defining

neurodiversity and terminology; gaining insight into neurodivergence; struggles in a neurotypical workplace; mental health support needs; supporting neurodiversity in the workplace; benefits of neurodiversity in the workplace; ethical and discrimination considerations; employer responsibility and accommodations., followed by the conclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There is a rising awareness of the challenges and opportunities associated with neurodiversity in the workplace. Neurodivergent individuals, those with neurological variations such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism and dyslexia, bring a distinct set of skills, perspectives, and experiences to the workplace. Perceived inclusion refers to an individual's perceptions of belonging and being valued for what makes them unique and different within a group (Shore, et al, 2011). Increasing diversity does not, by itself, increase effectiveness; what matters is how an organization harnesses diversity, and whether it's willing to reshape its power structure (Ely, 2021). This paper explores into the dynamics of neurodivergent relationships in the workplace, aiming to shed light on various crucial aspects of neurodivergent associations.

Defining Neurodiversity and terminology

Neurodivergence is a broad umbrella and is not just autism. Neurological variations can include ADHD, autism, and dyslexia (Neurodiversity Hub, 2023). Increasingly, many people in the U.S. and around the world identify as neurodivergent. Research suggests that up to 15-20% of the U.S. population is neurodivergent (Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion, 2023). You likely know, work alongside, and socialize with a significant number of people who are neurodivergent, including family members, coworkers, colleagues, and friends. No two neurodivergent people are exactly alike.

Perceptions of neurodiversity vary widely among individuals while reflecting a variety of perspectives and interpretations. The definition of Neurodivergent is applied to a wide range of people who vary significantly in abilities and character. Some may be considered high function while others may have profound cognitive disabilities and little to no language (Jurecic, 2007). There is a spectrum of cognitive abilities, illustrating the unique wiring of everyone's brain. Despite the potential ability to mask these differences, the variations persist. Attempts to deny or conceal these distinctions, whether through self-denial or external pressures, can take a significant toll on a neurodivergent mental and physical well-being (Med, 2021). Moreover, neurological differences, like autism, are just that: neurological differences. In other words, different brains work differently (Neurodiversity Hub, 2023).

Neurodiversity is the concept that there is natural variation in the human brain that leads to differences in how we think and behave. Neurodiversity is for short, Neurological Diversity (Boston University, 2023). Neurodivergent, sometimes abbreviated as ND, means having a brain that functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of "normal" (Walker, 2014). Neurodiversity is usually used to describe a group of neurodivergent individuals, it also refers to all of humankind because everyone has a unique way of processing information (Do-It, 2023). Neurotypical is the opposite of neurodivergent. Neurotypicality is the condition from which neurodivergent people diverge. Neurotypical, often abbreviated as NT, means having a style of neurocognitive functioning that falls within the dominant societal standards of "normal" (Walker, 2014).

Neurodiversity is a term originally coined by Australian sociologist, Judy Singer, in the late-1990s and embodies the concept that natural variations in the human brain result in diverse

ways of thinking and behaving (Neurodiversity Hub, 2023). Neurodiversity exists just like diversity exists in ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. Individuals with ADHD, autism, dyslexia, as well as those individuals who fall under the neurotypical and autistic categories, all possess brains that are inherently wired to operate and learn in distinct ways (Exceptional Individuals, 2023).

To delve deeper into the terminology associated with neurodiversity, individuals with neurological diversity may present with a singular diagnosis or a combination of diagnoses. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. People with ADHD experience an ongoing pattern of the following types of symptoms; inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity (National Institute of Mental Health, 2023).

Dyslexia is characterized by deficits in accurate and fluent word recognition. Individuals with dyslexia struggle with word recognition, decoding, and spelling. Reading comprehension is sometimes impaired due to very poor word reading skills (Learning Disabilities Association of America, 2023). Developmental Dyscalculia (DD) signifies a failure in representing quantities, which impairs the performance of basic math operations and schooling achievement during childhood (Santos, et al, 2022). Dysgraphia is a neurological disorder characterized by writing disabilities. Specifically, the disorder causes a person's writing to be distorted or incorrect. In children, the disorder generally emerges when they are first introduced to writing. The cause of the disorder is unknown, but in adults, it is usually associated with damage to the parietal lobe of the brain (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 2023). Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental condition involving persistent challenges with social

communication, restricted interests, and repetitive behavior. While autism is considered a lifelong disorder, the degree of impairment in functioning because of these challenges varies between individuals with autism (American Psychiatric Association, 2023).

Gaining Insight into Neurodivergence

Workplace relationships between neurodivergent and neurotypical individuals exhibit variations in interpersonal relationships. Criticisms of neurodiversity often arise from misconceptions or myths. There is a prevalent misconception that neurodivergent individuals cannot thrive in a professional setting (Doyle, 2020). Research has found that some workplace managers still view neurodiverse individuals as people unable to meet the same standards and expectations as their neurotypical peers (Ennaglobal, 2023). However, more research on neurodivergent individuals' productivity shows the opposite. Neurodivergent individuals can be just as capable and productive workers as neurotypical individuals – it's just a matter of providing the right environment for them to bring out their innate potential (Ennaglobal, 2023).

Unconscious biases often lead individuals to make assumptions about neurodiverse job seekers and employees. Initial impressions are frequently formed based on factors such as eye contact, greetings, and levels of enthusiasm, potentially reinforcing harmful stereotypes. Often, neurodiverse individuals don't know how to interact with people socially (PCMA, 2021). This demonstrates how individuals exhibiting neurodiversity may display unique traits within a professional environment as opposed to their neurotypical peers.

Organizations can take into consideration their recruitment and hiring procedures with enhanced human resources practices. Challenges may deter neurodivergent job candidates from applying for open positions (Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability

Inclusion, 2023). The social model is considered to cause disability and special needs by placing barriers in the way of people with impairments (Goering, 2010). These include social and communication barriers, understanding job requirements, and access to online systems and other software for applying to jobs and assessing job candidates (Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion, 2023). Opponents argue that the social model implies that physical differences and restrictions are entirely socially created. The social model has also been criticized for presenting disabled people as on homogeneous group rather than a complex group individual (Oliver, 2013). Insufficient education contributes to some of the misunderstandings surrounding neurodiversity.

Neurodiverse students and their families are often singularly focused on managing the academic rigors of formal education, leaving soft skills, such as communication, self-advocacy and executive functioning, inadequately remediated (Dipeolu, et al, 2014). Despite the academic efforts, neurodiverse students may find themselves inadequately equipped for the demands of the competitive workforce upon completing their education. Neurodevelopmental differences are lifelong. Some conditions can appear more hidden in adults. Often these individuals have experienced a lifetime of living with their differences; by adulthood they might have developed effective coping strategies to help them survive, or even thrive, in a world designed for neurotypicals (Honeybourne, 2019).

Struggles in a Neurotypical Workplace

“Eighty percent of the people on the autism spectrum are unemployed or underemployed,” Lawrence Fung, M.D., Ph.D., said. “Not because they’re not smart. It’s because they don’t know how to maneuver in a social setting and neurotypical people don’t

understand how to work with them” (PCMA, 2021). One aspect to consider is that neurotypical individuals effectively communicate in a distinct language compared to those who are neurodivergent may struggle to communicate. A 2021 study in the scientific magazine *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, suggested that those on the autism spectrum find it difficult to accurately identify angry facial expressions when they are displayed with the intensity and speed that neurotypicals find normal (Rozsa, 2021). The study goes on to explain that empathy involves both how one instinctively expresses emotions and how one develops certain expectations based on previous social interactions. Since these experiences can be very different for autistic people, this leads to a communication breakdown (Rozsa, 2023). Some might find the social interaction and communication demands of the workplace challenging (Honeybourne, 2019).

Dyslexia is a neurocognitive divergence and holds considerable implications for individuals across their educational journey, professional endeavors, and daily activities. As each person is unique, so is everyone's experience of dyslexia. It can range from mild to severe, and it can co-occur with other specific learning difficulties (British Dyslexia Association, 2023). Organization, memory and concentration might be difficult for some individuals (Honeybourne, 2019). Dyslexic people may have difficulty processing and remembering information they see and hear, which can affect learning and the acquisition of literacy skills. Dyslexia can also impact on other areas such as organizational skills (British Dyslexia Association, 2023).

Evidence suggests that adults with ADHD face numerous challenges in the workplace. Learning to channel excess energy into productivity and manage pace can be critical for ADHD clients. Many (but not all) ADHDers find that physical movement helps them think better and

work at their best (Genius Within, 2023). The Journal of Neural Transmission studied the nature of work-related problems and impairments of adults with ADHD (Fuermaier, et al, 2021). The examination concluded individuals with ADHD experienced work problems in not meeting their own standards and perceived potential, yet this is less often accompanied by negative performance evaluations or losing their job. ADHD symptoms, in particular symptoms of inattention, were found to be strongly associated with work-related problems (Fuermaier, et al, 2021). Once employed and initially working, ADHD adults may be highly motivated workers but, depending on the job, ADHD symptoms soon begin to hamper the person's performance. Adults with ADHD can also become hyper-focused in activities especially if they are incentivized by it. It is important to be aware of the potential for workaholism in adults with ADHD (Adamou, et al, 2013).

The work for managers will be harder but the payoff for companies will be considerable: access to more of their employees' talents along with diverse perspectives that may help them compete more effectively (Austin & Pisano, 2017). This implies a necessity for organizations to adopt a different mindset by viewing individuals not only as interchangeable human resources but as assets with unique qualities.

Mental Health

Work is an important activity of daily living and deserves particular attention in this context, as it contributes to mental health, increases status, social integration, and economic independence (Anker, et al, 2019). A mental health need may be a direct consequence of unsupported neurominority; an individual who is frustrated, excluded and unable to reach potential will naturally feel anxious or depressed (Doyle, 2020). The relation between depression

and neurological disorders is generally construed as unidirectional and expressed as an increased risk of depression in the presence of a neurological disorder (Kanner, 2005). There is no consensus about which problems should be included in the term “mental health problem,” and identifying mental illness is far from straightforward. The adoption of standardized classification systems assumes that individuals with intellectual disabilities have adequate linguistic skills, and they present mental health problems in the same way as members of the general population (Costello & Bouras, 2006). The process of identifying mental illness is described as far from straightforward, suggesting that the nature of mental health conditions is intricate and multifaceted.

The stress and mental health challenges associated with ADHD may contribute to occasional or chronic absenteeism. Some research suggests that conducive working conditions, such as part-time employment and having autonomy over work tasks, can help mitigate the negative impact of mental health on presenteeism (De Oliveira, 2022). Access to mental health support is crucial for everyone, including neurodivergent individuals. This support may include counseling, therapy, and accommodations tailored to their specific needs. Neurodivergent people are at a higher risk of experiencing mental health conditions, so it’s really important to provide appropriate support to help neurodiverse employees with mental health concerns (Benjamin, 2023). Navigating a world that is not designed for Autistic individuals means that experiences such as bullying, isolation, work discrimination, and sensory overwhelm are all too common. These experiences can all significantly impact mental health and well-being (Association for Autism and Neurodiversity, 2023). Likewise, there is a need for organizations to explore strategies to support the mental health of neurodiverse individuals in the workplace.

Factors such as the diversity of symptoms, individual variations, and influences contribute to the complexity of recognizing and categorizing mental health issues. Managing the demands of a job can be stressful for individuals with ADHD, potentially leading to anxiety. Studies on ADHD examined both absenteeism and presenteeism and found ADHD was associated with more days of missed work and poor work performance (De Oliveira, 2022). Neurodevelopmental disorders (NDs) can be associated with other co-occurring psychiatric diagnoses. Suicide prevention is also crucial, and it's important to know the warning signs and risk factors, and how these might present differently for Neurodivergent individuals compared to neurotypical people (Association for Autism and Neurodiversity, 2023). Difficulty in making and maintaining friendships despite often developing special interests and abilities can lead to low self-image and self-harm (Kelly, et al, n.d.). This information contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of mental health and emphasizes the importance of inclusive and tailored approaches for neurodiverse individuals.

In a new world of neurodiversity, people with ADHD may discover their greatest improvements in mental health come about not so much through drugs but through changing the ecology of their surroundings to match the brisk and ebullient nature of their joyful hyperactive brains (Kelly, et al, 2023). Embracing the concept of neurodiversity would bring the study of mental health disorders in line with movements that have already taken place over the past 50 years around biodiversity and cultural diversity (Armstrong, 2015). There is significant progress to be made in fostering neurodiverse mental health and promoting inclusion within the workplace.

Ethical & Discrimination Considerations

To understand the prevention of discrimination related to neurodiversity, ensuring that individuals with neurodivergent traits are granted equal access in recruitment, advancement, and career growth opportunities. Discrimination is defined as, treating someone differently or unfairly because of a personal characteristic or distinction, which, whether intentional or not, has an effect that imposes disadvantages not imposed on others, or that withholds or limits access that is given to others (Jones, et al, 2018). Data from the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) shows that the percentage of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) charges filed about neurodiversity has been steadily increasing for over a decade (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2022). Upholding these laws is not only a legal requirement but also an ethical responsibility to ensure fair treatment and equal opportunities for neurodivergent individuals.

Research has found that people perceive mental-behavioral disabilities more negatively than physical disabilities, thus introducing the potential for discrimination even within contexts specifically meant to help individuals with disabilities (Brown, 2020). Disability is not a flaw, an individual tragedy nor a whispered recognition of another's embodied failing or a shameful family truth. Disability is a matter of public discourse and international disgrace, exemplified in the continued exclusion of impaired children from mainstream school, the segregation of disabled adults from employment contexts and the denial of access to basic human rights as a consequence of reducing welfare and essential services (Goodley, et al, 2019). For example, when an employee with cognitive impairments working at a program for individuals with disabilities requested supplementary training or coaching as he was having difficulty understanding what was expected of him, he was denied these accommodations, given written

warnings which he was unable to read or understand and was eventually fired (Brown, 2020). It is hard for some employees with disabilities to advocate for themselves, just like it is hard for any harassed worker to advocate for themselves. As such, managers must closely oversee their work and prevent any forms of harassment against them (Dobrich, et al, 2002).

Advocates advanced the theories of normalization, protection and advocacy, independent living, and civil rights and empowerment for people with disabilities (Bruyere & Barrington, 2012). The social justice case for eliminating inequality in the workplace sees that managers have a moral obligation to treat all employees with fairness and respect. Treating people fairly should be seen as an end and not a means to an end. In this paradigm, fair treatment is the right ethical thing to do not because of the benefits it brings, or absence of harm caused (Honeybourne, 2019). By actively seeking ways to support neurodivergent employees demonstrates ethical leadership and a commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace.

Employer Responsibility & Accommodations

In the United States, the 2008 amendments to the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defined disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, including the ability to work, and protected qualified individuals with a disability from the workplace discrimination whether or not they required an accommodation to perform the essential functions of the job (Bruyere, 2022). Supporting neurodiversity in the workplace entails establishing an inclusive atmosphere that appreciates and caters to individuals with a range of neurological profiles. Managers must have compassion along with specific knowledge about the disorder or individual (Seitz & Smith, 2016).

Given the emphasis on soft skills in management over the last 40 years that place a premium on interpersonal skills, communication skills, networking abilities, and so on, many of today's job descriptions/requirements for high-paying jobs may appear to be out of reach for individuals with autism if such skills are viewed as essential (Patton, 2019). By educating employees and management about different neurodivergent conditions, strengths, and challenges the application and interview process may become an obstacle of the past. If leaders and people in those positions are willing to work with individuals with autism, then they are set up for success (Seitz & Smith, 2016). Those with unique neurological traits could benefit from clear and comprehensive policies. Firstly, it can be used to develop and enhance the policies and practices already in place. Secondly, it can offer reassurance about possible progress. Thirdly, it involves gathering information for all who may want to take part (Hurst, 2009).

Support is not exclusive to members of the neurodivergent community, neurotypical employees and management also require assistance and understanding. Implementing training sessions and awareness programs to educate both employees and management about neurodiversity will ensure understanding across the organization. Incorporating neurodiversity into the larger conversation about DEI is important for reasons of fairness and inclusion and because of the advantages that neurodivergent individuals can bring to organizations (Russo, et al, 2023). Within this dynamic framework, the roles of managers are also changing, partly through what has been called job enlargement. That is, more responsibility for an increasing range of activities that were once handled elsewhere in the organization, usually by specialists (Tyler, 2016). Leaders' responsibilities are changing, including supporting more diverse teams, including neurodiverse individuals.

Benefits of Neurodiversity in the Workplace

Incorporating neurodiversity into the workplace brings numerous advantages, cultivating a work environment that is both inclusive and dynamic. Each neurodivergent person brings a different set of skills and talents to the workplace and has different access and support needs (X, 2022). It can be implied that managers are familiar with the advantages organizations can gain from diversity in the backgrounds, disciplinary training, gender, culture, and other individual qualities of employees. Benefits from neurodiversity are similar but more direct. Neurodiverse people are wired differently from “neurotypical” people, they may bring new perspectives to a company’s efforts to create or recognize value (Austin, 2021). Organizations tapped into a broader range of skills and talents, gaining a competitive edge in attracting and retaining top talent.

The environments within which individuals with these neuro variations learn, work and live can either facilitate or inhibit their growth and development (Neurodiversity Hub, 2023). Prior research has hypothesized that certain neurodivergent individuals may encounter workplace challenges, such as difficulties with concentration or adapting to change, many exhibit creative and innovative thinking, often surpassing the productivity levels of their neurotypical counterparts (Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion, 2023). Neurodivergent workers can contribute their talents, skills, and perspectives in ways that can directly benefit your organization’s mission and help support productivity and performance. These skills and talents include innovation, creativity, technical, design, creative strengths and new ways to solve problems (Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion, 2023). This diversity of thought can lead to innovative problem-solving and creative solutions that benefit the entire team.

“Attention to detail, out of the box thinking, and tendency to dwell deep in their topics of interest make up part of this potential, says Dr. Fung, but perhaps the most impactful is the general increase in employee morale when neurodiverse workers are part of a team” (PCMA, 2021). It’s easiest to expand employment in those areas, such as software testing, business analytics, and cybersecurity, in which tasks are a good fit with neurodiverse talent (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Firms have become more successful at finding and hiring good and even great talent in tough-to-fill skills categories. Products, services, and bottom lines have profited from lower defect rates and higher productivity (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Neurodiverse teams often excel in collaboration, as they bring diverse perspectives and ideas to the table. This can foster a rich team dynamic and improve the overall quality of teamwork.

A neurodiverse workforce can enhance overall productivity. The strengths associated with autism include average to very high intelligence, ability to think in visual images, identify patterns, perform repetitive tasks where accuracy, rules and routine are important, honest, loyal and fair (Neurodiversity Hub, 2023). Strengths of autistic individuals can lead to improved efficiency and effectiveness. The strengths associated with dyslexia include seeing the bigger picture, mechanical aptitude, picture thinkers and highly creative (Neurodiversity Hub, 2023). These strengths contribute to a diverse skill set, fostering creativity, problem-solving capabilities, and a unique perspective that can be valuable in various organizations. The strengths associated with ADHD include hyper-focus, higher levels of creativity and curiosity, innovation, inventiveness, leadership abilities and high energy (Neurodiversity Hub, 2023). Strengths of ADHD individuals can lead to unique contributions and new ways to solve problems within an organization. In summary, embracing neurodiversity in the workplace is not just about

compliance; it's an opportunity to harness the unique strengths of individuals, promote inclusion, and create a thriving and innovative organizational culture.

Supporting Neurodiversity in the Workplace

Supporting neurodiversity in the workplace has a specific focus on neurological differences. Understanding the natural diversity in how people think, learn, perceive the world, and interact contributes to the creation of inclusive environments. When both employers and employees can have open discussions about finding ways to work more inclusively, that helps break down barriers and remove stigmas (Price, 2022). Neurodivergent workers report greater confidence and self-esteem when their job duties align well with their set of talents, strengths and skills. Workplace inclusion may also help many neurodivergent people gain confidence in other areas, such as participating in their community activities and interpersonal relationships (Employee Assistance and Resource and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion, 2023).

Many neurotypical workers appreciate learning about neurodiversity and experience pride in working at inclusive workplaces. This type of workplace culture helps them better understand and connect with their neurodivergent colleagues, as well as other coworkers, collaborators and friends (Employee Assistance and Resource and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion, 2023). The outcome of research demonstrated that people with autism who participated in the supported employment program improved their quality-of-life level in a very meaningful way during the analysis period (García-Villamisar, et al, 2002). In contrast, the group who participated in the modality of sheltered employment did not experience a meaningful improvement in their quality life level (García-Villamisar, et al, 2002). In summary, supported employment proves to be a valuable approach for improving the quality of life and mental health of neurodivergent individuals.

Most major companies with established neurodiversity employment programs insist that business justifications are at the heart of their efforts. Claims of business benefit can, of course, be made for disability employment more broadly (Lengnick-Hall, et al, 2008). Innovation research provides support for this idea; for example, Jeppesen and Lakhani who studied people who were successful in solving crowdsourcing challenges found they tended to be marginally social and with respect to the problem domain, ‘in the outer circle’ in comparison with others who tried to solve the problem (Jeppesen & Lakhani, 2012). Socially grounded views of disability, such as those discussed, have paved the way to increased consideration of inclusivity and accessibility. Thus, directing attention towards programs that aim to integrate neurodivergent individuals into the workplace.

By deepening understanding of team members' neurodiversity, certain employees may find support in technology and tools, such as dictation software or daily planners. Disability is a core component of a diversity commitment; diversity also exists within and among people with disabilities. Employee and applicant technology serves the needs of all users, including people with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities (Disability In, 2019). During the particularly digitally focused time due to COVID-19, neurodiverse employees could also have recommendations on how to engage neurodiverse audience members and make the online experience accessible (PCMA, 2021). There are many resources available to help support neurodiverse employees. As the nature of work evolves and jobs continue to become more specialized, neurodiversity will become an increasingly relevant dimension of organizational diversity and is likely to play a key role both in terms of individual employees' well-being and performance outcomes, as well as organizational success (LeFevre-Levy, et al, 2023). Notably,

the provided information underscores the importance of considering the working environment, as various elements in a typical workplace may pose challenges or barriers for neurodiverse employees.

Creating an inclusive environment for neurodiverse individuals fosters a positive workplace culture. The World Health Organization (WHO) affirms this idea, proclaiming that although it is difficult to quantify the impact of work alone on personal identity, self-esteem and social recognition, most mental health professionals agree that the workplace environment can have a significant impact on an individual's mental well-being (Harnois & Gabriel, 2000). Creating an inclusive and diverse workplace culture is fundamental for success. A workplace made up of employees from different backgrounds, with a range of characteristics and life experiences, who all feel respected, included, valued and comfortable at work is what every employer should strive for (Price, 2022). Raising awareness about neurodiversity in the workplace serves to educate all employees about the challenges some colleagues may encounter. Additionally, it offers an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the distinctive strengths they contribute to a team.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Multiple research articles, journals and studies have been evaluated, contrasted and would be presented as methods. Articles from well-known associations and institutions, such as Association for Autism and Neurodiversity, British Dyslexia Association, Learning Disabilities Association of America, National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, will be included. Primarily a queue was created in the UNH online library and Google Scholar using the words Neurodivergent and adding workplace and employees separately. Surveys will be primarily focused on ADHD, dyslexia, autism, and the primary source from within those journals and articles. The purpose of this capstone is to provide leaders with insights on how embracing neurodiversity in the workplace, free from stigma, can manifest into inclusion of neurodivergent individuals in the workplace. In a leadership position, one can effectively champion and support neurodivergent individuals by creating a positive and supportive culture.

Data Collection Method

Data was collected from participants anonymously via a Survey Monkey link. The participants included leaders across the continental United States, representing various platforms and job roles. The survey application underwent approval by Dr. Mews before being distributed to participants. Leaders received the survey via Survey Monkey with a link directing the participant to the survey as their responses were recorded anonymously. The survey questions were centered on leaders and how familiar they are with Neurodiversity. The objective was to gather anonymous insights from leaders regarding effective strategies for fostering workplace inclusivity. This also included their efforts to support neurodivergent individuals in the

workplace, current training and practices. All while emphasizing the importance of identifying team needs, fostering understanding and acceptance, while creating a supportive and inclusive work culture. An accompanying disclaimer clarified that, in this context, “Neurodivergent/Neurodiversity” referred to individuals diagnosed with ADHD, Dyslexia, or Autism. The survey, facilitated through SurveyMonkey, solicited electronic feedback (see Appendix A). The questionnaire comprised of 16 questions, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative elements. Four questions offered respondents the opportunity for open-ended responses, encouraging feedback. The remaining 11 questions featured a rating scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. The survey's mission was to contribute to academic research aimed at advancing knowledge and practices related to neurodiversity in professional environments. Expressions of gratitude for participants' input were included alongside my school email address for any further questions.

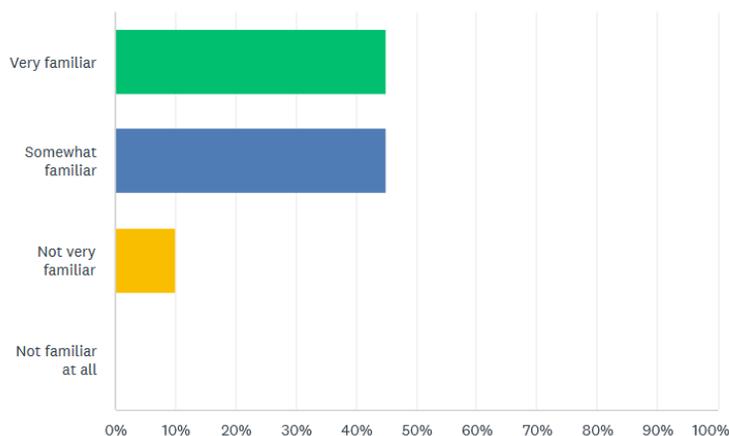
Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The survey created in Survey Monkey can be found in Appendix A. The survey was designed with the objective of gathering anonymous insights from leaders regarding effective strategies for fostering workplace inclusivity. An accompanying disclaimer clarified that, in this context, “Neurodivergent/Neurodiversity” referred to individuals diagnosed with ADHD, Dyslexia, or Autism. The survey's mission was to contribute to academic research aimed at advancing knowledge and practices related to neurodiversity in professional environments. The questionnaire comprised 16 questions, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative elements. Every question was meticulously chosen with consideration for its alignment with my literature review. To start, the survey provided the option of including an introduction which provided space for the purpose, scope of questions, and my contact information for further inquiry. For a better understanding, I titled the survey “Leadership Support for Neurodivergent Individuals in the Workplace.” Data was collected from participants via an anonymous survey link for a total of 20 respondents in leadership positions throughout the continental United States. The first two questions asked in the survey related to identification information about each respondent. The first question was to identify the respondent’s level in their organizational structure as a leader. Most of the respondents answered Director, Supervisor, Manager and Lead (19 out of 20 respondents.) The remaining one respondent identified as a Marketing Strategist. The purpose of asking the second question was to gather information about the duration of leadership experience possessed by the respondents. The years of leadership averaged 9.7 years. The results did not surprise me, as in my professional experience, leaders tend to stay in a leadership role for a lengthy time.

In my research, I aimed to explore the respondents' familiarity with the concept of Neurodiversity and whether they had prior experience working with neurodivergent individuals. I was happy to report that 90% of respondents were very familiar or somewhat familiar with the concept of neurodiversity. In question 4, when asked, have you ever worked with a neurodivergent colleague or employee, 85% responded frequently, sometimes, or occasionally. Leaving 10% as rarely and 5% as never had worked with someone neurodivergent.

How familiar are you with the concept of neurodiversity?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



In the workplace context, my interest centered around inquiries in questions 5, 6, and 7. These questions aimed to gauge leaders' likeliness to disclose a neurodivergent condition, the existence of supportive policies, and the efficacy of communication with neurodivergent individuals. A notable 35% of respondents indicated that they were unlikely or very unlikely to disclose a neurodivergent condition, suggesting a workplace culture characterized by a notable lack of transparency, possibly driven by apprehension. In contrast, a significant 45% of respondents reported having policies in place to support neurodivergent individuals, while 30%

expressed uncertainty. This disparity highlights a potential gap in support systems that may leave neurodivergent individuals without the necessary assistance they require. Communication emerged as the primary area of strength, with 95% of participants expressing some level of confidence, ranging from slight to extreme, in effectively communicating with neurodivergent individuals.

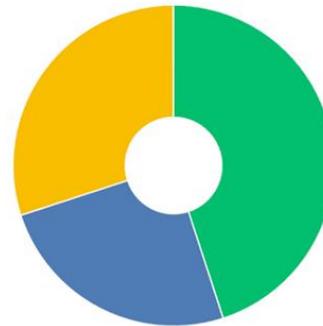
5. How likely are you to disclose a neurodivergent condition to your employer or colleagues?



Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

Extremely likely	10%	2
Likely	45%	9
Neutral	10%	2
Unlikely	25%	5
Very unlikely	10%	2

6. Does your organization currently have policies in place to support neurodivergent individuals?



Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

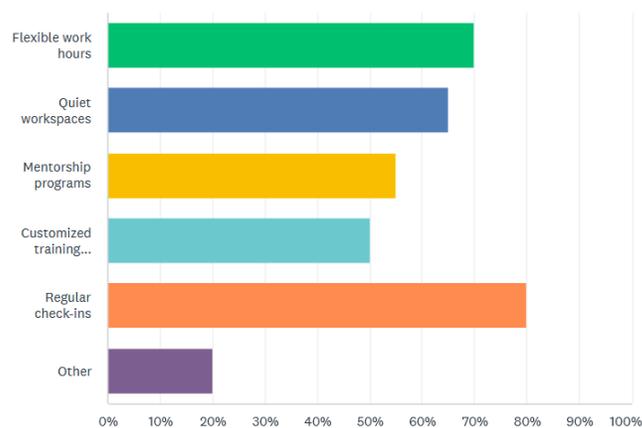
Yes	45%	9
No	25%	5
I'm not sure	30%	6

In survey questions 8-11 the respondents provided valuable data for understanding the current state of neurodiversity inclusion in the workplace, identifying areas for improvement, and informing strategies to create more supportive and inclusive environments for neurodivergent individuals. With over half of the respondents participating in training related to neurodiversity is an indication of a proactive trend of inclusion. While gauging participants perceptions of workplace culture regarding inclusivity and acceptance of neurodivergent individuals, 85% selected moderately to extremely inclusive which concludes the inclusivity of workplace culture.

Responses to inquiries regarding witnessing or experiencing discrimination against neurodivergent individuals reveal that 20% of respondents reported encountering such instances frequently or often. This underscores the presence of patterns of discrimination or bias within the workplace, indicating a need for preventive measures. This led me to my next question eleven, to determine which types of support are most crucial for neurodivergent individuals in the workplace. There were commonly selected options that could be beneficial to support neurodivergent in the workplace. See below:

What types of support do you believe are most important for neurodivergent individuals in the workplace? Select all that apply

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



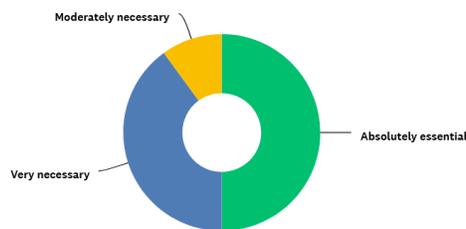
Question 12 provided an opportunity for open-ended responses. The question asked was, what challenges, if any, do you think neurodivergent individuals may face in the workplace? Many respondents emphasized anxiety as a significant challenge faced by neurodivergent individuals in the workplace. This includes anxiety related to sensory input, productivity expectations, and social interactions. Several respondents mentioned discrimination and stigma as challenges neurodivergent individuals may face, including being looked down upon for their

abilities and facing judgment from peers and leaders. Respondents echoed the importance of flexibility in accommodating the diverse needs of neurodivergent individuals, including flexibility in sensory input, work hours, and learning styles. Overall, the responses highlighted challenges faced by neurodivergent individuals in the workplace, ranging from social and communication barriers to discrimination and performance expectations.

The final four survey questions provided valuable insights into respondents' attitudes, beliefs, and observations regarding neurodiversity and inclusion in the workplace. 100% of respondents believed leadership training programs should include education on how to effectively support neurodivergent individuals. This indicates the desire from leaders that they yearn for more education in the workplace.

To what extent do you believe leadership training programs should include education on neurodiversity and strategies for supporting neurodivergent individuals in the workplace?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



Chapter 5: Conclusion

In conclusion, embracing neurodiversity in the workplace enriches the entire workplace, promoting a culture where differences are celebrated and valued. The physical environment can become adaptable, policies can be changed, and adjustments in workplace communication. Recognition that neurodiversity exists, and that existing policies and practices have not been designed to meet the full range of diversity (Honeybourne, 2019). Nurturing an environment characterized by empathy, support, and transparency not only positively impacts neurodivergent individuals but also contributes to our understanding of neurodiversity. It increasingly becomes apparent that the integration of neurodiverse individuals into the workplace is not just a moral commitment but a route for long-term success and progress. The survey responses confirmed efforts to promote greater awareness, understanding, and support for neurodivergent individuals in organizational settings. Leaders are in an influential position to make decisions that can impact on the mental health and well-being of their employees. As a result, there is an increasing trend for organizations to provide managers with training in how to reduce work-based mental health risk factors for their employees (Gayed, et al, 2018). From my research I conclude, with the implementation of the appropriate tools a more inclusive and equal work environment can be implemented. However, there is still progress to be made in addressing and eliminating discriminatory behaviors and biases in the workplace. By acknowledging the unique strengths of neurodivergent individuals and implementing workplace accommodations, this will contribute to cultivating a dynamic and high-performing workforce, allowing everyone to shine to the best of their capabilities.

References

- Adamou, M., Arif, M., Asherson, P., Aw, T. C., Bolea, B., Coghill, D., ... & Young, S. (2013). Occupational issues of adults with ADHD. *BMC psychiatry*, *13*(1), 1-7.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2023). *What is autism spectrum disorder?*
<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/autism/what-is-autism-spectrum-disorder>
- Anker E, Halmoy A, Heir T. (2019). Work participation in ADHD and associations with social characteristics, education, lifetime depression, and ADHD symptom severity. *11*(2):159–165.
- Armstrong, T. J. (2015). The myth of the normal brain: embracing neurodiversity. *AMA Journal of Ethics*, *17*(4), 348–352. <https://doi.org/10.1001/journalofethics.2015.17.4.msoc1-1504>
- Association for Autism and Neurodiversity. (2023, October 24). *I am Not the Cloud: How I got through lifelong depression - AANE*. AANE. <https://aane.org/autism-info-faqs/library/i-am-not-the-cloud-how-i-got-through-lifelong-depression/>
- Austin, R. D. (2021, August 27). *Neurodiversity is a competitive advantage*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2017/05/neurodiversity-as-a-competitive-advantage>
- Austin, R. D., & Pisano, G. P. (2017). *Neurodiversity as a competitive advantage*. Harvard Business Review, *95*, 96–103. <https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=52624>
- Benjamin, T. (2023, March 9). *Guest post: Five neurodiversity myths every employer must challenge*. The Brain Charity. <https://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/neurodiversity-myths/>

Boston University. (2023). *Ability and Neurodiversity | Diversity & Inclusion*.

<https://www.bu.edu/diversity/resources/self-guided-education/living-language-guide/ability-and-neurodiversity/>

Brinzea, V. M. (2019). Encouraging Neurodiversity in the Evolving Workforce - The Next Frontier to a Diverse Workplace. *Scientific Bulletin-Economic Sciences/Bulletin Stiintific-Seria Stiinte Economice*, 18(3).

British Dyslexia Association. (2023). *About dyslexia - British Dyslexia Association*.

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/about-dyslexia>

Brown, S. E. (2020). Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorder and Employment: Application. ADA National Network. https://adata.org/legal_brief/autism-spectrum-disorder-and-employment

Bruyere, S., & Barrington, L. (2012). *Employment and work*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Reference.

CCM Professional (2023). *Neurodivergent*. Cleveland Clinic.

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/23154-neurodivergent> (fixed one)

Costello, H., & Bouras, N. (2006). Assessment of mental health problems in people with intellectual disabilities. *Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences*, 43(4), 241.

De Oliveira, C., Saka, M., Bone, L., & Jacobs, R. (2022). The Role of Mental Health on Workplace Productivity: A Critical Review of the literature. *Applied Health Economics and Health Policy*, 21(2), 167–193. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40258-022-00761-w>

Disability In. (2019, June 26). *Accessible Technology Procurement Toolkit - Disability: Inclusive workplaces*. <https://disabilityin.org/home-2/>

Do-It (2023). *What do “neurodiverse” and “neurodivergent” mean?*

<https://www.washington.edu/doit/what-do-%E2%80%9Cneurodiverse%E2%80%9D-and-%E2%80%9Cneurodivergent%E2%80%9D-mean>

Dobrich, W., Dranoff, S., and Maatman, G. (2002). *The Manager’s Guide to Preventing a Hostile Work Environment*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

Doyle, N. (2020). Neurodiversity at work: a biopsychosocial model and the impact on working adults. *British Medical Bulletin*, 135(1), 108–125. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bmb/ldaa021>

Dipeolu, A.O., Storlie, C.A., & Johnson, C. (2014). Transition to college and students with autism spectrum disorder: Strategy considerations for school counselors. *Journal of School Counseling* 12 (11). Retrieved from <http://www.jsc.montana.edu/articles/v12n11.pdf>.

Ely, R. J. (2021, August 27). *Getting Serious About Diversity: Enough Already with the Business Case*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2020/11/getting-serious-about-diversity-enough-already-with-the-business-case>

Employee Assistance and Resource and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion. (2023). *Employee benefits of neurodiversity*. <https://askearn.org/page/employee-benefits-of-neurodiversity>

Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion. (2023). *Neurodiversity in the workplace*. <https://askearn.org/page/neurodiversity-in-the-workplace>

Employers Encouraged to Embrace Neurodiversity: Unwavering focus, superior analytical ability and mathematical talent are just some of the untapped skills neurodivergent people

- can bring to workplaces, according to recent report. (2022). In *NZBusiness* (Vol. 36, Issue 4, pp. S2-). *Adrenalin Publishing Ltd.*
- Ennaglobal. (2023, May 3). *Six key myths about neurodiversity in the workplace*. Enna.
<https://enna.org/six-key-myths-about-neurodiversity-in-the-workplace/>
- Exceptional Individuals. (2023). *Neurodiversity definitions and different types*.
<https://exceptionalindividuals.com/neurodiversity/>
- Fuermaier, A. B. M., Tucha, L., Butzbach, M., Weisbrod, M., Aschenbrenner, S., & Tucha, O. (2021). ADHD at the workplace: ADHD symptoms, diagnostic status, and work-related functioning. *Journal of Neural Transmission*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00702-021-02309-z>
- García-Villamizar, D., Wehman, P., & Navarro, M. D. (2002). Changes in the quality of autistic people's life that work in supported and sheltered employment. A 5-year follow-up study. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 17(4), 309-312.
- Gayed, A., Milligan-Saville, J. S., Nicholas, J., Bryan, B. T., LaMontagne, A. D., Milner, A., ... & Harvey, S. B. (2018). Effectiveness of training workplace managers to understand and support the mental health needs of employees: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Occupational and environmental medicine*, 75(6), 462-470.
- Genius Within. (2023, February 2). *ADHD*. <https://geniuswithin.org/what-is-neurodiversity/adhd/>
- Goering, S. (2010) 'Revisiting the relevance of the social model of disability.' *American Journal of Bioethics* 10, 1, 54-55

Goodley, D., Lawthom, R., Liddiard, K., & Runswick-Cole, K. (2019). Provocations for critical disability studies. *Disability & Society*, 34(6), 972–997.

Harnois, G., & Gabriel, P. (2000). Mental health and work: Impact, issues and good practices. (Nations for Mental Health publication). Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization. Retrieved from GLADNET Collection a.Google Scholar

Honeybourne, V. (2019). *The Neurodiverse Workplace: An Employer's Guide to Managing and Working with Neurodivergent Employees, Clients and Customers* (1st ed.). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Hurst, A. (2009). Neurodiversity, Disability, Legislation and Policy Development in the United Kingdom. *Neurodiversity in Higher Education*, 13.

Jeppesen, L. B., & Lakhani, K. (2012). Marginality and Problem-Solving Effectiveness in Broadcast Search. *Organization Science* 21(5), 1016–1033.

Jones, A. M., Finkelstein, R., & Koehoorn, M. (2018). Disability and workplace harassment and discrimination among Canadian federal public service employees. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*.

Jurecic, A. (2007). *Neurodiversity*. *College English*, 69(5), 421-442. www.jstor.org.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25472229>

Kanner, A. M. (2005). Depression and the risk of neurological disorders. *The Lancet*, 366(9492), 1147–1148. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736\(05\)67461-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(05)67461-2)

Kelly, C., Martin, R., & Taylor, R. (2023). Mental Health Issues in Neurodivergent Females. *The power of neurodiversity*. Google Books.

<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=GpLIVYwLRxQC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=related:KJLAFDKQcMJ:scholar.google.com/&ots=MZbsqXGpis&sig=Wc8hQ19osW05ylwtsvfN-R3hSnI#v=onepage&q=mental%20health&f=false>

Learning Disabilities Association of America. (2023). *Affects reading and related language-based processing skills*. <https://ldaamerica.org/disabilities/dyslexia/>

LeFevre-Levy, R., Melson-Silimon, A., Harmata, R., Hulett, A. L., & Carter, N. T. (2023).

Neurodiversity in the workplace: Considering neuroatypicality as a form of diversity. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 16(1), 1–19.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2022.86>

Lengnick-Hall, M., Gaunt, P., & Kulkarni, M. (2008). Overlooked and underutilized: People with disabilities are an untapped human resource. *Human Resource Management*, 47(2), 255–273.

Med, N. B. M. (2021, November 23). *What is neurodiversity?* Harvard Health.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/what-is-neurodiversity-202111232645>

Morehead, D., MD. (2023, June 5). The Neurodiversity Movement: Confusing Illness with

Stigma? *Psychiatric Times*. <https://www.psychiatristimes.com/view/the-neurodiversity-movement-confusing-illness-with-stigma>

National Institute of Mental Health (2023). *Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd>

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. (2023). *Dysgraphia*.

<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/dysgraphia>

Neurodiversity Hub. (2023). Neurodiversity Hub - resources for students, employers & more.

<https://www.neurodiversityhub.org/>

Neesham, C., Härtel, C. E. J., Coghill, K., & Sarros, J. C. (2010). Profit-making vs human value:

Philosophy's contribution. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*,

29(6), 593–608. Doi: 10.1108/02610151011067522.

Oliver, M. (2013). 'The social model of disability: Thirty years on.' *Disability and Society* 28, 7,

1024-1026

Patton, E. (2019). Autism, attributions and accommodations: Overcoming barriers and

integrating a neurodiverse workforce. *Personnel review*, 48, 915-934.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-04-2018-0116>

PCMA. (2021, October 8). *Neurodiversity in the workplace*. [https://www.pcma.org/stanford-](https://www.pcma.org/stanford-neurodiversity-project-workplace-events/)

[neurodiversity-project-workplace-events/](https://www.pcma.org/stanford-neurodiversity-project-workplace-events/)

Price, A. (2022, February 15). Neurodiversity and the workplace. *Forbes*.

[https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2022/02/15/neurodiversity-](https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2022/02/15/neurodiversity-and-the-workplace/?sh=1a5163dc2a22)

[and-the-workplace/?sh=1a5163dc2a22](https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2022/02/15/neurodiversity-and-the-workplace/?sh=1a5163dc2a22)

Rozsa, M. (2021, June 6). Being autistic may amount to a language difference — not an

impairment. *Salon*. [https://www.salon.com/2021/06/06/being-autistic-may-amount-to-a-](https://www.salon.com/2021/06/06/being-autistic-may-amount-to-a-language-difference-not-an-impairment/)

[language-difference-not-an-impairment/](https://www.salon.com/2021/06/06/being-autistic-may-amount-to-a-language-difference-not-an-impairment/)

Rozsa, M. (2023, June 5). Neurotypical explainer for the neurodiverse. *Salon*.

<https://www.salon.com/2023/06/05/neurotypical-people-explainer/>

Russo, Emily, Ott, Dana, Moeller, Miriam. (2023). *Shibboleth Authentication Request*.

<https://sloanreview-mit-edu.unh.idm.oclc.org/article/helping-neurodivergent-employees-succeed/>

Santos, F. H. D., Ribeiro, F. S., Dias-Piovezana, A. L., Primi, C., Dowker, A., & Von Aster, M.

(2022). Discerning developmental dyscalculia and neurodevelopmental models of numerical cognition in a disadvantaged educational context. *Brain Sciences*, *12*(5), 653.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci12050653>

Seitz, S. R., & Smith, S. A. (2016). Working toward neurodiversity: How organizations and

leaders can accommodate for autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Business and Management*, *22*(1), 135-152.

Shore, L., Randel, A., Chung, B., Dean, M., Ehrhart, K., Singh, G. (2011). Inclusion and

diversity in work groups: A review and model for future research *Journal of Management*, *37*, pp. 1262-1289

Stanford Medicine. (2023). Stanford Neurodiversity Project.

<https://med.stanford.edu/neurodiversity.html>

Tyler, M., Dymock, D., & Henderson, A. (2016). The critical role of workplace managers in

continuing education and training. *Supporting learning across working life: Models, processes and practices*, 249-265.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (2022). *ADA Charge Data by*

Impairments/Bases -Receipts (Charges filed with EEOC) FY 1997 - FY 2022.

<https://www.eeoc.gov/data/ada-charge-data-impairmentsbases-receipts-charges-filed-eeoc-fy-1997-fy-2022>

Walker, N. (2014). Neurodiversity: Some basic terms & definitions. *Neurocosmopolitanism*.
September, 27.

X, S. (2022, September 14). Employers are encouraged to embrace neurodiversity. *phys.org*.
<https://phys.org/news/2022-09-employers-embrace-neurodiversity.html>

Appendix

The survey titled “Leadership Support for Neurodivergent Individuals in the Workplace” was generated using Survey Monkey, and a unique link was subsequently emailed to each participating leader. The survey aimed to gain insights from leaders to identify effective strategies for workplace inclusivity. Their responses played a pivotal role in academic research aimed at enhancing understanding and practices concerning neurodiversity in professional environments. All survey responses were collected anonymously, ensuring confidentiality, with no direct linkage between individual leaders and their respective answers. Please find the questions provided in the survey below:



1. What is your leadership title?

2. How many years of leadership experience do you have?

3. How familiar are you with the concept of neurodiversity?

- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not very familiar
- Not familiar at all

4. Have you ever worked with a neurodivergent colleague or employee?

- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

5. How likely are you to disclose a neurodivergent condition to your employer or colleagues?

- Extremely likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

6. Does your organization currently have policies in place to support neurodivergent individuals?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

7. How confident do you feel in your ability to effectively communicate with neurodivergent individuals?

- Extremely confident
- Confident
- Moderately confident
- Slightly confident
- Not confident

8. Have you participated in any training related to neurodiversity and inclusivity?

- Yes
- No
- Planning to

9. To what extent do you believe your workplace culture promotes inclusivity and acceptance of neurodivergent individuals?

- Extremely inclusive
- Very inclusive
- Moderately inclusive
- Slightly inclusive
- Not at all inclusive

10. Have you ever witnessed or experienced discrimination or bias against neurodivergent individuals in your workplace?

- Frequently
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

11. What types of support do you believe are most important for neurodivergent individuals in the workplace? Select all that apply

- Flexible work hours
- Quiet workspaces
- Mentorship programs
- Customized training materials
- Regular check-ins
- Other

12. What challenges, if any, do you think neurodivergent individuals may face in the workplace?

13. To what extent do you believe leadership training programs should include education on neurodiversity and strategies for supporting neurodivergent individuals in the workplace?

- Absolutely essential
- Very necessary
- Moderately necessary
- Slightly necessary
- Not at all necessary

14. In your opinion, how important is it for workplaces to be inclusive of neurodiverse individuals?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not important at all

15. Have you observed any specific strengths or talents that neurodivergent individuals bring to the workplace?

16. Do you believe that neurodiversity in the workplace enhances creativity and innovation?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree