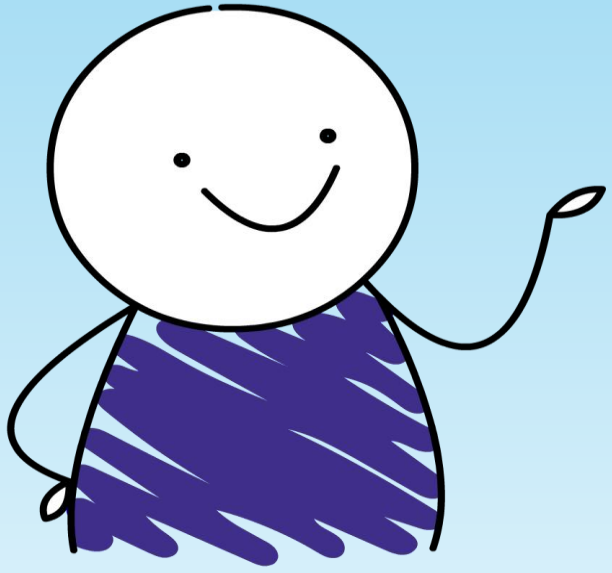


Understanding Neurodiversity: Supporting Children at Home and School

What is the **Mental Health Support Team (MHST)**?

MHST have three core functions

To deliver evidence-based interventions in an educational setting for mild-to-moderate mental health issues

Support the Mental Health Lead in each school or college to introduce or develop whole school or college approach

Give timely advice to school and college staff and liaise with external specialist services to help children and young people to get the right support and stay in education.



Housekeeping

Disclaimer:

The tools and suggestions we speak about are not a one-size-fits-all.

All children, young people, and families are unique and we need to try to use a person-centred approach to find the best solution.



Respect help us to create a safe space



Confidentiality



Any other boundaries we would like to set?

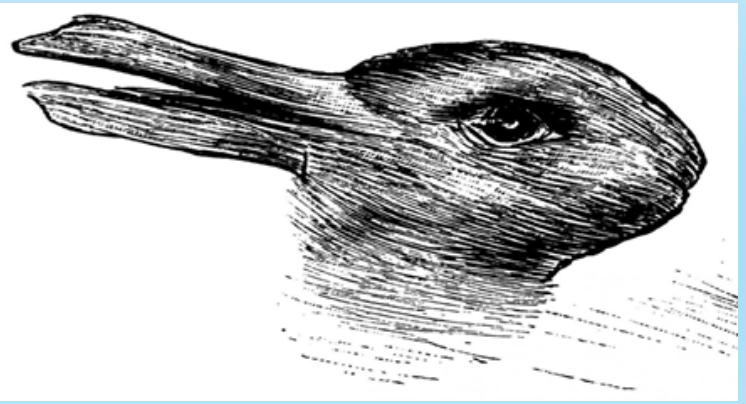


Agenda

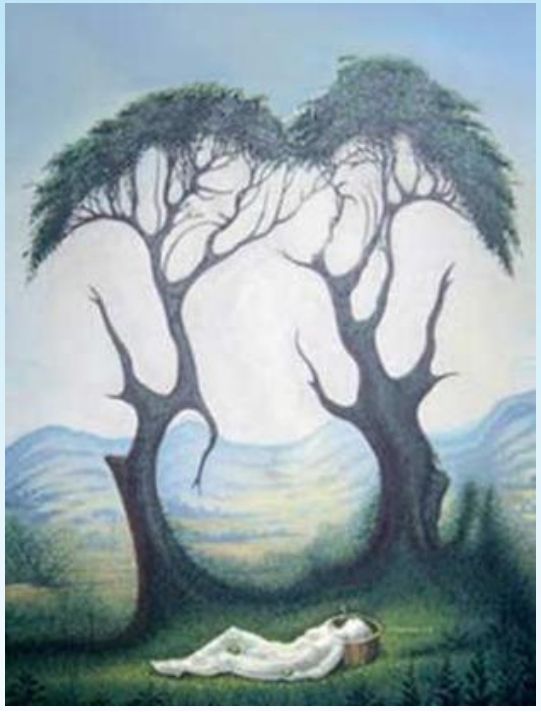
- What is Neurodiversity?
- Overview of Autism, ADHD and other differences
- Understanding behaviours
- Universal and Home Strategies
- Local Support Available
- Questions and Reflections



What can you see?



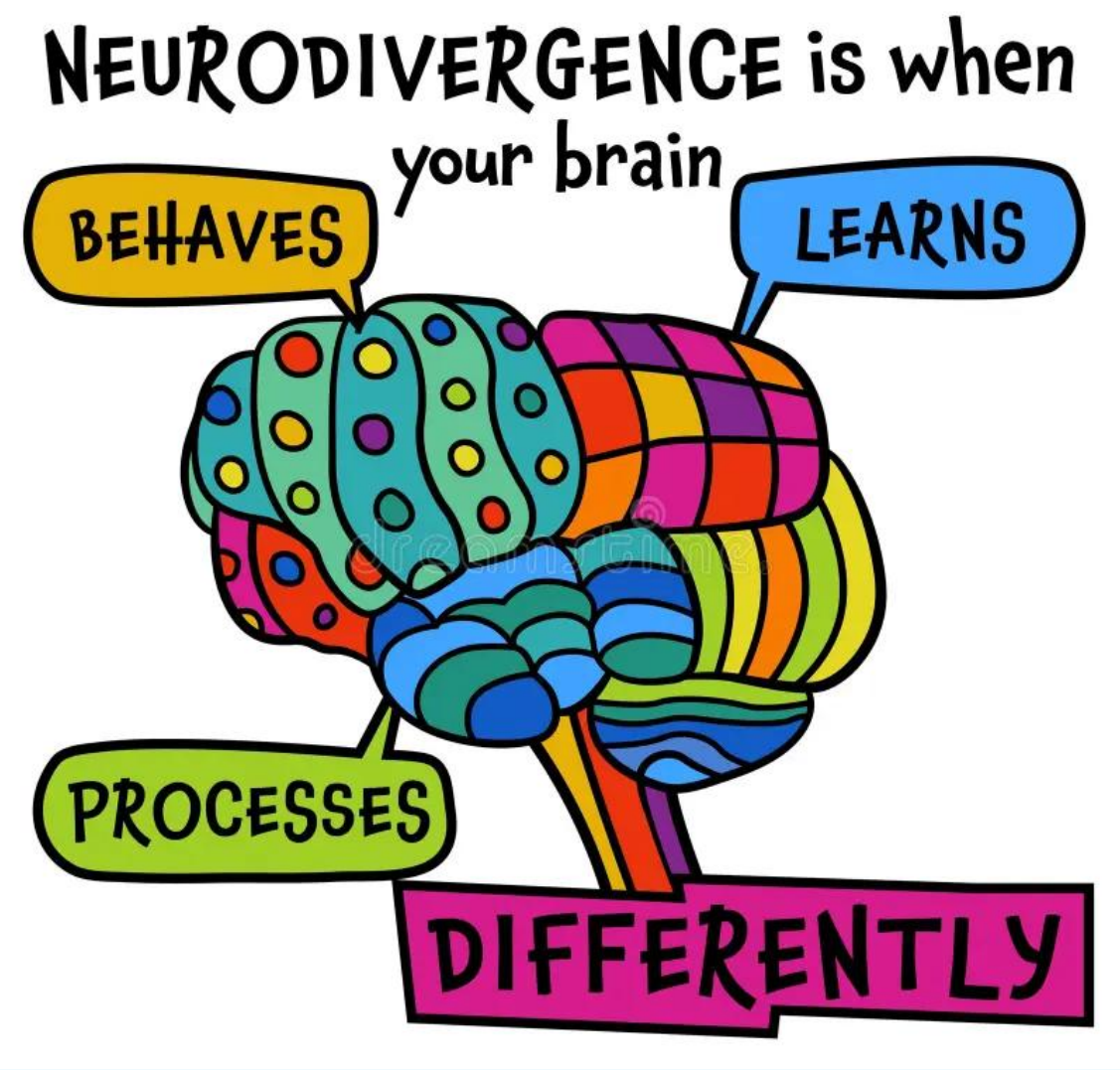








What is Neurodiversity?

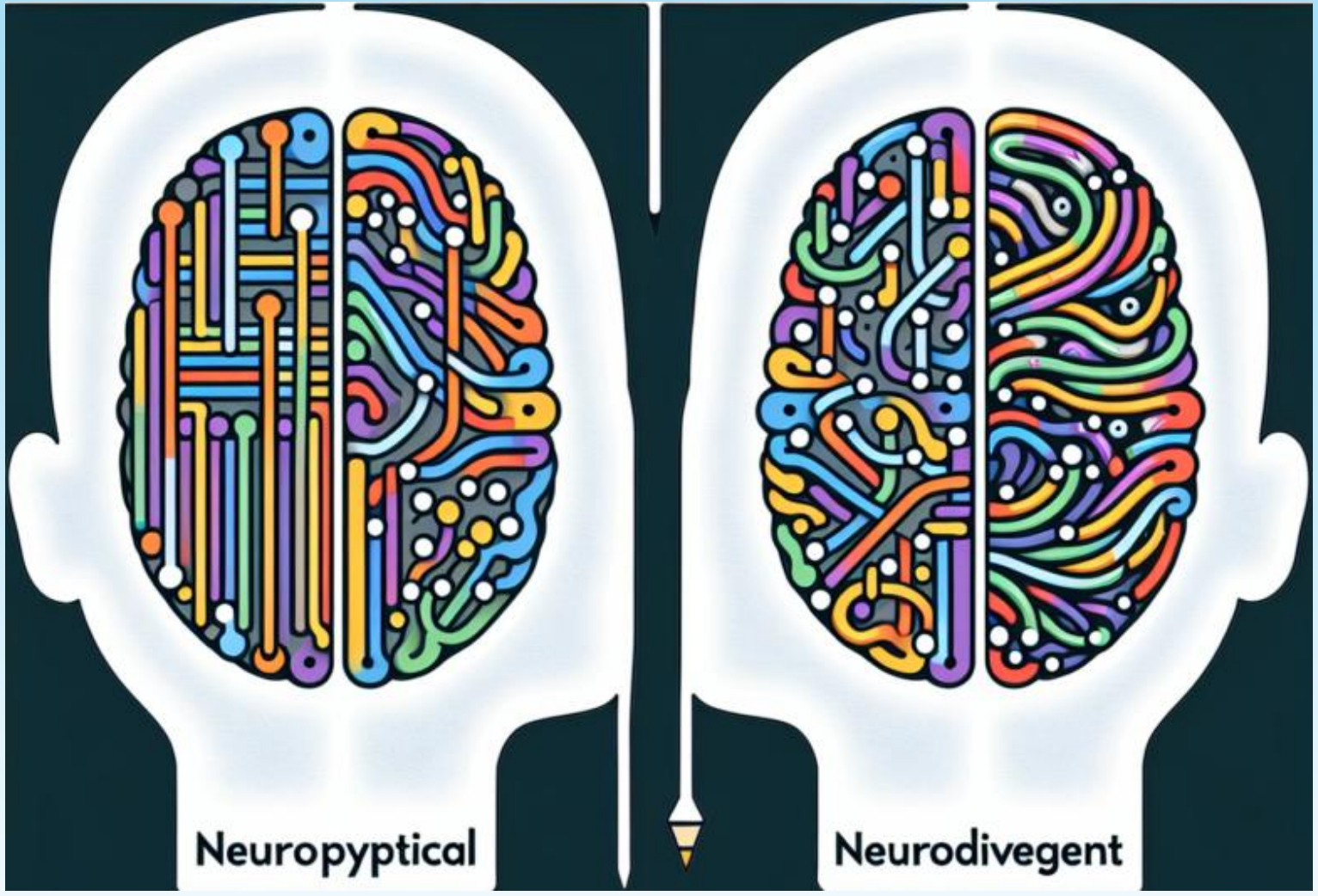


Neuro = Brain

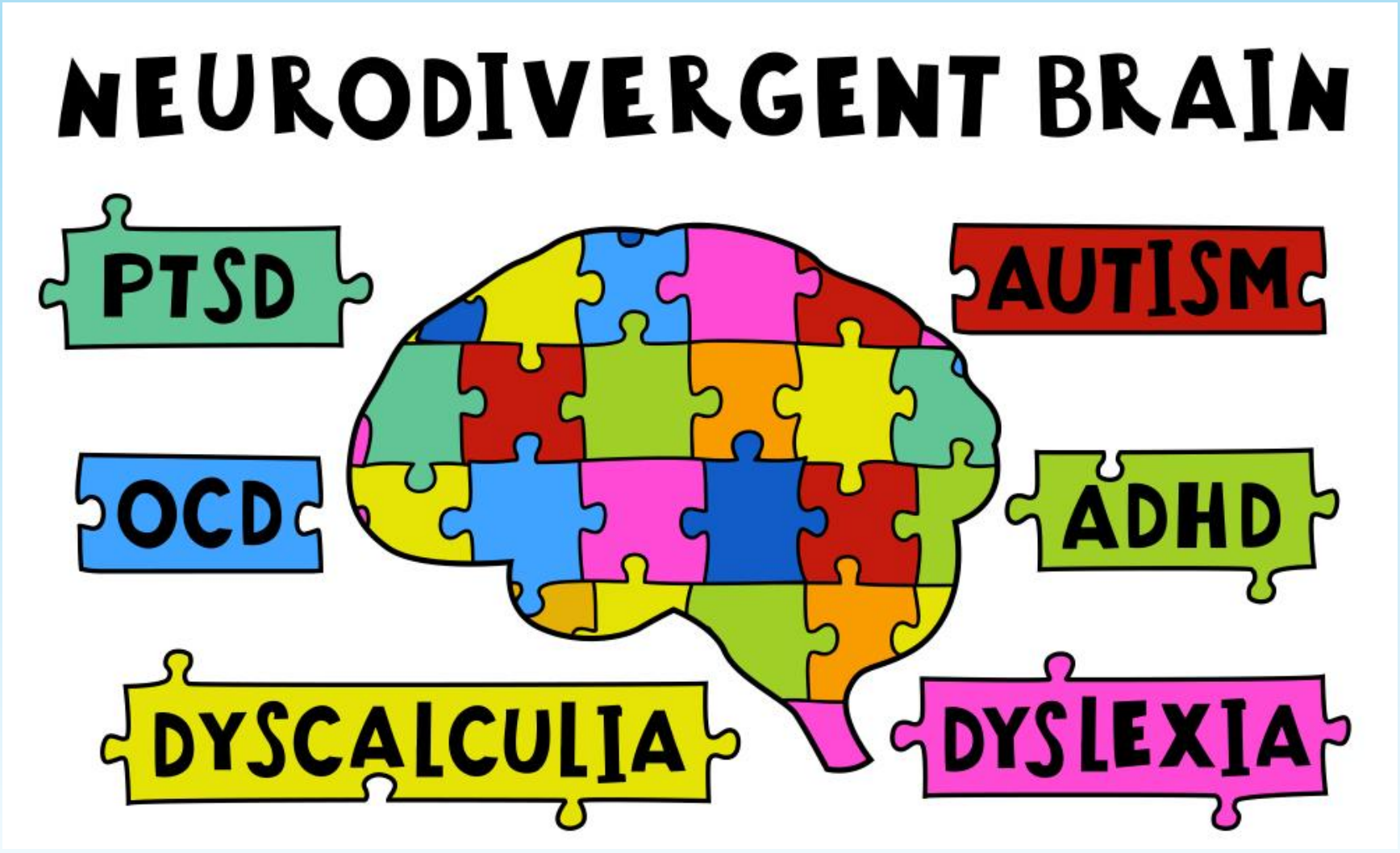
Divergent = Different

Neurodivergence means that a person's brain works in a way that is different from what is considered 'typical'

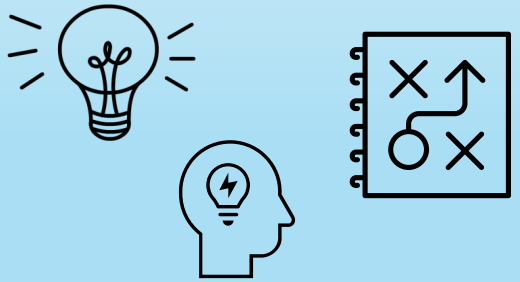
Neurotypical Vs Neurodivergent



Examples of Neurodiversity



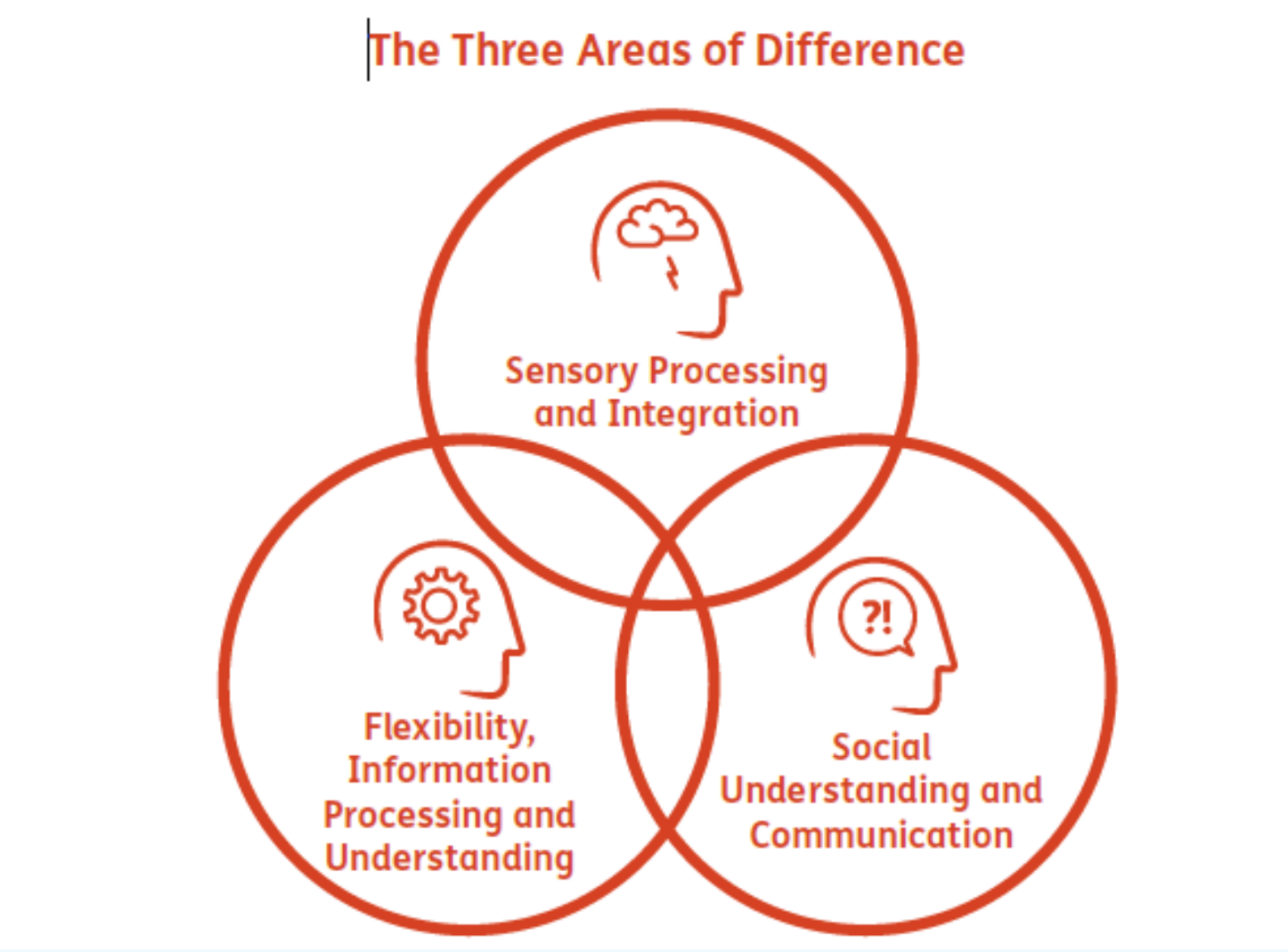
Strengths of Neurodiversity





- Creativity
- Pattern Recognition
- Honesty
- Problem Solving
- Innovative Thinking
- Curiosity

Differences within Neurodiversity



Autism Spectrum Disorder



Autism – How it may Present?

Social & communication differences

Sensory Sensitives

Intense Interests

Repetitive behaviours

Preference for Routines

Autism – Strengths



ADHD


ATTENTION
DEFICIT
1
2
ADHD
MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION
4
3
DISORDER
HYPERACTIVITY

ADHD – How it may Present?

Inattention

Hyperactivity

Emotional Regulation Difficulties

Impulsivity

ADHD – Strengths



Understanding Behaviour

Behaviour is a form of communication

When a neurodiverse child does these:

- ‘Meltdowns’
- Struggling to move onto another task
- Shutting down

They might feel:

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling anxious

They might need:

- Needs support

Responding to behaviour



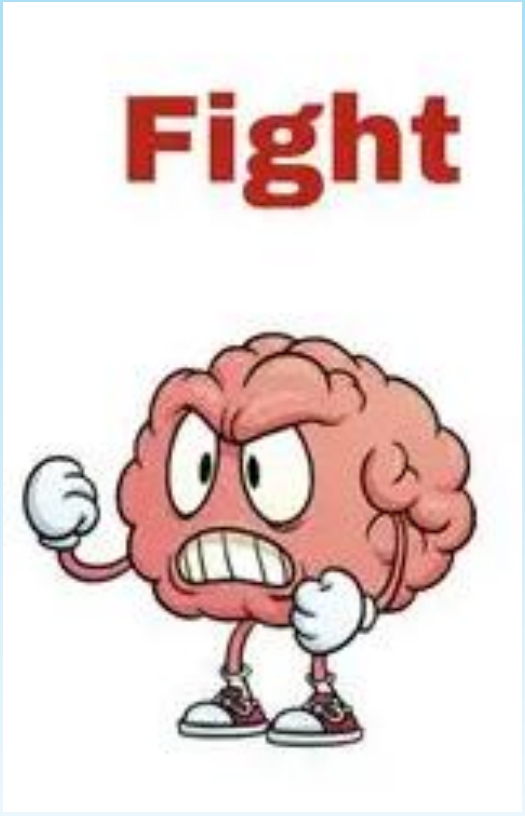
Behaviour
We see and respond to this

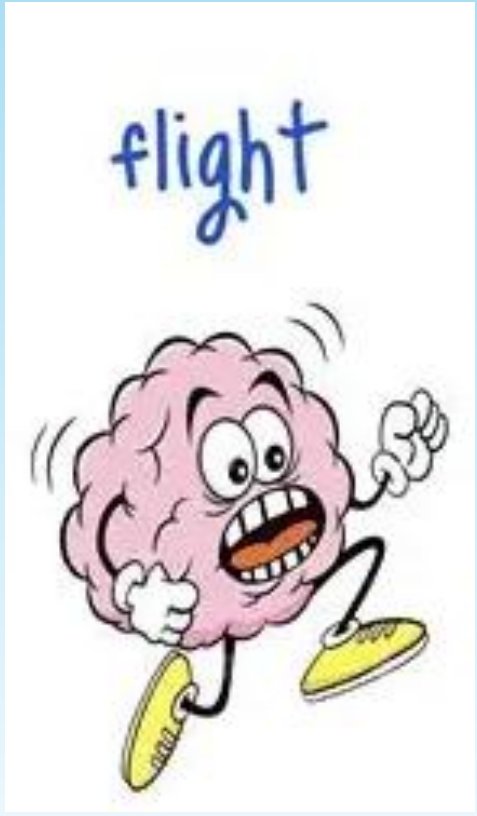
Unwelcome behaviour is often punished but if the thoughts and feelings are resolved or eased, the behaviour will change.

Thoughts and feelings driving the behaviour. We don't usually see or respond to this



Anxiety/Stress







It starts with developing an awareness…

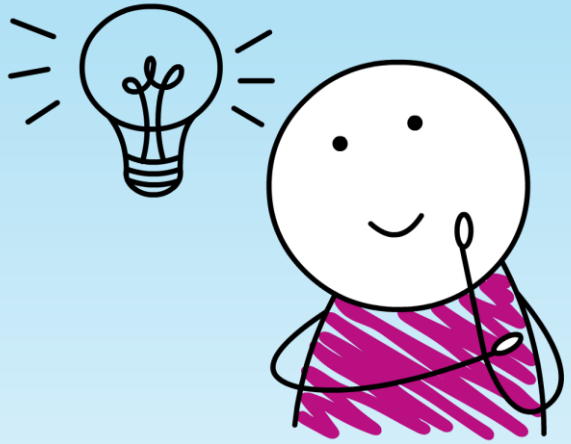
- Knowing about feelings helps children understand themselves, the situation they are in, and whether they need to do something to manage the feeling.

- Talk about emotions at home. Normalise and **model** it. Make it part of the everyday. Ask questions related to feelings:

  - *I felt frustrated at work today so I went for a walk at lunch time and felt much better.*
  - *How did you feel when we were late for school?*
  - *In this story how do you think the character felt about X happening?*
  - *Did you sleep well last night?*

How can we respond?

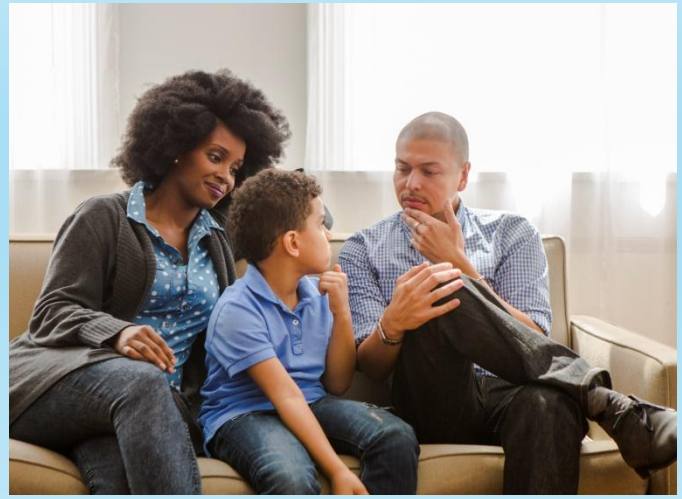
- **Validate, normalise and identify their feelings. Reflect on what you see:**
  - *I can see that you are very worried.*
  - *I would feel very angry if that happened to me.*
  - *I can understand why you are feeling sad.*
  - *I think most people would feel worried if that happened to them.*



- **Give them time to reconnect their thinking brain:**
  - *It's hard to think things through when we are upset, so we need to figure this out when you are feeling less upset.*

- **Create a sense of collaboration:**
  - *What do you think we should do next?*

- **You don't have to know the answers:**
  - *I'm not sure what to do about that.*
    I need to have a think about it but
    I will try my best to help you.



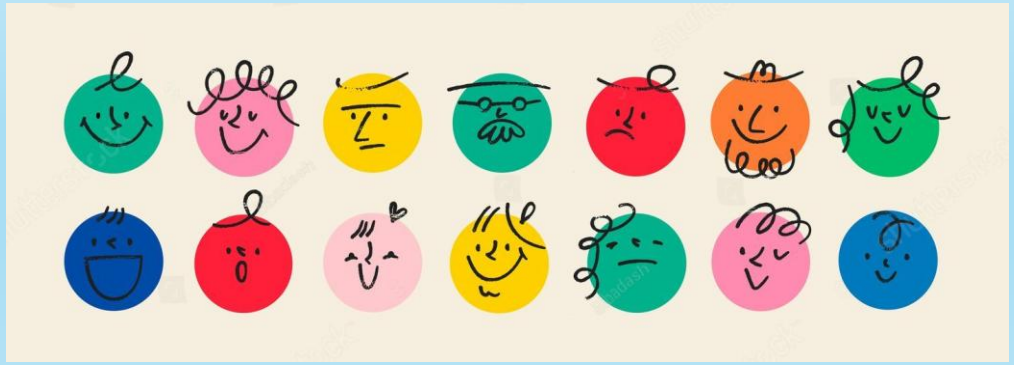
- **Give children as much choice and control as possible:**
  - *Would you like to do it now or later?*
  - *Would you like to tell your teacher or shall we do it together?*

- **Give hope for the future:**
  - *I know this is a really difficult feeling but I want you to remember that you won't always feel like this, the feeling will go.*

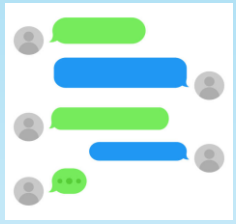
- **If children tell you about their difficult feelings, thank them:**
  - *Thank you for telling me about this, I can imagine it wasn't an easy thing to do.*











Alternative communication methods

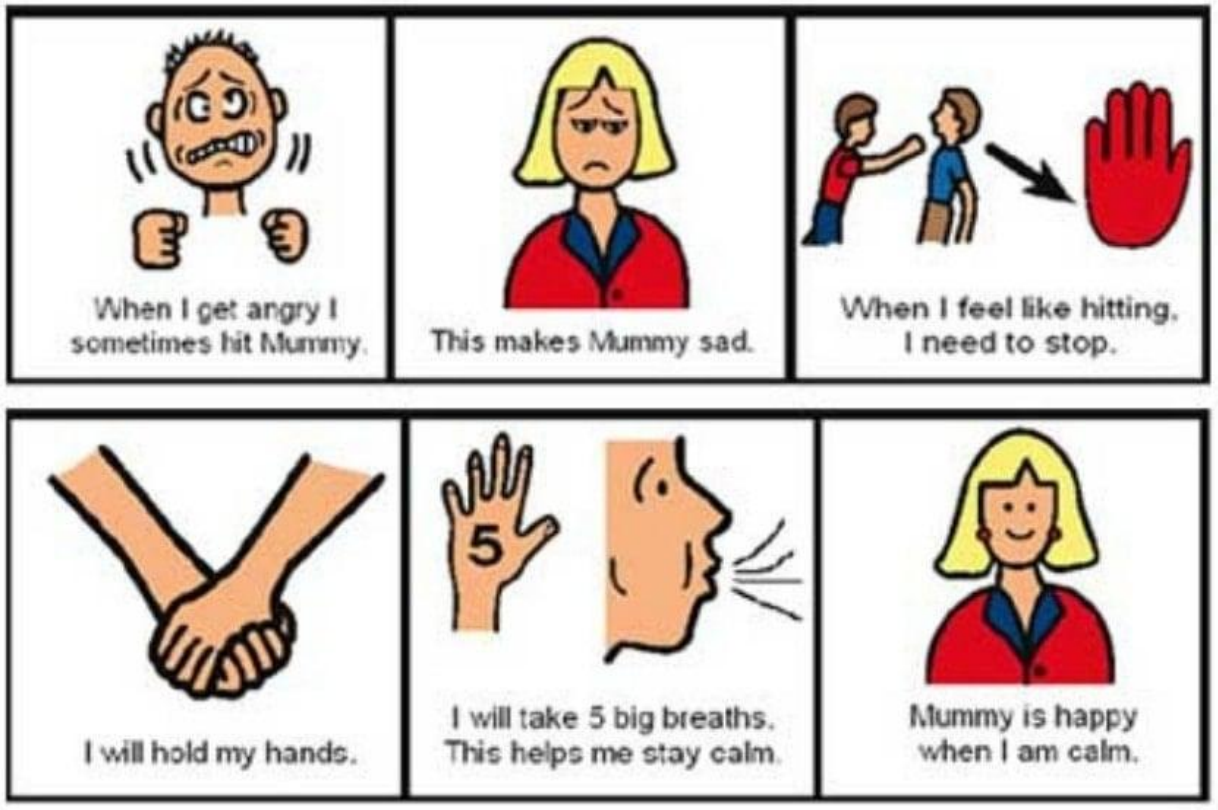








Social Stories



Ordinarily Available Provision



- Support that schools are expected to provide for all children.
- No diagnosis needed.
- Part of a graduated approach to meeting needs.

Creating a Supportive Home Environment

Consistent routines

Preparation for Change

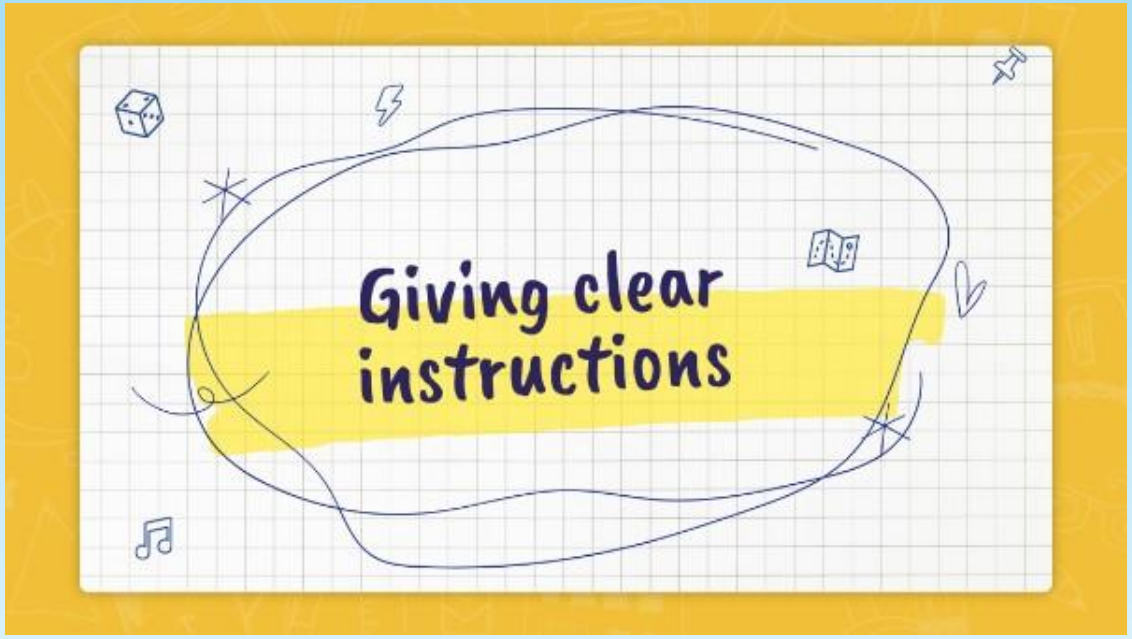
Choices with Boundaries

Sensory Support

Express emotions

Making Commands Effective

- Avoid unnecessary commands
- One command at a time
- Keep commands brief
- Use positive/do commands
- Avoid question commands
- Avoid power struggles
- Offer choices - "when...then..."
- Age-appropriate commands
- Give warnings and reminders
- Give time to comply (wait for response – 5 second rule
- Be polite
- Use distractions and redirections

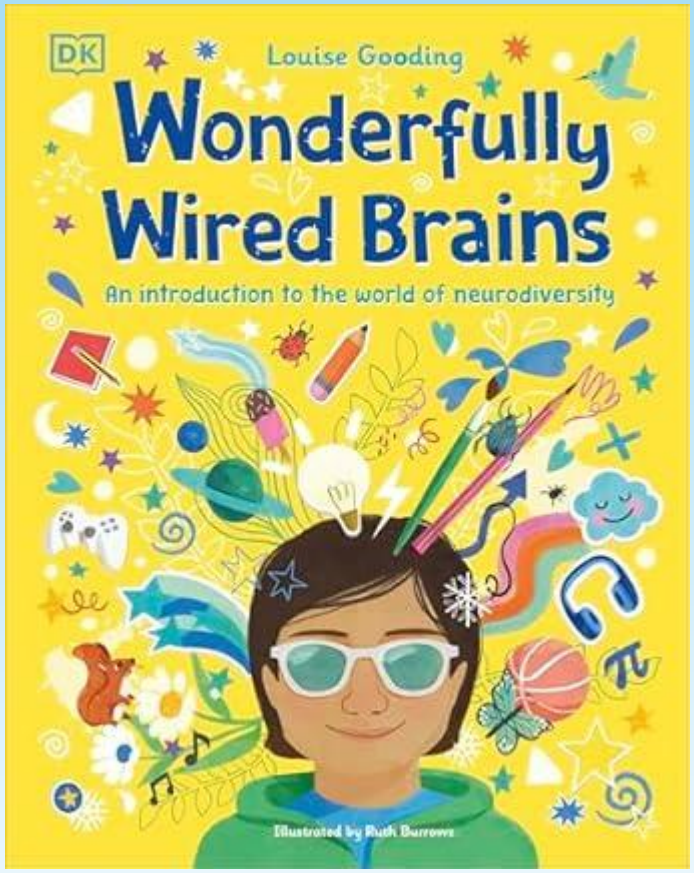


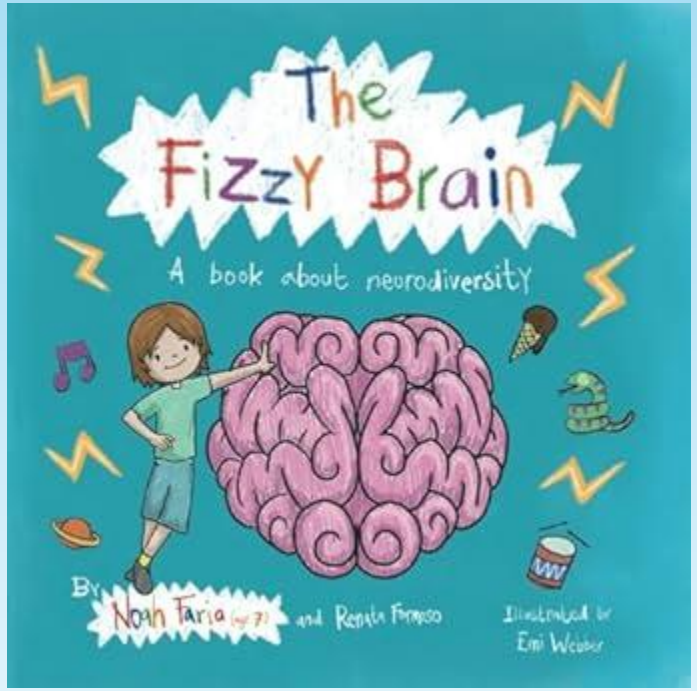
What doesn't help

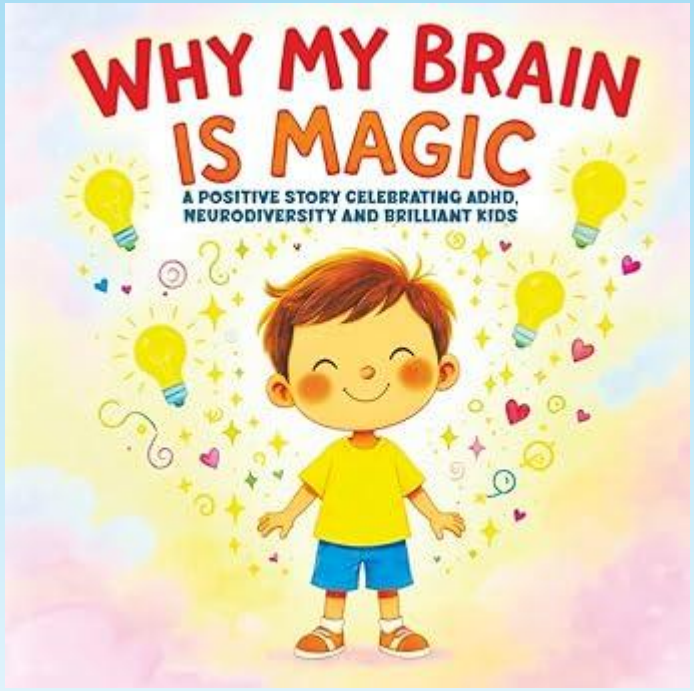


- Punishing behaviour caused by anxiety or overwhelm
- Removing support too soon
- Assuming "they should know better"
- Comparing your child to others
- Ignoring sensory or emotional needs

Books for children









Thank you for listening
Any Questions?

Feedback is very important to our service to continually improve the service we provide. Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire using the QR code. Thank you!

IT'S OK TO NOT BE OK.
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

NHS **SPA**	**Advice, help & support (24/7)** **0800 6444 101**	https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/ **Call 111 (or 999 in an emergency)**
Childline	**Advice, help & support.** Online counsellors available: https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/	https://www.childline.org.uk/ **Call 0800 11 11**
HOPELINE UK	**Prevention of young suicide** helpline. *(Phoneline open 9am – Midnight everyday)*	https://www.papyrus-uk.org/papyrus-hopelineuk/ **Call 0800 068 4141 or Text 07786 209697**
NSPCC	**Advice, help & support** for parents/carers & young people.	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/ **Call 0808 800 5000**
Samaritans	**Advice, help & support (24/7)**	https://www.samaritans.org/ **Call 116 123**
ADDvance	**ADHD & Autism help & support** in Herts for parents.	https://www.add-vance.org
The Sandbox	**Mental health support, help & advice** for parents/carers & young people in Herts.	https://sandbox.mindler.co.uk/?
Shout	**Mental health support (24/7)**	https://giveusashout.org/ **Text 'SHOUT' to 85258**
Young Minds	**Mental health support, help & advice** for parents/carers & young people.	https://www.youngminds.org.uk/ **Text 'YM' to 852558**
Stonewall	**LGBTQ+ support, help & advice** for parents/carers & young people.	https://www.stonewall.org.uk
Mind Mental health support, help & advice for parents/carers & young people.	**BLMK** Bedford, Luton & Milton Keynes	https://www.mind-blmk.org.uk/how-we-can-help/central-bedfordshire/
	Bucks Mind	https://www.bucksmind.org.uk
	Herts Mind Network	https://www.hertsmindnetwork.org/services-for-young-people/
BEAT	**Eating disorder** help & support. Webchat & helpline available. *(Phoneline open 9am-Midnight Monday-Friday & 4pm-Midnight Weekends & Bank Holidays)*	https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/ **Call 0808 801 0677**

NHS Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

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Our Values
Welcoming Kind Positive Respectful Professional

MHST
Herts & West Essex Mental Health Support Teams