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Neurodiversity – 17th October 2022



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**What words or phrases come to mind
when you think about neurodiversity?**

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



How do you identify yourself in terms of neurodiversity?

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Do you have a loved one who is neurodivergent?

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What is your organisation's approach towards neurodiversity?

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What is Neurodiversity (ND)?

- Neurodiversity refers to the diversity of thinking in the entire human species.
- Every brain works and interprets information differently
- Differences in the human brain are natural and, in many cases, can lead to meaningful and positive insights and abilities.
- Difference does **not** mean disorder, deficit or difficulty

Numbers

- 15-20% or 1 in 7
- People feel more confident in sharing diagnoses - growing population

Dyslexia	10%
Dyspraxia	5%
Dyscalculia	7%
ADHD	4%
Autism	1-2%

Why is it important for workforces to understand ND?

- Around 15-20% or 1 in 7 are neurodivergent
- It is the right thing to do!
- Many diagnoses are protected by law - employers have a legal responsibility
- It will make your ND employees feel happier, better supported and improve their well-being.
- It makes business sense - unlocking of huge potential, utilising skills and talents - increased productivity
- Because often small adjustments can make a huge positive difference

ND strengths

- Problem-solving
- Creativity and original insight
- Hyperfocus
- Attention to detail
- Pattern recognition
- Visual thinking

Neurodivergence and mental health

- Neurodivergent people can have good mental health like anyone else.
- Higher rates of mental health difficulties in neurodivergent people e.g. 7/10 autistic people have a mental health condition such as anxiety, depression, or OCD

Why?

- The world is set up for neurotypicals – people can feel isolated and misunderstood
- Double Empathy Problem
- People may have developed negative self-beliefs early in life e.g. I don't belong, I'm lazy, I'm stupid
- May face delays in getting their mental health problems diagnosed and properly treated
- Stigma and discrimination are still a problem
- Masking and burnout

What might get in the way of sharing a diagnosis

- Fear of being seen as “making excuses”
- Not wanting to be seen as asking for special treatment
- Not wanting to be treated differently
- Not wanting to be seen as causing problems or extra work for people
- Worries that their diagnosis might count against them
- Not know what might done to help
- Negative past experience

What can we do to help?

- Open and supportive communication - ask!
- Remember it might be difficult for people to ask - offer
- Support people to find their people - employee network groups
- Some adjustments are simply good practice and might help everyone
- Help the employee to think about who they would like to share the diagnosis with - LM? Team? All contacts?

Group Discussion

What can we do to make work life more equal and fair for ND employees?

Consider:

- Employee life cycle: attracting ND talent, application and recruitment processes, support employees, progression and career development
- Specific types of ND

Group Discussion

Use chat to summarise the key issues from your group discussion, or anything else you would like to mention – the responses will be used anonymously but will be hugely valuable in understanding where employers are on this subject, and how else we might be able to help and support.

Questions....

Other sources of information:

British Dyslexia Association

ADDISS (National society for ADHD)

National Autistic Society

Dyspraxia Foundation

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