

Employee Assistance Program

Your resource for help with daily challenges and difficult situations

April Is Autism Acceptance Month

Embracing Neurodiversity

Everyone's brain is different and develops in its own way. Neurotypical brain functions are considered "usual" or "expected by society." Neurodivergent individuals' brains, however, are unique and their behaviors or responses differ from what is expected socially, physically or verbally. Knowing the myths and facts about neurodiversity helps foster inclusive and thriving environments for neurodivergent individuals.

MYTH

Neurodiversity is the same as autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

All neurodiverse individuals are identical/similar.

Neurodivergent individuals lack communication skills.

Neurodivergent individuals choose not to engage in forming relationships.

Neurodivergent individuals have little chance of succeeding in school, at work or in their communities.

FACT

Neurodiversity includes ASD, as well as other neurological conditions, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, dyspraxia, intellectual disabilities, Tourette's syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and other mental health conditions.

All individuals, whether neurotypical or neurodiverse, are unique in their learning and experiences. Recognizing the diversity within neurodiverse individuals is vital to developing inclusive environments.

Like neurotypical individuals, neurodivergent individuals have diverse communication styles. Many communicate effectively in unique ways. Tailoring communication strategies to various styles fosters inclusivity and supports personal growth.

Many neurodivergent individuals genuinely desire connections with others but often feel sadness or a sense of isolation when faced with difficulties in forming those connections. Nonetheless, they can have authentic, enduring relationships, particularly when others are accepting and mindful of their differences.

With equitable opportunities and tools, neurodivergent individuals can be as successful as others.

For more information about neurodiversity, call your Employee Assistance Program at 1-866-EAP-4SOC (1-866-327-4762) TTY: 711 or visit eap.calhr.ca.gov.

Source: *Debunking Myths About Neurodiversity in the Workplace* – Stephanie Barnes, *Debunking The Neurodiversity Myths* – eLearning Industry