

Top Tips for Embracing a Neurodiverse Workforce

Mental Health and Neurodivergence

Neurodiversity refers to the natural differences in how our brains function, how we learn, process information, feel, behave, and communicate.

1 in 5 people are neurodivergent with conditions such as:

Clinical

- ADHD
- Autism
- Tourette Syndrome

Applied

- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia

Acquired

- Brain injury
- Neurological illness

The Challenges

Neurodivergent people are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, burnout, and other mental health challenges, not because of who they are, but because of how society responds. Common challenges include:

Sensory Overload: lights, sounds, interruptions

Cognitive Pressure: multitasking, unclear communication

Emotional Overwhelm: masking, rejection, exclusion

Stigma: bullying, internalised shame

Embracing neurodivergence in the workplace helps reduce stigma, enhances psychological safety, and improves employee wellbeing. It leads to more inclusive cultures and stronger, more effective organisations.

The following steps can help companies to foster a neurodiverse workforce:

1. Explore Staff Needs and Accommodations to Support Them

Tailor environments to meet different needs:

Need

Sensory sensitivity

Physical/mental endurance

Focus and productivity

Positive Accommodations

Noise-cancelling headphones, quiet zones, natural lighting

Standing desks, frequent breaks, shorter meetings

Remote work, flexible hours, reduced interruption

2. Recognise Everyone's Unique Skills and Strengths

Neurodivergent and neurotypical people may excel in:

- Creativity and innovation
- Attention to detail and pattern recognition
- Deep focus and passion for topics
- Honesty, empathy, and authenticity
- Visual, verbal or analytical thinking

Tip: Find out what people enjoy, how they work best, and match tasks where possible.

3. Communicate Clearly and Consistently

- Use plain language, avoid jargon and unnecessary acronyms
- Use preferred communication styles (written, verbal, visual)
- Share agendas, updates and changes in advance
- Be transparent about goals & feedback
- Offer time to prepare, unplanned conversations can be stressful for some



4. Support Different Learning and Processing Styles

People absorb and process information differently and that's OK.

- Use readable fonts, spacing, and colour contrast
- Create simple checklists, diagrams, or timelines
- Offer tools like:
 - Text - to - speech
 - Audio recordings
 - Visual summaries

Tip: Avoid putting pressure on instant replies in meetings or chats, Allow for pauses in conversation or written replies.

5. Stay Curious and Work Collaboratively

We're all unique in our own way, so avoid assumptions. Ask open-ended questions such as:

- "What is this like for you?"
- "How do you perceive this?"
- "What would you like to happen?"
- "What do you need for this to work best?"

Tip: Collaborate on solutions. Inclusion is a shared effort.



Final Thought

Don't look for a box to put someone in, let them open up. Approach people with curiosity, not assumptions. That's how we empower, not exclude.

Further Resources

- **Neurodiversity Association Hong Kong** <https://www.ndahk.com/>
- **Talos Foundation** <https://talos-foundation.org/>
- **Asia Neurodiversity Business Alliance** <https://www.anba.asia/>
- **Diverse Minds** <https://www.diverseminds.com/>
- **Neurodiversity in Business Resource Hub** <https://www.neurodiversityinbusiness.org/ndresourcehub/>
- **Disability:IN Neurodiversity At Work Playbook** <https://disabilityin.org/resource/neurodiversity-at-work-playbook-employee-engagement-growth-series/>



香港城市精神健康聯盟

**City Mental Health
Alliance** HK

The City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong (CMHA HK) is a not-for-profit membership organisation. We work with businesses to create mentally healthy, inclusive workplaces where all employees can thrive. Through collaboration, expert insight and practical support, we help our members turn commitment into lasting change.

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