NEURODIVERSITY: TRAINING CHECKLIST

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

Neurodiversity is the acceptance, recognition and celebration that we all think differently. Understanding neurodiversity better will enable us to adopt a more rounded approach to education and a variety of abilities that supports the fact that various neurological conditions are the effect of normal changes and variations in the human genome.

Being neurodiverse is a part of who an individual is and as significant as any other part of the individual's identity. Instead of solely focusing on the challenges neurodiverse people may face, we want to recognise and celebrate the strength of different ways of thinking and processing information. Being neurodiverse is not a reflection on intelligence.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE NEURODIVERGENT?

Someone who is neurodivergent may think, learn and have social differences in comparison to those who are neurotypical. This term can be used to describe an individual whose brain functions differently to what society deems to be 'typical'. This includes people with autism, ADHD, Tourette's, dyslexia and a range of other neurodiverse conditions.

WHY USE THIS CHECKLIST?

The experience of neurodiverse colleagues may vary and some may face barriers that we want to breakdown and remove to empower them to reach their full potential and be the best they can be.

Our role when delivering training:

● not to make assumptions based on an individual's identity, condition or lived experience as it is important to remember that the experience of a neurodivergent person is personal to them;

● to ensure sessions are tailored to different learning styles to ensure attendees gain what they need to from the session; and

● to deliver training in an impactful way to empower colleagues to reach their full potential.

In addition to training, this checklist can also be used for other meetings and sessions you may run.

TRAINING CHECKLIST

The below checklist sets out what should be considered when creating and delivering training.

POINT TO CONSIDER	HOW TO ACTION	IS YOUR TRAINING NEURO-INCLUSIVE?
CREATING THE SESSION / MATERIALS		
Clear and concise	• Be clear and concise – avoid irrelevant points but ensure the points you want to make are clear and detailed. • If some elements are more important than others, make this explicitly clear. • Ensure that you highlight connections from the information and find logical conclusions.	

	• Be clear about expectations, including start and end times.
Format – words / visual aids	• Avoid using large bodies of text within a document – if using PowerPoint, utilise the notes section, consider replacing long sentences or paragraphs with bullet points or other visual ways of displaying information.
	• Try to group information / imagery for one subject on a single page to provide a broader picture, as opposed to splitting information across multiple slides. Can then explore individual components later on.
	• Utilise relevant images as this may help with the retention of information. Images used should clearly link to the subject matter or include.
	• Diagrammatic explanations are helpful when visualising and retaining the information, such as: flow charts, relationship diagrams or clearly boxed off information that links to an image.
	• Reduce animations or flickering images.
Font / text size / colour backgrounds	• Use a clear font.
	• Consistency in design helps people who are neurodivergent focus on the content.
	• Soft pastel / earth tone colours are ideal and are less abrasive than hard primary colours.
	• Avoid brilliant white backgrounds and extreme colour contrasts.
Visual / Auditory / Kinaesthetic	• Try to create a clear hierarchy of information. Compartmentalise it into relevant sections / pages by using text boxes. Do not overcrowd pages with words or imagery.
	• Consider what options are available to you and consult with colleagues about what their preference would be.
	• Read text clearly, hit key points and explain where necessary. Avoid waffling and irrelevant tangents where possible.
	• If the session is held online, ensure auditory learners are catered for with text being read aloud. This enables maximum information retention.
Colloquialisms / Abbreviations	• Avoid using colloquialisms (i.e. a word or phrase that is not formal or literary) as this could be confusing
	• Using plain English and adding labels to iconography may be helpful – this would remove any ambiguity (and may also help when considering cultural differences in interpretation).
	• Try to use full words for abbreviated terms, such as DMP, DFM, LDP etc. Set out clearly what each abbreviation stands for if they do need to be used
Length of session	• Consider the length of the sessions you are running and whether you could introduce breaks or

| | alternatively, break-out groups/rooms or another level of interactivity. It can be beneficial to provide the opportunity to verbally recount/discuss information heard or read. Applying intonation in real life scenarios or showing how patterns form in the process and/or may re-occur or vary (diagrams can sometimes help with this too). |
| | • Label slides 1 of 10, 2 of 10, etc. to give people control over time, i.e. clear expectations of the session's progress. |

BEFORE THE SESSION

Clear objectives – what is the aim of the session?	• Clear diary invite – accurate title / time / location
	• Plan ahead – email beforehand or include in the diary invite a description of training with a high-level overview of what it covers
	• Use repetition where appropriate to summarise the key points. For example, by using a summary page at the end of the presentation or simply highlighting what the important points are as appropriate.
	• Send any questions / resources ahead of the session if attendees need to contribute – especially important when there are large amounts of text. Time required to read, process and retain information.
Location	• Be mindful of sensory settings when conducting meetings – i.e. if meeting requires particular concentration, hold the meeting in a meeting room rather than café.
	• Consider the use of Microsoft Teams (**Teams**), this allows for individuals to be in own environment.
	• If you will have a mix of in person and on Teams attendees, consider whether to hold entire session on Teams.
	• If meeting held on Teams, ensure to minimise pop-ups / unexpected sounds by putting self on do not disturb.

DURING THE SESSION

General	• If the session is held on teams, ensure all attendees are on mute to avoid distractions during session.
Auto-caption	• Use automatic captioning so people can read along as speaking.
Processing info	• Allow enough time for people to process training, consider if people need extra time.
Questions	• Verbal interaction can be positive and may help attendees retain information through relaying it in the form of a response to a question or as part of a discussion.

	• Encourage discussion and engagement but allow people to contribute on their own terms rather than calling individuals out, where possible.
	• If there is an interactive section, offer the use of the chat function on Microsoft Teams, or raising hands instead of shouting out.
AFTER THE SESSION	
Follow up	• Send any relevant resources by email.
	• If the session has been recorded, send the link to recording.
	• Consider when it might be helpful to refer back to another session and signpost colleagues to this

*many of these considerations will be relevant, supportive and inclusive for all colleagues irrespective of colleagues being neurodiverse and we would encourage you to think about these considerations for every meeting

NEURODIVERGENT CONDITIONS

Where possible, be alive to whether any attendees identify with a neurodivergent condition. A brief explanation of some of the more common neurodivergent conditions has been set out below.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Accommodating autism in training: Autistic people don't always pick up on subtleties in conversation, or things that are implied. Because of this, it's important not to use language that can be misinterpreted in training materials. **Be explicit when it comes to directions**, **avoid sarcasm**, and **make sure everyone can follow the information being presented**.

Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Accommodating ADHD in training: People with ADHD are likely to struggle with long training sessions. Sitting still for long periods is difficult for them. **Break up learning modules into shorter training sessions** to prevent learners' attention from wandering. You may also want to **incorporate a checklist, so ADHD learners can see what they've done and what learning they still need to take**.

Dyslexia

Accommodating dyslexia in training: Because reading and writing are such an integral part of dyslexia, your dyslexic learners may be good candidates for other sorts of learning, such as on the **job training or coaching** (F&Ps video training / demo is fab for this!). If that's not possible, be **flexible about the time you give learners for training**; dyslexic workers often need more time to read materials.

Dyspraxia

Accommodating dyspraxia in training: **Remote learning** is a good option for people with dyspraxia. While no one should ever be excluded from an event, like a conference or in-person training, because of disabilities, dyspraxic workers may **appreciate the ability to learn from their desks** when it's appropriate.

Sensory Processing Disorder

Accommodating Sensory Processing Disorder in training: People with sensory issues may also appreciate **remote learning**, which enables them to **control their environment** while they take modules. Rather than going to a conference room and smelling other people's perfume, being subjected to the temperature and lighting they cannot control, remote learning allows these learners to be in a comfortable space and truly focus on the learning.

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