



# Abiding Presence Neurodiversity Ministry

All  
are  
Welcome!

# What is Neurodiversity?

**each individual is neurodivergent:**

Autistic    OCD    ADHD    BPD    EPILESPY

**this group is neurodiverse:**

Autistic    OCD    ADHD    EPILESPY    BPD    NEURO TYPICAL

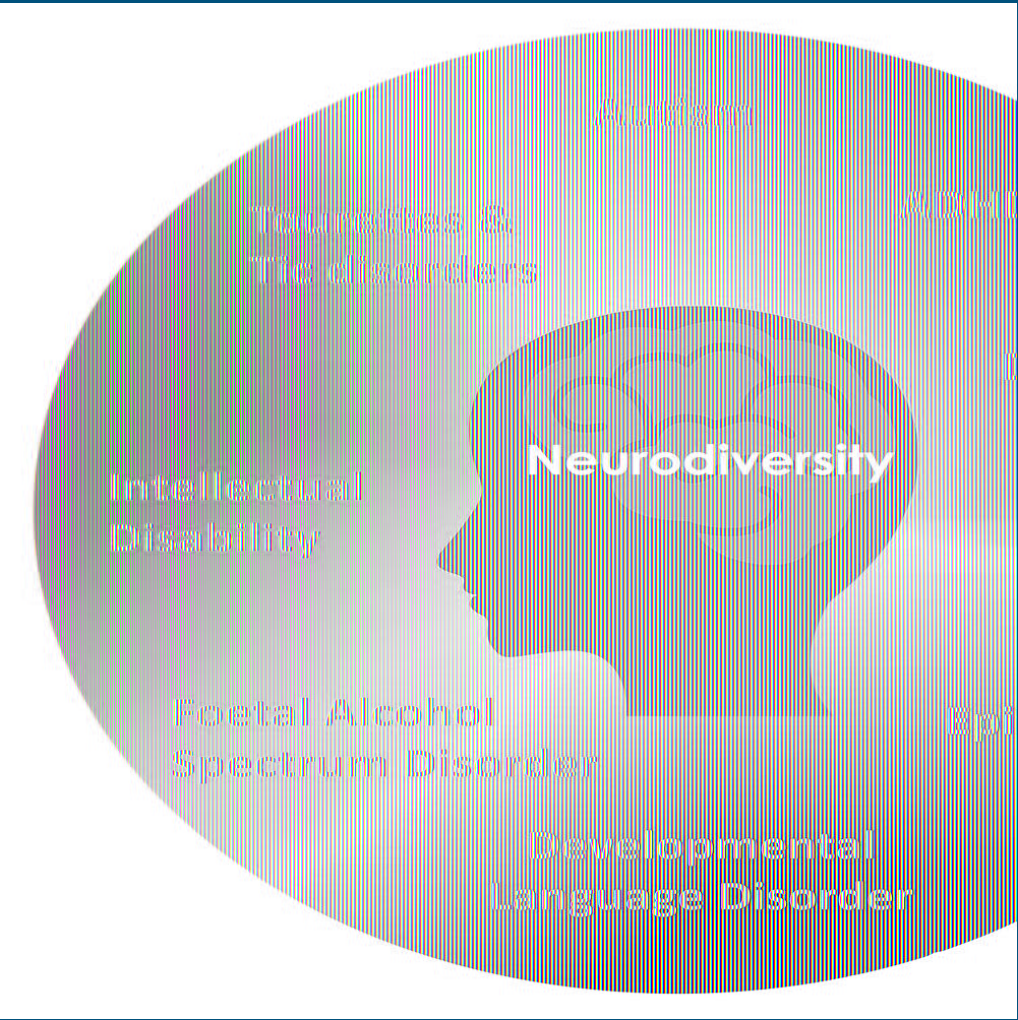
**this is also a neurodiverse group:**

Autistic    OCD    ADHD    Autistic    ADHD

**this is another neurodiverse group:**

Autistic    NEURO TYPICAL    NEURO TYPICAL    ADHD    NEURO TYPICAL

@livedexperienceeducator



Autism

ADHD

Tourette's &  
Tic disorders

Intellectual  
Disability

**Neurodiversity**

Foetal Alcohol  
Spectrum Disorder

Epilepsy

Developmental  
Language Disorder

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# The Neurodiversity Movement

The Neurodiversity Movement is a social justice movement. While it focuses on acceptance, it is not meant to trivialize the challenges of living with a disability, of raising a child a disability, or of educating a child with a disability; rather, it **seeks to remove the stigma associated with the diagnosis itself.**

As a society, we must practice autism acceptance while advocating for appropriate supports and services for people who learn, communicate, and behave differently from the “norm” because of their neurology.



Thanks for creating a  
welcoming place for our  
families!







PLEASE, DON'T LOVE THEM!  
WE'VE ALREADY LOVED, and  
we DON'T WANT TO  
LOVE!

PLEASE, DON'T LOVE THEM!  
WE'VE ALREADY LOVED, and  
we DON'T WANT TO  
LOVE!



PLEASE, DON'T LOVE THEM!  
WE'VE ALREADY LOVED, and  
we DON'T WANT TO  
LOVE!

Or maybe

PLEASE, DON'T LOVE THEM!  
WE'VE ALREADY LOVED, and  
we DON'T WANT TO  
LOVE!



PLEASE, DON'T LOVE THEM!  
WE'VE ALREADY LOVED, and  
we DON'T WANT TO  
LOVE!



April 2012

# Double Empathy Problem

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Communication breakdowns are a 2-way street, not the fault of a neurodivergent person. Neurotypical people often have difficulty understanding neurodivergent behaviors and social interaction styles

We can all learn about how others communicate!





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# Neurodiversity Affirming Services

**\*\*Neurodiversity affirming** does *not* mean we provide *no* services or supports; it means we provide services and supports that:

- Are strengths based
- Provide modifications and accommodations to support regulation and connection
- Acknowledge and build on the child's interests
- Presume competence
- Honor all forms of play, communication, and learning styles

# Small Groups

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How can we be Neurodiversity-affirming in these scenarios?

# Scenario 1

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You are sitting in church on Sunday with your family and a young adult in the sanctuary is making loud noises during the service. Your daughter whispers in your ear that he is old enough that he should know how to act in church. What do you do next?

## Tips

- Share with your daughter that we never know what someone else's story is and that "all are welcome" in our church.
- Reassure her that she is safe and he is okay as well.
- Encourage her not to stare and explain how everyone's body may move and act differently and that's ok!

# Scenario 2

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One Sunday, when you turn to "pass the peace" to the family next to you, one of the children ignores your outstretched hand and looks away from you when you greet them. What do you do next?

## Tips

- Continue on with your greetings of others in the church
- Remember that "all are welcome" and try not to take it personally.
- Introduce yourself to the child and family after the service. This may lead to deeper connection opportunities where the child is more comfortable

# Scenario 3

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You are at church attending a special event, and as you leave, you notice a parent with their school aged son who is laying face down on the floor crying. The parent is kneeling down next to their son, talking calmly and quietly to them. What do you do next?

## Tips

- Ask parent “Help or walk away?”
- Avoid pointing, staring or doing anything else that would draw attention to the parent and child.
- Smile and share a “thumbs up” with the parent if they look at you.

# Scenario 4

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You are volunteering with a youth group event and ask a youth to read a passage from the Bible aloud. The youth says "no I don't want to read" while looking away from you. What do you do next?

## Tips

- Accept their response and move on to the next person.
- Try not to take this personally or think poorly of the youth.
- After the event, you could ask the youth minister and/or the youth (if appropriate) if there were things other than reading that the youth would feel comfortable doing so that you can engage them in the future.

# Connection Take aways...

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- ❖ Presume competence
- ❖ Ask before touching
- ❖ If available, check in w/parent before interceding
- ❖ Wait time
- ❖ Breaks
- ❖ Understand that “paying attention” can take many forms - NOT making eye contact or moving their body does not equate to NOT paying attention
- ❖ Continue to have grace navigating interactions





Questions?

Feedback?