# Neurodiversity

## Some Definitions & Terminology

**Neurodiversity**: the biological reality of infinite variation in human neurocognitive functioning and behaviour, akin to 'biodiversity' in the natural world. The term 'neurodiversity' is now also being used to describe the fast-emerging sub-category of workplace diversity and inclusion that focuses on including people who are neurodivergent.

**The neurodiversity paradigm**: a perspective on neurodiversity that suggests neurodiversity is the result of natural human variation, and that there is no one 'normal' brain type. This stands in contrast to the highly medicalised perspective (until recently, the dominant perspective globally) that views autism, ADHD and others as 'disorders' to be treated.

**Neurodivergent**: having cognitive functioning different from what is seen as 'normal' – while the term appears to reflect the 'medical model' above, it is a term that most neurodivergent people are comfortable with. Neurodivergence can innate, genetic or acquired, such as through a brain injury.

**Neurodivergence**: the state of being neurodivergent. It's worth noting that a common misuse of language is to talk of 'an individual's neurodiversity' – better would be 'an individual's neurodivergence'.

**Neurodiverse**: refers to the difference in ways of thinking, processing information and interacting with the world of all people. This term is often used instead of 'neurodivergent', however it refers to the natural differences and variation in everyone. A group can be neurodiverse – an individual is likely better described as neurodivergent.

**Neurotypical**: given the biological fact that there is no such thing as a 'normal' brain, neurotypical is best thought of as 'not neurodivergent' – that is, within parameters of neurocognitive style that have not been either medically defined as 'disorders' or culturally defined as 'neurodivergent'. It's important not to draw compartions between 'neurotypicals' and neurodivergent people – human neurodiversity is a highly complex spectrum, in which everyone sits.

**Neurominority**: a group such as autistic people, or dyslexic people, defined by sharing a similar form of innate neurodivergence. There is invariably great variety within each neurominority demographic.

***Note**: Such definitions may be subject to modifications over time because of changing cultural perspectives, or through patterns of popular usage. Most important in practical terms is likely to be the spirit of the endeavour – a good-faith effort to use inclusive terms and act (whether as the organisation, or as an individual team member) in an inclusive way. Taking this approach is likely to be most important – especially as the terms and lexicon around this topic remain fluid.*

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