

Neurodivergence & Young People



In the play, the character of Nemo experiences both the joys and challenges of being neurodivergent.

What is it?: When we talk about neurodiversity, what we mean is all the different ways that brains can work. Neurodiversity includes every single human being. Like biodiversity describes all life on Earth, neurodiversity describes the diversity of all human brains.

Terms:

- Neurodiversity means both neurodivergent and neurotypical people. Everyone falls under the concept of neurodiversity.
- Neurotypical means individuals whose brain functions, behaviours, and information processing align with society's 'typical' standards.
- Neurodivergent means a person who is not 'neurotypical'.
- Neurodivergence - Neurodivergence refers to the variations within neurodivergent individuals. E.g. Samantha is autistic.

Types of neurodiversity: There are lots of different types of neurodivergence. It's likely we don't know about every type because brains are so different. These are the ones that are most common:

- Autism
- ADHD
- Dyslexia
- Dyscalculia
- Dyspraxia
- Tourette Syndrome

There are also conditions that are sometimes considered neurodivergent such as OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) and Alzheimer's Disease.

Challenges and strengths: We see in the play that Nemo's neurodivergence makes him feel different and out of place. However, as the story progresses, he begins to feel differently. There are lots of strengths to being neurodivergent we are shown in Ward 76 such as - creativity, empathy, adaptability and great problem solving.

People often face challenges with their neurodivergence when things aren't set up with them in mind. That's why it's important we listen to people about what they need and help to put in changes that include everyone.

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Supporting others: Neurodiversity means everyone is an individual. You might know two people with the same neurodivergence that experience completely different things.

You can support neurodivergent friends by making things clearer, fairer and kinder in everyday life and at school. Examples of this include:

- Respecting their boundaries. E.g. receiving hugs or, taking part in some activities.
- Use clear communication Some people find emotions harder to read so it's best to communicate clearly
- Be flexible with plans If it's been a very busy day, your friend may need to spend some time alone or change your planned activity.

Did you know?:
Neurodivergent celebrities include: Simone Biles, Greta Thunberg, Tim Burton, Jennifer Aniston, Lewis Capaldi and Billie Eilish.

Did you know?:
Tourettes is three times more common in males than it is in females.

Sources:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/identity/autism-and-neurodiversity>

<https://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/seven-neurodivergent-conditions/>

<https://www.touretteshero.com/faq/>

