

# **Supporting neurodiversity & cognitive accessibility in our work and teams**

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Hi.  
I'm Amy and  
I have ADHD.

**Inclusive design requires  
supporting variations in  
cognition**

**Remove barriers for  
people whose disabilities  
affect how they process  
information**

# What is Neurodivergence?

Term used to describe natural variations  
in the human brain

# Variations in:

- thinking
- learning
- mood
- attention
- sociability
- other mental functions

# The Neurodivergent Spectrum

- ADHD
- Autism
- Dyspraxia
- Dyslexia

Note: This spectrum includes additional conditions and is continually being redefined as more is known.

20%

of users may be  
neurodiverse

Neurodiversity is  
not an edge case

Access to diagnosis may  
be limited.

Inclusion should not  
require a diagnosis.

Hi. I want to create  
neurodiverse-friendly  
experiences.

Our brains may not  
physically be able  
to match requirements

Those with neurodiverse brains often experience superpowers or deficits in several key areas.

# Disclaimer

While there are common traits across the spectrum, each person with neurodivergence will experience it differently.

1.

Lower cognitive  
load and memory

Why?

Limited working  
memory

2.

Reduce Complexity

Why?

Difficulty with task  
initiation

3.

Eliminate time  
challenges

Why?

Time blindness

4.

Focus attention and  
remove distractions

Why?

Attention regulation

5.

Aid task completion

Why?

Analysis paralysis

6.

Remember emotion

Why?

Emotional  
dysregulation

The ultimate theme:  
Executive  
dysfunction

# Build cognitive- inclusive experiences

1. Cognitive load & memory
2. Complexity
3. Time challenges
4. Attention & distraction
5. Task completion
6. Emotion

Our teams:  
Making work more  
inclusive

# Build cognitive- inclusive experiences

1. Cognitive load & memory
2. Complexity
3. Time challenges
4. Attention & distraction
5. Task completion
6. Emotion

# Cognitive load & memory

1. Transcripts & live captioning
2. Note takers & everything in writing
3. Clear instructions & task requirements
4. Documentation

# Complexity

1. Documentation
2. Easy ways to find documentation
3. Collaborative design
4. Visual tools (Miro)

# Time challenges

1. Reconsider deadlines
2. Provide processing time
3. Break up tasks
4. Respect time blocks
5. Flexible schedules

# Attention & distraction

1. Deep work time
2. Slack etiquette
3. Distraction limiting tools and spaces

# Task completion (& initiation)

1. Clear instructions & task requirements
2. Low pressure accountability
3. Safe spaces to struggle

# Emotion

1. Safe spaces to share
2. Understand that work is emotional
3. Watch for burnout

The problem is  
not the person.

**“The world will benefit significantly from talents such as empathy, emotional intensity, certitude, sensitivity, ability to detect details, depth of thought, will to embrace, and many other things that we need in a time where alienation, coldness, superficiality, and emotional hardness are predominating.”**

— Jenara Nerenberg, *Divergent Mind: Thriving in a World That Wasn't Designed for You*