

# NEUROINCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

## FOR COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS



NEUROINCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIONS IS GOING TO BE A CORE SKILL FOR COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS AS OUR AUDIENCE CHANGES

## NEURODIVERSITY TERMS

### Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity refers to the natural diversity of human minds. It is a biological fact that we are diverse in our minds, just like we are diverse in our ethnicity, gender, sexuality, etc.

Neurodiversity acknowledges the whole spectrum of neurodiversity from neurodivergent individuals to neurotypical individuals.

(Judy Singer)

### Neurodivergent

Neurodivergent is an umbrella term for individuals who have a mind or brain that diverges from what is typical. It can be acquired or genetic, an innate part of you or not.

Neurodivergence just means having a mind that functions differently to what is considered the norm, including learning, processing, interpreting, feeling, etc.

(Kassiane Asasumasu)

### Neurotypical

Neurotypical refers to having a mind or functioning that falls within the society standards of what is deemed "typical", "common" or "normal".

Neurotypical is the opposite of neurodivergent, someone who diverges, and is not a negative word at all, but a neutral word.

(Sonny Jane Wise)

### Neurodiverse

Neurodiverse is a term to describe a group of individuals who represent the spectrum of neurodiversity, which includes neurotypical and neurodivergent individuals.

Remember, an individual cannot be neurodiverse. Individuals who aren't neurotypical would be neurodivergent.

(Sonny Jane Wise)

Neurodiversity



Neurotypical



Neurodivergent



2 in 10 people are neurodivergent

### Neuroinclusion

Neuroinclusion refers to the practice of actively including and accommodating individuals with diverse neurotypes, including both neurotypical and neurodivergent individuals, in all aspects of society.

It emphasises creating accessible, supportive environments that value and empower individuals with varying cognitive styles.

# 4 STEPS FOR NEUROINCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIONS



THOUGHTFUL AND INTENTIONAL ADJUSTMENTS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE TO INCREASE NEUROINCLUSION



## MESSAGE

Your messages should be clear, concise and consistent. Be clear by using plain and literal language. Be concise by using simple and short phrases, avoid jargon and unnecessary information. Be consistent, repetition can be a good thing with a neurodivergent audience.



CLEAR IS KIND



## FORMAT

A simple and logical structure will ensure your neurodivergent audience is focused and engaged. Lots of text and long paragraphs will not appeal. Include an overview/summary, use headlines, short paragraphs, bullet points and simple instructions. Signpost with simple visual icons. Choose larger text, a simple sans serif font (For example: Arial) and a plain background. Avoid bright colours, distracting shapes or auto-replay videos.



## DELIVERY

A neurodivergent audience will have different ways of processing information - there is no one size fits all. By diversifying your communications delivery, you are more likely to meet the needs of different cognitive styles. Communicate your key messages in different ways (text, visual and/or audio) and via multiple channels (For example: email, intranet and/or posters). Your communications should also provide options to find out more information or context with links to supporting resources or explainer videos.



## PACE

Be mindful of sensory load. A neurodivergent audience may have heightened sensitivities, with a tendency to be easily overwhelmed by information and/or need additional processing time. Find the right pace for your communications, include silences, provide plenty of time for processing information and asking questions.

Use the Neuroinclusive communications checklist on the last page as a useful reminder



# INVOLVE NEURODIVERGENT VOICES



## EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT



As neurodivergent is an umbrella term for different neurotypes, it is important to remember that everyone is different.

Involving neurodivergent people or experts in your communications will help with wider engagement and should avoid a one size fits all approach. You can consider appointing neurodiversity champions and/or using Listening campaign techniques to fully understand your target audience.

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### Author

Georgia Broome has over 13 years of experience in communications. She has worked in high-profile UK public sector roles - from leading a strategic communications team for the financial regulator at the height of the credit crunch, to managing numerous international media events attended by the late Queen and the Prime Minister - and as the founder of gb communications.

As a communications specialist, she understands how to bring together audiences, content and channels to deliver strategic and effective communications. She believes that neuroinclusive communications is going to be a core skill for communications professionals as audiences change, and has spent the last year researching this topic.

Georgia is currently the Head of Strategic Communications at the Department of Computer Science, University of Oxford.

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### Resources

- The National Autistic Society estimates that around 20% of the population could be neurodivergent in one way or another (2018)
- Sonny Jane Wise (they/them) is a 'Lived Experience Educator' raising the profile of neurodiversity and ensuring neurodivergent individuals are no longer labelled or viewed as disordered [www.livedexperienceeducator.com](http://www.livedexperienceeducator.com)
- For a more detailed breakdown of neurodiversity please go to: <https://geniuswithin.org/what-is-neurodiversity/>
- If appropriate for your audience, you can download the opendyslexic font for free: <https://opendyslexic.org/>
- "IS THAT CLEAR?: Effective communication in a neurodiverse world" by Zanne Gaynor, Kathryn Alevizos and Joe Butler
- Inclusive Communication Guide from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Diversity & Inclusion Network [https://cipr.co.uk/CIPR/About\\_Us/equity-diversity-inclusion-cipr-resources.aspx](https://cipr.co.uk/CIPR/About_Us/equity-diversity-inclusion-cipr-resources.aspx)

# NEUROINCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

## CONSULT

Have you involved neurodivergent voices?

## MESSAGE

Have you kept your message:

- Clear
- Concise
- Consistent

## FORMAT

Is your format:

- Simple
- Logical
- With visual signposting

## DELIVERY

Have you varied your delivery:

- Text
- Visual
- And/or audio

## PACE

Have you been mindful of pace:

- Included silences or allowed for extra time

### Hosting an event?

Consult your neurodivergent audience to ensure that the atmosphere is welcoming and inclusive. Consider noise levels, layout, décor, temperature and staff training. Provide quiet areas and break-out spaces.

