



## Neurodiversity Definitions & Terms

**N**eurodiversity was coined by [Judy Singer](#) and means that no two brains are exactly the same. Every person has things they are good at and things they need help with, and there is no such thing as a “normal” brain. Kassiane Asasumasu coined the “neurodivergent” term.

## NEURODIVERSITY

Neurodiversity is a term that acknowledges the natural variation in human minds, recognizing the diverse ways individuals think, process information, behave, and interact with the world. It emphasizes that differences in neurological functioning are a normal part of human diversity, just like variations in ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other aspects of identity. The concept of neurodiversity challenges the notion that there is a single, "normal" way for the human brain to function, instead celebrating the unique strengths and challenges that come with different neurological makeups.



## NEURODIVERGENT

"Neurodivergent" is a broad term used to describe individuals whose neurological functioning differs from what is considered typical or "normal" by societal standards. This divergence can manifest in various ways, such as differences in learning, information processing, perception, emotional regulation, communication, and behavior.

## NEURODIVERGENCE (NOUN)

Mental or neurological function from what is considered typical or normal – "the state of being neurodivergent"

## NEURODIVERSE (PLURAL)

Neurodiverse is a term used to describe a group, community, or population comprised of individuals with different brain functioning. Society as a whole is neurodiverse, as it consists of individuals with a wide range of neurological differences. It is important to note that while a group can be described as neurodiverse, an individual cannot be referred to as "neurodiverse".





### **NEUROTYPICAL**

The concept of neurotypicality is based on societal expectations and norms, which can vary across cultures and change over time. Neurotypical individuals tend to think, perceive, process information, and behave in ways that are generally expected and accepted within their cultural context.

### **NEURONORMATIVITY (NOUN)**

Neuronormativity refers to a pervasive societal belief system that upholds certain neurological functions, behaviors, and traits as the "normal," superior, or correct way of being. This belief system creates a set of expectations and standards that privilege individuals whose neurological functioning aligns with these norms, while marginalizing and stigmatizing those who diverge from them. It is rooted in the assumption that there is a single, optimal way for the human brain to operate and that deviations from this norm are inherently problematic or deficient.

### **MASKING/COVERING**

Masking, also known as covering, is a social strategy commonly used by members of the neurodivergent community to "blend in" with societal norms. Neurodivergent individuals may feel compelled to conceal their differences or alter their natural behavior to fit in, especially when their environment is not fully accepting or accommodating of neurodivergence. While masking may offer certain immediate advantages, such as avoiding unwanted attention or facilitating smoother social interactions, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant cost.



Reference/Additional Info






Hello!

I'm Karen Erasmus (she/they/AuDHD), the CEO and Founder of 3 Dots Coaching.

I hope you found this brief handout helpful. If you did, please consider sharing your thoughts and passing it along to anyone else who might find it useful.

If you would like guidance on how to promote neuro-inclusivity and raise awareness, I'd be happy to discuss further. Let's connect and explore how we can improve your neurodiversity practices or provide the support you need. Feel free to reach out so we can have a more in-depth conversation. 

*Karen*

