



Fact Sheet

# Neurodiversity

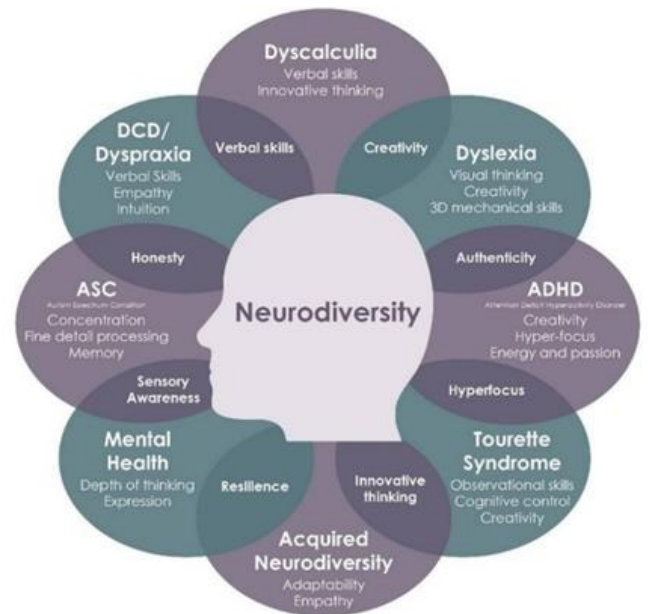
## What is Neurodiversity?

It is estimated that around 15 – 20% of the population is neurodivergent, meaning that the brain functions, learns and processes information differently. In Australia, the most common neurodivergent conditions are:

- dyslexia - approximately 10% of the population
- Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) - approximately 6% of the population
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - 0.4% of the population.

## What are the benefits of neurodiversity in the workplace?

Workplaces that foster an inclusive work culture benefit from diversity of thought, different approaches to work, innovation and creativity. Studies have shown that teams with both neurodivergent and neurotypical members are far more efficient than teams that comprise neurotypical employees alone. Teams that are neurodivergent excel in handling complex and repetitive tasks, reasoning power, productivity and accuracy, efficiency, and problem-solving capabilities. This is because of the unique learnt strategies developed to overcome their neurodivergences. The diagram outlines the unique contributions neurodivergent employees offer if supported correctly.



## What are some neurodiverse characteristics which may present in the workplace?

While everyone is different, there are some common traits that may present in the workplace depending on the condition. Some of these are outlined in the table below.

Dyslexia	ADHD	Autism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being disorganised</li> <li>• Difficulty expressing ideas in writing</li> <li>• Forgetfulness</li> <li>• Trouble sequencing tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restless</li> <li>• Easily bored</li> <li>• Prone to distraction</li> <li>• Difficulty maintaining focus in extended meetings</li> <li>• Challenges transitioning between tasks once in a state of 'flow'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too direct in communications</li> <li>• Interrupt inappropriately</li> <li>• Difficulty with abstract concepts</li> <li>• Struggle with social aspects of work</li> <li>• Fidgety</li> </ul>

## What are some workplace adjustments that could assist a neurodivergent employee?

It is important to understand your employee's challenges and strengths to support them appropriately by having a conversation with them to identify what options might be of assistance. Examples of simple workplace adjustments to support individual needs might include, but are not limited to:

- inclusive technology options e.g. colour filters for screens, noise cancelling headphones, assistive technology, task management apps, fidget devices
- flexible working e.g. adjustable start/finish times, work hours and/or locations, scheduled breaks, uninterrupted work time, adapting work location to energy levels
- clear communication e.g. setting clear expectations, providing written instructions/follow-up, regular check-ins, constructive feedback
- providing written summaries of meetings or allowing for recordings
- more frequent breaks
- job design e.g. the employee may prefer one task at a time versus multiple tasks
- work environment considerations e.g. quieter space, adjustable lighting, personalisation of workspace.

Further information on workplace adjustments is available on the [PWSS website](#).

## Case Study

Brian engaged with the Counselling and Support team on a range of issues that were impacting on his ability to complete tasks at work. He had recently been diagnosed with ADHD and was feeling isolated and unsure how to raise the topic at work.

Once Brian had the confidence to discuss his diagnosis with his manager, she asked him what short- and longer-term adjustments might help him to do his best work and participate productively in a sustainable way. Brian suggested trialling noise cancelling headphones and hybrid working arrangements as to see if these workplace adjustments assisted his concentration. His manager was supportive of these adjustments and also recommended that he seek support through the Early Intervention Program. Through the Program, Brian was referred to an ADHD coach who helped him to build on his individual strengths and to develop new strategies and systems to minimise the impact of his symptoms.

## Support

The PWSS is available to provide a range of human resource and work health and safety support and guidance to Parliamentarians and MOP(S) Act employees. We also provide wellbeing support and conflict resolution to all employees.

The PWSS can be contacted via phone 24/7 on **1800 747 977**, by SMS on 0487 112 755, email at [support@PWSS.gov.au](mailto:support@PWSS.gov.au), or in person at M2.105 in APH from 8.30am - 8.00pm sitting days or 8.30am – 5.00pm all other business days. Visit [pwss.gov.au](http://pwss.gov.au) for more information.