

What is Neurodiversity?

The term “neurodiversity” was coined within the Disability Rights movement and has been used in a variety of ways.

In its widest sense it refers to any state of being which involves a difference or deficit in neurological functioning.

This includes the “degenerative” conditions (such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Multiple Sclerosis, etc) and the “sudden-onset” or “acquired” conditions (such as stroke and head or spinal injuries).

Now the word is usually used to refer to the so-called “developmental” conditions and this is the sense that NENDA uses the term.

Neurodiverse people (NDs) are those who have conditions such as autism, Asperger’s syndrome and other ASDs; ADD and AD(H)D; dyslexia; dyspraxia; dyscalculia; Tourette ’s syndrome, etc.

We refer to non-NDs as NTs (neuro-typicals).

ND conditions have certain features in common.

They all have a genetic element and a metabolic dimension but the crucial factor is that they all involve a difference in neurological functioning.

It is this difference in brain functioning which leads to differences in perception, cognition and behaviour.

Although many of the “symptoms” which ND people find difficult to cope with can be alleviated, these conditions are, as far as we know, “incurable” and are therefore life-long.

Our differences give us a different way of thinking and a different perspective on the world. We believe that ND people have a valuable contribution to make to society and that society at large must learn to accept us as we are.