

# Chancery Bar Association

## Neurodiversity Webinar



RIGHTTRACK  
WE BELIEVE IN BRAVE



1

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand neurodiversity and the unique strengths it brings.
- Adapt communication to include diverse styles and preferences.
- Act as allies by challenging stereotypes and exclusion.
- Identify adjustments that empower neurodivergent colleagues.
- Commit to actions that create inclusive, neuro-affirming workplaces.



RIGHTTRACK  
WE BELIEVE IN BRAVE

2

## NEW WORLD RULES

**You must adhere to these rules during the discussion.**

Clocks don't exist, so you can't keep time. Do not look at your watches or clocks.

Use turn-taking by raising your hand when you wish to speak.

When you think it's been 5 minutes, put your hands on your head.

You must state how you are feeling each time you speak.

When you have finished speaking, you must announce "I have finished speaking".

When you speak, you must speak with your eyes closed.



3

## NEURODIVERGENCE AND COMMUNICATION

**Communication 'norms' can be challenging for neurodivergent people.**

- Non-verbal
- Selective-mutism
- Written word e.g., emails and MS Teams messages
- Eye contact
- Small talk
- Direct vs indirect/passive
- Social Queues
- Flow and Turn taking



4



5

## WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

### Diversity of human brains and minds

The infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning within our species (source: [www.autisticuk.org](http://www.autisticuk.org))

- Neurodiversity is a **spectrum**.
- Many neurodiverse people **reject** functioning and linear labels (high or low) (mild to severe).



**RIGHTTRACK**  
WE BELIEVE IN BRAVE

6

## WHAT IS NEURODIVERGENT?

**Describes neurological function that is not considered 'typical' in our society.**

- Includes a diversity of experiences and cognitive functions.
- Does not indicate that something is broken or that someone is ill.
- Can influence strengths.
- Can be considered by some as a disability.



**RIGHTTRACK**  
WE BELIEVE IN BRAVE

7

## WHAT IS NEUROTYPICAL?

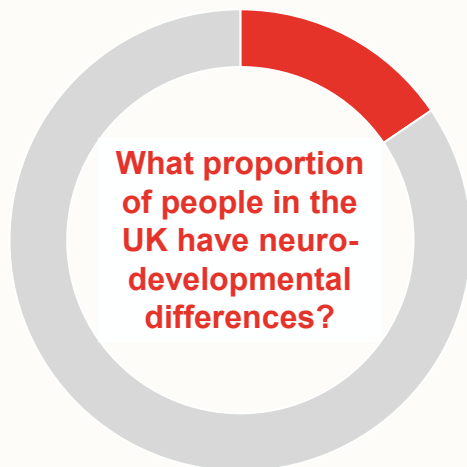
**Refers to someone who's brain function is as typically expected by society.**

- Typically considered to be the norm, but there's nothing abnormal about people who are neurodivergent.



**RIGHTTRACK**  
WE BELIEVE IN BRAVE

8



## NEURODIVERSITY – THE DATA

- 1 in 7 people in the UK are neurodivergent (ACAS 2019).
- **Neurodivergent** people are often under-represented in the workforce (CIPD, 2018; GMB, 2018).



9

## THE LAW



- The law protects many neurodivergent conditions as disabilities.
- Employers must make changes to support you.
- Employers should identify and remove barriers before they cause problems.



10

Referring to neurodivergent traits as something that needs to be "fixed" instead of recognising them as part of the individual's neurotype.

Presuming that neurodivergent individuals are not capable of handling complex tasks or holding positions of responsibility.

Saying things like "You don't look autistic" or "Everyone gets distracted sometimes," which diminishes the person's lived experience.

Using phrases like "normal people don't do that" can be exclusionary and stigmatising.

Using a condescending tone or overly simplistic language when communicating with neurodivergent individuals.

Expressing irritation or disbelief when neurodivergent individuals request reasonable accommodations, such as "Do you really need to have all the instructions written down?"

Presuming that all neurodivergent individuals want to be alone or have poor social skills.

Copying or making fun of behaviours associated with neurodiversity, such as stimming or difficulties with eye contact.

Forcing social interaction or physical contact, even when it's clear that it's uncomfortable or unwelcome.



11



## EMPOWER YOURSELF AND OTHERS

**In chat, type one thing you wish more people understood about the way you work.**

- Learn about neurodiversity beyond stereotypes.
- Share what you learn – normalise the conversation.
- Model openness by sharing your own work preferences.



12



## SPEAK UP AND CHALLENGE EXCLUSION

Think of a moment you wish you'd spoken up – what could you have said?

- Step in when you hear dismissive comments or see exclusion.
- Use low-conflict language: "Can we check that works for everyone?"
- Show visible support when someone self-advocates.



**RIGHTTRACK**  
WE BELIEVE IN BRAVE

13

## WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS

To ensure everyone has an equitable experience in the workplace, workplace adjustments might be needed. These could look different for different people:



### Physical Adjustments:

- Making workspaces more accessible.
- Providing specialised equipment or ergonomic tools.



### Flexible Working Arrangements:

- Allowing flexible working hours or part-time work.
- Implementing remote working options.



### Job Modifications:

- Altering job responsibilities or reallocating tasks.
- Providing additional training or support with specific job tasks.



### Communication Support:

- Offering information in accessible/multiple formats.
- Providing communication aids.



**RIGHTTRACK**  
WE BELIEVE IN BRAVE

14

## CONCLUDING ACTIONS

### 5 actions to build more neuro-inclusive workplaces:

1. Take the time to understand what neurodiversity means.
2. Be intentional in your efforts to understand and include others.
3. Ask about people's preferences and offer options for everyone.
4. Look at key processes, such as hiring and performance management, for inclusivity.
5. Learn about your own and other people's communication styles.

