

December 2025

# Neurodiversity in the Workplace: Annotated Resource Guide

25 resources including  
articles, videos, podcasts, &  
peer-reviewed research to  
support neurodivergent  
employees in the workplace.



📞 (705)733-2312

✉️ [info@communityliteracyontario.ca](mailto:info@communityliteracyontario.ca)

♾️ @CommunityLitOn

📷 @CommunityLitOn

🌐 [www.communityliteracyontario.ca](http://www.communityliteracyontario.ca)



# Acknowledgments

## Project Host

**Community Literacy of Ontario**

[www.communityliteracyofontario.ca](http://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca)

## Project Manager

**Catherine Toovey**

## Research and Writing

**Melissa Morrison**

## Editor

**Cindy Norman**

## Funder

**Ontario's Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training & Skills Development**

## Date of Publication

**December 2025**

This Employment Ontario program is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario. The opinions expressed in this document are the opinions of Community Literacy of Ontario and do not necessarily reflect those of our funders.

**Canada**

**EMPLOYMENT  
ONTARIO**

**Ontario**



**Get SET**

Skills, Education and Training

## **Neurodiversity in the Workplace – Annotated Resource Guide**

This resource guide provides annotated summaries of publications focused on neurodiversity in the workplace. Neurodiversity refers to a range of cognitive variations, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, Tourette syndrome, learning differences, and other neurological processing differences.

Each annotation is organized into three categories based on the main insights from each resource: Strengths, Challenges, and Strategies. These categories explain what the resource contributes, the barriers it identifies, and the practical actions it recommends.



### **1. A Manager's Guide to Nurturing Neurodivergent Talent**

**Author:** UNICEF

**Link:**

<https://www.unicef.org/careers/media/3116/file/UNICEF%20Manager%27s%20Guide%20-%20Neurodivergent%20Talent%20-%20June%202025.pdf>

**Annotation:**

This guide provides practical tools for managers to support neurodivergent employees through neuro-affirmative leadership, clear communication, consistent structures, flexible work design, and organizational accountability. It emphasizes individualized, strengths-based management practices and encourages leaders to build environments in which neurodivergent employees can thrive without masking or fear of stigma.

**Strengths:**

- Provides concrete, easy-to-use tools and frameworks for managers.

- Promotes clear communication and predictable structures that support both neurodivergent and neurotypical employees.
- Encourages flexible, individualized work design that accommodates differing sensory, processing, and communication needs.

### **Challenges:**

- Managers may be unaware of neurodivergent communication or sensory differences, creating unintentional barriers.
- Employees may hesitate to disclose needs without psychologically safe processes.
- Organizational norms and rigid structures may resist the transition to neuro-affirmative practices.

### **Strategies:**

- Use clear, concrete, direct language; avoid figurative or ambiguous phrasing.
- Establish predictable routines, communication channels, and feedback structures.
- Offer accommodations and flexibility proactively, normalizing their use.
- Create a culture of psychological safety and structured check-ins so employees feel supported in sharing needs.



## 2. Breaking Down Barriers: Improving the Workplace Experience for Neurodivergent Canadians

**Author:** The Conference Board of Canada

**Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8I52-HZDJ84>

### **Annotation:**

This short video, presented by Dr. Jennifer Fain of the Conference Board of Canada, summarizes national research examining the workplace experiences of neurodivergent Canadians. Drawing on surveys and interviews with neurodivergent workers and employers across multiple sectors, it identifies key barriers, gaps in employer practices, and practical strategies for building neuroinclusive environments.

### **Strengths:**

- Frames neurodiversity as a natural variation in thinking, communication, and information processing that contributes valuable cognitive diversity to workplaces.
- Highlights how neuroinclusive practices can strengthen workplace culture, improve retention, and expand access to untapped talent pools.
- Uses quantitative and qualitative data to present a comprehensive picture of lived workplace experiences and systemic challenges.
- Demonstrates that neurodivergent perspectives can enhance organizational innovation and adaptability.

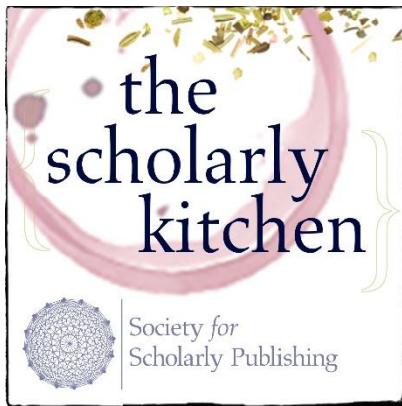
### **Challenges:**

- Over half of neurodivergent participants reported feeling stigmatized due to low workplace awareness.
- Only a minority of neurodivergent workers receive tools, training, or support, with rigid accommodation processes creating further barriers.

- Communication challenges lead to misunderstanding and reduced performance.
- Many workers fear negative consequences if they disclose their neurodivergent identity.
- Employment rates remain disproportionately low, especially for autistic adults (33% employed vs. 79% of non-disabled Canadians).

**Strategies:**

- Deliver organization-wide awareness training facilitated by knowledgeable professionals.
- Offer inclusive alternatives to traditional hiring processes, such as advance access to interview questions, multiple interview formats, skills demonstrations, and fewer abstract behavioural questions.
- Develop clear, transparent, and flexible accommodation processes that proactively outline available supports.
- Adopt people-first management approaches that build trust, emphasize wellbeing, and encourage open communication.
- Establish neurodivergent employee resource groups to build community, visibility, belonging, and support.



### 3. Building a Neuro-inclusive Workplace

**Author:** The Scholarly Kitchen

**Link:** <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2025/03/17/building-a-neuro-inclusive-workplace>

**Annotation:**

This article explores how organizations can create environments that recognize, value, and support neurological diversity. It outlines common barriers faced by neurodivergent employees, examines how traditional workplace norms disadvantage people who think differently, and explains how universal design, cultural change, and intentional hiring practices can make workplaces more equitable and innovative. The article emphasizes that neuro-inclusion benefits everyone.

**Strengths:**

- Frames neurodiversity as a natural part of human variation, including commonly recognized profiles such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, and Tourette's.
- Highlights research indicating that nearly every workplace already employs neurodivergent individuals.
- Emphasizes that neuro-inclusive practices improve clarity, communication, and well-being for all employees, not just those who disclose.

**Challenges:**

- Many workplace norms are built around neurotypical expectations, which can unintentionally exclude neurodivergent staff.
- Persistent stigma and misunderstanding can lead to harmful assumptions about competence or professionalism.

- Masking and compensatory coping strategies can lead to chronic stress and burnout.
- Intersectional factors, including race, gender, and disability, can intensify challenges but are often overlooked.
- Cultural resistance and organizational inertia can slow progress toward meaningful inclusion.

### **Strategies:**

- Apply universal design principles, including flexible work locations, hours, and sensory-aware workspace options.
- Use direct, clear, and predictable communication practices to support different processing styles.
- Design policies that assume neurodiversity is present and remove reliance on self-disclosure.
- Include neurodivergent employees in shaping training, practices, and inclusion frameworks to ensure authenticity.
- Embed neuro-inclusion into organizational strategy and culture rather than treating it as a standalone initiative.



## 4. Building Workplaces Where Neurodivergent Workers Thrive

**Authors:** The Conference Board of Canada & Future Skills Centre

**Link:** <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/neurodiversity-in-workplace/>

**Annotation:**

This resource synthesizes survey findings from neurodivergent employees and managers across Canada to identify the barriers affecting neurodivergent workers and the gaps in employer practices. It highlights the risk of exclusion when workplaces rely on neurotypical norms and offers specific steps organizations can take to improve inclusion, psychological safety, retention, and performance.

**Strengths:**

- Reinforces that many workers and managers view neurodiversity as an asset that contributes to innovation, engagement, and problem-solving.
- Shows that neurodivergent workers thrive when supports, clarity, and flexibility are built into workplace processes.
- Presents practical, evidence-informed recommendations tailored to Canadian workplaces.

**Challenges:**

- Lack of accessible tools, training, and organizational supports limits neurodivergent workers' ability to participate fully.
- Fear of disclosure is widespread due to stigma and perceived career risks.
- Many managers are unfamiliar with neurodiversity and unsure how to support neurodivergent staff effectively.
- Traditional workplace norms and policies often assume neurotypical processing and communication styles, making accommodations inconsistent.

**Strategies:**

- Increase clarity and transparency around accommodation processes and available supports.
- Provide organization-wide neurodiversity training, especially for leaders and supervisors.
- Expand flexible work arrangements to support diverse cognitive and sensory needs.
- Involve neurodivergent workers in co-designing supports and inclusion practices.



## 5. Coaching Neurodiversity at Work

**Author:** University of British Columbia

**Link:** <https://extendedlearning.ubc.ca/courses/coaching-neurodiversity-work/0493>

**Annotation:**

This professional development course by the University of British Columbia (UBC) provides a neuro-affirmative coaching framework designed to support neurodivergent adults in workplace and organizational settings. It integrates theory, lived experience, and practical coaching tools to help coaches, HR professionals, educators, and leaders build inclusive environments and support neurodivergent employees more effectively. The course emphasizes systemic thinking, intersectionality, and approaches that respect individual strengths and ways of processing.

**Strengths:**

- Provides a structured, evidence-informed, neuro-affirmative coaching framework that addresses identity, sensory needs, executive functioning, and wellbeing within workplace systems.
- Values lived experience and recognizes how neurodivergence intersects with race, gender, culture, and socioeconomic factors.
- Delivered in an online, asynchronous format, allowing learners to progress at their own pace using readings, recorded content, and reflection activities.
- Equips participants to support individual neurodivergent clients while also influencing organizational practices and culture toward greater inclusion.

**Challenges:**

- The tuition cost (CAD \$4,800) may be prohibitive for individuals or smaller organizations without access to funding.

- Organizational change requires leadership buy-in, as coaching skills alone are insufficient without broader structural support.
- Time and workload demands may be challenging for participants juggling work and caregiving responsibilities.
- Impact depends on the ability of participants to apply course concepts and on the organization's openness to adapting policies and practices.

**Strategies:**

- Apply the neuro-affirmative framework to employee support, onboarding, supervision, accommodations, and workplace policy development.
- Use a strengths-based and intersectional approach to tailor supports to individual needs rather than relying on diagnostic labels.
- Leverage the asynchronous nature of the course to integrate learning gradually and sustainably.
- Advocate to embed neuro-inclusion within accessibility and organizational wellbeing strategies.



## 6. Decoding job postings: Improving accessibility for neurodivergent job seekers

**Author:** Labour Market Information Council (LMIC)

**Link:** <https://lmic-cimt.ca/decoding-job-postings-improving-accessibility-for-neurodivergent-job-seekers>

### **Annotation:**

This LMIC report examines how conventional job postings create unintended barriers for neurodivergent job seekers in Canada. Through analysis of job ads and labour-market information, it identifies specific accessibility issues in language, structure, and application processes. It also highlights labour-market disparities for neurodivergent adults and provides actionable recommendations for employers to make job postings more transparent, more inclusive, and more accessible, ultimately broadening access to talent.

### **Strengths:**

- Shows that job postings are a critical intervention point for improving accessibility, with minor changes significantly reducing barriers.
- Highlights employment inequities for neurodivergent adults in Canada, including higher rates of unemployment and underemployment.
- Provides concrete, research-informed recommendations that employers can apply immediately.
- Calls for improved labour-market information collection to better identify and address barriers faced by neurodivergent Canadians.

### **Challenges:**

- Many job postings rely on vague or subjective soft-skill requirements that deter candidates who interpret language literally or struggle with certain social norms.

- Complex, multi-step, or high-friction application systems disproportionately challenge applicants with executive-functioning or processing-related differences.
- Jargon-heavy job postings make it difficult for job seekers to understand expectations.
- Few postings include statements about flexibility, inclusion, or accommodations, which are important to neurodivergent applicants.

**Strategies:**

- Use clear, concise, plain language and reduce reliance on abstract skill requirements.
- Streamline application processes and explicitly offer accommodations.
- Focus job ads on essential duties and concrete expectations rather than long lists of interpersonal traits.
- Include inclusion statements and information about flexibility that indicate a supportive work environment.



## 7. Diverse Minds: Creating Inclusive Workplaces for Neurodivergent Workers

**Author:** Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)

**Link:** [https://ccrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Diverse-minds-Creating-inclusive-workplaces-for-neurodivergent-workers\\_CCRW-Trends-Report-2025.pdf](https://ccrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Diverse-minds-Creating-inclusive-workplaces-for-neurodivergent-workers_CCRW-Trends-Report-2025.pdf)

### **Annotation:**

This CCRW Trends Report provides an in-depth examination of neurodiversity in Canadian workplaces, positioning neuro-inclusion as both a human-rights imperative and a strategic advantage. The report outlines barriers faced by neurodivergent job seekers and workers, highlights labour-market inequities, and synthesizes employer perspectives, worker insights, and current research. It offers practical strategies and system-level recommendations to help organizations build workplaces that support cognitive and sensory diversity.

### **Strengths:**

- Defines neurodiversity as a broad and natural spectrum of human variation, moving away from deficit-based or medicalized interpretations.
- Emphasizes that neurodivergent people comprise a meaningful share of Canada's workforce, making neuro-inclusion relevant to all sectors.
- Presents evidence and case examples demonstrating that inclusive practices enhance culture, retention, engagement, and productivity.
- Provides clear, actionable recommendations that organizations can apply immediately.

## **Challenges:**

- Many workplaces still rely on neurotypical norms such as communication, sensory expectations, and performance definitions that disadvantage neurodivergent employees.
- Stigma, misunderstanding, and concerns about discrimination reduce willingness to disclose and seek support.
- Leadership awareness and organizational buy-in remain inconsistent, slowing systemic change.
- Intersectionality factors such as race, gender, or class shape experiences of neurodivergence, yet remain underrecognized in workplace approaches.

## **Strategies:**

- Apply universal design principles to policies, workspaces, communication, and hiring practices to accommodate diverse cognitive styles.
- Build organization-wide literacy through training, neurodiversity education, and leadership modelling.
- Use data such as voluntary self-identification, employee feedback, and inclusion metrics to inform continuous improvement.
- Co-design initiatives with neurodivergent workers to ensure relevance, authenticity, and impact.
- Integrate neuro-inclusion into core organizational strategy rather than treating it as a separate initiative.



## 8. 5 tips for working with neurodivergent adult learners

**Author:** ABC Life Literacy

**Link:** <https://abclifeliteracy.ca/news/5-tips-for-working-with-neurodivergent-adult-learners/>

**Annotation:**

This short resource offers five practical strategies for adult educators supporting neurodivergent learners in literacy and foundational skills programs. It highlights the importance of flexibility, clear communication, varied teaching methods, and learner-centred practices that respect different cognitive and sensory needs. The guidance helps instructors create learning environments that are more inclusive, supportive, and effective for the diverse ways adults process information.

**Strengths:**

- Frames neurodivergence as natural human variation, not a deficit.
- Recognizes that many adult learners may be neurodivergent and bring valuable perspectives and strengths.
- Emphasizes learner-centred, flexible approaches that support a wide range of learning needs and styles.

**Challenges:**

- Traditional lecture-heavy instruction can be inaccessible for some learners.
- Sensory distractions or environmental factors may disrupt concentration.
- Tasks involving planning, sequencing, or organization may require additional support.
- Uniform teaching methods may exclude learners who benefit from alternative approaches.

**Strategies:**

- Create supportive, flexible learning environments that reduce sensory barriers.
- Use multiple teaching and assessment formats, including visual and hands-on methods.
- Break tasks into smaller steps that provide clear structure.
- Communicate using plain, concrete language and avoid ambiguity.
- Encourage learners to express their needs and participate in shaping their learning experience.



## 9. Here's why employers should do more to embrace neurodiversity in the workplace

**Author:** CBC

**Link:** <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/just-asking/neurodiversity-in-the-workplace-1.7350104>

### **Annotation:**

This CBC article can be read or listened to and explores why employers should embrace neurodiversity by highlighting the valuable skills and perspectives of neurodivergent workers. Through interviews, including one with a neurodivergent worker who faced discrimination after disclosing their diagnosis, the article illustrates how conventional hiring practices and workplace expectations often exclude neurodivergent people. It argues that more flexible, supportive, and informed approaches can improve both worker well-being and employer outcomes.

### **Strengths:**

- Shows that neurodivergent workers often excel in areas such as problem-solving, creative thinking, and pattern recognition.
- Demonstrates that inclusive practices create healthier workplace cultures and expand access to underutilized talent.
- Challenges common stereotypes, helping shift public attitudes toward neurodivergence.
- Emphasizes that neurodiversity is already present in the workforce and that inclusion strengthens organizations.

### **Challenges:**

- Neurodivergent workers frequently face stigma, disbelief, and job loss after disclosing their diagnosis or asking for accommodations.

- Some supervisors resist or misunderstand accommodations, treating them as optional rather than essential.
- Even when formal accommodations exist, consistent day-to-day support may be lacking.
- Systemic gaps — in policy, training, and hiring processes — leave neurodivergent workers vulnerable to exclusion.

**Strategies:**

- Encourage employers to recognize neurodivergent talent as a business advantage and integrate inclusion into organizational strategy.
- Build supportive workplace cultures where accommodations are normalized, and communication is flexible and clear.
- Provide training to supervisors and HR to reduce stigma and strengthen understanding of neurodivergent needs.
- Ensure that inclusion responsibilities extend beyond HR, with managers and teams actively supporting neurodivergent colleagues.



## 10. Moving beyond disclosure: rethinking universal support for neurodivergent employees

**Authors:** Hanna Kalmanovich-Cohen & Steven J Stanton

**Link:** <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12137293>

### **Annotation:**

This article critiques workplace systems that require neurodivergent employees to disclose a diagnosis in order to access accommodations. It argues that disclosure-based models place a disproportionate burden on employees, are shaped by medicalized understandings of disability, and fail to remove structural and environmental barriers. The authors propose a universal design approach that reorients responsibility toward organizations, creating conditions in which workers do not need to disclose in order to thrive.

### **Strengths:**

- Repositions neurodiversity within diversity, equity, and inclusion frameworks rather than medical or deficit-based models.
- Demonstrates that effective supports, such as flexible communication and predictable workflows, benefit all employees.
- Highlights organizational responsibility for creating inclusive environments, reducing reliance on individual disclosure.
- Uses empirical research and lived-experience narratives to show the limitations of current accommodation systems and the value of universal design.

### **Challenges:**

- Disclosure-based accommodation systems require neurodivergent employees to navigate stigma, bureaucracy, and emotional labour.

- Fear of discrimination deters many from disclosing, resulting in unmet needs and inequitable experiences.
- Reactive accommodation models reinforce individualization of disability rather than addressing systemic barriers.
- Managers often lack the knowledge or tools needed to provide consistent, inclusive support.

**Strategies:**

- Adopt universal design practices that anticipate diverse cognitive and sensory needs without requiring disclosure.
- Normalize flexible, clear, and predictable communication and work practices across the organization.
- Provide managers with training on neurodiversity, inclusive leadership, and environmental design.
- Shift from diagnosis-based models to organizational responsibility for equitable structures and environments.
- Create accessible, low-barrier avenues for support that do not depend on formal disclosure.



## 11. Navigating Neurodiversity and the Workplace: Neurodivergent Strategies

**Author:** Exceptional Individuals

**Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AD1exjjZ0w>

**Annotation:**

This webinar, led by neurodivergent educator and neuroscience specialist Nat Hawley, explores how neurodiversity shapes workplace experiences and how organizations can foster meaningful inclusion. The session covers foundational concepts such as the neurodiversity paradigm, the social and medical models of disability, sensory and communication challenges, workplace culture, psychological safety, and the business case for hiring neurodivergent talent. Drawing on lived experience, organizational examples, and audience discussion, the webinar offers a broad and practical overview of barriers and strategies for neuroinclusive employment.

**Strengths:**

- Uses an accessible, conversational approach that integrates neuroscience knowledge and lived experience, making concepts relatable.
- Reinforces that neurodivergent individuals bring unique strengths such as creativity, innovation, alternative problem-solving, and detail-focused thinking.
- Presents a strong business case for neuroinclusion, showing how inclusive practices improve innovation, culture, and performance.
- Introduces progressive models such as the neurodiversity paradigm, the double-empathy problem, and intersectionality to broaden understanding beyond diagnosis labels.

## **Challenges:**

- Sensory overload in typical workplaces such as noise, crowds, lighting, and commuting demands can significantly impair productivity and wellbeing.
- Misunderstanding and stigma remain common, and organizational awareness of neurodiversity is often low despite widespread interest in inclusion.
- Rigid policies and inflexible processes make it difficult for neurodivergent employees to access meaningful accommodations.
- Masking is prevalent, leading to burnout, reduced authenticity, and long-term harm.
- Lack of psychological safety prevents neurodivergent employees from disclosing needs, offering ideas, or asking for support.

## **Strategies:**

- Adopt universal design: build inclusive systems, tools, environments, and expectations from the beginning rather than retrofitting accommodations.
- Increase organizational awareness and training to improve understanding of neurodiversity, communication differences, and lived experience.
- Provide flexible working arrangements, sensory-considerate spaces, and role design that aligns with strengths.
- Promote self-advocacy by helping neurodivergent employees articulate strengths, needs, and communication preferences.
- Use emotional intelligence frameworks to improve empathy, awareness, and collaborative problem-solving.
- Recognize intersectionality and avoid one-size-fits-all assumptions by considering each individual's whole context.



## 12. Neurodivergence and the Workplace: A Systematic Review of the Literature

**Authors:** Obed Vargas-Salas, Juan Carlos Alcazar-Gonzales, Fernando Alberto Fernández-Fernández, Fredy Nicolás Molina-Rodríguez, Renato Paredes-Velazco, and Marleny Lucy

**Link:** <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/10522263251337564>

### **Annotation:**

This peer-reviewed systematic review synthesizes research on neurodivergent individuals' experiences in workplace environments. It considers evidence on hiring, inclusion, retention, and long-term career outcomes, identifying consistent patterns of barriers as well as emerging signs of workplace adaptation and inclusive practices.

### **Strengths:**

- Provides a broad, evidence-based overview of multiple neurodivergent conditions and their intersection with work, helping to map common themes and challenges across diagnoses.
- Documents the systematic barriers that neurodivergent employees often face, underscoring the need for structural change rather than individualized adjustments.
- Highlights that some organizations have begun adapting hiring and support practices, offering hopeful examples of more inclusive workplaces.
- Grounds the discussion in peer-reviewed empirical research, giving weight and legitimacy to calls for neuro-inclusive policies and practices.

### **Challenges:**

- Existing research remains inconsistent: definitions of “neurodivergence” and “neurodiversity” vary across studies, complicating comparison and policy-making.

- There is a significant lack of data about long-term career development, job progression, and retention of neurodivergent employees that limits understanding of long-term outcomes.
- Inclusion policies and practices remain uneven across workplaces, and many remain reactive rather than proactive.
- Stigma, misunderstanding, and lack of awareness persist, contributing to employment barriers and limiting access to supports.

**Strategies:**

- Standardize language and definitions related to neurodivergence and neurodiversity within organizations and across research, to improve clarity and consistency.
- Develop evidence-based inclusion practices and support frameworks informed by research rather than ad-hoc accommodations.
- Focus on improving hiring as well as long-term retention, career development, and support structures for neurodivergent employees.
- Encourage workplaces to adopt universal design and inclusive practices, reducing reliance on individual disclosure or diagnosis-based supports.
- Promote further empirical research on neurodivergence and employment, especially longitudinal studies examining career trajectories, mental health, and job satisfaction.



## 13. Neurodiversity in Adult Education: What Does the Literature Reveal?

**Authors:** Carol Rogers-Shaw & Tulare Williams Park

**Link:**

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/395939743\\_Neurodiversity\\_in\\_Adult\\_Education\\_What\\_Does\\_the\\_Literature\\_Reveal](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/395939743_Neurodiversity_in_Adult_Education_What_Does_the_Literature_Reveal)

**Annotation:**

This literature review synthesizes current research on how neurodivergent adults, such as those with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and related cognitive differences, experience adult education systems. It examines how traditional instructional models, assessment practices, and institutional structures often fail to meet the needs of neurodivergent learners, while also highlighting the strengths these learners bring when environments are supportive. The review calls for more neuro-affirming, flexible, and learner-centred approaches across adult literacy, upgrading, vocational training, and continuing education.

**Strengths:**

- Positions neurodiversity as a natural form of cognitive variation, shifting adult education away from deficit-based models.
- Highlights the strengths and assets neurodivergent adult learners contribute, including creativity, visual-spatial reasoning, persistence, and innovative problem-solving.
- Shows that inclusive instructional practices benefit all learners, improving engagement, retention, and overall learning outcomes.
- Emphasizes the importance of incorporating neurodivergent voices and lived experience into program design, policy development, and teaching practice.

## **Challenges:**

- Traditional adult-education environments rely heavily on lecture-style teaching, dense text, and abstract verbal instruction. These approaches disadvantage many neurodivergent learners.
- Many assessment tools are outdated, deficit-framed, or designed for children, making them inappropriate stigmatizing for adults.
- Educators often lack training or confidence in supporting neurodivergent learners, resulting in inconsistent practices and misunderstandings.
- Sensory barriers, unclear instructions, and rigid attendance or participation expectations can impede learning.
- Disclosure rates remain low due to stigma, past negative schooling experiences, and fear of discrimination, which reduce access to accommodations.

## **Strategies:**

- Adopt universal design for learning (UDL): provide multiple ways to access information, demonstrate learning, and engage with material.
- Use clear, concrete instructions, break tasks into smaller steps, and provide models or scaffolding to support executive-functioning needs.
- Incorporate multimodal teaching including visual, hands-on, experiential, and digital, rather than relying solely on reading or listening.
- Create sensory-aware learning environments with quiet spaces, adjustable lighting, and flexible seating to reduce overload.
- Normalize accommodations and encourage learner self-advocacy by creating safe channels for discussing needs and preferences.
- Invest in educator training on neurodiversity, neuro-affirming pedagogy, and strengths-based approaches to teaching adult learners.



## 14. Neurodiversity in the workplace: An agenda for research and action

**Authors:** Lorne M. Hartman & Braxton L. Hartman

**Link:** <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/dvr2.70000>

### **Annotation:**

This peer-reviewed article analyzes how current HR and management practices often exclude or disadvantage neurodivergent employees during hiring, onboarding, and retention. The authors argue that organizational norms are built around neurotypical communication and behaviour, creating systemic barriers for neurodivergent candidates. The paper outlines a research agenda focused on developing inclusive, bias-free recruitment methods, improving workplace supports, and shifting organizational culture to sustain neurodiversity inclusion over time.

### **Strengths:**

- Highlights the unique strengths neurodivergent individuals can bring to workplaces, including creativity, innovation, pattern recognition, systems thinking, and attention to detail.
- Provides a rigorous synthesis grounded in empirical research and theory, giving organizations a credible foundation for change.
- Shows that neuro-inclusive practices improve engagement, satisfaction, and retention, benefiting both employees and employers.
- Identifies structural issues rather than framing neurodivergence as an individual deficit, helping shift organizational thinking.

## **Challenges:**

- Traditional hiring and assessment practices such as unstructured interviews, group interviews, or tasks requiring implicit social reasoning systematically disadvantage neurodivergent candidates.
- Workplace accommodations remain inconsistent and are often dependent on disclosure, creating inequity and excluding workers who fear stigma.
- There is a shortage of long-term research on retention, progression, job performance, and well-being for neurodivergent employees, limiting evidence-based policy development.

## **Strategies:**

- Design and implement bias-free recruitment processes that reduce reliance on social communication norms such as skills-based assessments, structured interviews, or work-sample tasks.
- Conduct research on how specific accommodations and supports influence productivity, well-being, and retention to guide evidence-informed HR practices.
- Provide training on neurodiversity for HR teams, managers, and co-workers to reduce stigma and improve collaboration.
- Align onboarding, supervision, performance evaluation, and workplace support systems with neurodiversity-affirming principles.
- Promote expanded empirical research on long-term vocational outcomes and inclusive workplace design.

## 15. Neurodiversity in the Workplace

**Author:** Impact HR

**Link:** <https://impacthr.ca/neurodiversity-in-the-workplace/>

**Annotation:**

This article introduces neurodiversity as a natural form of cognitive variation and highlights the strengths that neurodivergent employees bring to organizations. It describes persistent barriers that limit workplace inclusion and outlines practical steps employers can take to attract, retain, and support neurodivergent talent. The article emphasizes that embracing neurodiversity is both a human-centred and business-positive strategy that can enhance culture, productivity, and innovation.

**Strengths:**

- Demonstrates the business value of neurodiversity for increasing productivity and expanding access to skilled, often under-utilized talent.
- Reinforces that inclusive practices benefit entire workplaces, improving engagement, collaboration, and culture.
- Notes growing employer awareness of neurodiversity and increased interest in adopting inclusive approaches.

**Challenges:**

- Traditional hiring practices often rely on social communication norms such as small talk, eye contact, and behavioural interviews that disadvantage neurodivergent candidates.
- Stigma and misunderstanding may discourage disclosure, preventing neurodivergent employees from requesting accommodations or support.

- Conventional workplace structures lack flexibility, making it challenging to support diverse sensory, communication, or work-style needs.

**Strategies:**

- Adapt hiring and interview processes to focus on demonstrated skills and abilities rather than social performance.
- Use clear, structured communication, including explicit expectations, written instructions, and consistent feedback.
- Offer flexible work arrangements, such as modified schedules, hybrid/remote options, or adjustable workspaces.
- Provide neurodiversity training for managers and teams to reduce stigma and promote supportive, informed practices.



## 16. Neurodiversity in the Workplace

**Author:** MindToolsVideos

**Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnPL26q0AMo>

**Annotation:**

This video explains neurodiversity as the natural variation in how people's brains work, clarifying the difference between neurotypical and neurodivergent thinking. It uses the social model of disability to argue that workplace barriers create disadvantage as opposed to individual differences. The video outlines how organizations can build more inclusive cultures through more transparent hiring processes, increased awareness, individualized supports, and flexible working arrangements. It emphasizes that neurodivergent people bring diverse strengths and that effective workplace inclusion requires adapting environments rather than expecting individuals to conform to neurotypical norms.

**Strengths:**

- Highlights the wide range of neurodivergent experiences, noting that conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, and Tourette syndrome involve varied traits.
- Uses the social model of disability to illustrate how systemic barriers create disadvantage.
- Emphasizes that neurodivergent individuals can contribute valuable strengths, alternative perspectives, and different approaches to problem-solving.
- Reinforces that each neurodivergent person is unique and that traits should not be generalized across diagnoses.

### **Challenges:**

- A lack of awareness about neurodiversity can lead to misunderstanding, stereotyping, or incorrect assumptions.
- Employers sometimes rely on assumptions when offering support rather than asking individuals what they actually need.
- Because neurodivergence is highly individualized, workplaces may struggle to provide supports that genuinely match each person's preferred working style.

### **Strategies:**

- Build internal awareness of neurodiversity through campaigns, talks, and accessible information.
- Share relevant support policies and ensure employees know how to access them.
- Provide individualized accommodations such as noise-cancelling headphones, quiet workspaces, dedicated desks, regular breaks, or clear written instructions, depending on the employee's needs.
- Offer flexible working arrangements based on individual preferences, including structured guidance, clear deadlines, or more autonomy.
- Ask employees what supports are most helpful and tailor accommodations accordingly, rather than assuming needs based on diagnosis.

## NEURODIVERSITY

WITH THEO SMITH

Dave Thompson - Navigating Neurodiversity in the Workplace & Beyond  
Neurodiversity with Theo Smith



### 17. Neurodiversity with Theo Smith: Dave Thompson – Navigating Neurodiversity in the Workplace and Beyond

**Authors:** Theo Smith with guest Dave Thompson

**Links:** Apple: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/dave-thompson-navigating-neurodiversity-in-the/id1480239272?i=1000671751129>

Spotify: <https://creators.spotify.com/pod/profile/neurodiversity/episodes/Dave-Thompson--Navigating-Neurodiversity-in-the-Workplace--Beyond-e2p658m>

#### Annotation:

In this podcast episode, Theo Smith and Dave Thompson explore how workplaces can better understand and support neurodivergent individuals. Dave reflects on his lived experience navigating neurodiversity and identifies the limitations of traditional hiring practices, disclosure-driven accommodation systems, and narrow diagnostic labels. The conversation emphasizes the value of universal design, success enablers, and supportive communities in creating environments where neurodivergent employees can thrive. The episode positions neurodiversity as an evolving field that requires ongoing learning, flexibility, and organizational commitment.

#### Strengths:

- Illustrates the strengths neurodivergent individuals contribute when workplaces prioritize enabling success rather than assessing deficits.
- Highlights the importance of focusing on individual needs, context, and strengths rather than relying on diagnostic labels.
- Emphasizes that universal design improves conditions for all employees, not only those who are neurodivergent.

- Recognizes the vital role of community, peer connection, and shared experience in supporting wellbeing and belonging.
- Notes the increasing visibility of neurodiversity in workplaces and the growing role of employee resource groups.

### **Challenges:**

- Disclosure-based accommodation systems place emotional and practical pressure on neurodivergent employees.
- Labels can be limiting, reinforcing stereotypes or oversimplifying diverse lived experiences.
- Many organizations still treat neurodiversity as an add-on rather than embedding it into core inclusion strategies.
- Segregated education pathways and early workplace exclusion can constrain career opportunities later on.

### **Strategies:**

- Shift toward universal, proactive support systems that do not rely on formal diagnosis or self-disclosure.
- Prioritize “success enablers” such as clear expectations, flexible processes, predictable workflows, and strengths-aligned role design.
- Encourage open conversations about needs, enabling employees to ask for support without stigma.
- Develop employee resource groups or peer networks to create community and shared learning.

## Workplace Strategies for Mental Health



### 18. Neurodiversity works: Unlocking the power of different minds in the workplace

**Author:** Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

**Link:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5\\_-ZeAAdGo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5_-ZeAAdGo)

#### **Annotation:**

This webinar introduces neurodiversity as a natural part of human variation and explores the strengths, challenges, and workplace experiences of neurodivergent employees. Presenters Mary Ann Baynton, Maya Volpatol, and Greg Swaine share educational insights, personal narratives, and practical advice for creating psychologically safe, inclusive, and strengths-focused work environments. Key themes include masking, stigma, communication differences, the value of diverse thinking, and the importance of authentic dialogue between employees and leaders.

#### **Strengths:**

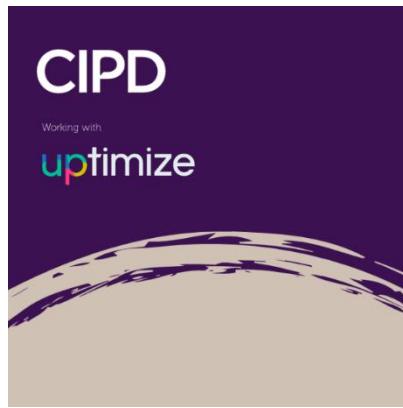
- Frames neurodiversity as a normal aspect of human diversity, noting that roughly one in five people process information differently.
- Highlights strengths associated with ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, and related neurodivergences, including creativity, problem-solving, visual thinking, innovation, and strong pattern recognition.
- Shows that cognitive diversity improves decision-making, innovation, and organizational resilience by expanding the range of perspectives and approaches.
- Uses lived experiences to demonstrate the benefits of understanding oneself, reducing masking, and engaging in open conversations about needs at work.

### **Challenges:**

- Masking and attempts to “blend in” lead to exhaustion, stress, anxiety, and burnout, and can diminish authenticity and creativity.
- Misunderstanding or mislabeling in school, work, or healthcare can delay diagnosis, undermine confidence, and limit access to adequate supports.
- Many workplaces rely on rigid norms for communication, productivity, and behaviour, creating barriers for neurodivergent employees seeking accommodations.
- Inconsistent awareness among leaders and limited access to diagnosis or formal supports result in unmet needs and uneven accommodation practices.

### **Strategies:**

- Normalize conversations about individual needs by focusing on what helps people work well, rather than on diagnostic labels.
- Use inclusive leadership practices such as structured agendas, written follow-up, clear expectations, predictable workflows, and flexible communication options.
- Create psychologically safe environments where employees can express challenges or propose alternative approaches without fear of judgment.
- Adopt strengths-based approaches that align tasks and workflows with employees’ natural abilities, such as creativity, analytical focus, or systems thinking.
- Provide individualized accommodations, including assistive tools, sensory-friendly options, modified meeting formats, or flexible scheduling.
- Educate managers and teams about neurodiversity to reduce misperceptions and support more empathetic and effective responses.
- Encourage self-advocacy by helping employees understand their own strengths, challenges, and preferred supports, and by supporting thoughtful disclosure conversations when appropriate.



## 19. Neuroinclusion at work report

**Authors:** Ed Thompson (Optimize) & Dr Jill Miller (CIPD)

**Link:** <https://www.cipd.org/globalassets/media/knowledge/knowledge-hub/reports/2024-pdfs/2024-neuroinclusion-at-work-report-8545.pdf>

### **Annotation:**

This report analyses the current state of neuroinclusion in workplaces using survey data from employers and employees. It finds that while awareness of neurodiversity is rising, practical implementation remains uneven. Many organizations express positive attitudes but lack integrated strategies, resulting in gaps between policy and everyday experience. The report identifies risks of exclusion for neurodivergent workers and outlines principles for cultivating inclusive cultures that enhance well-being, engagement, and retention.

### **Strengths:**

- Provides data demonstrating increasing employer acknowledgement of neurodiversity as an important component of workforce diversity.
- Shows that neuroinclusive practices improve employee wellbeing, organizational culture, and openness around discussing neurodivergence.
- Offers clear guiding principles that employers can use to structure neuroinclusive policies, leadership practices, and workplace culture.

### **Challenges:**

- Awareness of neurodiversity among employees and managers remains limited, leading to inconsistent understanding and support.
- Neurodivergent workers commonly report discrimination, bullying or harassment, and negative impacts on well-being, job satisfaction, and retention.

- Managers often feel untrained or unsure about how to support neurodivergent staff, and access to practical training is inconsistent.

**Strategies:**

- Integrate neuroinclusion into organizational frameworks, leadership priorities, and long-term planning rather than treating it as a standalone initiative.
- Provide training for managers, HR teams, and leaders to build confidence, reduce stigma, and increase capacity to support neurodivergent employees.
- Offer flexible work arrangements and proactively communicate available supports to reduce reliance on formal disclosure.
- Evaluate and track neuroinclusion initiatives using data on wellbeing, engagement, performance, and retention to guide continuous improvement.

## 20. SRDC Neuroinclusive Employment: Knowledge Synthesis

**Author:** Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) & Sinneave Family Foundation

**Link:** <https://www.srdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Sinneave-Knowledge-Synthesis-2024.pdf>

**Annotation:**

This knowledge synthesis from SRDC and The Sinneave Family Foundation reviews research on employment outcomes for autistic and other neurodivergent adults. It provides an evidence-informed analysis of what supports effective job entry, retention, and long-term career success. The report highlights employer barriers, systemic gaps, and promising practices across coaching, workplace design, employer training, and broader policy systems. It emphasizes that neuroinclusive employment requires coordinated action across job seekers, employers, service providers, and policymakers.

**Strengths:**

- Presents strong evidence that neuroinclusive employment practices significantly improve job retention, engagement, and long-term success.
- Integrates quantitative research with lived-experience perspectives, grounding findings in real-world workplace and labour-market contexts.
- Shows that individualized, strengths-based employment supports consistently improve employment outcomes.
- Demonstrates that neuroinclusive practices benefit employers as well, including reduced turnover, improved productivity, and better use of diverse talent.

## **Challenges:**

- Many employers lack preparedness, training, or organizational systems to implement neuroinclusive practices consistently.
- Supports are often program-dependent rather than embedded into standard employment practices, making them fragile or inconsistent.
- Stigma, misunderstanding, and fear of discrimination reduce disclosure and limit access to accommodations or appropriate supports.
- System-level barriers, including fragmented service systems and eligibility criteria, prevent many neurodivergent individuals from receiving sustained support.

## **Strategies:**

- Implement individualized, strengths-based job coaching that aligns workplace tasks with a person's cognitive profile, interests, and preferred work style.
- Provide comprehensive employer training to build awareness, reduce stigma, and equip supervisors with practical strategies for supporting neurodivergent staff.
- Expand access to employment supports, including coaching and workplace accommodations, across regions and funding systems to ensure equitable opportunities.
- Monitor employment outcomes such as retention, job satisfaction, and career progression to evaluate the effectiveness of neuroinclusive approaches and guide policy and practice improvements.

**North by Northwest**

with Margaret Gallagher



Neurodiversity in the workplace

## 21. North by Northwest with Margaret Gallagher: Neurodiversity in the Workplace

**Author:** CBC Radio-Canada**Link:** <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-43-north-by-northwest/clip/16177727-neurodiversity-workplace>**Annotation:**

This radio segment features CBC story producer Melody Jacobson discussing recent Canadian research on neurodiversity and employment. Drawing on interviews with Dr. Jennifer Fain of the Conference Board of Canada and consultant Wanda Deschamps, the segment highlights how traditional hiring practices often screen out neurodivergent talent and how inclusive approaches can improve retention, workplace culture, and access to skilled employees. It also explores personal experiences of exclusion and stigma, the early stage of neurodiversity awareness in many organizations, and the need for systemic change across sectors.

**Strengths:**

- Demonstrates that redesigned hiring practices can help employers capture talent previously excluded by traditional interviews, which often overemphasize eye contact, small talk, or social fluency.
- Reports evidence from pilot hiring programs (e.g., Microsoft, JP Morgan Chase) that achieved 100% retention among neurodivergent hires when processes were redesigned to emphasize skills rather than social performance.
- Shows that workplace adjustments made to support neurodivergent employees, such as clear communication and a more inclusive culture, improve retention and morale for all employees.

- Highlights that disability-inclusive companies have higher productivity and generate more revenue than comparable organizations, strengthening the business case for neuroinclusion.
- Includes lived-experience perspectives that illustrate how neurodivergent workers contribute effectively when workplaces understand and support different communication and processing styles.

### **Challenges:**

- Conventional interviews and recruitment processes screen out competent neurodivergent applicants who may struggle with eye contact, small talk, or unstructured social demands.
- Many workplaces lack awareness of neurodivergent needs, leading to misunderstandings, judgment, or stigma.
- Neurodivergent individuals often experience discrimination or unfair treatment, with one interviewee describing persistent misinterpretation of her behaviour and a lack of good-faith assumptions.
- Fear of disclosure remains high; employees worry about negative repercussions or limited advancement if they identify as neurodivergent.
- Organizations are still in the early stage of understanding neurodivergence, and efforts are often driven more by optics than measurable outcomes.
- Structural inertia, such as reliance on traditional HR processes, culture, and norms, slows the adoption of more inclusive hiring and management practices.

### **Strategies:**

- Redesign recruitment processes by replacing or supplementing traditional interviews with skills-based assessments, hands-on tasks, or alternative formats.
- Provide organizational training and awareness-building to reduce stigma and strengthen managers' ability to understand and support neurodivergent staff.
- Treat neuroinclusion as part of workforce strategy rather than a niche initiative, recognizing that an inclusive culture benefits all employees and reduces attrition.
- Engage both public and private sector employers in the broad adoption of inclusive hiring practices to prevent missed opportunities for accessing talent across major fields (business, health, social sciences, education).
- Adopt a proactive approach to talent retention, recognizing that inclusive practices make workplaces more appealing and sustainable during times of labour force instability.



## 22. Outcomes over optics: Building inclusive organizations

**Author:** Deloitte.

**Link:** <https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-zone3/ca/en/docs/generic/2024/ca175-inclusion-AODA-EN.pdf>

**Annotation:**

This Deloitte report analyzes how Canadian organizations approach equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and highlights the disconnect between external commitments (“optics”) and meaningful, measurable outcomes. Based on employer surveys, interviews, and case examples, the report argues that while most organizations publicly support inclusion, many lack the structures, metrics, and accountability needed for sustained progress. It identifies risks of performative EDI and provides guidance on embedding inclusion into strategy, leadership, culture, and organizational systems to achieve long-term impact.

**Strengths:**

- Identifies inclusion as a strategic advantage, especially in tight labour markets where attraction and retention are critical.
- Demonstrates that employees respond positively to transparent, measurable EDI efforts and are more engaged when organizations show real progress.
- Reinforces that psychologically safe, inclusive workplaces experience higher retention, stronger culture, and better organizational performance.
- Offers a research-informed framework for moving from symbolic inclusion initiatives toward outcome-driven, sustainable practices.

**Challenges:**

- Many organizations prioritize EDI messaging over structural change, resulting in branding that exceeds actual progress.

- Leaders frequently overestimate their organization's inclusiveness, creating misalignment between intention and employee experience.
- Lack of internal measurement frameworks limits the ability to track inequities, evaluate initiatives, or scale what works.
- Performative or inconsistent EDI efforts can damage employee trust, contribute to disengagement, and undermine inclusion goals.

**Strategies:**

- Integrate EDI into core organizational strategy with clear goals, performance indicators, and leadership accountability.
- Develop systems to monitor inclusion-related measures such as retention, promotion, representation, psychological safety, and employee experience.
- Involve employees in designing, implementing, and assessing inclusion initiatives.
- Provide sustained resources, training, and leadership commitment so EDI efforts are consistent and embedded rather than reactive.
- Communicate transparently about progress, challenges, and next steps to build credibility and trust across the workforce.



## 23. The human-centred workplace: Fostering belonging for neurodivergent professionals

**Author:** Rita Kamel/CareerWise

**Link:** <https://careerwise.ceric.ca/2024/10/09/human-centred-workplace-belonging-neurodivergent/>

### **Annotation:**

This article argues that workplaces must evolve from transactional, compliance-oriented accommodation models to human-centred cultures that recognize neurodiversity as a natural aspect of human cognitive variation. It emphasizes belonging, empathy, and organizational responsibility rather than expecting neurodivergent employees to mask or adapt to neurotypical norms. Drawing on lived experience and practical examples, the article highlights how shifting workplace culture, communication, and environmental design can support diverse thinking styles and strengthen organizational wellbeing, innovation, and retention.

### **Strengths:**

- Frames neurodivergence as natural human variation rather than a problem to be solved.
- Shows that when employees are welcomed as their whole, authentic selves, their strengths, such as creative thinking, alternative problem-solving, and unique perspectives, contribute meaningfully to organizational success.
- Emphasizes that human-centred neuroinclusion strengthens engagement, retention, and overall workplace culture.
- Provides practical, real-world examples and lived experiences that demonstrate how inclusive practices reduce barriers and foster belonging.

## **Challenges:**

- Many organizations still approach neurodiversity through an accommodation lens, treating needs as exceptions rather than redesigning systems to be inclusive from the start.
- Expectations to conform or “fit in” lead many neurodivergent employees to mask, resulting in stress, burnout, or disengagement.
- Sensory, communication, and social norms within standard workplaces may unintentionally exclude or overwhelm neurodivergent staff.

## **Strategies:**

- Apply a human-centred design approach that reshapes culture, communication, and environments to support diverse sensory, cognitive, and interaction needs.
- Encourage open, empathetic dialogue about neurodiversity to reduce stigma and create safe conditions for employees to share needs or preferences.
- Offer flexible work arrangements, sensory-considerate spaces, and multiple communication or workflow options to honour diverse work styles.
- Design hiring and management practices that intentionally value diverse thinking, emphasize strengths, and evaluate cultural health through inclusion rather than conformity.
- Integrate neuroinclusion into core organizational identity and everyday practice so that diversity in thinking becomes recognized as an asset, not an exception.



### 24. The Impact of Neurodiversity-Inclusive Policies on Employee Performance, Retention, and Organizational Culture in the Workplace

**Author:** Atina Ndindeng

**Link:**

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381699207\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_Neurodiversity-Inclusive\\_Policies\\_on\\_Employee\\_Performance\\_Retention\\_and\\_Organizational\\_Culture\\_in\\_the\\_Workplace](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381699207_The_Impact_of_Neurodiversity-Inclusive_Policies_on_Employee_Performance_Retention_and_Organizational_Culture_in_the_Workplace)

**Annotation:**

This mixed-methods study examines how neurodiversity-inclusive policies influence employee performance, retention, and organizational culture. Drawing on literature review, surveys, interviews, and case studies, it evaluates workplaces that have implemented structured neurodiversity initiatives. The findings indicate that inclusive policies are associated with improved individual and organizational outcomes, including stronger performance, reduced turnover intention, and more positive, supportive workplace cultures. The study argues that intentional, well-designed neurodiversity policies can shift organizations from reactive accommodations to proactive, inclusive systems.

**Strengths:**

- Provides empirical evidence showing that neurodiversity-inclusive policies correlate with higher employee performance, stronger engagement, and reduced turnover intention.
- Demonstrates that inclusive policies foster benefits across the workforce, contributing to improved morale, job satisfaction, and cultural cohesion.
- Uses a mixed-methods design (survey data, interviews, case studies), offering a multi-dimensional understanding of how inclusion policies operate in practice.

- Examines the interconnected outcomes of performance, retention, and culture, providing a holistic picture rather than focusing solely on accommodations.

### **Challenges:**

- Differences across sectors, job types, and neurodivergent profiles mean that standardized policies may overlook nuances or varied support needs.
- Organizational resistance, lack of awareness, or limited resources may slow adoption of inclusive practices or reduce effectiveness.
- Sustaining inclusive policies requires ongoing investment, monitoring, and leadership commitment, which some organizations may struggle to maintain.

### **Strategies:**

- Develop clear, formal neurodiversity-inclusive policies addressing recruitment, onboarding, workplace adjustments, communication practices, and career development.
- Use ongoing data collection to assess how inclusion policies affect performance, retention, and culture, enabling continuous refinement.
- Provide training for HR professionals, managers, and teams to build awareness, reduce stigma, and strengthen everyday inclusive practices.
- Embed neurodiversity inclusion within organizational strategy, ensuring it is treated as a long-term cultural priority rather than a reactive accommodation.
- Tailor supports and accommodations to individual needs and job contexts, using flexible approaches rather than relying on rigid or generic templates.



## 25. Unlocking the Full Potential of Neurodiversity at Work

**Author:** Caitlin Collins/Betterworks

**Link:** <https://www.betterworks.com/magazine/how-to-embrace-neurodiversity-in-the-workplace>

**Annotation:**

This article outlines the importance of embracing neurodiversity in the workplace and encourages employers to redesign hiring, communication, and management practices to better support neurodivergent employees. It highlights the cognitive strengths neurodivergent individuals bring, discusses how neurotypical norms can create barriers, and offers practical steps for building more inclusive and high-performing work environments.

**Strengths:**

- Frames neurodiversity as a natural aspect of human variation rather than a deficit-based condition.
- Emphasizes that neuroinclusive practices strengthen overall organizational performance through improved creativity, engagement, innovation, and retention.
- Reinforces that most workplaces already include neurodivergent staff, making inclusion a necessary part of modern talent strategy.

**Challenges:**

- Traditional hiring practices that rely on rapid processing or abstract questions can disadvantage neurodivergent candidates.
- Workplace structures often reflect neurotypical preferences, such as rigid schedules, sensory-intense environments, or ambiguous expectations.

- Many organizations lack foundational awareness or training about neurodiversity, resulting in inconsistent or reactive support.

**Strategies:**

- Redesign hiring practices using clear language, advance access to interview questions, sensory-considerate settings, and skills-based assessments rather than social performance.
- Provide flexible work arrangements, including remote options, adaptable schedules, and quieter or low-stimulus workspaces.
- Use direct, clear, and predictable communication and invite employees to share preferred communication styles.
- Offer structured, consistent feedback to reduce ambiguity and strengthen clarity.
- Increase organizational understanding through neurodiversity awareness training and build cultures of psychological safety where neurodivergent employees feel valued and supported.