

The Diversity of Neurodiversity: Understanding Intersectional Identities

Adam R. Lalor, Ph.D.

Vice President for

Neurodiversity Research and Innovation



Agenda

- Introduction
- What is neurodiversity?
- Identifying with neurodiversity
- Intersectionality and neurodiversity
- Landmark College intersectionality efforts
- Q&A

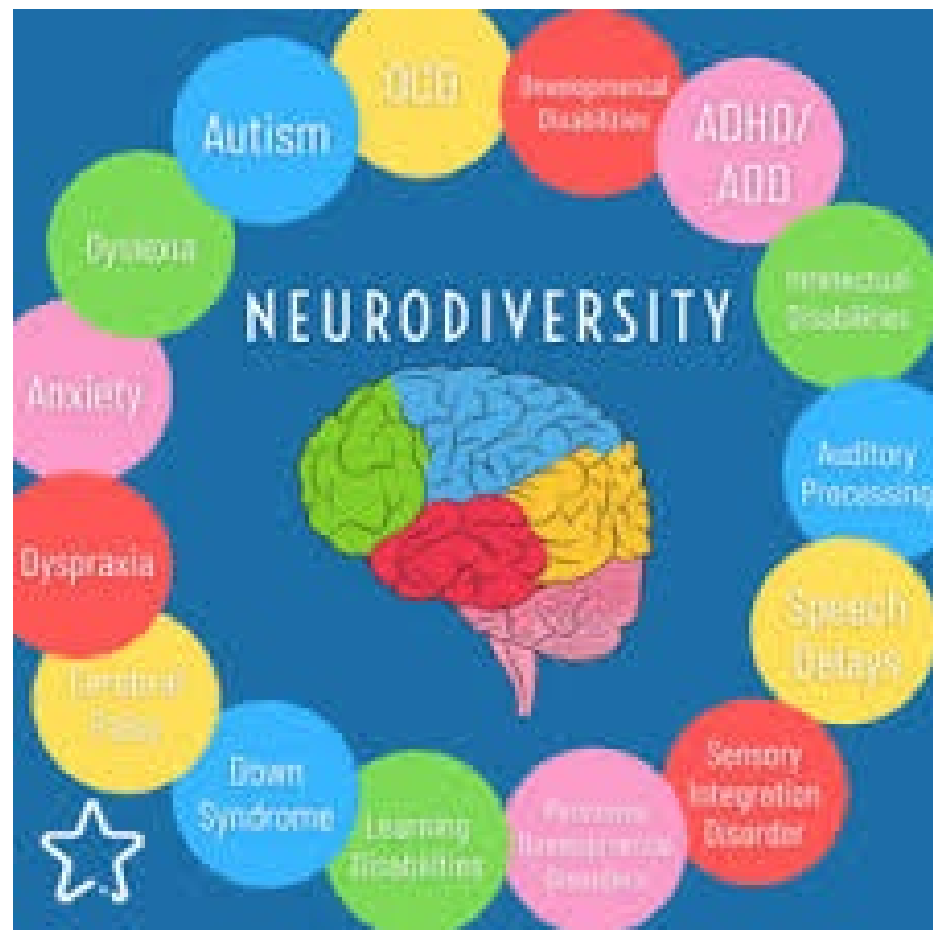
What is *neurodiversity*?

- Neurodiversity as a concept and movement was coined in the late 1990s.
- Originally, used only in association with the autism movement.
- Today, refers to the natural brain variation and cognition that occurs among people.

Neurodiversity includes ALL!

Incorporates neurotypical brains and those that have differences associated with:

- ADHD
- Autism
- cerebral palsy
- intellectual disabilities
- learning disabilities
- psychiatric disabilities
- traumatic brain injury
- giftedness



Why is neurodiversity important?

Expands our notion of “different,” and adjusts the discourse to recognize and acknowledge strengths - not just weaknesses - of people with neural differences.



Identifying as neurodiverse/neurodivergent

Some will choose to identify, and some will choose not to identify.

And this is okay!

Identity varies over time.

Identity varies based on a large number of factors.

A person can hold multiple identities that impact one another.

A collage of diverse human faces in various shapes and sizes, with a magnifying glass focusing on a specific group of people. The background is a dense collection of faces, some overlapping, some in circular frames, and some in rectangular frames. A large magnifying glass is positioned on the right side, focusing on a group of people in the center-right. The overall tone is light and positive, with a focus on human diversity and connection.

**Let's take a look at
some intersections!**

Neurodiversity, Race, and Ethnicity

- Extensive differences in the perception of, experience with, and connection to neurodiversity by race and ethnicity (Green, 2020).
- Overrepresentation of Black children in special education (NCLD, 2020).
- Underrepresentation of Black neurodivergent students in higher education (Newman et al., 2011).

If you are already being oppressed by society due to your ethnicity, it makes sense that you would avoid being identified as being neurodiverse

- Green, 2020

Neurodiversity and Gender



- Research suggests neurodivergent people (primarily autistic people) identify as transgender and gender diverse than neurotypical people (Van Vlerken et al., 2020).
- Girls and women less likely to be identified as neurodivergent, but more likely to self-diagnose/identify in later life (Kirby, 2021).

Landmark College in Action!

- Collaboration between
 - Centers for Diversity and Inclusion
 - Center for Neurodiversity
- Campus Programs and Committees:
 - ROTO Program
 - Family First Club
 - Neurodiversity Sessions
 - DEI Steering Committee
- Student Conference Presentations:
 - College Autism Summit
 - CUNY Neurodiversity Conference
 - National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
 - Summer Institute for Educators



Conclusion



- Neurodiversity and individual profiles are more varied than we think, and research suggests.
- Should not view neurodiversity, neurodivergent profiles, and disability as monoliths.
- Need to understand the individual and their unique stories.
- All people are a result of nature and nurture, and their interaction with society results in the presence/perception of strengths and challenges.



**You've got questions and I'll
try to give answers! 😊**