



Disability high use terms

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ADHD | Aroreretini

Definition

ADHD¹ stands for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. ADHD is a neurodevelopmental² condition not a behavioural disorder. It affects the brain's systems that help us to plan, control impulses and execute tasks.

Aroreretini is the Te Reo Māori term, translating to 'attention goes to many things'.

Example of usage

I received an ADHD diagnosis after I completed undergrad. I would have had a much easier time if I had known that I had ADHD earlier.

Key points

ADHD can affect:

- executive functioning - including the ability to plan and organise
- the ability to filter and control attention
- emotional regulation
- energy or motor control, and
- judgement.

These effects of ADHD can be interpreted as:

- distractibility
- hyperactivity
- disorganisation
- emotional outbursts, and
- acting before thinking.

Many people only discover they have ADHD as an adult.

ADHD can present as predominantly hyperactive, predominantly inattentive, or a combination. There is no 'one true way' for ADHD to look like.

Saying things like 'She is so ADHD' to mean hyperactive, inattentive or disruptive is not okay.

Sources

[What is ADHD?](#) by ADHD New Zealand

[This is ADHD](#) by Chanelle Moriah, 2023

[Understanding ADHD](#) by TKI Te Kete Ipurangi Inclusive Education

[Disability Word collections](#) at Te Reo Hāpai

[ADHD in tertiary education organisations](#) by ADHD New Zealand

¹ ADHD was previously known as Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD). In 1987 it officially became known as ADHD on the strength of further research that increased our understanding.

² Neurodevelopmental conditions relate to or involve the development of the nervous system. In ADHD, the nervous system has developed differently, and functions differently.

Autism | Takiwātanga

Definition

Autism is a neurodevelopmental³ condition that affects how Autistic people perceive the world, think and behave, and communicate and interact with others.

Takiwātanga is the Te Reo Māori term, from 'tōku/tōna anō takiwā' - 'my/his/her own time and space'. Taonga Takiwātanga⁴ is a mana-enhancing term, which regards people with autism as taonga.

Example of usage

One of my postgrad students is autistic and needs a space that is quiet, do you know of any?

Key points

Autistic person⁵ in te reo is tangata whaitakiwātanga.

Autism is a spectrum. This is often incorrectly interpreted as linear, placing people from 'more autistic' to 'less autistic'. However, individuals will have different abilities and needs across several areas including:

- speech
- motor skills
- sensory processing
- emotional regulation
- social skills, and
- executive function.

Individual support needs, symptoms, and experiences can fluctuate depending on environmental and situational conditions like stress and crowded environments.

Allistic is the term for those who are not autistic.

While the term used in diagnosis in New Zealand is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), some autistic people prefer to use the term autism as they dislike the negative meaning implied by the word "Disorder" in Autism Spectrum Disorder. Some language commonly used to describe autism in the past such as "high functioning" or "low functioning", and "Aspergers" or "Aspergers Syndrome" is now considered outdated. Speculating that somebody is 'on the spectrum' due to their behaviour or how they interact with others is not okay.

Person first language vs identity first language. Some individuals prefer to describe themselves as 'a person with autism', while others will prefer 'an autistic person'. It is important to respect the wishes of the individual you are communicating with or about. Try mirroring the language they use to refer to themselves.

³ Neurodevelopmental conditions relate to or involve the development of the nervous system. In autism, the nervous system has developed differently, and functions differently.

⁴ Takiwātanga was coined by linguist and educator Keri Opai (Te Atiawa, Ngāti Ruanui, Ngāti Te Ata, Waiohua, Ngāti Porou), and is intended to be non-clinical, encapsulating aroha and manaaki.

⁵ Dr Stephen Shore, an autism advocate who is autistic himself, encapsulated this in the oft-repeated quote, "If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism."

Sources

[Disability Word collections](#) by Te Reo Hāpai

[Takiwātanga – in your own time and space](#) from Ministry of Education, 2023

[I Am Autistic](#) by Chanella Moriah, 2022

[Autism, what is it?](#) by Altogether Autism, 2016

[Understanding Autism](#) by TKI Te Kete Ipurangi Inclusive Education

[Supporting Autistic Tertiary Learners](#) by Altogether Autism

Blind, visual impairment and low vision

Definition

Visual impairment is used to describe any kind of vision loss, whether it's someone who is blind and cannot see at all or someone who has partial vision loss. Some people are completely blind, but many others have what is called legal blindness.⁶

Example of usage

“One of my friends is legally blind. She has to zoom in to 500% to read anything, but mostly she uses a screen reader. Another person I know has central vision loss and always used to get in trouble for ‘not looking at the teacher properly’- the only way she can see what they are doing is to turn away slightly! I had no idea that vision loss was so varied until I talked with them about it.”

Key points

[Examples of low vision](#) or visual impairment are:

- Central vision loss. Not being able to see things in the centre of your vision.
- Peripheral vision loss. Not being able to see things out of the corners of your eyes.
- Night blindness. Not being able to see in low light.
- Blurry or hazy vision.

Low vision can affect:

- Reading
- Driving
- Recognising people's faces
- Telling colours apart
- Seeing computer screens or TV clearly

People living with vision loss often use [adaptive technology](#) to support work or study. People who are legally blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled are eligible for certain copyright exemptions, allowing them access to copyrighted print material via the Marrakesh Treaty.⁷ These exemptions need to be applied for via Student Disability Services.

Sources

[Low vision and blindness](#) Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand

[Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People](#)

[Making copies for people with print disabilities](#) University of Auckland

[Resources for communities to help people who are blind, deafblind or have low vision](#), Blind Low Vision NZ

[Useful tips and tools to create accessible information](#) Blind Low Vision NZ

⁶ In Aotearoa New Zealand a person is legally blind if they can't see at 6 metres what someone with full vision can see at 60 metres. A person who is legally blind may still have some vision.

⁷ The Marrakesh Treaty allows international sharing of books and other literary works by authorised entities in formats accessible for people who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled.

[Copyright \(Marrakesh Treaty Implementation\) Amendment Act 2019](#).

Deaf/deaf

Definition

The word 'deaf' is written as either deaf with a lowercase d, or as Deaf with an uppercase D. This conveys important information and is not just a stylistic choice.

Deaf | Turi: The word 'Deaf' denotes a unique community. The use of sign language as one's first language is the principal characteristic of people who identify with this community. Turi is the te reo Māori term for Deaf. Māori Deaf are constructing a distinctive identity with terms such as 'tāngata Turi' and 'ngāti Turi' expressing new forms of self-representation and cultural activities, reclaiming a right to their tūrangawaewae (a place where one has the right to stand) within Aotearoa.

deaf: The word deaf generally refers to a person with severe or profound hearing loss. People who identify as deaf have specific communication and health needs that are different from Deaf people's.

Hard of Hearing: This is a widely accepted term to describe a person with hearing loss. A hard-of-hearing person with mild or moderate hearing loss can most likely understand spoken language, and may use assistive technology. For the most part, Hard of Hearing people are integrated into hearing society.

Hearing loss: A hearing loss refers to a partial or total inability to hear sound/s. Hearing loss can be described by variation in type, degree and shape/pattern, and has a variety of causes. Hearing loss may be present at birth or acquired at any time afterwards.

Example of usage

"My supervisor has hearing loss in one ear."

"I'm going to a performance by a Deaf theatre club this weekend for my sign language class."

"My classmate is Hard of Hearing and can understand me better when they can see my face while I'm speaking."

Key points

The Deaf community has its own language, values, behavioural norms and traditions. Deaf people see themselves as a distinct group within a country and their first language is sign language.⁸

Sometimes when both deaf and Deaf people are being referred to, the term 'd/Deaf' will be used.

Many individuals who are deaf or Hard of Hearing prefer the terms "deaf" and/or "Hard of Hearing," because they consider them to be more positive than the term "hearing impaired," which implies a deficit. While some people are comfortable using the term "hearing impaired" for themselves, it is better to avoid applying it to others.

There is a wide range of assistive technologies that d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals may choose to use. These include hearing aids, cochlear implants, FM systems, and captioning technologies. People may also use a range of accommodations, such as lip-reading, sign language interpreters, note takers, and visual warning systems.

⁸ In Aotearoa New Zealand, it's New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL). Deaf people have a dual identity of being Deaf and having a disability.

Sources

[Fact Sheet: What is Deaf Culture?](#) By Deaf Aotearoa

[Understanding being Deaf](#) by TKI Te Kete Ipurangi Inclusive Education

[Deaf Culture](#) by TKI Te Kete Ipurangi Inclusive Education

[Perceptions of Māori deaf identity in New Zealand](#). The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education.

Smiler K, McKee R. 2007.

[Karanga rua, karanga maha: Māori with lived experience of disability self-determining their own](#)

[identities](#). *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 19(1), 45–64. Jones, B., King, P.

T., Baker, G., Nikora, L. W., Hickey, H., Perry, M., ... Ingham, T. R. (2023).

Depression

Definition

Depression⁹ is a mental health condition that can affect how you feel and behave for weeks, months or years at a time.

When you are depressed, your low mood lasts, affecting your sleep, relationships, hobbies, job and appetite. Anyone can experience depression. It can be caused or triggered by different things, but the symptoms will be similar. It can be very hard to ask for help and to believe that there is a way out of depression, but depression can be treated, and most people do recover. The earlier support is given, the better your chances of recovery.

Example of usage

Before my depression was diagnosed, it was difficult to understand what I was going through.

Where to get help:

Call 111 if it is an emergency and you feel like you or someone else is at risk.

Need to Talk? Free call or text [1737](tel:1737) any time to speak to a trained counsellor.

[Lifeline](#) 0800 543 354 or text HELP to 4357

[Suicide Crisis Helpline](#) 0508 828 865 / 0508 TAUTOKO (24/7). This is a service for people who may be thinking about suicide, or those who are concerned about family or friends.

[Depression Helpline](#) 0800 111 757 (24/7) or text 4202

[Samaritans](#) 0800 726 666 (24/7)

[Youthline](#) 0800 376 633 (24/7) or free text 234 (8am-12am), or email talk@youthline.co.nz

[What's Up](#) free counselling for 5 to 19 years old, online chat 11am-10.30pm 7 days/week or free phone 0800 WHATSUP / 0800 9428 787 11am-11pm

[Asian Family Services](#) 0800 862 342 Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm or text 832 Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm. Languages spoken: Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi and English.

[Rural Support Trust Helpline](#) 0800 787 254

[Healthline](#) 0800 611 116

[Rainbow Youth](#) (09) 376 4155

[OUTLine](#) 0800 688 5463 (6pm-9pm)

Sources

[Depression](#) by the Mental Health Foundation

⁹ Anxiety symptoms can often occur alongside depression.

Disability

Definition

Disability: Waipapa Taumata Rau defines disability as any physical, psychological, cognitive or sensory impairment which, in interaction with social and systemic barriers, restricts a person's full and effective participation in university life on an equal basis with others.

Waipapa Taumata Rau's [Disability Action Plan](#) sets out our commitments to providing a safe, inclusive and equitable environment that support students and staff with disabilities to succeed.

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC¹⁰) provides Equity Funding to support students with the following range of permanent (ongoing for six months or longer) or temporary disabilities or impairments, including, but not limited to:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Deaf
- Hearing impairment
- Blind
- Vision impairment
- Specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia
- Medical
- Head injury
- Mental health
- Physical/mobility
- Speech impairment.

Example of usage

The University has [networks for disabled staff and students](#). These are great ways to meet other people with disabilities, and even learn about getting support for your disability while you work or study here.

Key points

Tāngata Whaikaha is a te reo term that means people with disabilities and is closely associated with Maaka Tibble.¹¹

Invisible disabilities or **hidden disabilities** may not be immediately apparent when looking at somebody.

A **visible disability** will either present itself

- in a physical form based on a person's appearance, movement, or facial expressions, or

¹⁰ The [Kia Ōrite | Achieving Equity Code of Practice](#) for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments (Ministry of Education, 2004, pp. 6-7) is a New Zealand code of practice to achieve an inclusive and equitable tertiary learning environment for disabled learners to succeed.

¹¹ Maaka Tibble is a Ngāti Porou kaumatua who has worked in the disability world for decades. Himself blind, he found the existing te reo Māori words all focused on deficiencies. Influenced by Sir Mason Durie's term 'whaiora', meaning to have wellbeing, he suggested whaikaha, a term based on disabled people's strengths.

- made visible by the use of assistive devices such as a wheelchair, cane, or garments such as support braces.

Acquired disabilities develop during a person's lifetime, often as the result of an accident or illness.

Sources

[Students with Disabilities Disclosure Guidelines](#) at the University of Auckland

[Invisible disabilities](#) from Hidden disabilities, 2024

[Finding our name](#) from Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People

Dyscalculia

Definition

Dyscalculia is a cognitive difference that affects a person's ability to understand and manipulate quantities, numbers, and their representations.

People with dyscalculia therefore have difficulty accessing and applying standard mathematical tools.

Example of usage

Because dyscalculia is so poorly understood, many people assume they are just 'bad at math'. Knowing instead that they are dyscalculiac can be a revelation.

Key points

Dyscalculia occurs at similar rates to, and often co-occurs with other learning differences such as dyslexia, but is less researched and less well-understood. It is more than just dyslexia with numbers.

Dyscalculia can affect:

- non-symbolic number sense (intuitive ability to judge quantities)
- symbolic number sense (ability to link Arabic numerals and number words with quantities), and
- visuospatial working memory.

There may be other areas affected however these three are the most researched.

Sources

[Developmental dyscalculia](#) from The Education Hub

[Dyscalculia resources](#) from Tertiary Education Commission, 2022

Dyslexia, dyslexic

Definition

Dyslexia is a brain-based learning difference that affects the phonological processing skills required to read and write. Concentration, sequencing, planning and organising, processing speed and short-term memory can also be affected, as can some numeracy skills.

Example of usage

One of my fellow students is dyslexic. Her dyslexia means that she has an easier time following along in class if she has extra time to read the material beforehand.

Key points

Dyslexia is not something that people outgrow, though skills and toolkits developed over time can mask the effects dyslexia has on their study and work.

Sources

[Understanding dyslexia](#) by TKI Te Kete Ipurangi Inclusive Education

[What is Dyslexia?](#) From Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand

[Dyslexia resources](#) from Tertiary Education Commission, 2022

Dyspraxia, dyspraxic

Definition

Dyspraxia is neurological in origin, affecting how people learn, plan, and carry out coordinated movements in sequence to achieve an objective. Dyspraxia can be developmental in origin, or acquired via accidental damage to the brain, stroke, or illness.

Example of usage

My best friend is dyspraxic. Their dyspraxia means they have trouble using pens and pencils for any length of time, so do all of their writing using a device such as a laptop.

Key points¹²

Dyspraxia can affect gross motor skills such as:

- balance
- posture
- spatial awareness
- co-ordinating both sides of the body
- as well as planning motor activities.

Fine motor co-ordination such as:

- handwriting
- hand-eye coordination
- eye movement (looking up at the lecturer then back to the desk)
- holding or manipulating small objects, and
- speech clarity and modulation.

Self-organisation skills including:

- planning
- time management
- short term memory
- focus
- language processing
- keeping up with conversations
- processing verbal instructions
- judging the amount of time a task may take to complete
- sensing time passing.

Sources

[Understanding dyspraxia](#) by TKI Te Kete Ipurangi Inclusive Education

[What is Dyspraxia?](#) from Dyspraxia Support Group

[Dyspraxia resources](#) from Tertiary Education Commission, 2022

¹² The '-praxia' part of dyspraxia comes from 'praxis', or planning. Dyspraxia affects motor ideation, planning and execution.

Dysgraphia

Definition

Dysgraphia affects the ability to compose writing by hand. Dysgraphia can include:

- poor phonological awareness
- difficulties with handwriting
- poor pencil grip
- inconsistent letter formation
- slow writing fluency, and
- inaccurate spelling.

Handwriting requires the coordination of multiple brain regions, including motor, visual, proprioception, language, executive function, and long-term memory systems.

Example of usage

Dysgraphia commonly co-occurs with dyslexia. However, a dysgraphic person can read fluently if dyslexia is absent.

Key points

Dysgraphia is not something that people outgrow, although skills and toolkits developed over time can mask the effects dysgraphia has on their study and work.

Sources

[Writing and neurodivergence](#) from The Education Hub

Invisible, non-visible, and hidden disability

Definition

An invisible disability is a physical, mental or neurological condition that is not visible from the outside, yet can limit or challenge a person's movements, senses, or activities, as defined by the Invisible Disabilities Association.

Some people with disabilities that are not obvious prefer the phrase 'non-visible'. This is because the word 'invisible' can erase the legitimacy of the disability, or imply the disability does not exist. (UK Gov Disability Unit).

Hidden disability is another term that some people use to refer to disabilities that are not visible or readily apparent to others.

Example of use

My sensory processing disorder isn't visible, but can be very disabling, especially when I'm in noisy environments.

Key points

Many people living with invisible disabilities are fully active in their work, families, sports or hobbies. Some people with invisible disabilities can work full or part time, but struggle to get through their day (Invisible Disabilities Association).

With invisible or non-visible disabilities, it is important to emphasise that even though the disability cannot be seen, it still exists and can affect people's lives in many ways.

Examples of an invisible disability include but are not limited to:

- mental health conditions
 - o depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and schizophrenia
- chronic illnesses
 - o endometriosis and autoimmune disease
- sensory, processing, and cognitive difficulties
 - o dementia, traumatic brain injury.

The Sunflower Programme offers people an easy way to show they have an invisible disability and may need a little extra support or time in shops, at work, on transport, or in public spaces.

Sources

[Invisible disability organisation](#)

[UK Government Disability Unit](#)

[Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Programme](#)

Mental health, mental illness

Definition

Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right¹³, and it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development.

Mental health conditions include:

- mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities
- other mental states associated with significant distress,¹⁴
- impairment in functioning, or
- risk of self-harm.

People with mental health conditions are more likely to experience lower levels of mental well-being, but this is not always or necessarily the case.

Example of usage

My mental health used to take a downturn during the exam season.

Key points

Mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders. It exists on a complex continuum, which is experienced differently from one person to the next, with varying degrees of difficulty and distress and potentially very different social and clinical outcomes.

Sources

[Mental health fact sheet](#) from World Health Organisation

[Mental distress prejudice and discrimination in Aotearoa](#) | Key statistics from Mental Health Foundation, 2022

¹³ [World Health Organisation](#)

¹⁴ Almost one in every two New Zealanders will experience mental distress or illness in their lifetime.

Neurodiversity and the neurodiversity paradigm

Definition

Neurodiversity¹⁵ is the diversity of human minds, the infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning within our species. Neurodiversity is a biological phenomenon, and not a belief or a political position.

Neurodiversity refers to the range of natural variations in human brain functioning, rather than a characteristic or deficit of an individual person. Neurodiversity is not a trait that an individual person has, because it is a term identifying the diversity of groups of people.

Neurodiversity is a term that includes conditions that are life-long and also those that can develop across the lifespan. People may be neurodiverse in multiple ways, which can change across the lifespan.

The neurodiversity paradigm is a specific perspective on neurodiversity that has three key principles:

1. Neurodiversity is a natural and valuable form of human diversity.
2. The idea that there is one “normal” or “healthy” type of brain or mind, or one “right” style of neurocognitive functioning, is culturally constructive. It is no more valid and no more conducive to a healthy society than the idea that there is one “normal” or “right” ethnicity, gender, or culture.
3. The social dynamics relating to neurodiversity are similar to those relating to other forms of human diversity, such as diversity of ethnicity, gender, or culture. These dynamics include social power inequalities, and also the ways in which embracing diversity acts as a source of creative potential.

Example of usage

I value **neurodiversity**. The variety of ways people can experience the world adds to the richness of the human condition.

In seeing "neurotypical" and "neurodivergent" as categories that each society constructs, the "**neurodiversity paradigm**" reflects a social model of disability rather than a medical one.

Key points

When we say as an institution that "we value neurodiversity" it means that we recognise and value the fact that people have natural variations in their neurocognitive functions, sensory processing, and ways of experiencing the world. Neurodiversity is an inherently pluralistic term.

The concept of "neurodiversity" includes both neurotypical and neurodivergent ways of thinking, perceiving, and feeling.

¹⁵ The concept of neurodiversity has foundations in neuroscience. Numerous studies have detailed a range of physiological differences in how people process information and the effects this can have. These differences are often diagnosed as neurological conditions.

"Neurodiversity" is not a synonym for "neurodivergent" person, or "neurodivergence". A person cannot have "neurodiversity" or "a neurodiversity". Instead, they may refer to themselves as neurodivergent.

The neurodiversity paradigm avoids pathologising all forms of neurodivergence as deficits, and allows for the possibility that forms of neurodivergence include strengths and differences that are not impairments. The paradigm also conceptually includes forms of neurological difference that are illnesses and/or impairments. Some conditions that are currently understood as neurodivergent impairments might not have been disabling in other times and cultures.

Sources

[Neurodiversity terms and definitions](#) by Dr Nick Walker

[Neurodiversity](#) from Te Pou

Neurodiverse

Definition

Neurodiverse is a characteristic of groups of people, not individuals. Any group of two or more people whose forms of neuro-cognitive function differ from each other is a "neurodiverse" group.

For example, a group of two people, one with ADHD, the other without ADHD, is neurodiverse. Also neurodiverse is a group that includes two neurotypical people and an autistic person.

A group in which all members share the same neurodivergent condition, for example, dyspraxia, is not neurodiverse.

Example of usage

The University community is neurodiverse.

Key points

Many people say or write "neurodiverse" when referring to an individual whose neuro-cognitive functions differ from that which society currently caters to. That is, people use "neurodiverse" when they mean "neurodivergent". Because "neurodiverse" refers to a plurality of different neurocognitive styles across a community, it does not grammatically apply to an individual.

A community can be diverse, for example, we can say that "A neurodiverse university community includes people who have a range of neurocognitive styles, including those with conditions that are not currently well-catered for in society, such as Autism or Dyslexia".

An individual cannot be "neurodiverse" any more than an individual can be "ethnically diverse" or "sexually diverse".

Sources

Dr Maxine Lewis, University of Auckland

[Neurodiversity terms and definitions](#) by Dr Nick Walker

Neurodivergent

Definition

Neurodivergent is sometimes abbreviated as ND. It means having a mind that functions in ways which diverge significantly from the current dominant societal standards of “normal.”

The term "neurodivergent" serves as the antonym of "neurotypical". It is a broad term that does not serve as a synonym for any specific form of neurodivergence. Neurological differences which become forms of neurodivergence, include:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia and
- Tourette Syndrome.

Example of usage

Our dyslexic colleague is neurodivergent.

Key points

The term "neurodivergent" applies to individuals whose neuro-cognitive functioning diverges from what society considers the "norm" and caters for in its socialisation, education, built environment, and other social structures.

"Neurodivergent" is not a direct synonym for any single condition or neurocognitive style, such as "autism", "ADHD", "dysgraphia" or any other form of neurodivergence.

One student can be neurodivergent, in that their cognitive style diverges from what society caters to, and the form of their neurodivergence is autism.

For another student who is neurodivergent, the form of their neurodivergence might be dyslexia.

People can have multiple forms of neurodivergence, for instance, a staff member might have dyslexia and ADHD.

Do say "I have their permission to share that they are neurodivergent."

Don't say "I have their permission to share that they are neurodiverse".

Sources

Maxine Lewis

[Neurodiversity terms and definitions](#) by Dr Nick Walker

[Neurodivergence at work](#) from University of Auckland

Neurotypical¹⁶ or NT

Definition

Neurotypical is sometimes abbreviated as NT. It means having a style of neurocognitive functioning that falls within the current dominant societal standards of “normal”.

Neurotypical can be used as either an adjective “He’s neurotypical” or a noun “He’s a neurotypical”.

Example of usage

By designing with accessibility in mind, all of your students will benefit, even the neurotypical ones.

Key points

"Neurotypical" is an antonym of "neurodivergent". "Neurotypical" is not an antonym of any specific neuro-cognitive style of functioning or condition.

Sources

[Neurodiversity terms and definitions](#) by Dr Nick Walker

¹⁶ Neurotypical is not an objective state but a social one. Since different societies now and throughout history have different standards and definitions of what is cognitively and psychologically "normal", what one culture defines as "neurodivergent" might be defined by another as "neurotypical."