

# DE&I and Neurodiversity Glossary

## **Accessibility**

Designing environments, tools, and processes so people of all abilities can fully use and participate in them.

## **Active Listening**

Active listening is the practice of being fully present in a conversation. Not just hearing words, but absorbing meaning, reading context, and responding with intention.

## **Allyship**

Active, ongoing support for marginalized groups through learning, advocacy, and meaningful action.

## **Anxiety**

A mental health condition involving persistent worry, nervousness, or fear that can affect daily functioning, thinking, or behavior.

## **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

A neurodevelopmental condition involving differences in attention regulation, organization, impulsivity, and/or activity level.

## **Autism**

A neurodevelopmental condition that affects communication, sensory processing, social interaction, and behavior in diverse ways.

## **AuDHD – Autism and ADHD**

AuDHD is a non-clinical term used to describe someone who has both autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

## **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

A diagnostic term describing the spectrum of autism-related traits and support needs.

## **Belonging**

A feeling of acceptance, inclusion, and being valued for one's authentic self.

## **Bias (Implicit/Unconscious Bias)**

Attitudes or stereotypes that affect understanding, decisions, or actions without conscious awareness.

## **Cultural Competence**

The ability to understand, respect, and effectively interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

## **Depression**

A mental health condition involving persistent low mood, loss of interest, or reduced energy that affects thinking and daily life.

## **Disclosure**

In the context of sharing a diagnosis, disclosure is the process of revealing personal, often sensitive, medical information to others, such as family, friends, or employers. It is a strategic act of communication that balances the desire for privacy with the need for support, understanding, or workplace accommodation.

## **Disability**

Disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and mind and features of the society in which they live. A disability can occur at any time in a person's life; some people are born with a disability; others develop a disability later in life. It can be permanent, temporary, or episodic.

## **Diversity**

The presence of differences within a group, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, neurotype, and more.

## **Dyscalculia**

A learning difference involving difficulty understanding numbers, math concepts, and numerical reasoning.

## **Dysgraphia**

A learning difference involving challenges with handwriting, spelling, or organizing written ideas.

## **Dyslexia**

A learning difference that affects reading, spelling, and language processing.

## **Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder)**

A condition that affects coordination, motor planning, movement, and sometimes speech or organization.

## **Equity**

Ensuring fair treatment, access, and opportunities by recognizing individual needs and addressing systemic barriers.

## **Gender Expression**

The external expression of one's gender (e.g., through clothing, behavior, appearance).

## **Gender Identity**

A person's internal experience of gender, which may or may not align with sex assigned at birth.

## **Identity First Language**

Places the disability related word first (e.g. autistic person, disabled person) to emphasize it as an inherent part of identity rather than a negative trait.

## **Inclusion**

Creating environments where everyone feels welcomed, respected, supported, and able to fully participate.

## **Inclusive Language**

Language that avoids expressions or words that exclude, stereotype, or demean people based on identity. Inclusive language strives to be respectful, accurate, and accessible to all.

## **Inclusive Leadership**

Leadership behaviors that intentionally seek out, value, and incorporate diverse perspectives.

## **Intelligence Quotient (IQ)**

A standardized score intended to measure certain cognitive abilities.

## **Intersectionality**

A framework recognizing that people experience interconnected and overlapping forms of advantage or disadvantage based on the combination of their social identities.

## **Masking**

The conscious or unconscious suppression of one's true personality, emotions or neurodivergent traits to fit in, avoid stigma or feel safe.

## **Microaggressions**

Everyday comments or behaviors—often unintentional—that convey negative or harmful messages to marginalized groups.

## **Multiple Intelligences**

A theory proposing that people possess different kinds of intelligence.

## **Neurodivergence/Neurodivergent**

Having a style of neurocognitive functioning that differs from what society considers typical.

## **Neurodiversity**

A group of people who collectively represent a range of neurocognitive styles.

## **Neurotypical**

Having a style of neurocognitive functioning that aligns with societal expectations of typical functioning.

## **Person First Language**

Person first language emphasizes the person before the disability.

## **Plain Language**

Plain language involves using clear, simple language appropriate for the context. Use Grade 6 reading level, shorter sentences, use bullet points, spell out acronyms in full, avoid jargon.

## **Privilege**

Unearned advantages individuals may receive because of aspects of identity.

## **Psychological Safety**

A workplace environment where people feel safe expressing ideas and making mistakes without fear of consequences.

## **Representation**

The presence and visibility of diverse identities within a group or organization.

## **Sensory Sensitivities**

Heightened or reduced sensitivity to sensory input such as light, sound, touch, or smell.

## **Stimming**

Stimming, short for "self-stimulatory behavior," refers to repetitive physical movements, sounds, or actions used to manage emotions, sensory input, and stress. Examples can include humming, rubbing skin, tapping, repetitive movements.

## **Systemic (Structural) Inequality**

Inequities embedded in institutional policies or societal systems that advantage some groups.

## **Tourette**

A neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by involuntary, repetitive motor and vocal tics.

## **Tics**

Involuntary, sudden, repetitive movements or vocalizations.