

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER CAN AFFECT COMMUNICATION OR BEHAVIOR IN A VARIETY OF WAYS, DEPENDING ON THE INDIVIDUAL.

Here are a few examples:

- Avoiding eye contact during conversations or other social situations
- Displaying a lack of empathy for others
- Engaging in repetitive motions or behaviors
- Engaging in self-harming or self-destructive behaviors, which may also be repetitive (such as banging their head repeatedly)
- Failing to interpret social cues correctly
- Focusing obsessively on a single subject
- Lack of interest in socializing with others
- Speaking in a flat or monotonous fashion



IS BEING NEURODIVERGENT A DISABILITY?

SOME NEURODIVERGENT PEOPLE STRUGGLE BECAUSE OF SYSTEMS OR PROCESSES THAT DON'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO SHOW OFF THEIR STRENGTHS OR THAT CREATE NEW OR MORE INTENSE CHALLENGES FOR THEM.

EXAMPLE 1

Neurodivergent individuals may struggle in social situations during job interviews but can excel in certain roles that require attention to detail and data processing skills. Skills tests can be used to screen potential hires and ensure they are given a fair chance.

EXAMPLE 2

Neurodivergent individuals may find busy environments overwhelming, but noise-canceling headphones can help them focus better and be more productive.



UNDERSTANDING AND
**LEARNING ABOUT
NEURODIVERGENCE**



WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Providing accommodations for people with disabilities is not a recent concept. Here are a few examples of how accommodations can be made for different types of disabilities:

- Physical disabilities: Installing ramps and automatic doors at entrances for wheelchair users.
- Sensory disabilities: Incorporating loud tones at crosswalks to alert individuals with visual impairments when it is safe to cross the street.



WHY USE THE TERM NEURODIVERGENT TO DESCRIBE PEOPLE?

Opponents of neurodiversity argue that it focuses on differences instead of deficits and neglects the medical conditions of some who are neurodivergent.

However, research indicates that awareness of neurodiversity does not lead to denial of struggles. Instead, it helps people adapt and succeed.



CAN PEOPLE WHO ARE NEURODIVERGENT BE SUCCESSFUL?

Yes, many people who are neurodivergent are accomplished and successful. More and more people who are neurodivergent are talking about their experiences. Some examples of famous and successful people who are neurodivergent include:

- Animal scientist and author Temple Grandin.
- Oscar-winning actor Sir Anthony Hopkins.
- Musician and singer Florence Welch.
- Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles.
- Climate activist Greta Thunberg.
- Experts also believe several accomplished historical figures were neurodivergent based on evidence from their lives. Those include:
 - Nobel Prize-winning physicist and chemist Marie Curie.
 - Nobel Prize-winning theoretical physicist Albert Einstein.

- Artist Vincent Van Gogh.
- Inventor and engineer Nikola Tesla.
- Author F. Scott Fitzgerald.



Some of the conditions that are most common among those who describe themselves as neurodivergent include:

- Autism spectrum disorder (this includes what was once known as Asperger's syndrome).
- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Down syndrome.
- Dyscalculia (difficulty with math).
- Dysgraphia (difficulty with writing).
- Dyslexia (difficulty with reading).
- Dyspraxia (difficulty with coordination).
- Intellectual disabilities.
- Mental health conditions like bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and more.
- Prader-Willi syndrome.
- Sensory processing disorders.
- Social anxiety (a specific type of anxiety disorder).
- Tourette syndrome.
- Williams syndrome.