



Neurodivergent The Basics

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Agenda

Definitions

Diagnostic Information

Strengths and Challenges





Neurodiversity

a nonmedical term that describes people whose brains develop or work differently for some reason. This means the person has different strengths and struggles from people whose brains develop or work more typically. While some people who are neurodivergent have medical conditions, it also happens to people where a medical condition or diagnosis hasn't been identified.

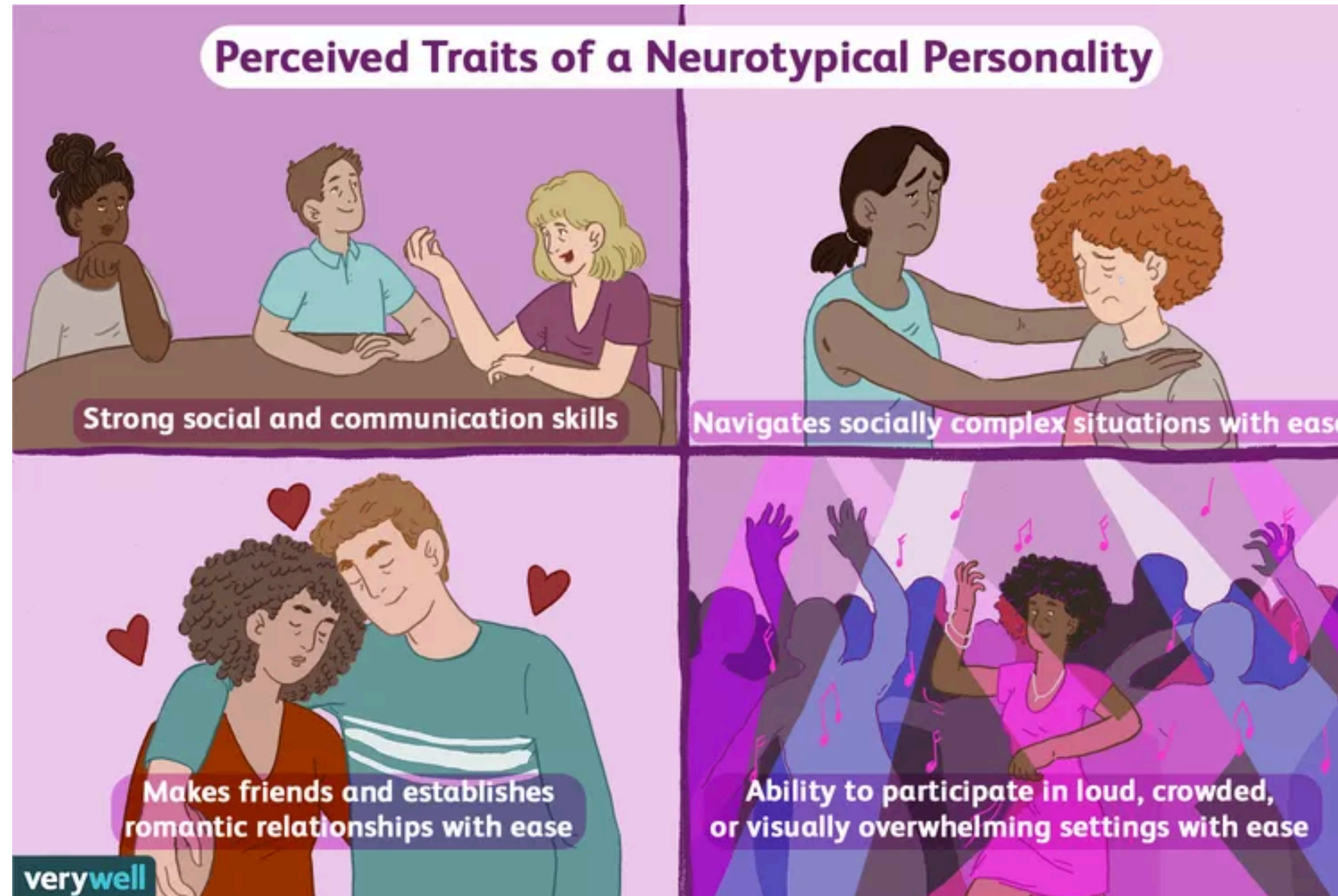
<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/23154-neurodivergent>



Neurotypical

an informal term used to describe a person whose brain functions are considered usual or expected by society. This term is often applied to people who do not have a developmental disorder like autism, differentiating them from those who do. It is neither a mental disorder nor even an official diagnostic term.

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-does-it-mean-to-be-neurotypical-260047>



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Neurotypical

A neurotypical person is an individual who thinks, perceives, and behaves in ways that are considered the norm by the general population. Institutions such as schools, sports leagues, and places of employment are typically designed to accommodate people who fit into these norms.

Neurotypical does not mean “normal.” It simply means that the behaviors fall within expected boundaries, which can differ from one culture to another. (Direct eye contact, for example, is considered rude in some cultures and expected in others.)

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Neurotypical Characteristics

- Developing verbal, physical, social, and intellectual skills at an expected pace, order, and level
- Communicating in an expected way by listening and responding in a give-and-take manner
- Being able to pay attention and look someone in the eye while speaking
- Communicating at the appropriate volume and speed for the situation you are in
- Communicating nonverbally with facial expression and body language
- Ability to show interest and empathy
- Being able to recognize and respond to someone else's facial expression and body language
- Knowing the difference between a literal meaning (like "he jumped off a bridge") and abstract meaning (like "go jump off a bridge")
- Being able to shift your attention from one task or subject to another
- Ability to work collaboratively
- Navigating multiple stimuli like sounds, sights, and smells by "tuning out" certain ones and focusing on others

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Neurodivergent

a person's brain works in a way that is not expected. It is commonly used when the behavior or response differs from what is expected socially, physically, or verbally.

- **Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)**: This is a range of traits that affects how people interact with others, communicate, learn, or behave.
- **Dyslexia**: This condition affects how reading and spelling are processed, affecting a person's ability to learn.
- **Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**: A cluster of traits that impact a person's ability to focus and/or remain still.

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DSM-5: Autism



Autism

Challenges

- Doesn't engage in verbal communication
- Doesn't express emotions, feelings, or empathy
- Doesn't show interest or response when spoken to
- Speaks with an abnormal tone or rhythm
- Difficulty recognizing nonverbal cues
- An intense focus on a particular object or subject
- Repetitive movements, like rocking or flapping
- Inability to adapt to a change of routine or focus
- Inability to engage in abstract thought or make-belief
- Difficulty engaging in group activities
- Overreaction to specific sounds, sights, textures, tastes, or smells

Strengths

- Ability to focus intensely on a specific topic
- Being honest and straightforward
- Being observant
- Being detail-oriented or goal-focused
- Having exceptional memory skills with facts and figures
- Being good with puzzles and problem-solving
- Having above-average skills in math, music, or art
- Excelling with repetitive tasks
- Ability to work effectively in isolation
- Highly motivated by topics or activities that are of interest
- Having a high degree of accuracy when performing tasks



DSM-5:

ADHD

Strengths

- **Energy:** A small study found that some people living with ADHD liked having more energy than other people.¹
- **Self-awareness:** The treatment for ADHD often includes therapies that help people learn to manage emotions and behaviors (self-regulation). People with ADHD often learn their triggers and patterns, as well as how to control them. In time, they may become more skilled at self-regulation than some neurotypical people.
- **Self-reliance:** Some people with ADHD learn how to soothe and regulate themselves (a skill that many neurotypical people can struggle with) as part of their treatment plan.
- **Resilience:** The ability to bounce back from difficulties (resiliency) is a predictor of success. Many parents and teachers describe kids with ADHD as being resilient.
- **Creativity:** Creative problem-solving is very important for success at school and work. Research has found that people with ADHD have more creativity and are better at idea generation than people without the disorder. This creativity can lead to outside-the-box thinking that is needed for discovery and innovation.
- **Hyperfocus:** Many people with ADHD become hyperfocused on things that interest them. This can lead to extreme focus and attention to detail, as well as a passion for school, work projects, and hobbies.
- **Risk tolerance:** People with ADHD often have a higher risk tolerance than people without the condition. In some situations, this can be beneficial. For example, a person with ADHD might be more empowered to try a solution to a problem.
- **Clear expectations:** To cope with symptoms, many people with ADHD have open, honest conversations about expectations with the people they're close to. This open communication benefits both people and can strengthen the relationship.
- **Impulsivity:** While there are situations when impulsive behavior can be a downside, qualities like impulsivity and playfulness help keep a spark alive in long-term relationships.



Thank You!!

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