

Welcome

Embracing neurodiversity in the workplace

A better understanding of our colleagues and teams can lead to a more inclusive, innovative, and productive work environment.

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Who are Platform Wellbeing?



Workplace Wellbeing



Talking Therapies



Education Wellbeing



Supervision



Embracing neurodiversity in the workplace

Dr Kiran Sidhu, Clinical Psychologist

What is neurodiversity?

- Neurodiversity refers to the different ways a person's brain processes and interprets information.
- People who are neurodiverse often think about and see the world differently.
- Neurodiversity is on a spectrum and is used to describe numerous neurological differences.
- It is estimated that around 1 in 7 people in the UK have some kind of neuro difference.

Where does Neurodiversity come from?

- Debates surrounding genetics vs environmental
- Neurodiversity is much more than a medical category. It is a community, identity and a celebration of difference. The limitations of the DSM/ICD should not overshadow this.
- The diagnosis of autism, ADHD etc does not identify what is going on at a biological, cognitive, or psychological level for people who are given it. It is better thought of as a descriptor rather than an explanation. It is not a scientifically valid concept. It is a cultural one. This does not mean that neurodiversity does not exist, it means the DSM/ICD have not got it right. It's a reductionist approach.

Definitions

- **Neurodiversity**

The cognitive differences between every human brain

- **Neurodivergent**

Someone who shows different patterns of thought or behaviour

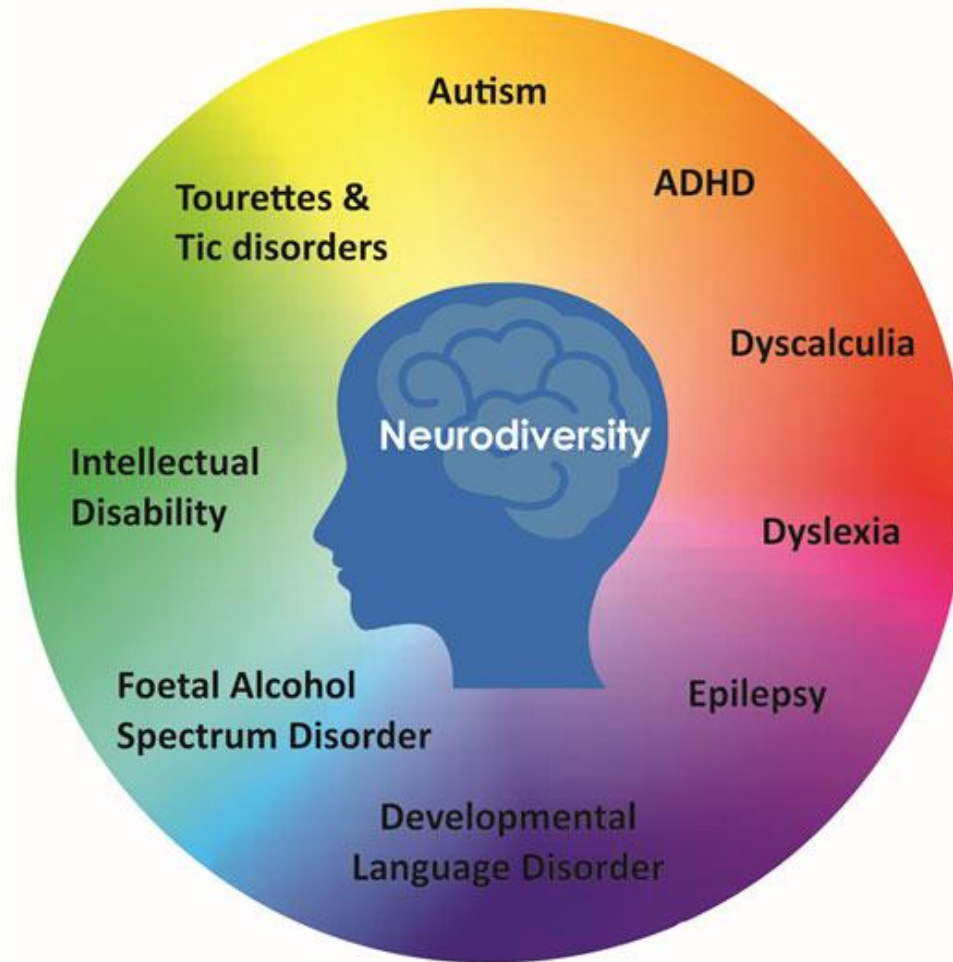
- **Neurotypical**

Someone who fits 'typical' patterns of thought or behaviour

- **Support Needs**

Aid people need to access and function in neurotypical systems

Common neurodivergent conditions



Source: [Neurodiversity | Local Government Association](#)

Some common neurodivergent attributes

Strengths:

- Information processing
- Attention to detail
- Thinking outside of the box
- Recognising patterns/observational skills
- Memory
- Problem solving
- Creativity

Challenges:

- Social communication and social interaction
- Impulsivity
- Mental health co-morbidity
- Emotional regulation
- Sensory processing
- Executive functioning –task/time management
- Flexibility and inflexibility

What stories are held about
neurodiversity in the agencies
you work within?

Stories from the workplace

Negative stories:

- Neurodivergent traits considered as anxious, lack of ability or effort
- Autism/ ADHD as childhood conditions
- Staff worried about being judged and impact on career progression
- Didn't see neurodiversity as a disability so didn't declare it at the recruitment phase
- Assumptions made about ability without consulting with the individual
- Neurodivergent staff having to repeatedly re-state requirements when managerial staff 'forgot' or didn't see meeting these requirements as necessary

Stories from the workplace

Positive stories:

- Staff listened to and slight adjustments made, allowing staff to thrive, take initiative, and succeed
- Neurodiversity embraced rather than just being seen as an obstacle
 - encouraging staff to offer fresh perspectives
- Adjustments to communication styles made to accommodate neurodivergent colleagues end up benefitting organisation as a whole

Creating an inclusive workplace

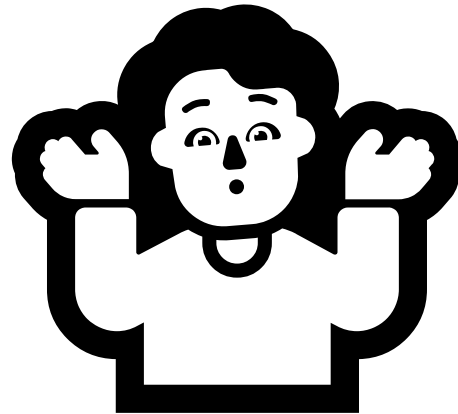
- Building awareness and compassion
- Using a relational approach to understand differences
- Promoting collaboration
- Encouraging diverse perspectives & sharing experiences from neurodivergent employees – co-production
- Reasonable accommodations and support
- Fostering inclusion and innovative practice in teams



A personal perspective on neurodiversity at work

Laurence Shanahan, Communications Officer

“What’s it like being an autistic person?”



By the time you've reached the workplace,
you've already learnt to mask. To pretend to
be someone else.

Autistic employees are as intelligent,
hardworking and capable as anyone else.

The changes and ideas that you can introduce to your workplace and processes to create a **better environment** for autistic people will ultimately **benefit** the majority of your staff.

1. Ditch the assumptions
2. Listen to the responses
3. Embrace the differences

Assumed **inabilities** based on limited knowledge.

Treated differently from neurotypical colleagues.

Assumed adjustments could be ignored when it suited.

Didn't make assumptions but asked and listened.

Favoured open, honest, and frank communication.

Challenges discussed, and individuals trusted.

Assumption **versus** communication

Create an organisation that is **curious** about
people – about individuals

1. If you've met one autistic person, you've met one autistic person.
2. The difficulty with being autistic is often not the autism itself, but how the world reacts to it.
3. The world is not divided into neurodivergent people and neurotypical people. It is simply made up of people, and it is up to you whether you are interested in them or not.



Tangible steps for workplace neuro-inclusion

Sophie Mason, Founder and CEO Of Thinkedi

Tangible Steps for Workplace Neuro-Inclusion

Interview



Job Offer

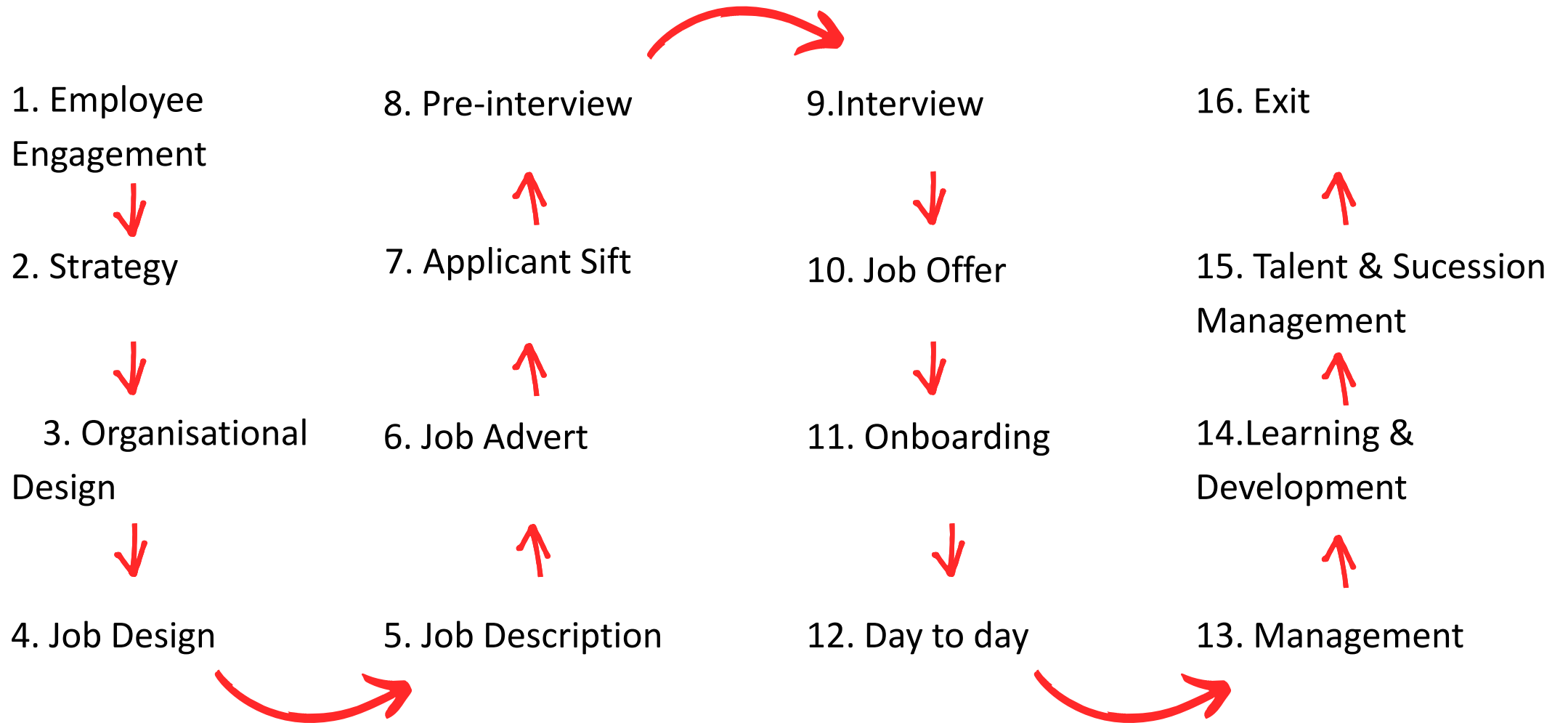


Onboarding

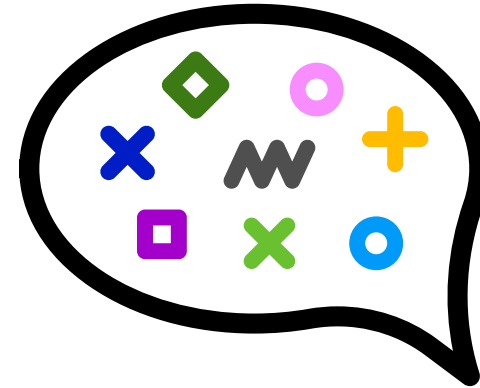
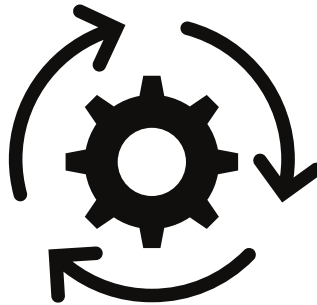
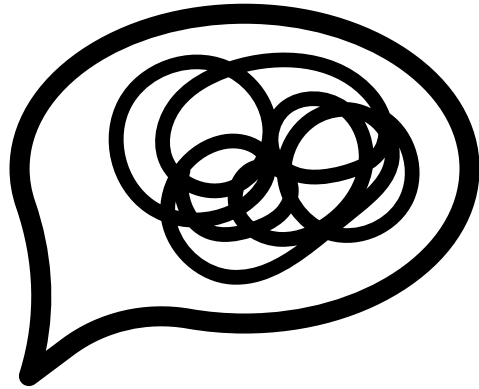


Day to day

Tangible Steps for Workplace Neuro-Inclusion



Tangible Steps for Workplace Neuro-Inclusion



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Any questions??

Get in touch

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