

**Language of Neurodiversity**  
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**Ableism** – Discrimination or prejudice, whether intentional or unintentional, against persons with disabilities.

**Accommodation** – An accommodation is a modification, whether in the classroom or in the workplace, that ensures that a person with a disability can complete required tasks and functions as those without disabilities.

**Accessible** – Accessible spaces and programs are made to be inclusive, and generally don't require accommodations. Accessibility is not only in response to disability.  
<http://sudcc.syr.edu/resources/event-guide.html>

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**– Federal civil rights law designed to ensure that persons with disabilities are fully included in society and protected from discrimination.

**Identity first Language (IFL)** - *Identity first language*, such as saying “disabled person” emphasizes the disability as an identity. IFL came from a countermovement in response to person-first language by some disabled people who recognize their disability as part of who they are, not something to distance themselves from. Some disabled people prefer IFL.

**Invisible Disability** - Disabilities that are not immediately apparent. They can be physical, mental or neurological conditions that limit a person's daily functions. They are also sometimes referred to as *hidden disabilities*.

**Mobility Aid** - A device that assists a person to move around. They can include wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes, braces, and other similar devices.

**Neurodiversity** - A viewpoint that brain differences are natural variations rather than deficits. It is a concept where neurological differences are recognized and respected as any other human variation.

**Neurodiverse** - A group of people is neurodiverse if one or more members of the group differ substantially from other members, in terms of their neurocognitive functioning.

**Neurodiversity Paradigm** - A specific perspective or approach that includes these fundamental principles:

- Neurodiversity is a natural and valuable form of human diversity.
- The idea that there is one “normal” or “healthy” type of brain or mind or one “right” style of neurocognitive functioning is a culturally-constructed fiction, no more valid (and no more conducive to a healthy society or to the overall well-being of humanity) than the

idea that there is one “normal” or “right” ethnicity, gender or culture.

- The social dynamics that manifest in regard to neurodiversity are similar to the social dynamics that manifest in regard to other forms of human diversity (e.g., diversity of ethnicity, gender, or culture). These dynamics include the dynamics of social power inequalities, and also the dynamics by which diversity, when embraced, acts as a source of creative potential.

**Neurohomogenous** - Composed of people who are all neurocognitively similar to one another.

**Neurodiversity movement** - This is a social justice movement that seeks civil rights, equality, respect and full societal inclusion for the neurodivergent. The movement is based on a philosophy for embracing different ways of thinking and behaving as normal variations of being human. The term was coined by autistic self-advocate Judy Singer in the late 1990s.

**Neurodivergent, or ND (and Neurodivergence)** - This means having a brain that functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of “normal.” For instance, having developmental, intellectual, psychiatric or learning disabilities.

**Neurotypical, or NT** - This means having a style of neurocognitive functioning that falls within the dominant societal standards of “normal.” For instance, *not* having developmental, intellectual, psychiatric or learning disabilities.

**Neurominority** - Population of neurodivergent people about whom all of the following are true:

- They share a similar form of neurodivergence.
- The form of neurodivergence they share is one of those forms that is largely innate and that is inseparable from who they are, constituting an intrinsic and pervasive factor in their psyches, personalities and fundamental ways of relating to the world.
- The form of neurodivergence they share is one to which the neurotypical majority tends to respond with some degree of prejudice, misunderstanding, discrimination and/or oppression (often facilitated by classifying that form of neurodivergence as a medical pathology).

Neurominority groups include autistic, bipolar, dyslexic and schizophrenic people.

**Person first Language (PFL)** – *Person first language*, such as saying “person with a disability,” emphasizes that the person is more important than the disability. PFL was developed as a way of showing respect. Some people with disabilities prefer PFL.

**Person on the Autism Spectrum/ Autistic person** – Refers to a person who identifies as having a form of autism or Asperger’s syndrome. Some persons on the spectrum prefer to say “autistic person.”

**Person with a Cognitive or Intellectual Disability/ Cognitively or Intellectually Disabled person** – Refers to persons with various disabilities affecting the brain. This broad category includes, for example, persons with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and persons with Dyslexia. Many of these disabilities are also referred to as “learning disabilities.”

**Person with a Hearing Disability/ Hearing-Impaired or Deaf person** – Refers to a person

who has a disability affecting hearing. Some persons with hearing disabilities, particularly those who speak sign language, prefer the term “Deaf Person” and view their disability as a cultural identity.

**Person with a Physical Disability/ Physically Disabled person** – General term which refers to persons with various disabilities affecting functions of the body.

**Person with a Psychiatric Disability** – Refers to a person with a disability that involves emotional and/or psychological issues. Examples include persons with anxiety disorders and persons with depression.

**Person with a Vision Disability/ Vision-Impaired or Blind person** – Refers to a person with low vision or a person who is Blind. Many persons who are Blind see their disability as a cultural identity and thus prefer to call themselves “Blind.”

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act** – Federal civil rights law which ensures that persons with disabilities have equal access to education.

**Sensory space** - A space designed to help an individual with sensory issues learn to regulate their brain’s negative reactions to external stimuli by providing coping skills for these experiences.

**Universal Design** - This refers to the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**- Developed by Rose and Meyer in the 1990s, UDL refers to a framework that links theory and practice to minimize barriers in the learning environment. Learning environments are universally designed, rather than adapted, to support all learners including those from diverse backgrounds and/or with disabilities. UDL is research-based and adheres to three core principles: (1) Provide multiple means of engagement, the “why” of learning; (2) Provide multiple means of representation, the “what” of learning; and (3) Provide multiple means of action and expression, the “how” of learning.

**Wheelchair user** – Refers to a person who uses a wheelchair for mobility. Use this term rather than saying a person is “wheelchair-bound” or “confined to a wheelchair.”