

ICCCFO

Spring 2023

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Neurodiversity: **ACCOMMODATIONS, NOT REVOLUTIONS**



Jan Behounek



Cory Kamholz



Carol Stolt

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the ways in which your institution is currently addressing students' mental health and neurodiverse learning needs.
2. Identify practices that can lead to an implementation plan for awareness of mental health and inclusion of neurodiversity.
3. Understand examples of mental health focused strategies to engage students.
4. Include a facilities evaluation for improving the support of student mental health and neurodiversity in your universal design plan.

Focus (Low Focus & Hyper-Focus)

- How often do you have difficulty concentrating on what people say to you, even when they are speaking to you directly?
- How often do you misplace or have difficulty finding things at home or at work?
- How often are you distracted by activity or sound around you?
- How often do you have trouble wrapping up the final details of a project, once the challenging parts have been done?
- You find background sounds annoying
- Do you have problems remembering appointments or obligations?
- You frequently get so strongly absorbed in one thing that I lose sight of other things
- You are fascinated by dates.
- In a social group you can easily keep track of several conversations.
- You tend to notice details that others do not
- You are fascinated by facts
- You tend to have very strong interests and get upset about you can't pursue.
- People often tell you that you keep going on and on about the same thing

Sensory

- You experience pain when witnessing others in distress.
- Does hearing music produce an experience of color for you?
- Do you perceive colors or abstract shapes during everyday activities like eating?
- Do certain sounds produce an odor or taste in your mouth?
- Do you perceive numbers, letters or words in color?
- Are you more sensitive to touch than most people?

Anxiety

- Do you find it difficult to put your ideas on paper?
- When you have a task that requires a lot of thought, how often do you avoid or delay getting started?
- How often do you fidget or squirm with your hands or feet when you have to sit down for a long time?
- Do you talk confidently about what you know but resist writing it down?

Motor

- Do you hold pens, pencils or markers awkwardly?
- Is your handwriting so bad that you can't even read it?
- Do you have trouble using scissors, buttoning clothes or zipping zippers?
- Are you restless when writing; moving around and getting distracted easily?

Executive Function

- Do you find it hard to follow several instructions all at one time?
- Do you confuse your left from your right?
- Do you read a page multiple times to understand it?
- Do you find it difficult to find the right word to say?
- Even if given appropriate time and attention to do a task do you find others find your writing difficult to read?
- Do you find that you forget tasks easily even though you leant it the previous day?
- Do you get frustrated and impatient very quickly and more than one would expect with daily tasks?
- You have repetitive behaviors, such as fixed repetitive routines or an urge to check things repeatedly.
- You prefer to do things the same way over and over again
- When you're reading a story, you can easily imagine what the characters might look like.

Go to menti.com and use the code 1499 5472

What one word comes to mind when we say neurodiversity?

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Got feedback?

SOME DISABILITIES LOOK LIKE THIS



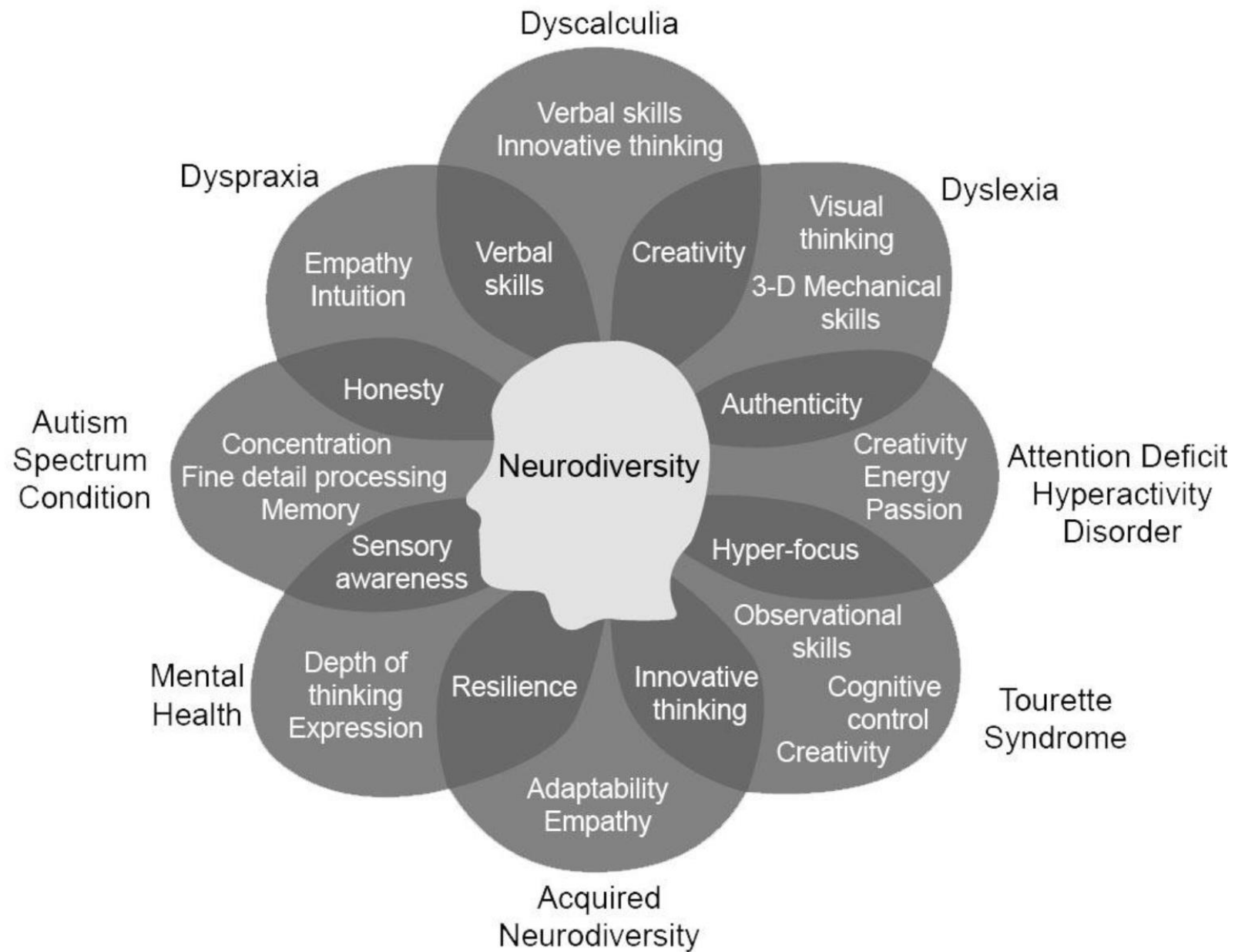
SOME LOOK LIKE THIS



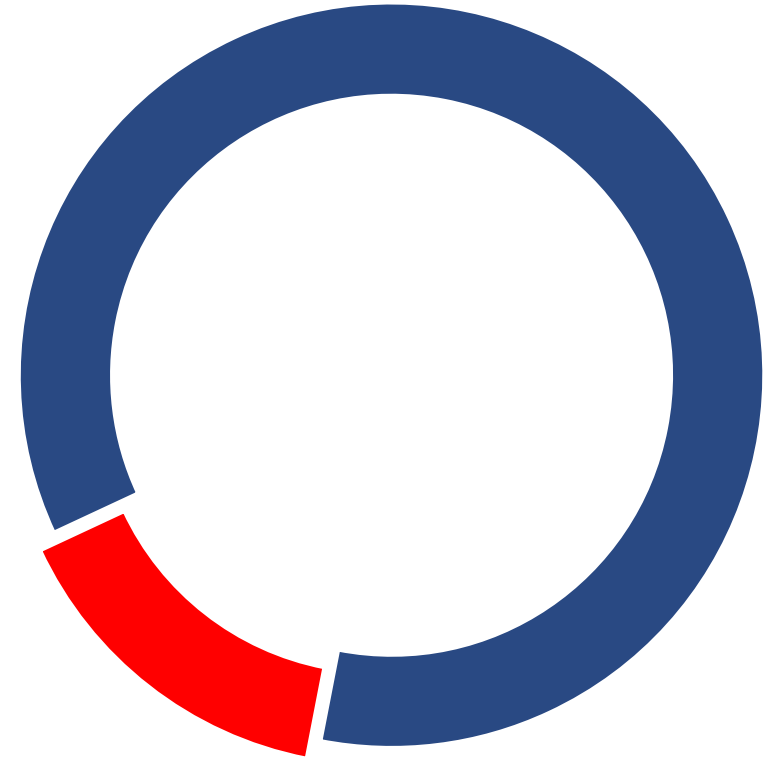
Harvard Health Publishing Defines Neurodiversity:

Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.

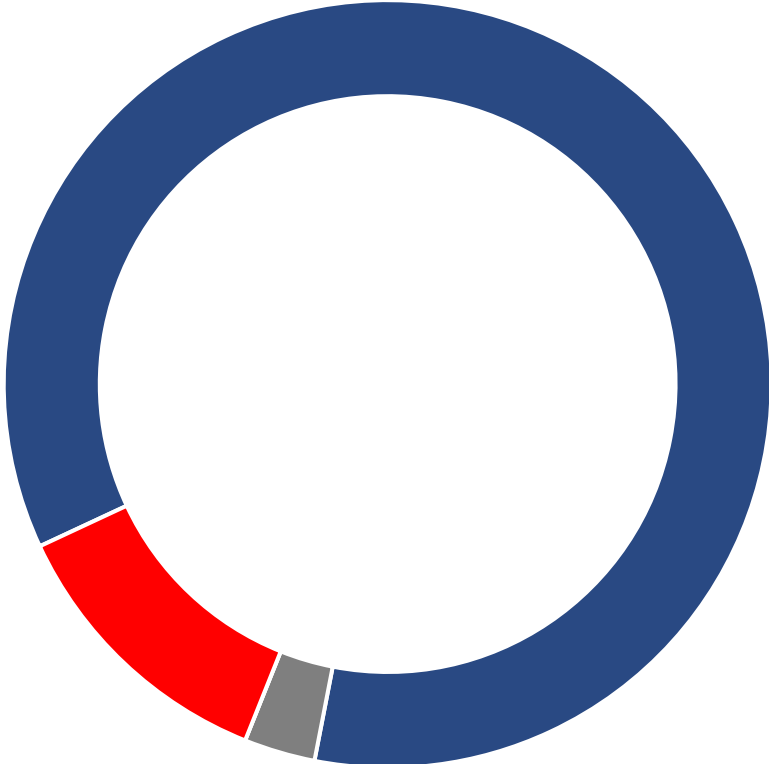




15% to 20% of the **US**
population is considered
neurodiverse



Only 20% of the neurodiverse population is employed



19% of undergraduates reported having a disability

2015-2016 National Center for Education Statistics



19% of undergraduates reported having a disability

About **one-third of students who did have a disability while attending college **informed** their college**



Understanding strengths and weaknesses is an important key to success for our students

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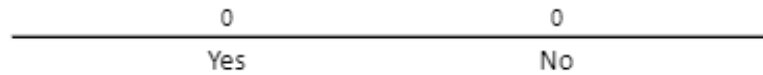
What these individuals want is acceptance and recognition for the gifts and skills they often bring

Studies show that if you provide the same problem to neurotypical workers and neurodivergent workers, the latter group tends to solve the problem faster and in a more effective and more creative way.



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Is this statement true for me: When I'm reading a story, I can easily imagine what the characters might look like.



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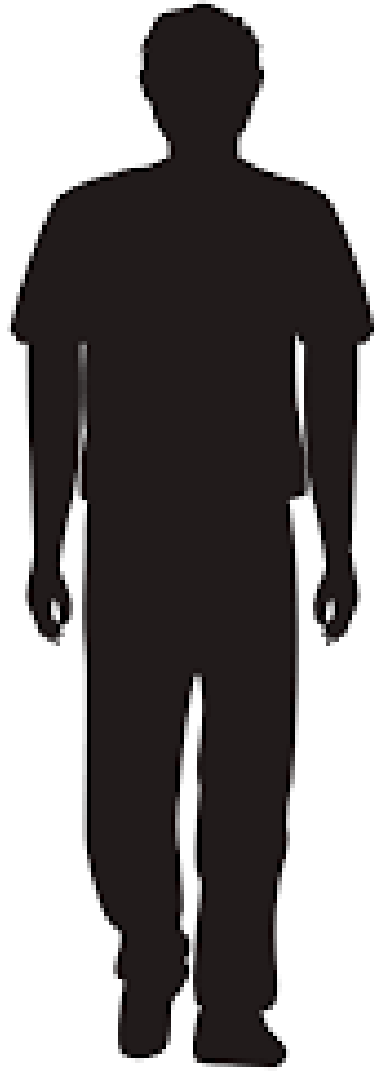
Got feedback?

“Neurodiversity is the idea that neurological differences like autism and ADHD are the result of normal, natural variation in the human genome.”

“People with differences do not need to be cured; they need help and accommodation instead.”

John Elder Robison, a scholar in residence and a cochair of the Neurodiversity Working Group at the College of William & Mary





Meet John



Understanding strengths and weaknesses is an important key to success for our students



These individuals want acceptance and recognition for the gifts and skills they often bring



ONE SIZE NO LONGER FITS ALL



How can **differently abled** be accommodated in the built environment?

Operational Accommodations

- **Awareness training** to help faculty and administration understand neurodiversity among students and colleagues
- **Flexible work** policies that allow faculty and administration to work from home
- Flex hours so faculty and administration **can work during off-hours** to minimize distractions
- **Noise cancelling headphones** to reduce auditory distractions
- Ability to have **intermittent breaks** between tasks
- Having **clear action points and assignments**
- Ability to **book quiet rooms** for concentrative tasks



Design Accommodations

1. Having the **option** to select where and how you will study and work
2. Spaces that **allow you to move**
3. Access to **natural light**
4. Work points located in low-traffic areas
5. Dedicated **quiet rooms**
6. Spaces that have **areas to retreat to**
7. Rooms where you can **turn the lighting down** or off
8. Spaces that incorporate **natural elements**
9. **Adjustable**, ergonomic furniture

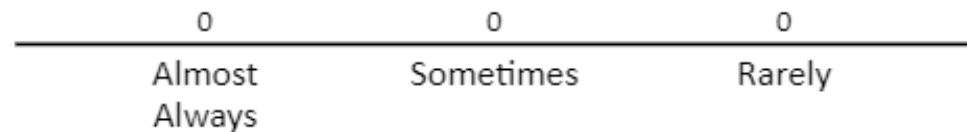


- Neurodiverse people frequently need accommodations to prevent auditory overstimulation, to activate or maximally leverage their abilities.
- Sometimes they exhibit challenging eccentricities.
- In many cases, the **accommodations and challenges are manageable** and the potential returns are great.



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Do you sometimes have to read a page several times to understand it?



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Got feedback?

Prepare the next generation of leaders

Equitable and inclusive

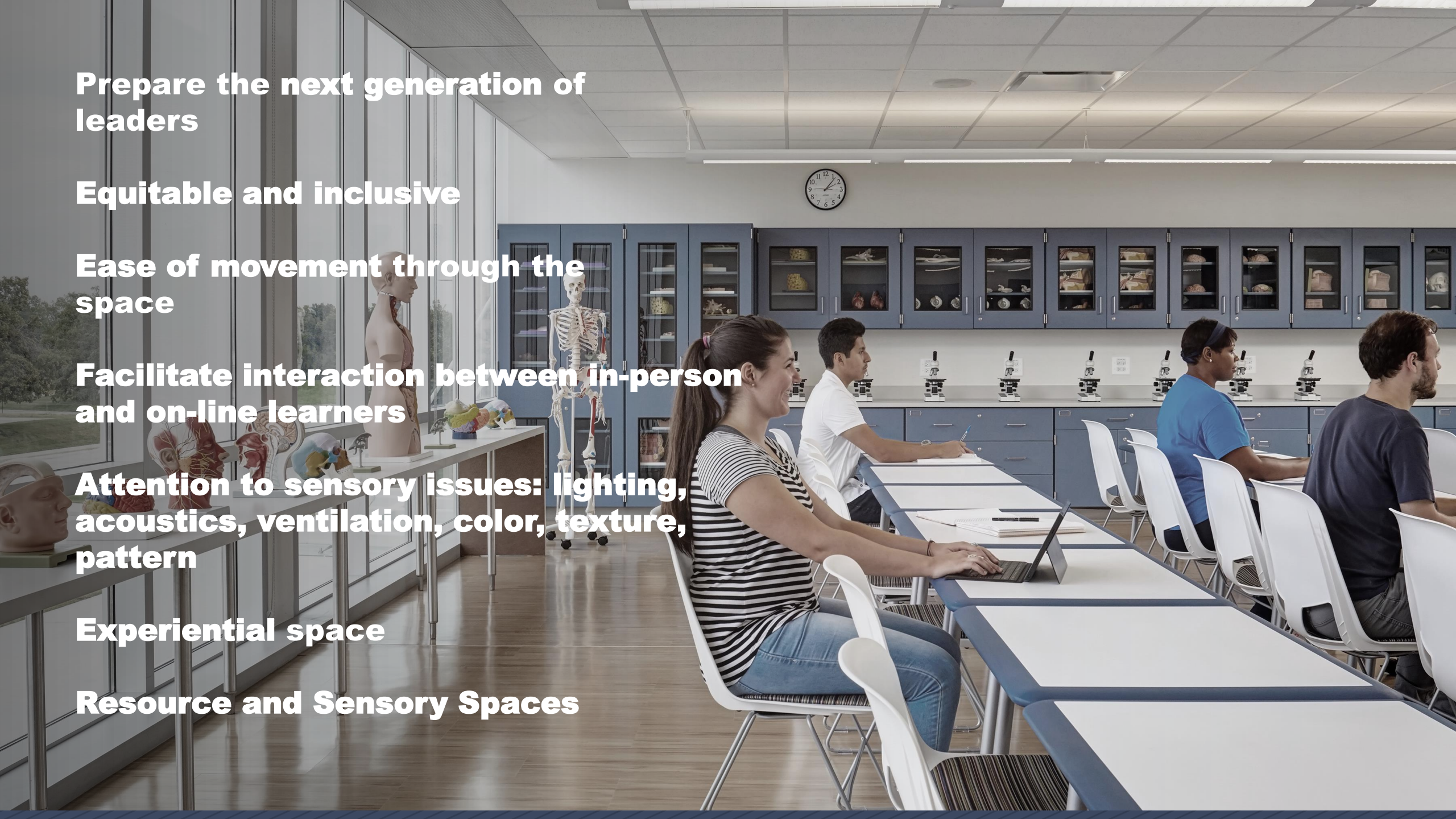
Ease of movement through the space

Facilitate interaction between in-person and on-line learners

Attention to sensory issues: lighting, acoustics, ventilation, color, texture, pattern

Experiential space

Resource and Sensory Spaces





Choose the way you experience learning



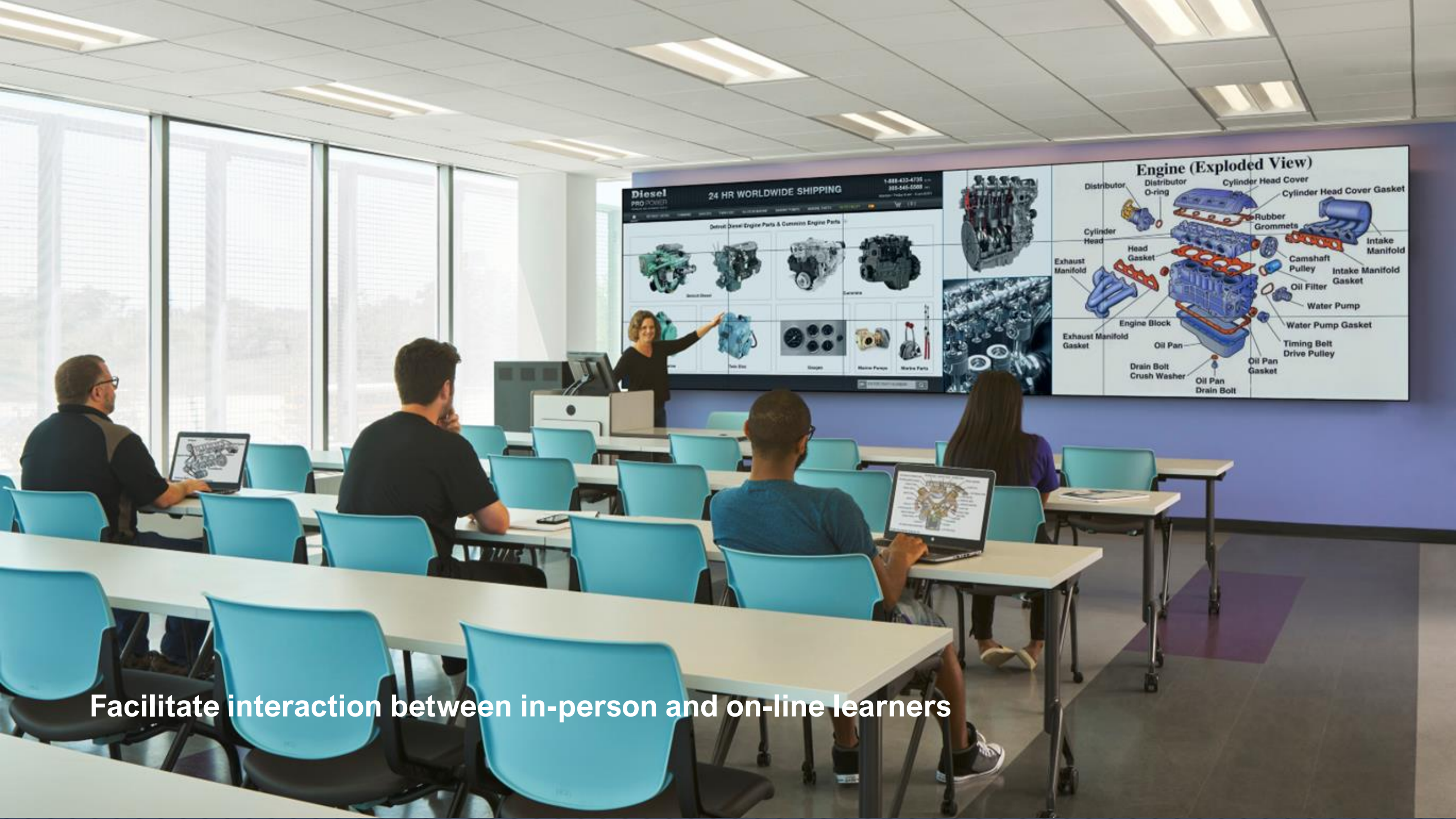
Ease of movement



Ease of movement



Ease of movement



Facilitate interaction between in-person and on-line learners



Sensory Processing Difficulty



Acoustic ceiling treatment

Drywall

Ceiling diffuse

Exterior Windows

Flooring

Acoustics

Undesirable

Desirable



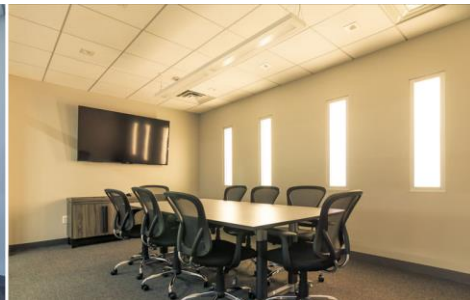
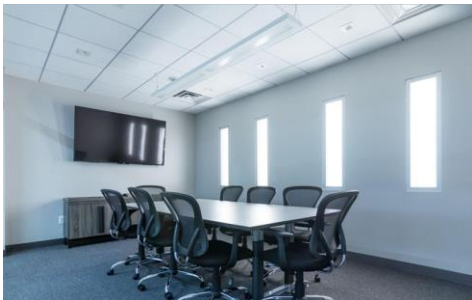
Lighting designed specifically for the function

Undesirable

Desirable



Ability to control light levels



Control color and temperature

Undesirable

Desirable



Ability to control glare







Natural Elements



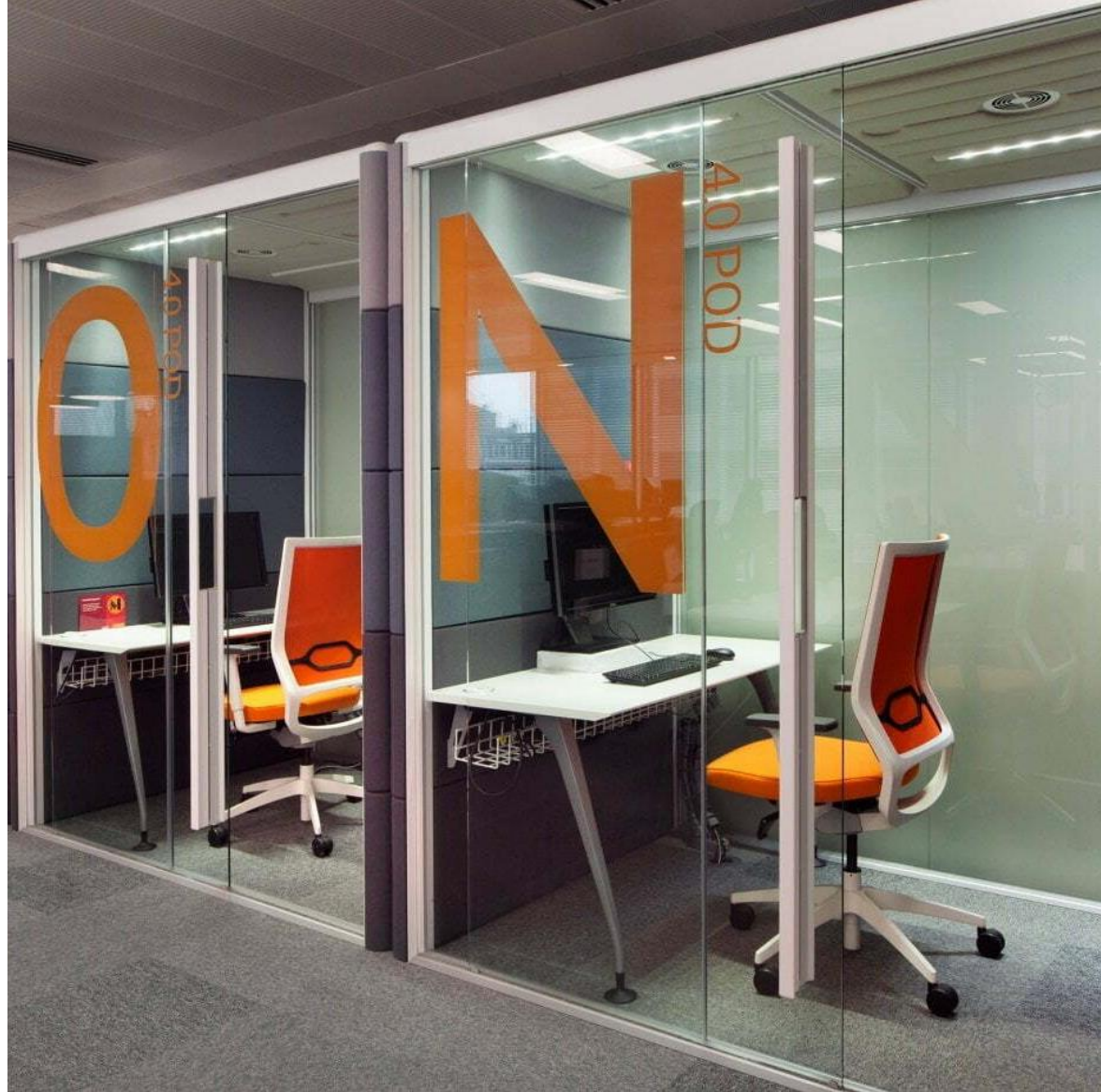
Experiential Space



Spoken and Unspoken Cues



Individual Spaces to Reset and Regenerate



Quiet Focus Spaces



Resource and Sensory Spaces

How do we start?

Team with social partners for expertise you lack

Partner with non-profits committed to helping people with disabilities get into college

Use nontraditional, non-interview-based assessment

“Hangouts”—comfortable gatherings, usually lasting half a day, in which neurodiverse candidates can demonstrate their abilities in casual interactions

Train faculty and administration

Help them understand what to expect and how to interact with neurodiverse students

Set up a support ecosystem

Support circles include a buddy, a job and life skills coach, a work mentor

Tailor methods for managing success

Serious thought about ongoing assessment and development that will take the special circumstances of neurodiverse into account

Mainstream the program



Visual

- Quality of light
- Light levels
- Sunlight
- Glare
- Color and pattern
- Visual distractions
- Messaging
- Spatial Organization
- Collaborative + Quiet Spaces

Auditory

- External noise distraction
- Sounds from equipment
- Sounds from furnishings
- Internal noise distraction
- Repetitious noises

Olfactory

- Unexpected odors from food
- Unexpected odors from toilets
- Unexpected odors from cleaning materials
- Unexpected odors from program spaces

Tactile

- Distracting textures
- Busy patterns



Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the ways in which your institution is currently addressing students' mental health and neurodiverse learning needs.
- lead the conversation with empathy
2. Identify trauma-informed practices that can lead to an implementation plan for awareness of mental health and inclusion of neurodiversity.
- recognize and accept
3. Hear personal and client perspectives, discussing examples of mental health focused programming to engage students.
- accommodations, not revolutions
4. Include a facilities evaluation for improving the support of student mental health and neurodiversity in your universal design plan.
- prepare the next generation of leaders

Resources

Books

Look Me in the Eye by John Elder Robison

Articles

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/serving-neurodiverse-students/>

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-to-teach-your-many-neurodivergent-students>

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-to-make-room-for-neurodivergent-professors>