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EXAMPLES OF HOW WE CAN SHIFT OUR LANGUAGE

Instead of using this:	Use this:
Disorder or illness	Disability or neurodivergence
Deficit	Difference
Symptoms	Traits, experiences, responses, characteristics
High-functioning or low-functioning	Low level of support or high level of support
Normal	Dominant standards and expectations or neuronormative
Problem	Challenge or difficulty
Attention seeking	Support seeking
Obsessions	Deep interests or intense interests
Comorbidity*	Co-occurring or co-existing

* Shifting from the Pathology Paradigm towards a Neurodiversity Paradigm means moving away from pathologizing language. As comorbidity is a medical term to describe the existence of more than one disease or illness, it's important that we replace this term with one that isn't rooted in the disease model.

PATHOLOGY PARADIGM VERSUS NEURODIVERSITY

PARADIGM - SUMMARY

Pathology paradigm	Neurodiversity paradigm
Ideal outcome is compliance	Ideal outcome is autonomy
Relies on typical and neuronormative goals, expectations, functioning and milestones	Respects individual goals, needs and differences
Spoken communication is seen as superior and associated with ability to think	All forms of communication are seen as valid and competence is presumed
Labels behaviour based on external observations	Seeks to understand the thoughts, feelings and context behind behaviours
Reducing symptoms	Reducing distress, accommodating traits/differences
Functioning is defined by capitalism and productivity	Functioning is self-defined
Worth equates ability and productivity	Everyone is worthy
Success and productivity are measured by capitalist and Western societal standards	Success is self-defined and productivity is not a requirement or expectation
Reinforces binary ways of thinking e.g. right/wrong, normal/abnormal	Focuses on what is meaningful and recognizes there is no such thing as normal
Supporting individuals revolves only around changing their behaviour and traits	Allowing individuals to determine how they would like to work with their neurodivergence
Encouraging only self-regulation and independence	Encourages self-regulation and independence as well as interdependence and co-regulation



REFLECTIONS FOR PROVIDERS

Am I allowing neurodivergent individuals to define their own goals and outcomes when it comes to therapy?

- Am I allowing neurodivergent individuals to define their own meanings and expectations when it comes to success, recovery and functioning?
- Am I giving neurodivergent individuals the space to create their own meanings around their experiences?
- Am I respecting and accommodating all the multiple forms of communication, expression, movement, feeling and functioning, and how am I applying this within my practice?
- In what ways can I improve the accessibility of my environment and practice as well as my website and forms?
- How am I affirming and understanding the different ways of being that are often stigmatized such as hearing voices, having alters or experiencing manic episodes?
- Am I challenging the concept of independence as the ideal goal or outcome within my practice?
- How can I provide accommodations, tools and alternative ways of doing things to suit someone's executive functioning differences rather than increasing executive function skills?
- How am I challenging social norms and expectations that neurodivergent individuals are expected to meet and conform to? Am I challenging how we define ideal or normal functioning?
- Am I considering how community, belonging, acceptance and co-regulation are important parts of well-being alongside the traditional domains of employment, education and living?



APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE NEURODIVERSITY PARADIGM TO RESEARCH

- Actively seeking out the views of neurodivergent individuals to make informed decisions about what research is needed and valuable.
- Shifting the language within research as well as changing how research describes and discusses neurodivergent individuals.
- Using strength-based language as well as identity-first language rather than deficit language.
- Partnering with neurodivergent individuals with research about us as well as allowing more neurodivergent individuals to lead discussions and research about us.
- Focusing on challenges and barriers within society and exploring accessibility and accommodations that benefit neurodivergent individuals rather than defaulting to viewing them as people with a problem to be fixed or changed.



BOOKS TO READ

- *Gender Identity, Sexuality and Autism: Voices from Across the Spectrum* by Eva A. Medes and Meredith R. Maroney (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2019)
- *The Autistic Trans Guide to Life* by Yenn Purkis and Wenn Lawson (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2021)
- *All the Weight of Our Dreams: On Living with Racialized Autism* by Lydia X. Z. Brown, E. Ashkenazy and Morénike Giwa Onaiwu (DragonBee Press, 2017)
- *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century* edited by Alice Wong (Vintage Books, 2020)
- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson (Penguin, 2021)
- *Supporting Trans People of Colour: How to Make Your Practice Inclusive* by Sabah Choudrey (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2022)
- *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo (Seal Press, 2018)
- *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor* by Layla F. Saad (Sourcebooks, 2020)

ACCOMMODATIONS IN WORKPLACES

Accommodations for sensory differences

- Provide white noise machines, sound-absorbing panels and/or wall partitions.
- Allow desks to be relocated to another area as required.
- Allow noise-cancelling headphones, noise-reducing earplugs and sunglasses or tinted glasses.
- Uniforms are not compulsory to accommodate sensory differences.
- Provide a low-stimulus area for individuals with heightened sensory sensitivity.
- Encourage the use of support objects.
- Provide a written summary of any spoken communication.
- Allow virtual attendance and participation for meetings.
- Allow the use of recording devices during meetings and spoken instructions.

Accommodations for social interactions

- Keep the office door closed during focus hours.
- Receive communication through written format (e.g. email instead of phone calls).
- Assign 'Do not disturb' hours.
- Provide a visual sign with instructions on how to interact (e.g. knock before entering).
- Regularly work from home/remote work days.
- Allow non-compulsory attendance at social events

Accommodations for communication differences

- Allow time to process giving answers to questions.
- Do not label direct communication as rude or passive-aggressive.
- Say what you mean without hinting or implying information.
- Do not make assumptions - clarify first.
- Allow the use of a recording device during meetings and verbal instructions.
- Allow time to respond to verbal communication including questions.
- Respect the use of AAC or written communication.
- Provide instructions and materials in multiple forms of communication.

Accommodations for respecting plurality, alters, systems and multiples

- Allow individuals to have a name tag of whoever is fronting.
- Request that colleagues and employers respect names.
- Provide room to adjust the name as needed.
- Accommodate memory issues by providing written communication (paper record).
- Have written instructions on how to complete tasks readily available.
- Provide flexible working hours.
- Assist individuals in filling any gaps in memory if needed.
- Accommodate the need for breaks when switching.
- Allow the use of a recording device during meetings and verbal instructions.

Accommodations for hearing voices or experiencing psychosis

- Allow the ability to leave last minute to accommodate experiences.
- Accommodate absences and remote working.
- Provide a work space where there is lower noise and distraction levels.
- Accommodate individual needs for private work spaces or non-open office plans.
- Create a private space for when individuals may be experiencing hallucinations.
- Allow noise-cancelling headphones, sunglasses or other tools.
- Provide tools that assist with memory recall.

Accommodations for time management and focusing

- Provide a neurodivergent-friendly timer to manage time management on projects/tasks.
- Normalize and utilize fidget items during office hours, including meetings, sessions and sitting at the desk to encourage focus.
- Ensure there are readable clocks around the office.
- Allow for flexible work schedules such as switching from 11-7 rather than 9-5.
- Adjust work schedules to avoid rush hour.
- Allow for staggered focus and task completion rather than straight blocks of focusing.
- Do not view tardiness or lateness as poor attitude.
- Incorporate more breaks.
- Utilize a task flowchart or a checklist.

- Incorporate colour-coded systems such as coloured tabs, folders or sticky notes.
- Divide large tasks into smaller tasks.
- Provide to-do lists with prioritization indicators.

Accommodations for memory

- Provide written summaries of any form of meetings.
- Provide verbal summaries in the form of debriefing after any meetings.
- Provide instructions and deadlines via written communication.
- Streamline methods of communication through one source or app such as email, Slack, etc.
- Provide verbal and written reminders.

Accommodations for organizing, planning and prioritizing

- Provide additional training time to go over new programmes, tasks and instructions.
- Provide colour-coded instructions, manuals, checklists and maps.
- Encourage body doubling and/or the sharing of strengths and skills.
- Divide large tasks into smaller tasks.
- Provide to-do lists with prioritization indicators.

Accommodations for hyperactivity

- Allow the use of fidget items during meetings and work sessions.
- Provide a variety of seating (e.g. office chairs, kneeling chairs, bouncy ball).
- Have alternative workstations including standing desks.

- Modify break schedules (e.g. multiple small breaks).
- Normalize the use of movement during completing tasks, meetings and more.

Accommodations for learning differences

- Offer alternative ways to complete tasks, paperwork or reports.
- Present instructions orally, visually and in written form.
- Provide a glossary of relevant terms.
- Provide grips for pens and pencils.
- Use easy-to-read fonts in all materials.
- Provide materials or written instructions with large print or double spacing.
- Allow the use of text-to-speech or speech-to-text software.
- Highlight important information.
- Provide written and verbal summaries of any meetings.
- Allow extra time for completing projects and tasks.
- Provide written materials with text is that legible and not italicized.
- Provide proofreading and copywriting assistance as needed.
- Utilize colour-contrast overlays to increase legibility of documents.
- Provide instructions verbally, written and visually as well as through demonstration.

Accommodations for emotional differences and mood episodes

- Provide flexible deadlines to accommodate changes in mood.
- Provide a space for regular breaks.

- Allow for a flexible work environment, whether it's working for home or flexible scheduling.
- Provide natural lighting where possible.
- Provide extended time for projects, KPIs (key performance indicators) and tasks.
- Provide a space to retreat to when in emotional distress.
- Allow for unlimited use of the bathroom.
- Allow for shortened work days or starting work days later.

ACCOMMODATIONS IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Accommodations for managing sensory differences

- Allow the use of noise-cancelling headphones.
- Allow students to listen to music while completing schoolwork.
- Incorporate sound-absorbing panels to reduce outside noise.
- Allow the use of noise-reducing earplugs that reduce the intensity of sounds.
- Allow students to make their uniforms more sensory friendly.
- Allow the use of sunglasses or tinted glasses while in the classroom.
- Provide a low-stimulus study area for individuals with sensory differences.
- Allow the presence of a support animal or support objects.
- Provide grips for pens and pencils.
- Utilize a range of seating options (e.g. beanbags, swivel chairs, floor seating).
- Allow for unlimited use of the bathroom.

Accommodations for social differences

- Do not enforce social interactions during recess, lunch or breaks.
- Create visual signs for when individuals aren't in a socializing mood.
- Provide visual signage with instructions on how to interact (e.g. ask before engaging).

- Allow non-compulsory attendance to social events such as school formals.
- Do not punish lack of attendance.

Accommodations for communication differences

- Allow time to process giving answers to questions.
- Provide ample preparation time for pop quizzes - remove the 'pop' from pop quizzes.
- Do not label direct communication as rude or passive-aggressive.
- Say what you mean without hinting or implying information.
- Do not make assumptions - clarify first.
- Allow the use of a recording device.
- Allow time to respond to verbal communication including questions.
- Respect the use of AAC or written communication.
- Provide instructions and teaching in multiple forms of communication.
- Allow assignments to be completed in multiple ways.

Accommodations for respecting plurality, alters, systems and multiples

- Provide a space for individuals to ground themselves as needed.
- Have access to rules, expectations or instructions that is in verbal as well as written format.
- Allow for extra time for tests, exams and quizzes to accommodate switching or dissociation.

- Provide content warnings for triggers and highly sensitive topics to allow students to leave the classroom if they might be triggered.
- Provide tools that assist with memory recall.
- Respect and honour the name of who is fronting.

Accommodations for hearing voices and psychosis

- Allow individuals to remove themselves from a situation.
- Accommodate absences and remote learning.
- Provide a space where there is lower noise and distraction levels.
- Create a private space for when individuals may be experiencing hallucinations.
- Allow noise-cancelling headphones, sunglasses or other tools.
- Offer alternative curriculum when certain topics are distressing or triggering.
- Allow extra time to complete assignments, tests or exams.
- Provide tools that assist with memory recall.

Accommodations for time management and focusing

- Provide a neurodivergent-friendly timer to manage time management on projects/tasks.
- Normalize and utilize fidget items.
- Ensure there are readable clocks around the classroom.
- Allow for staggered focus and task completion rather than straight blocks of focusing.
- Do not view tardiness or lateness as poor attitude.
- Incorporate more breaks, including movement breaks.

- Utilize a task flowchart or a checklist with visual and written reminders.
- Incorporate a colour-coded system such as coloured tabs, folders or sticky notes.
- Divide large tasks into smaller tasks.
- Provide to-do lists with prioritization indicators.

Accommodations for memory difficulties

- Provide written summaries of previous classes.
- Provide instructions and deadlines via written communication so we can check back on it.
- Provide verbal and written reminders.
- Break down steps and instructions.
- Present concepts and topics in a variety of different ways.
- Provide flowcharts for procedures, activities and assignments.
- Avoid open-ended questions and pop quizzes.

Accommodations for hyperactivity

- Allow the use of fidget items.
- Provide a variety of seating (e.g. wobble chairs, kneeling chairs, exercise balls, bean bags).
- Provide alternative learning spaces such as standing desks.
- Modify break schedules with multiple small breaks.
- Normalize the use of movement.
- Allow space to complete assignments or take tests where students can move freely.
- Teach topics in alternative formats such as physical activities or practical activities.
- Allow for unlimited use of the bathroom.

Accommodations for learning differences

- Use a variety of teaching styles and methods.
- Provide computer-assisted learning or hands-on activities.
- Offer alternative ways to complete assignments, homework or tests.
- Present instructions orally, visually and in written form.
- Provide a glossary of relevant content terms.
- Allow understanding to be demonstrated in different ways.
- Provide grips for pens and pencils.
- Don't grade homework or tasks based on handwriting or spelling.
- Provide handouts or written instructions with large print or double spacing.
- Allow the use of text-to-speech or speech-to-text software.
- Provide access to audiobooks if textbooks are needed.
- Allow use of a calculator or cheat sheet with formulas.

Accommodations for managing emotional differences and mood episodes

- Provide the opportunity to learn from home to accommodate mood changes.
- Ensure classrooms have visible reminders to eat, drink, rest and take a break.
- Provide natural lighting where possible.
- Provide extended time for assignments and tests.
- Provide a space to retreat to when in emotional distress.
- Allow for unlimited use of the bathroom.
- Allow for shortened school days.



PROMPTS FOR ADJUSTING YOUR HOME AND LIFESTYLE

- Can you identify any times or situations where your communication needs change (e.g. preferring written methods to communicate)?
- Can you identify which of your senses are hypersensitive and which are hyposensitive?
- Can you list ways you could adjust your home or bedroom to suit your sensory needs?
- Can you identify what chores or household tasks you can find difficult or challenging? It might be helpful to think which chores you avoid the most and explore the reason behind it.
- Can you identify ways you can make these chores or tasks easier for you? Are there any tools, adjustments or strategies? If it's not possible to make something easier, that's totally fine because we don't have to do everything - we can accept we can't do something.
- Can you incorporate visual reminders, instructions and cues around the house?
- Are there any chores or household tasks that you can break down into steps or use visual cues?
- Can you identify ways that you can accommodate your sensory and executive functioning differences when it comes to cooking and eating?
- Are there any demands or responsibilities that you can outsource or body-double with?
- Are there any sustainable ways that your partner can support you?

- Are there any sustainable ways that your parents, caregiver or carer can support you?
- Are there any sustainable ways that your housemates can support you?