

# NEURODIVERSITY AT WORK



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# INTRODUCTION

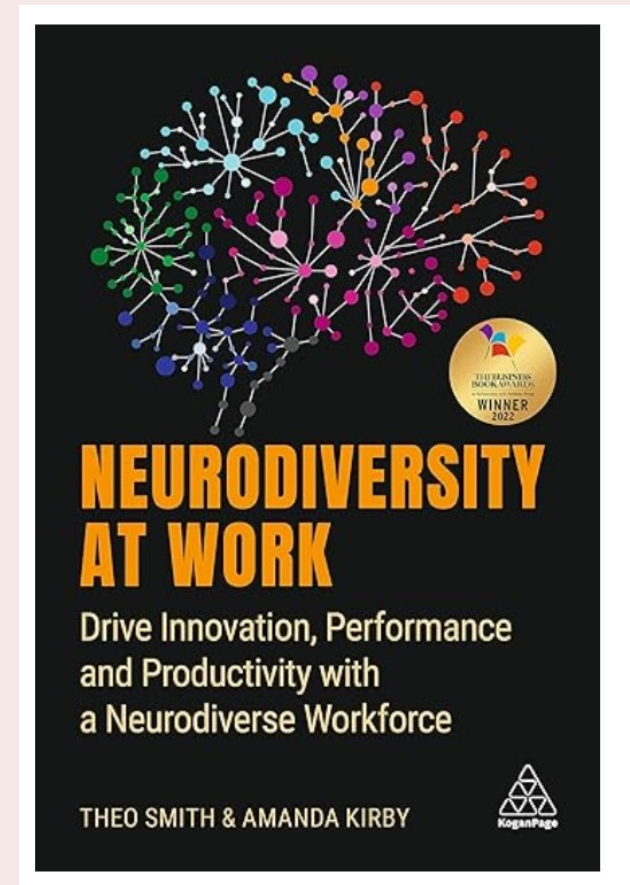
Business Psychologist, OD and L&D Specialist, Exec Coach,  
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Specialising in:

- Workplace Mental Health & Resilience
- Relational Leadership
- Employee Engagement



TRANSFORMING TALENT



# WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

We are all neurodiverse.

Everyone's brains are wired differently.

People you work with will all think differently, see things differently, sense things differently, move differently and do things differently from others.

	ADHD	ASD	Dyslexia	Dyscalculia	DCD	TS
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creativity</li> <li>Good initiator</li> <li>Energy</li> <li>Hyper-focused</li> <li>Makes connections between things</li> <li>Project oriented</li> <li>An ideas person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hyper-focused</li> <li>Specific interests</li> <li>Detail oriented</li> <li>Retention of facts</li> <li>Creative</li> <li>Good analytical skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative</li> <li>Outgoing</li> <li>Resourceful</li> <li>Entrepreneurial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative</li> <li>Artistic</li> <li>Thinker</li> <li>Empathic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empathic</li> <li>Caring</li> <li>Persistent</li> <li>Creative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creativity</li> <li>Sense of humour</li> <li>Empathy</li> <li>Persistence</li> </ul>

“There are not more than five primary colours, yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever be seen. There are not more than five cardinal tastes, yet combinations of them yield more flavours than can ever be tasted.”

*Sun Tzu*

## WHY IS THIS AN IMPORTANT TOPIC?

We assume that most people see, do and act like us, and we don't always consider that someone may be sensing the world differently.

It's not a case of purposely miscommunication, but an ignorance that this is taking place.

Allowing a mix of skills and talents will provide new thinking and new solutions.

Stereotyping and fixed thinking results in creating barriers to education and employment and has a human and societal cost.

We need to understand the opportunity that valuing neurodiverse society offers- new ideas, work productivity, wellbeing and maximizing the talents of all.

There is a need for employers (and educators) to allow people to have the confidence to feel they can be the person they are and ask for support at any stage of their careers.

“Context is everything, and if we build assessments the right way, laser focused on the key cognitive skills we require, then we give ourselves the best opportunity to build high-performing diverse teams with complementary skills and experiences.”

*Theo Smith and Amanda Kirby*

## WHAT CAN WE DO DIFFERENTLY?

What is your message? Do employees feel they can truly be themselves and ask for what they need?

Hire diverse talent- The need to move from “culture fit” to “**culture add**”

Assessment and skill tests- Are you actually testing what’s relevant to the job and does not put the person with a disability at a disadvantage because of specific challenges they have

Check your internal dialogue

Inclusion has to be considered at the time of the design and not as an afterthought

Making workplace adjustments- Equality vs. Equity... It’s important to consider what we want. Is it doing the same thing for everyone or supporting each person according to need?

## EQUALITY

The belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability

## EQUITY

Is about giving people what they need, in order to make things fair



## POLICIES

We can get wound up in legal aspects of supporting our workforce with reasonable adjustments and our internal policies and practices, and actually we forget what's really important: keeping our policies simple and accessible to those that use them.

HR needs to take responsibility, but they will also benefit from support from those professionals that can help.

KEY LAWS IN  
THE UK

HEALTH AND  
SAFETY AT WORK  
ACT 1974

HUMAN RIGHTS  
ACT 1998

EQUALITY ACT  
2010

## SOME TIPS

Ask the individual what they need

Consider the job role and the work environment

Don't forget training and development

Consider social interaction

A medical report can then provide more focused information or address specific areas of medical complexity

Undertaking neurodiversity profiling in cases where an individual do not have a diagnosis, could also be just as helpful as a medical report when it comes to determining what might be needed to assist them

If adjustments have been put in place and does not make a difference- consider whether enough time to embed the training has been allowed.

Sometimes it won't be possible to accommodate an individual. If everything (above) have been explored together with the employee- they will feel listened to and treated fairly and have more understanding of the employer's position.

*Yvonne Saxon, Head of HR, D&I Services at  
Vista Employer Services Ltd, UK*

# AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE

## CASE STUDY:

Autotrader – National Autistic Society's (NAS) first **autism-friendly UK company**

- Reached out to the experts for support
- NAS did a full audit of their offices to look at the physical working environment
- Made their policies and practices clearer for everybody
- Awareness training for people managers
- Awareness training for the People Team (HR) (e.g., recruitment, onboarding, etc.)
- Network leads' role was to lead the disability neurodiversity network, and help their people understand it's part of their day job to continuously improve the employee experience
- Environment team were responsible for the physical environment and also the technology that their colleagues use.
- Some of the people on these teams are neurodiverse themselves- so were involved in the solution

One of the company  
values:  
**Community  
minded**

## START SIMPLE

Have a genuine interest and a desire to increase your personal awareness

Create meaningful partnerships with the experts

Involve your neurodiverse colleagues to be part of creating and maintaining the change

Tell your people what you're trying to do in order to make the working environment more inclusive to neurodiverse colleagues

Finally- just do something- An awareness session will go a long way and spark interest

Just never stop- it's never ending. It's not a project that's done and finished. **It should be part of your overall people strategy.**

## RESOURCES

Access to Work: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

National Autistic Society (NAS): <https://www.autism.org.uk>

ADHD UK: <https://adhduk.co.uk>

British Dyslexia Association: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk>

Tourettes Action Helpdesk: <https://www.tourettes-action.org.uk>

Dyspraxia Education: <https://www.dyspraxia-ed.co.uk>

Do-It profiler: <https://doitprofiler.com>

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS/  
SUGGESTIONS?

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# NEXT WEBINAR

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS FOR  
WORKING PARENTS

FRIDAY, 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023 AT 12 NOON

with Paula Power from My White Dog

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