

behind the
smiles

NEURO DIVERSITY

- THE BASICS -



THE 'GOLDEN' GLOSSARY

Neurodiversity

The neurodiversity movement **celebrates the uniqueness** of every individual's thinking. It recognises **all ways of thinking as equally valid**, viewing these differences as natural variations in the human experience, like eye or hair colour. By **embracing these differences**, neurodiversity **values every perspective** as part of the rich diversity of our human ecosystem.

Neurodivergent

An individual who has a neurological difference which **diverges** from what's considered typical, such as ADHD, autism or dyslexia. An estimated **20% of the world's population!**

Neurotypical

A person who falls within the 'typical' range of processing.

Neurotype

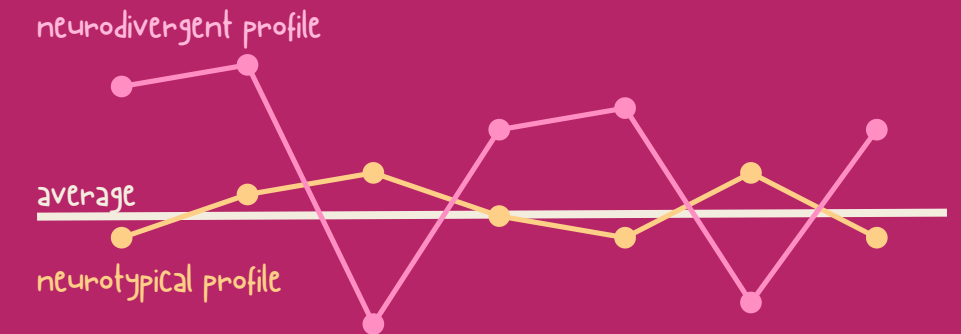
The unique way in which an individual's brain functions and processes information.

Neurodiverse

A group of people with different neurotypes.

SPIKY PROFILES

Everyone has strengths and challenges, but neurodivergent individuals often have **spiky profiles**. This means their **abilities can vary greatly**, with some strengths being very pronounced (peaks) and certain challenges equally distinct (troughs).



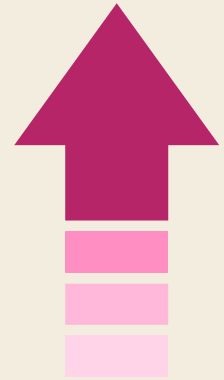
Many people assume that being skilled in one area means having similar abilities across the board. However, for neurodivergent individuals, tasks outside their strengths can require **immense effort**, which can lead to misunderstandings.

Recognising these differences is key to providing the right support, allowing neurodivergent individuals to **thrive**.

I am brilliant at coding complex software but find it overwhelming to remember appointments, so I need support in this area.



AN INCREASE IN DIAGNOSES



In recent years, diagnoses of neurodivergent conditions have **increased significantly**; for instance, autism diagnoses in the UK have risen by almost **800%** over the last 20 years. This is often mistaken as a "rise" in these conditions, but it's more accurately a result of **better recognition and understanding** - much like the shift in how left-handedness was viewed.

For much of history, left-handed people were encouraged to write with their right hand, often hiding their natural way of doing things. As left-handedness became **better understood and accepted**, more people felt **comfortable being their authentic selves**. This didn't mean more left-handed people suddenly existed - just that they were finally being **recognised and supported**.



Similarly, as **awareness and acceptance** of neurodiversity have grown, more people are being **correctly identified and diagnosed**. This doesn't mean more people are becoming neurodivergent; it simply means we are **better at recognising** the diverse ways people think and experience the world.



SUPPORTING NEURODIVERGENT INDIVIDUALS

01. Listen and Learn

Take the time to understand each individual's unique needs, preferences, and experiences. Listen openly without making assumptions and educate yourself on neurodiversity to become a more supportive ally.

02. Adapt Environments

Create spaces that are flexible and accommodating. Whether at home, work, or school, adapting environments to meet sensory needs, communication styles, or routines can help neurodivergent individuals feel more comfortable and supported.

03. Advocate for Acceptance

Promote acceptance and understanding, not just awareness. Encourage others to see the strengths and perspectives neurodivergent individuals bring to the community, and work towards creating an inclusive, supportive culture.



LEARN MORE

To learn more about neurodiversity, visit **Behind the Smiles** - a community built to educate, support, and empower, regardless of neurotype.

We provide **resources**, **share experiences**, and offer **guidance** to foster acceptance of all ways of thinking. By raising awareness and breaking down barriers, we create a **safe, non-judgmental space** for growth.

Behind the Smiles **empowers** individuals to build **confidence**, **embrace** their neurodivergent identities, and **connect** with a supportive, inclusive community.

Explore our content and join us in supporting all minds at **BehindTheSmiles.co.uk**.

