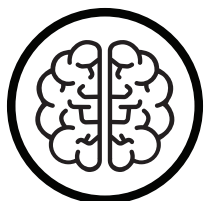


# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## Understanding Neurodiversity

by Mary Lowery, M.S., CCC-SLP



### Neurodiversity vs. Neurodivergence

*Neurodiversity* is the idea that everyone's brain is different. The term "neuro" refers to the brain

and nervous system, while "diversity" refers to differences. *Neurodivergence* describes people whose brains function or process information differently from what is considered "typical." Neurodivergent people often think, learn, or react to their environment differently than their same-aged neurotypical peers. These differences in brain function or behavior are not wrong; rather, they are natural variations in how brains function.



### Examples of Neurodivergence

While every person's brain is unique, neurodivergence is most often discussed in relation to autism and ADHD. It can also refer to a variety of other conditions, such as sensory processing differences, stuttering, Tourette's syndrome, and learning differences.



### Strengths and Challenges Associated with Neurodiversity

Because neurodivergent individuals may perceive or



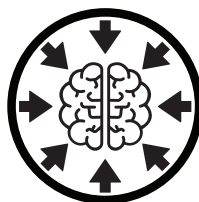
react to the world in different ways, they can face challenges that others may not. These challenges might include differences in social interactions or communication, sensory sensitivities or overstimulation, difficulties with executive functioning skills (e.g., planning and organization), and increased vulnerability to bullying or exploitation.

At the same time, neurodivergent individuals can also bring many valuable strengths, including unique ideas and perspectives, creativity, strong attention to detail, and advanced knowledge of areas of interest. It is important to remember that, like all people, each neurodivergent individual has a unique set of strengths and challenges.

For more FREE Handy Handouts®, go to [www.handyhandouts.com](http://www.handyhandouts.com)

# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students  
(cont.)



## How to Support Neurodivergent Individuals

Supporting neurodivergent individuals begins with accepting each person for who they are, not trying to change them to fit what might be considered “typical.” This includes celebrating the differences, unique strengths, and talents of each person. Promoting awareness of neurodiversity and educating others are vital parts of supporting inclusivity. In addition, some neurodivergent individuals may benefit from supports or accommodations, such as assistive technology or sensory strategies.

### Resources

Behaviour Help. “Challenges Faced by Neurodiverse Individuals in the Community.” Behaviour Help. Accessed February 4, 2026. <https://behaviourhelp.com/behaviour-blog/strategies/challenges-faced-by-neurodiverse-individuals-in-the-community>

National Autistic Society. “Autism and Neurodiversity.” Autism UK. Accessed February 4, 2026. <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/identity/autism-and-neurodiversity>

National Network of Libraries of Medicine. “Neurodiversity.” NNLM Reading Club. Accessed February 4, 2026. <https://www.nlm.gov/reading-club/topic/331>

Optimum Student Support. “The Unique Strengths of Neurodivergent Individuals.” Optimum Student Support. Accessed February 4, 2026. <https://optimumstudentsupport.co.uk/the-unique-strengths-of-neurodivergent-individuals/>

The Neurodiversity Alliance. “What Is Neurodiversity?” The ND Alliance. Accessed February 4, 2026. <https://thendalliance.org/what-is-neurodiversity/>

For more FREE Handy Handouts®, go to [www.handyhandouts.com](http://www.handyhandouts.com)