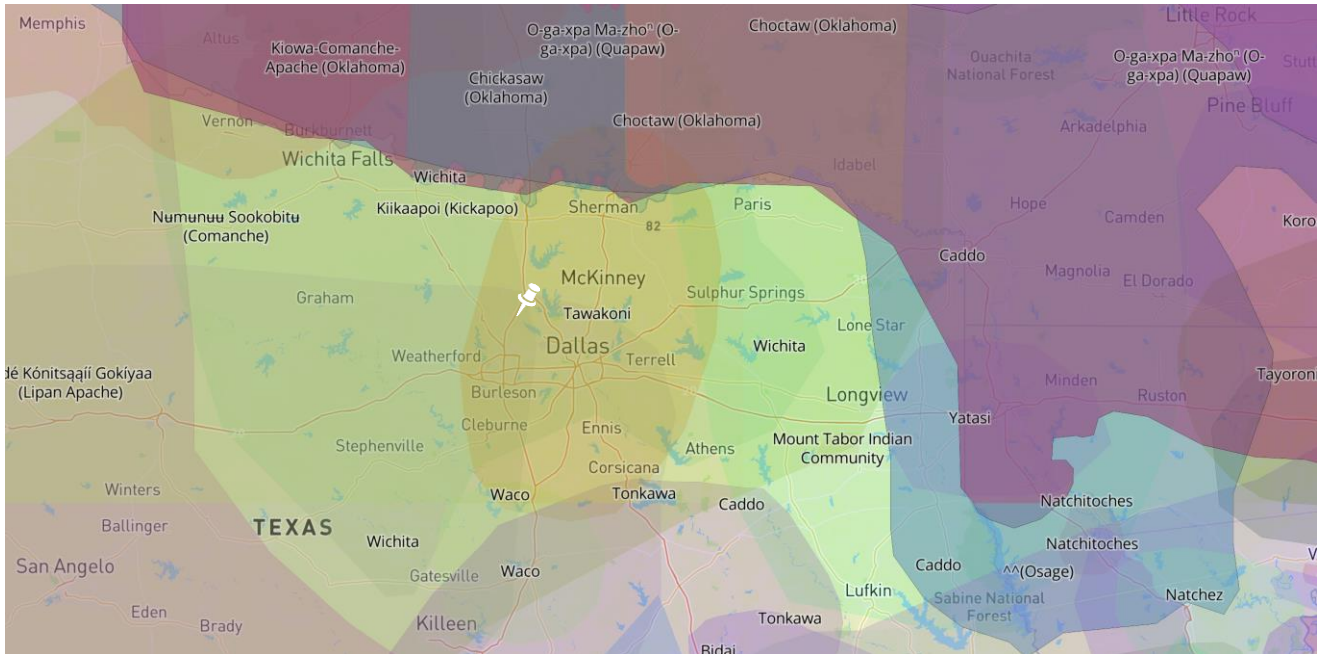


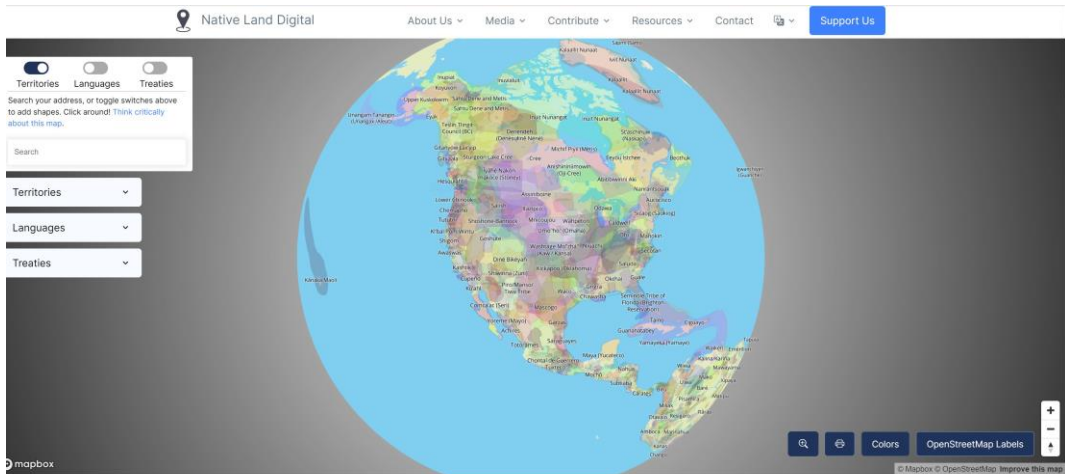
Why Supporting Neurodivergent Talent is Better for Business



Native Land Statement



<https://native-land.ca/>





Krista Lindsey (she/her)

Associate Director, Product Marketing

Seramount, part of EAB





Why Supporting Neurodivergent Talent is Better for Business



Jess Kramer (she/her)

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Director, Digital Marketing

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What Is Neurodiversity?

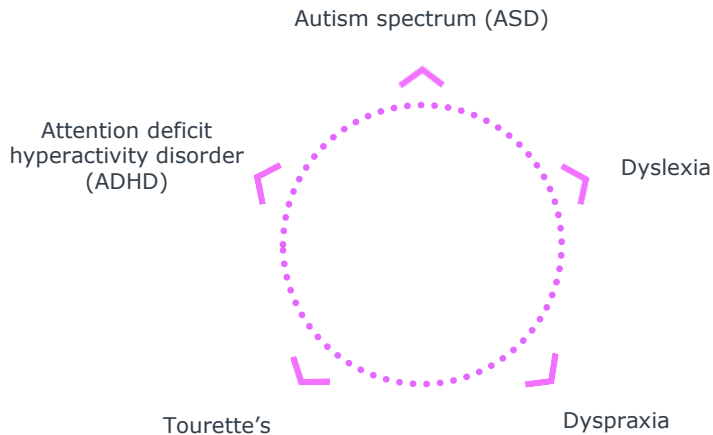
Defining Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is an affirming way to describe the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many ways.

There is a natural diversity in human brains and cognition. There is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.

Source: Harvard Health Publishing (2021)

Selected neurological or developmental conditions



Terminology to Know



Term	Definition
Neurodiversity	The diversity of human brains and minds (neurotypes)
Neurodivergent	Individuals who process information and behave in a way that differs from the actual or perceived norms of a particular culture
Neurotypical	Individual with typical neurological development and/or functioning; not neurodivergent
Neurodiverse	A group of individuals where some members of that group are neurodivergent (not for use when describing one person)

Source: Medical News Today (2022); LSE Business Review (2022)

Neurodivergent Prevalence



15-20%

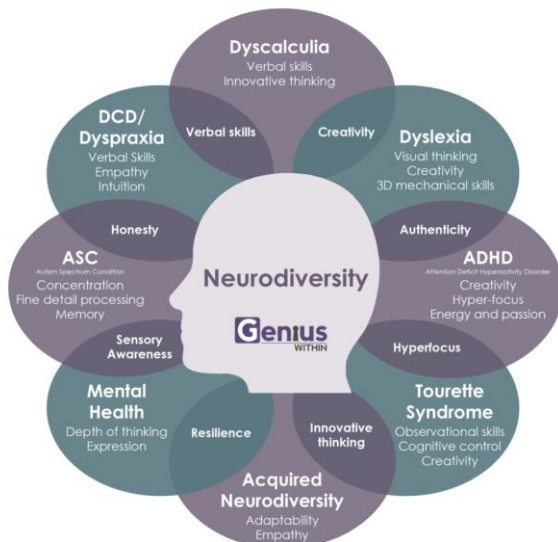
Of the world's population is neurodivergent

[Forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com)



Neurodivergence in the Workplace

Strengths Associated with Neurodivergence



Based on the highly original work of Mary Colley, DANDA

Types of Neurodivergence Employees May Exhibit



Selected neurological or developmental conditions

1 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

2 Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

3 Dyslexia

4 Sensory Processing Disorder

5 Tourette's

What is it?

- A condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and interacts with others and the world.
- Common behaviors: repetitive or rigid patterns, sensory issues, or repetitive movements and speech.
- There is a range in presentation, so autism is a spectrum.

How it *could* present at work

- Difference in communicating or socializing, including not making eye contact, difficulty understanding implicit/unwritten rules of workplace social interaction, and needing routines
- Highly creative, display great focus, display attention to detail, sense of justice and fairness, and strong visual learner

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What is it?

- A condition impacting executive function — the mental skills that include working memory, flexible thinking, and self-control.
- Common difficulties: paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors, or staying organized

How it *could* present at work

- Disorganized or have developed elaborate strategies/coping skills to stay organized
- Messy desks and missed deadlines or lists, charts, and extreme punctuality
- Zoned out or fidgeting or intensely focused in hours-long deep work sessions

Types of Neurodivergence Employees May Exhibit



Selected neurological or developmental conditions

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What is it?

- A learning disorder that impacts a person's ability to read, write, and speak
- Common difficulties: spelling, writing, pronouncing words, and matching letters to sounds

How it *could* present at work

- Takes longer to read information
- Trouble spelling words for the first time
- Preference for visual learning and hands-on practice with new skills/concepts

Types of Neurodivergence Employees May Exhibit



Selected neurological or developmental conditions

1 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

2 Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

3 Dyslexia

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5 Tourette's

What is it?

- A condition in which a person has trouble receiving and responding to information that comes in through the senses
- Common experiences: find common sounds irritating or overwhelmingly, lights may seem too bright or painful, some clothing may hurt skin, & difficulty knowing where limbs are in space

How it *could* present at work

- Difficult time being around specific stimuli, such as a certain noise (white noise, loud sounds, multiple noise stimuli at once), fluorescent lights, or a fragrance a coworker is wearing

Types of Neurodivergence Employees May Exhibit



Selected neurological or developmental conditions

1 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

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5 Tourette's

What is it?

- A condition that causes tics, sudden involuntary movements or sounds that people do repeatedly – the individual cannot stop their body from doing these
- Common motor movements: eye twitches, winks, or grunts
- Often co-occurs with ASD, ADHD, anxiety, depression, and OCD.

How it *could* present at work

- Tics may happen more some days than others
- Tics may worsen during times of stress or during exciting times.
- Tics may seem to disappear during times of concentration on an engaging task

Brain Break



?

Which star of *Splash*
is autistic?

Answer: Daryl Hannah



As a young child, she was struggling in school and after an autism diagnosis, medical professionals urged her parents to have her institutionalized and medicated, which her parents rejected. She has since become an internationally famous actor and activist.

Brain Break



?

Which castmate of
Frida is dyslexic?

Answer: Salma Hayek



Mexican-American actor Salma Hayek was diagnosed with dyslexia in childhood and has spoken about the difficulties of arriving in the United States and having to master English as a dyslexic learner. Hayek has said that while she may take longer to read scripts than her co-stars, she only needs to read them once to get them.



Brain Break



?

Which gymnast, who was honored with the 2022 Presidential Medal of Freedom, has ADHD?

Answer: Simone Biles

The most decorated gymnast in the history of the Gymnastics World Championships, she was diagnosed with ADHD as a child and takes medication to support her ADHD.



Brain Break



?

Which actor, who uttered the phrase, "Did I stutter?" in Pulp Fiction, actually grew up with a stutter?

Answer: Samuel L. Jackson



Samuel L. Jackson had a stutter as a child, which he was bullied for. He has since become the second highest-grossing actor of all time.

Selected Statistics



84%

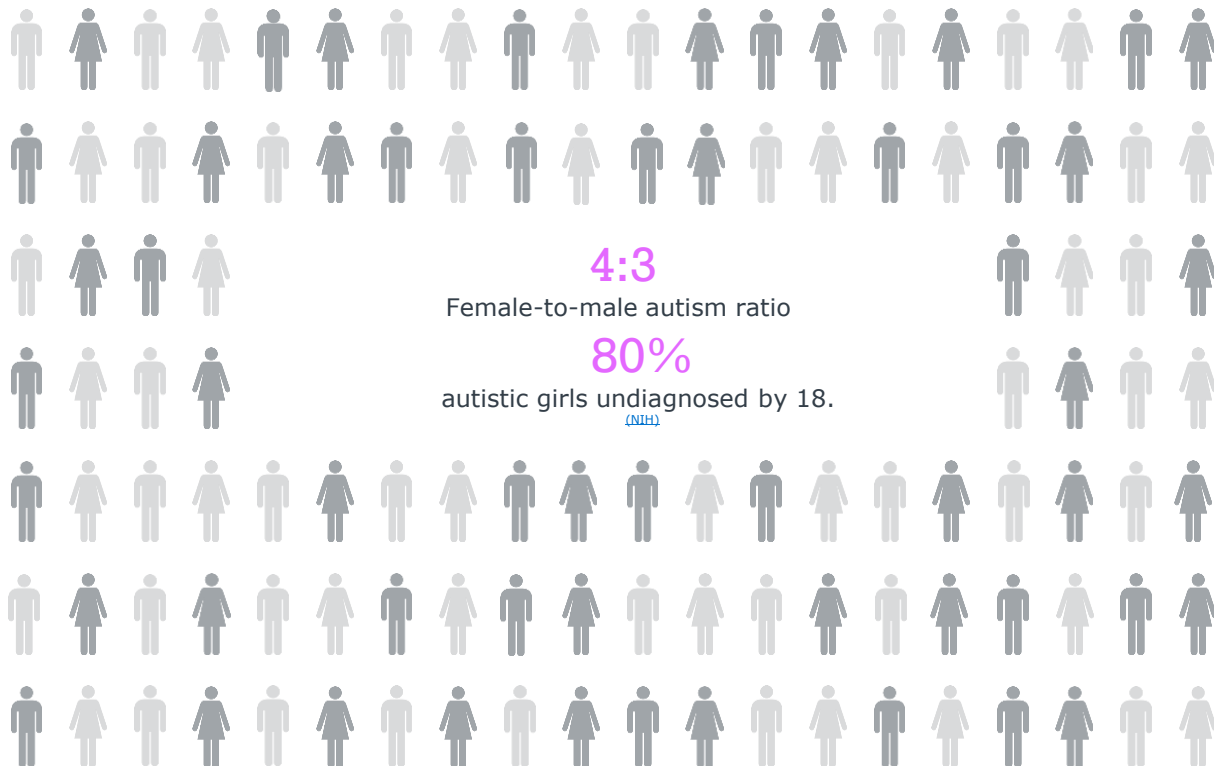
- ▶ The incidence of anxiety and depression amongst neurodivergent professionals (as compared to 49% amongst neurotypical colleagues) ([BIMA](#))



3x

- ▶ Rate of suicide for autistic people ([Healthline](#))

Autistic Prevalence in People AFAB



Autism and Sexual Orientation



Autism and Gender Identity



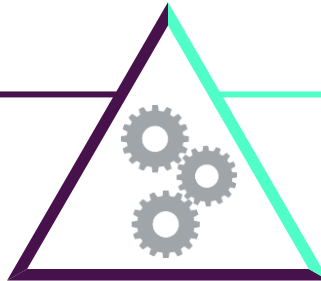
More on Language

Identity First vs. Person First



Person-First

- Person with an injury
- Person with a disability
- Person with X

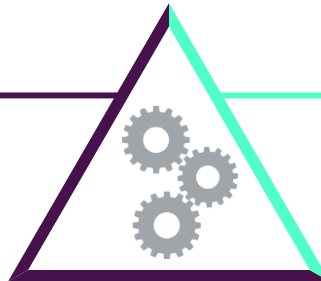


Identity First

- Autistic person
- Deaf person
- Non-Binary person
- Disabled person

Non-Inclusive

- Functioning labels: “High-functioning” and “low-functioning”
- Euphemisms: “special needs,” “differently abled”



Inclusive

- Support needs: High or low support needs
- Disabled or neurodivergent

Disability v. Difference

The language we use matters. Not everyone considers being neurodivergent a disability. Having Autism, ADHD, or other neurodiverse diagnoses does not always correlate with intelligence. Labeling a disability can speak to what someone "cannot do" and there may be a personal preference depending on the individual.

[Headstrongnation.org](https://www.headstrongnation.org)

Workplace Impact

ND Bias in the Workplace & Its Impact



- **50% of managers admit their discomfort in hiring neurodivergent individuals** ([Institute of Leadership & Management](#))
- **1 in 3 employers report they would feel uncomfortable employing or managing an individual with ADHD or Tourette's syndrome** ([Institute of Leadership & Management](#))
- **60% of autistics reported that people in their workplace behave in ways that exclude neurodivergent colleagues** ([Institute of Leadership & Management](#))
- **39% of neurodivergent professionals have not disclosed at work** ([BIMA](#))
- **51% of ND workers want to quit their jobs, or already have, because they don't feel valued or supported by their employer** ([Alludo](#))



85%

- ▶ The unemployment rate for autistic college graduates - almost 20x the national average ([NPR](#))



5x

- ▶ Dyslexic folks are 5 times more likely than non-dyslexic people to be unemployed ([Dyslexia Institute](#))

Business Impact of Neurodivergent Inclusion



95%

95% of adjustments to improve neurodivergent inclusion costs nothing to implement (Job Accommodation Network)

140%

Autistic people are up to 140% more productive than neurotypical people (Harvard Business Review)

30%

30% increase in productivity for teams with neurodivergent professionals (Deloitte)

90%


ND inclusion leads to a 90% increase in employee retention. (US Dept of Labor)

28%


Workplaces that have the most inclusive working environments report 28% higher revenue (Forbes)

Universal Design

Universal Design



Universal design is the design and composition of creating products and environments — both physical and digital, — in a way that can be accessed, understand and used, barrier-free, to the greatest extent by all peoples regardless of abilities.



What is right vs. legal?



What is right.

What is the right thing to do?



Maximize access by everyone

- Above the legal minimums
- Ensuring equitable access

Universal Design

What is legal.

What is legally required?



Examples

- ADA – Reasonable accommodations
- Section 504, 508
- WCAG 2.1 AA

Supporting Neurodivergent Colleagues

Supporting Neurodivergent Talent



Dos

- ✓ **Ask individuals if they need support or accommodations**
- ✓ **Use multiple modes of communication** - alt text, closed captions, timing, verbal and written
- ✓ **Support flexible / remote work arrangement** - office vs. home setting, working times, etc.
- ✓ **Curate a sensory safe environment** - lighting, acoustics, background noise, reflections, colors
- ✓ **Provide materials/agendas in advance** – allows for processing time and reduces surprises
- ✓ **Be direct, avoid indirect social cues**
- ✓ **Offer networking opportunities beyond happy hours**
- ✓ **Provide camera breaks and camera-free gatherings, without comment**
- ✓ **Allow person to stim** (i.e. partake in self-stimulating behavior like tapping foot, finger-flicking, rocking back and forth, swaying, etc.)
- ✓ **Offer job sharing services**
- ✓ **Check virtual setup** – microphone levels, captions, lighting, technology

Supporting Neurodivergent Coworkers



Dos

- ✓ **ND and/or disability ERG**
- ✓ **Partner with ND-led organizations**
- ✓ **Policies**

Don'ts

- ✗ **Assume what abilities, skills, talents or difficulties an individual has**
- ✗ **Ask unnecessary open-ended questions**
- ✗ **Expect eye contact**
- ✗ **Get offended if we skip the small talk / talk about special interests**
- ✗ **Hire ND talent without first having internal support and policies in place for retention**

Q&A Panel

Fireside Chat



Krista Lindsey
Moderator

Q&A



Jess Kramer
Presenter



Christian Santillo
Presenter

Interested in More?

Take Our Poll

I'm interested in...

- 1 Talking to an expert about how Seramount's DEI Research Partnership supports organizations in advancing DEI
- 2 Unlocking the benefits of a more inclusive and productive workforce with our Neurodivergent Advocacy training
- 3 Hearing more about attending the WorkBeyond Summit in October



Events That Celebrate DEI Engagement & Progress

Past and Upcoming Programming

Seramount has developed these events to help your teams better understand the various Heritage Month celebrations and enhance your workplace diversity and inclusion efforts.

[Black History Month Webinar](#)

Feb 1 | 12-1:30pm EST

[International Women's Day Webinar](#)

March 8 | 10-11:30am EST

[*New*Neurodiversity Seminar](#)

April 6 | 12-1:30pm EST

[Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Webinar](#)

May 2 | 12-1:30pm EST

[LGBTQ+ Pride Month Webinar](#)

June 1 | 12-1:30pm EST

[Hispanic Heritage Month Webinar](#)

Sep 28 | 12-1:30pm EST

[National Disability Employment Awareness Month Webinar](#)

Oct 26 | 12-1:30pm EST

[Native American Heritage Month Webinar](#)

Nov 10 | 12-1:30pm EST

[Veteran's Day Webinar](#)

Nov 10 | 12-1:30pm EST

QUARTERLY DEI MEMBER CONFERENCES ALSO INCLUDED

Upcoming Conferences

Multicultural Women's Conference

June 21-22 | Hybrid Conference | Chicago

This conference offers tangible tools for career advancement for women of color leaders and equips DEI/HR leaders with the skills to support them.

WorkBeyond Summit

October 18 Hybrid Conference | NYC

Offers opportunities for HR and DEI practitioners to develop their DEI skills, and equips them with strategies for leading inclusive teams and navigating the changing world of work.



Washington DC | Richmond | Birmingham | Minneapolis

202-747-1000 | seramount.com