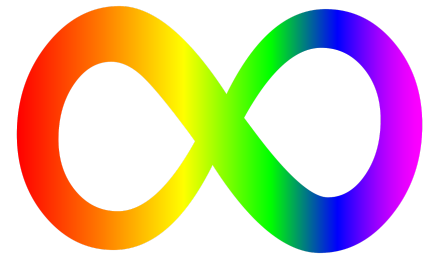




Neurodiversity

Awareness

Month



Neurodiversity : What it is and what it isn't



Neurodiversity is “the diversity of human brains and minds – the infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning within our species.” Neurodiversity is the biological fact that there are differences amongst all of the individuals in our species.

Neurodivergent is “having a brain that functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of “normal.”” Neurodivergent covers experiences that can be attributed to genetics and are innate (autism and dyslexia as examples), experiences that result from behaviors (trauma, mind altering drug use, meditation), or a combination of both.

Neurotypical is “the opposite of neurodivergent, not the opposite of autistic.” Neurotypical means having neurocognitive functions that fall within the dominant societal standards of “normal”. An individual can be neither neurotypical or autistic and still be neurodivergent (dyslexic or an individual with Down’s syndrome). It is not a negative or derogatory word though it can be used to criticize the behavior of neurotypicals or systems that only benefit neurotypical individuals.



The Neurodiversity Paradigm: a perspective on neurodiversity encompassing 3 principles

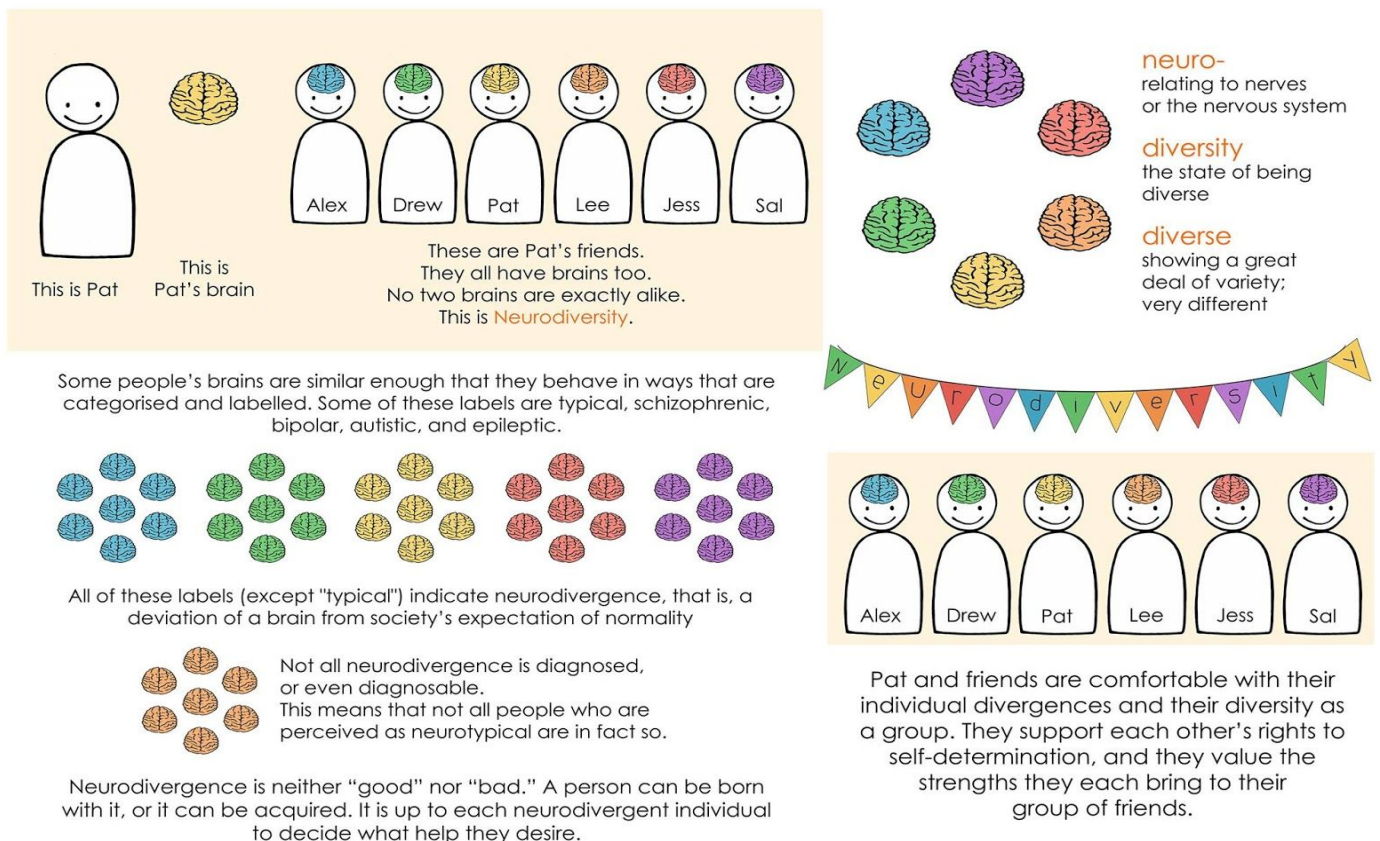
1. Neurodiversity is a natural and valuable form of human diversity
2. The idea that there is only one “normal”, “healthy”, or “right” kind of mind is a culturally constructed fiction that contributes no more than the ideas of a “normal, healthy, or right” gender, ethnicity, or culture.
3. As in other forms of diversity, the dynamics surrounding social inequalities as well as the dynamics of embracing the diversity exist.

The Neurodiversity Movement: “a social justice movement that seeks civil rights, equality, respect, and full societal inclusion for the neurodivergent.” The movement does not only advocate on the behalf of autistic individuals nor is it lead by one single group.

More terms and definitions can be found here:

<http://neurocosmopolitanism.com/neurodiversity-some-basic-terms-definitions/>

What is Neurodiversity?



neuro-
relating to nerves or the nervous system

diversity
the state of being diverse

diverse
showing a great deal of variety; very different

This is Pat
This is Pat's brain

Alex Drew Pat Lee Jess Sal

These are Pat's friends. They all have brains too. No two brains are exactly alike. This is **Neurodiversity**.

Some people's brains are similar enough that they behave in ways that are categorised and labelled. Some of these labels are typical, schizophrenic, bipolar, autistic, and epileptic.

All of these labels (except "typical") indicate neurodivergence, that is, a deviation of a brain from society's expectation of normality

Not all neurodivergence is diagnosed, or even diagnosable. This means that not all people who are perceived as neurotypical are in fact so.

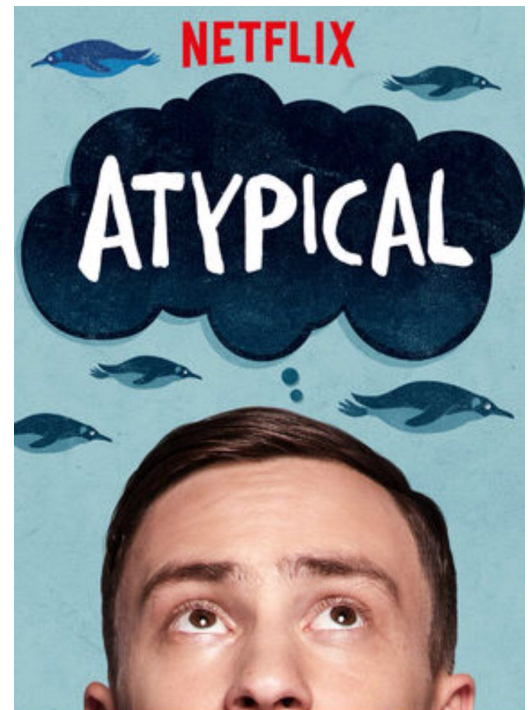
Neurodivergence is neither "good" nor "bad." A person can be born with it, or it can be acquired. It is up to each neurodivergent individual to decide what help they desire.

Alex Drew Pat Lee Jess Sal

Pat and friends are comfortable with their individual divergences and their diversity as a group. They support each other's rights to self-determination, and they value the strengths they each bring to their group of friends.

Neurodiversity in Media

The Netflix show *Atypical*, featuring a protagonist on the autistic spectrum, just came out with its second season. The show describes Sam's struggles with his everyday life and love life, as he experiences adolescence and different life changes.



Another movie with character with autism

as a lead role played by Dustin Hoffman is the classic movie *Rain Man*. Even the soundtrack by Hans Zimmer is written to reflect and contrast the character Raymond and his brother and might be worth a listen.

An example for a recurring character in a show would be the brilliant heart surgeon Virginia Dixon in *Grey's Anatomy*.

But there are far more examples across all forms of media. Often times, supporting characters are written to be on the spectrum or have single episodes dedicated to them and their story.



An extensive list can be found here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_autistic_fictional_characters



Public Figures

Jamie Brewer is an actress, best known from her work in *American Horror Story*. Along with her work as an actress she has been involved politically by advocating for the removal of the “r” word from state legislation in Texas, USA. She was also the first woman with Down’s Syndrome to walk in New York Fashion Week.



Alessia Cara is a singer who has synesthesia (a neurological condition where one sense is also perceived by another sense ie. hearing a sound and seeing different colors associated to that sound). “for me, it was just a natural pairing to my music. Everything audible was visual to me—and it still is.”

Dan Harmon is a TV show creator, famous for the shows *Community* and *Rick and Morty*. He found out he was on the autism spectrum later on life when he was writing a character for *Community* and found that he related to a lot of the characteristics.



Seasonal Depression

The weather is getting colder, the days are getting shorter and as we are approaching spooky season, there is another demon out there waiting for many who are affected:

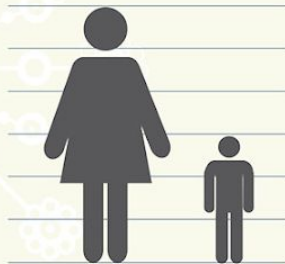


SEASONAL DEPRESSION

What you need to know about depression



21 MILLION
American adults suffer from depressive illness during any one year period.

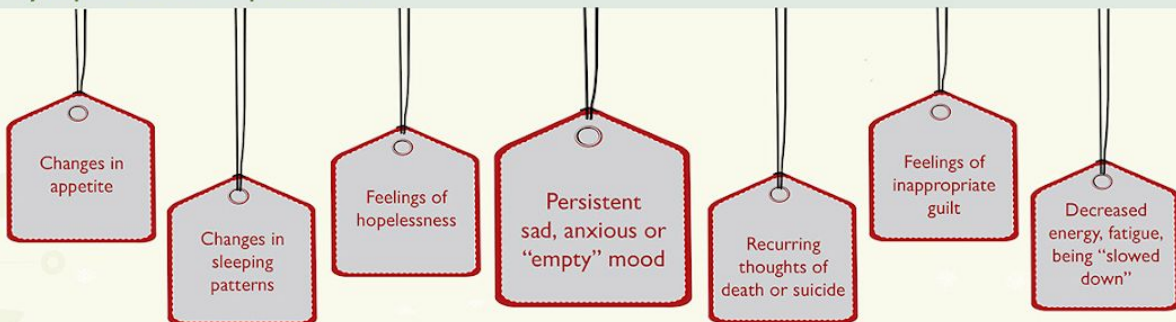


WOMEN
experience depression **2x** as often as men.



Without treatment, depression can last weeks, months or years.

Symptoms of depression



Major depression is classified as a type of affective disorder or mood disorder that goes beyond the day's ordinary ups and downs, becoming a serious medical condition and important health concern in this country.

How can you beat holiday depression?



Exercise
A daily 30-minute walk may help prevent depression – so take a brisk stroll down a snowy path!



Enjoy the Sunlight
As little as 15 to 30 minutes of sunlight, best in the early morning, will go a long way to alleviating the winter blahs.



Get enough Sleep
A lack of sleep can take a toll on your mood – so aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.



Moderate Alcohol Consumption
Two glasses of wine are plenty for the holiday party – one if you've already had the eggnog.



Adjust Expectations
Don't let visions of perfection spoil everything. Learn that most things can be good enough – gifts, food, company, etc.

Concerned about depression?

If the depressed mood is serious, leading to isolation, crying spells, not sleeping or eating, hopelessness and thoughts of death or suicide, **get help immediately.**

