

Invisible Illness: Trauma-Informed Mental Health Practice in Library School and Beyond Sarah Martin LA Law Library

What are neurodivergence and neurodiversity?

Neurodivergence is a social theory which describes people whose brain processes, learns and/or behaves differently from a "neurotypical" person's

A neurotypical individual's brain works within the socially constructed parameters of what is considered standard or functional

The neurodivergent umbrella can include neurological conditions such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), as well as chronic mental health conditions like anxiety and depression

A neurodivergent person typically has both different struggles and different strengths from a neurotypical person

The fact that there are many unique combinations of mental abilities and needs \setminus is called neurodiversity

Is neurodivergence a problem?

Neurodivergence has been pathologized and misunderstood throughout history

Neurodivergence can present both challenges and opportunities

Embracing and accommodating a neurodiverse workforce, student body, or partnership can strengthen your organization

Neurodivergent individuals must currently officially identify as disabled to receive reasonable accommodations, whereas some personally label themselves as disabled and some do not

Some neurodivergent individuals feel that the legal protections that come from disclosure are not worth the fears of stigma, colleague mistreatment, and negative attitudes

Invisible disabilities are often misunderstood due to lack of experience, awareness, or context

By not receiving the accommodations to succeed at work or at school, many neurodivergent individuals have difficulties maintaining academic proficiency or employment



Email: SMartin@lalawlibrary.org Phone: (310) 383-3536 LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/sarah-martin-053939115/ Attention to detail: neurodiverse individuals tend to have better focus and make fewer mistakes than their neurotypical counterparts

Visual thinking: an important component in problem solving & is thought to speed up the process

Global/holistic processing: "big picture" and creative thinking, which leads to new insights and solutions

Lateral thinking: generates ideas and increases the number of possible alternatives

of 90%

Low turnover: there are extraordinarily low rates of turnover among neurodivergent employees

Costs of replacing an individual employee: 50% to 200% of the employee's annual salary, as well as lost customer relationships, lost institutional knowledge and decreased team morale

Why should I accommodate a neurodiverse workforce or student body?

Problem Solving

Loyalty

High retention: autistic employees have a retention rate upward

Reliability: neurodivergent individuals flourish in a structured environment with specific rules and routine

Trustworthiness: a set structure can be comforting to people on the spectrum, making it unlikely that an autistic student or employee will take advantage of your trust

Collaboration: neurodivergent students and employees tend to highly value treating others with respect and working cooperatively

Untapped Potential

Need for qualified talent: growing skills gaps are highlighting the need to expand and diversify the field

Fresh perspective: a point-of-view from someone with a different way of experiencing the world can lead to advantageous changes

Accommodate existing consumer base: having diverse individuals entering the field can help bring awareness to the needs of the populations we serve

Boost Organizational Culture

Safe environment: inclusion efforts can create a safe and judgment-free environment, allowing people to feel more free express themselves

Productivity: students and employees who feel comfortable and supported are more productive and have a more positive attitude

Comfort & positivity: other employees and students, especially newer ones, feel more comfortable and positivity spreads throughout the entire organization

Boost Organizational Image/Reputation

Consumer appeal: students, patrons and the public are more likely to trust an organization and defend the organization from criticism

Attractive to new prospects: incoming applicants consistently list diversity as an important factor when evaluating an organization

Reach: help reach new demographics and strengthen relationships with existing students, patrons, and

