



Teach The Spectrum.com



NEURODIVERSITY

Different NOT Less

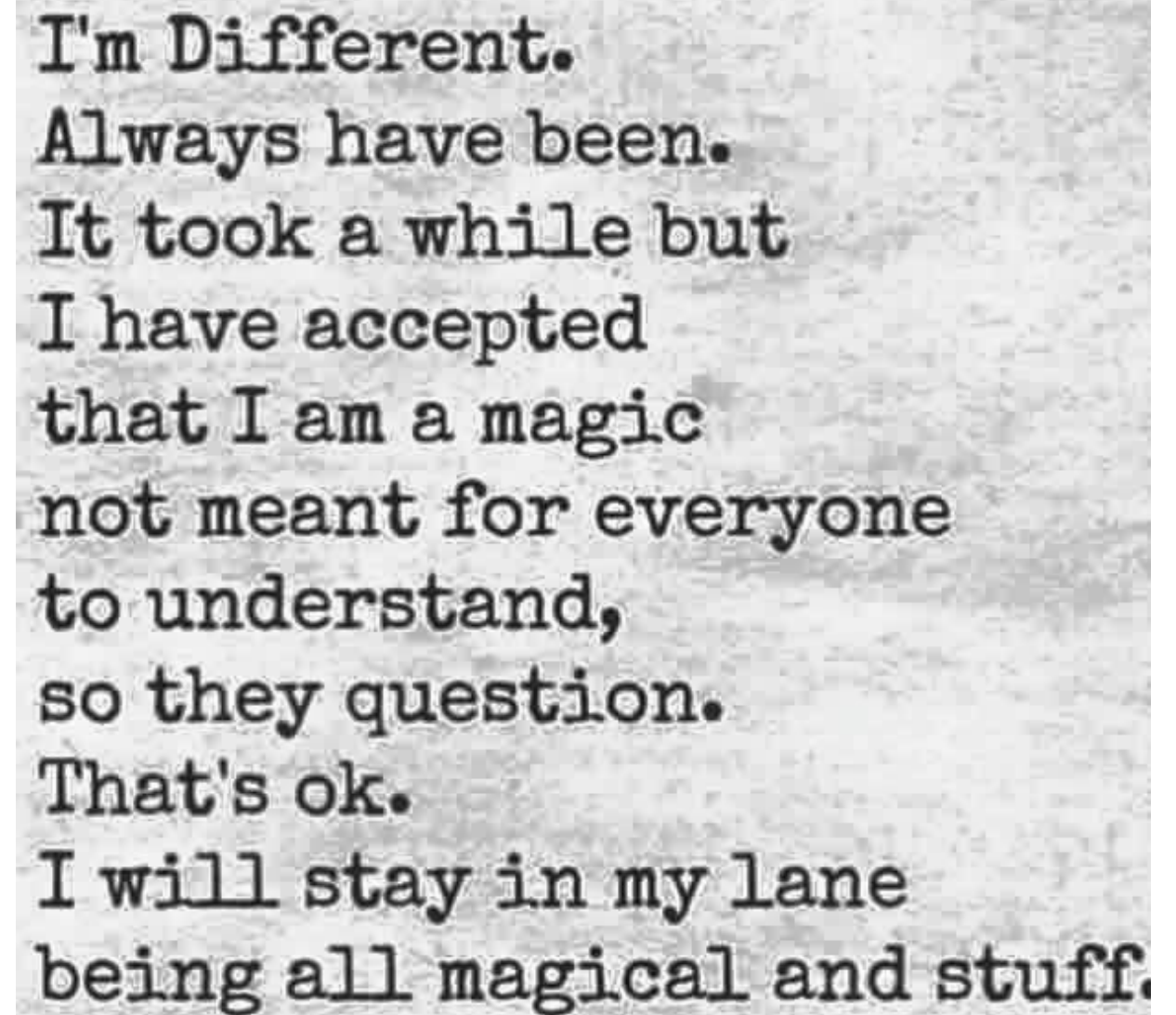
Neurodiversity is the idea that variation in brain function exists across the population. Differences such as autism and ADHD have existed throughout human history and are not due to faulty neural circuitry. Rather than viewing them as such, neurodiversity embraces autism as a different way of thinking and behaving.

Autism

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 36 children in the United States today.

Challenges for Children With Autism

- Sensory Dysfunction.
- Verbal Comprehension.
- Executive Function.
- Motor Skills.
- Social Communication.
- Changing Rules.
- Changing Routines.
- Tolerance of Behaviors



I'm Different.
Always have been.
It took a while but
I have accepted
that I am a magic
not meant for everyone
to understand,
so they question.
That's ok.
I will stay in my lane
being all magical and stuff.

Possible Strengths



Common Challenges



REMEMBER

Our Neurodivergent students possess just as many strengths as challenges. It is our job to encourage, support and build those strengths while providing support for the challenges that can be very specific to that child. Think of self-regulation as an internal thermometer that monitors our body and mind; constantly checking on our physical, mental, emotional, and social states. For many Neurodivergent people, that thermometer may not be as accurate, available, and able as some Neurotypical people.

First	Then
<p>Put toys away</p>	<p>Play on computer</p>

Washing my Hands

<p>Wet hands with water.</p>	<p>Use 1 squirt of soap. Rub onto your hands.</p>	<p>Rinse your hands with water.</p>	<p>Use a paper towel to dry your hands.</p>
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WHY VISUAL SUPPORTS..?

NEURO-TYPICAL BRAIN	NEURO-DIVERSE BRAIN
<p>10x more powerful</p>	<p>10x more powerful</p>
<p>Ability to process what is heard.</p>	<p>Ability to process what is seen.</p>
<p>Why VISUAL CUES are necessary</p>	

Circle Time
Centers
Snack
Group Time
Lunch
Outside
Nap Time
Art
Centers

Whole Body Listening	Whole Body Listening

Visual Supports

Visual supports and visual schedules are used to help Neurodivergent students improve their skills in: processing information. understanding and using language. understanding and interacting with their physical and social environments.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Avoid sensory overload. Many unexpected things can be distracting to students with autism. Fluorescent lights, smells, and noises from other students can make it difficult for students with autism to concentrate. Using cool, calm colors in the classroom can help create a more relaxing atmosphere. Avoid covering the walls with too many posters or other things to look at. Some students may even benefit from their own center, where they can spend time away from any possible distractions.

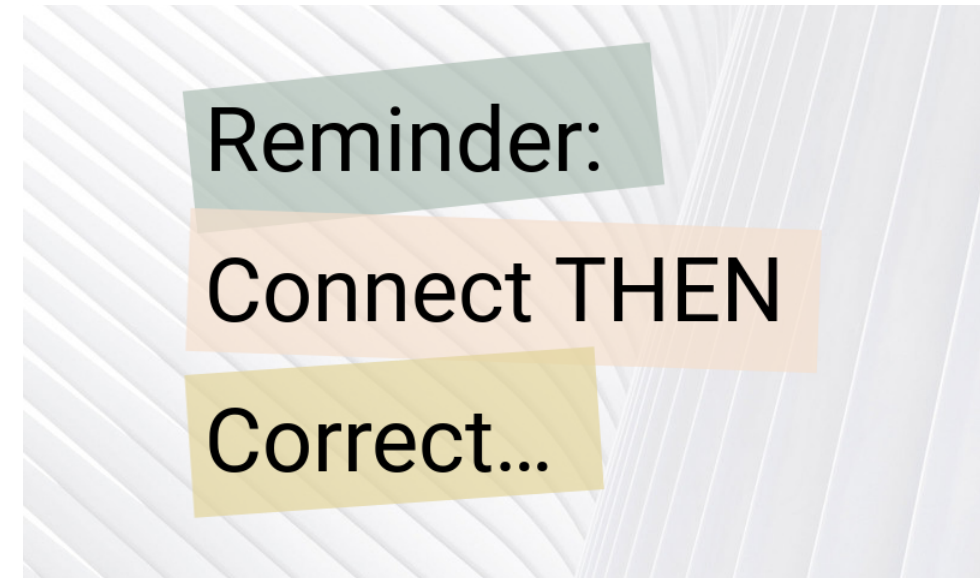
Use visuals. Even individuals with autism who can read benefit from visuals. Visuals can serve as reminders about classroom rules, where certain things go, and resources that are available to students. Using pictures and modeling will mean more to students with autism than a lengthy explanation.

Be predictable. If you've ever been a substitute teacher, you know about the unspoken anxiety of being with a different class (sometimes in a different school) every day. Having predictability in the classroom eases anxiety for students with autism and will help avoid distraction. Students are less worried or curious about what will happen next and can better focus on the work at hand. Give your student a schedule that they can follow. If there are any unpredictable changes, it's a great teaching moment to model how to handle changes appropriately.

Keep language concrete. "Can you please give an inch?!", "I've told you a MILLION times!", "Why aren't you following along!?" Figurative language is a problem for many individuals with autism who have trouble understanding figurative language and interpret it in very concrete terms. This may serve as a great opportunity to teach figurative language and hidden meanings in certain terms.

Directly teach social skills. The hidden curriculum may be too hidden for some individuals with autism. There are certain things that may have to be explicitly taught (like analogies). Model appropriate social skills and discuss how our behavior can make others feel. Social Thinking is a great curriculum with picture books such as *You Are a Social Detective* that explain social skills in an easy to understand way.

Treat students as individuals. I'm sure this goes without saying, but I'm going to say it: It's so important to model patience, understanding, and respect when working in a classroom with any special learners. Celebrate their success and don't sweat it if some accommodations don't conform to what you are used to in the classroom. Keep in mind that some of these recommendations may be super helpful for some students, while others may not need the same degree of consideration. Autism can affect individuals differently.



Think "Sandwich Technique": Praise. Correction. Praise.



The #1 Behavioral Support you can provide your ASD student...

Autism Spectrum

The Autism Spectrum is NOT linear



less autistic

very autistic

The Autism Spectrum looks more like:



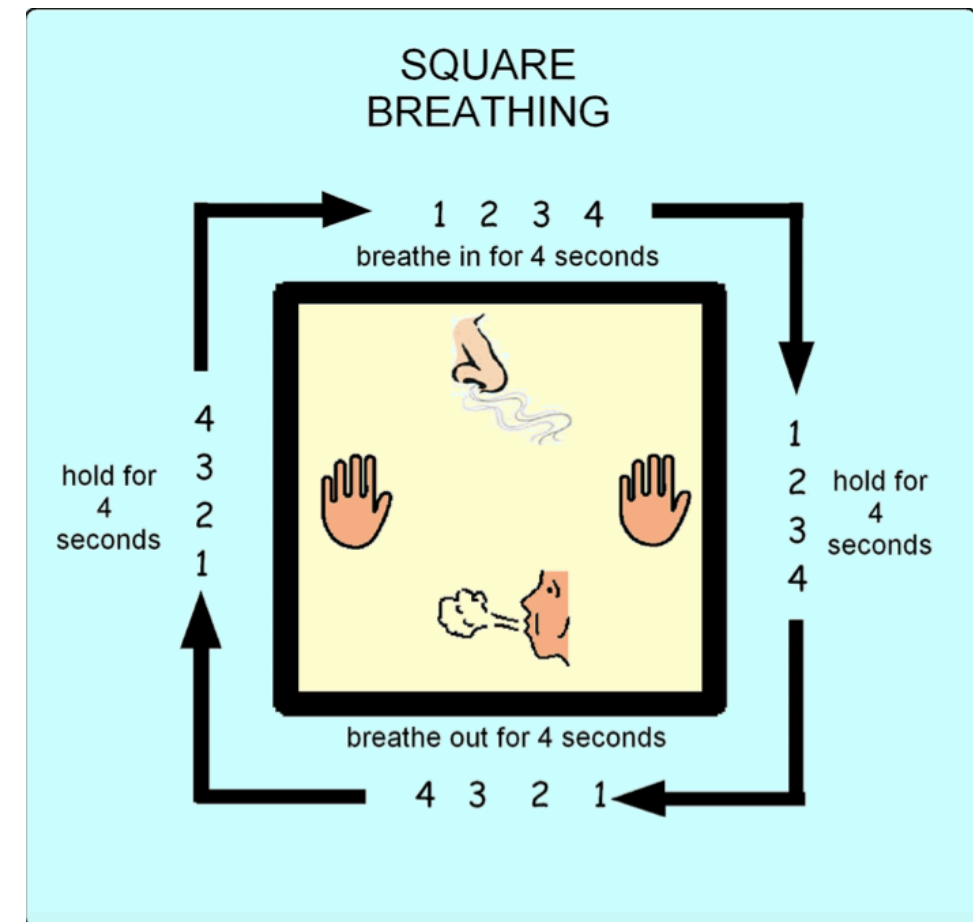
- Social differences
- interests
- repetitions
- sensory sensitivities
- emotional regulation
- perception
- executive functioning
- other

Terms like "high functioning", "low functioning" and "Asperger" are harmful and outdated.



The Maori word for autism is "Takiwatanga"


It means "In his/her own time and space"



EXPLICITLY TEACH SOCIAL SKILLS



ENTERING PLAY: A Teachable Lesson



- AWARENESS OF OTHERS & OUR OWN THOUGHTS
- USE OUR BODIES TO MAKE OUR PRESENCE KNOWN
- USE OUR EYES TO CONVEY EMOTIONS & MONITOR REACTIONS
- USE LANGUAGE TO SHARE & ASK

WHAT DOES WORK:

- **HELP** - "Would you like a drink of water?"
- **PROMPT** - "Please walk with me to line."
- **WAIT** - "I'm here to help if you need me."

**REMOVE TRIGGERS
REDIRECT STUDENT
SAFETY FIRST**

CLASSROOM ROUTINES

Visual Cue Cards

A research-based strategy for nonverbal praise & redirection!

REFRAME THE BEHAVIOUR

"KIDS DO WELL IF THEY CAN"
~ROSS GREENE



"SEE A CHILD DIFFERENTLY, YOU SEE A DIFFERENT CHILD"
~Dr. Stuart Shanker




When kids exhibit challenging behaviour we can be "STRESS DETECTIVES"...finding and removing barriers.

- FIND STRESSORS → REDUCE THEM
- FIND UNMET NEEDS → MEET THEM
- FIND SKILLS DEFICITS → TEACH THEM

@kwiens62

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING IMPROVES IN CALM ENVIRONMENTS

- Exists in the Frontal lobe
- Binds events over time (*only now)
- Social Functioning
- Reciprocity ("Win-Win")
- Connects to the Limbic System* (EMOTION & MEMORY)

1. EXTRA PROCESSING TIME
2. "PARTNER PICKING" HELP
3. ALLOW FOR SOLO WORK
4. EXTRA COMPASSION (Post Lunch)
5. EXPLICITLY TEACH ABSTRACT
6. ALERT TO    CHANGES

Social Story Guidelines

1. Write social stories from the perspective of the individual with autism.
2. Use a combination of descriptive, perspective, and directive sentences.
 - a. Descriptive sentences describe what people do in a given social situation, why they are doing it, when and where the event will take place, and who will be involved.
 - b. Perspective sentences describe the thoughts and feelings of other individuals. These sentences may be related to consequences because they describe how another individual may react when the individual with autism engages in the behavior.
 - c. Directive sentences state the goals of the story by listing the responses the student is expected to provide during a given situation.
3. Employ one directive sentence for every two to five descriptive and/or perspective sentences.

Why I Should Not Yell Out In Class When I Need Help



When Miss Garcia helps us with math, the children usually do not yell out. When they need Miss Garcia's help, they can ask for help by raising their hand.



When they raise their hand, they wait quietly and patiently. They do not get angry if she does not come right away



When I need help with my work, I will try not to yell out. When I want help, I will raise my hand and wait quietly.



Miss Garcia will usually help me if I ask for help. Miss Garcia will be happy if I do not yell out and wait patiently for her to come.



Comprehension Questions: What do the children do when they need Miss Garcia's help? What should I do when I need Miss Garcia's help? Will Miss Garcia be happy if I ask for help?



SELF-REGULATION

A calm room within the school setting can allow children the opportunity to access a variety of tools and techniques to combat strong emotions and stress that prevent them from focusing on learning. In this space, children can gain a sense of safety, quiet, and grounding to regulate their emotions and mood.



KNOW the DIFFERENCE...

- *Not on Purpose
- *Requests for Communication
Worsens Situation
- *Harder on Them
- NO Agenda**

Tantrums & Meltdowns

Tantrums	Overlap	Meltdowns
Controlled	Irrational	Disregulated
Purposeful	Misunderstood	Emotional
Frustrated	Exhausting	Overwhelmed
Aware	Lack of Skills	Unaware
Communicative	Signaling a Need	Unresponsive

REMEMBER:

ADAPTING OUR
OWN PERCEPTION,
FOLLOWING
RATHER THAN
LEADING AND
BUILDING BRIDGES
ARE ALL KEYS TO
HELPING THE
CHILD WITH
AUTISM LEARN.

ADELE DEVINE

"I might hit developmental and societal milestones in a different order than my peers, but I am able to accomplish these small victories on my own time."

-HALEY MOSS

*Attorney, Autism Spectrum Award Winner 2019
Advisory Board Member*

WHEN YOUR STUDENT CAN'T, CAN YOU...

- BE FLEXIBLE
- STAY CONSISTENT
- BE PATIENT
- BE SPECIFIC
- BE EMPATHETIC
- ASK FOR HELP
- AVOID ACCUSATIONS
- AVOID "STOCK-PILING"

“If they can’t learn the way we teach, we teach the way they learn...”

- Dr. Ivar Lovaas

Alan Aymie

Alan wrote and performed, *A Child Left Behind*, a solo play about autism, education and every child’s first teacher in 2010. He continues to perform it across the country each April to raise autism awareness and acceptance. An educator & Autism Specialist for 25 years. Alan continues to provide autism life coaching, professional development and educational advocacy through his company, TeachtheSpectrum.com. He currently lives in Los Angeles with his wife and family and can be reached at : alan@teachthespectrum.com

