

Accessibility and the Neurodiverse Campus Community



Goals

1. A catalyst conversation
2. Better understand the term neurodiversity
3. Share some learnings and reflections
4. Inspire and encourage the use of neurodiversity lens, increasing accessibility

Language is Powerful

Deficit vs difference

Identifying

Concept of Neurodiversity

Originating from autistic community

Current usage

Not meant to erase

Tems: Neurodiverse, neurodivergent, neurotypical

Examples of strengths

- Creativity
- Out-of-the-box thinking
- Ideation
- Specialization
- Resilience
- Innovation

Neurodivergence and Navigating the Postsecondary Environment

Neurodivergent cognitive styles

Often unacknowledged and unseen extra work

- Sensory
- Communication
- Access to unwritten social rules and information
- Executive function
- Navigating certain academic approaches

Areas of Postsecondary

Often unseen and unacknowledged barriers

- Spaces – the physical environment
- Services
- Events
- Policies and practices
- Communications

Consider...

- Campus is neurodiverse
- Systems, environments and services are set up for NT
- Intersecting identities and diversity of lived experiences

Examples of Strategies

- Facilitate a body-doubling group or give students resources to services that do this (EF)
- Assure that lighting is changeable wherever possible (sensory)
- Provide clear expectations in courses and about how to navigate interactions, emails, and other communications, have clear and up to date policies for employees
- Make sure that formally delivered social events, experiential learning opportunities, volunteer activities are accessible and take neurodiversity into account in their design
- Infuse accessibility into daily discussions (i.e. We will all have things we need to bring our best, we will all have to experience change ups in our functioning at given points, the use of services is expected at postsecondary)
- Accessibility growth mindset – template to content to delivery and onwards





How Do We Inform Our Work?

- ask the students (and faculty, and staff)
- Continue to learn and grow to make culture shift
- Infuse it into the daily work, formal structure
- develop opportunities for allyship and facilitate opportunities for connection
- Apply a Neurodiversity lens on our programs and services



Opportunities

- Enhancing services
- Creating social and physical spaces that are reflective and responsive
- Improve our knowledge, understanding, and attitudes about Neurodiversity and universal design
- Drawing on the lived-experience shared by individuals and community
- Lead and learn from other postsecondary



“Campuses are already neurodiverse, let’s make sure they are neuroinclusive”



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Questions?

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