



Image Source: [MissLunaRose12](#)

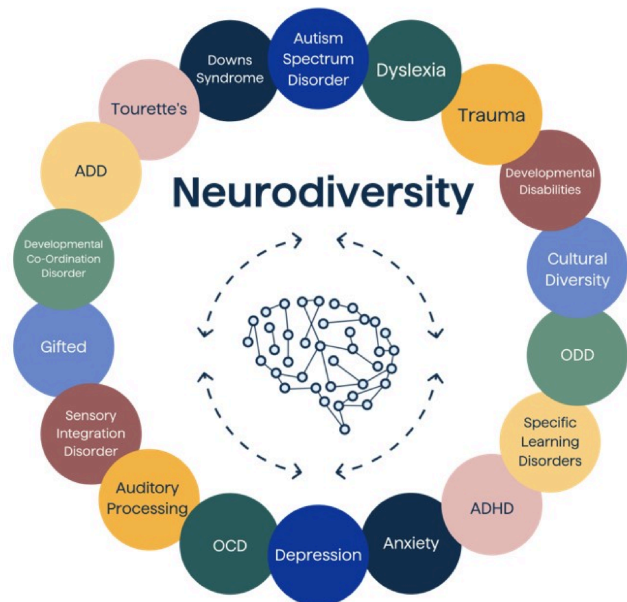
## What does it mean to be NEURODIVERGENT?

Neurodivergence centers around the idea that as individuals our brains function differently. This includes how we take in information (i.e. learning) and how we perceive the environment around us.

This term is often used to describe people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), but also applies to individuals with a variety of other differences.

***“A neurodivergent person is often described as a high-energy, out-of-the-box thinker and bold problem solver with above-average pattern recognition.”***

***–CTI Working Environments***



<https://images.app.goo.gl/JeK14y4AupKhRR598>

Bill Gates, Greta Thurnburg, Simone Biles, Albert Einstein, Emma Watson, and Steve Jobs are just a few examples of neurodivergent individuals.

Neurodivergent individuals often have a specialized or unique skill set, but may struggle with processing social skills. Since their brains take in and process information differently than neurotypical individuals, they may not react to stimuli the same way that you do, or in the way that you would “expect” for them to. Understanding the uniqueness of each individual and working together to meet their needs is the key to achieving success in scouting.



# PAUSE

When working with **neuro-divergent** scouts I invite you to **PAUSE**:

## **P - Plan.**

Written plans and schedules are very helpful. They provide a framework of expectations. However, flexibility and transitions can be difficult for neurodivergent individuals. If the plan changes, the scout might become upset and need some additional time to process the changes.

## **A - Accommodate.**

Allow for movement (i.e. wiggling/fidgeting/standing vs. sitting) and provide choices (i.e. buddy, group, activity) whenever possible. Ask the parents/guardians, or the scout themselves for the types of accommodations they might need to be successful.

## **U - Understand uniqueness.**

Neurodivergent individuals are unique in their gifts and challenges. One scout may love knots and might find it challenging to stop working with their rope to focus on a different activity. Another scout may be bothered by the texture of the rope and not want to touch it at all. Strategies that work for one scout may not work for another. Be patient, ask questions, and withhold judgments.

## **S - Set the scene.**

Sensory input can be overwhelming and can cause a scout to become dysregulated. (i.e. background noise, strong smells, itchy uniform) Having a separate location for a scout to calm down when overstimulated can be very helpful.

## **E - Express empathy.**

Emotions are often experienced and expressed in a big way. Telling a scout that they are over-reacting, or that they need to just “get over \_\_\_\_\_ and straighten up” likely won’t help. Recognize their situation, listen to what they need to share, and then give them a safe space to process their feelings and let them rejoin the group when they are ready.

Most importantly, remember that each individual is different. What works for one, will most definitely not work for all. Ask questions: “What can I do to support you/your scout?”. Admit when you have missed the mark: “How can we do this differently next time?”. Being open and willing to learn what works for your scouts, as well as understanding and accepting what does not work, will keep these individuals active in our scouting programs!

### **Resources for working with Neurodivergent Scouts:**

<https://docs.guides4guides.org/accessibility/Leader-Guide-Accessibility-and-Adaptive-Scouting.pdf>

<https://neurodiversescouts.com/>

### **Resources for Understanding Neurodiversity:**

<https://www.livingonthespectrum.com/education/the-spectrum-of-neurodiversity/>

<https://neurodivergentinsights.com/resources>

<https://www.neurodiversityhub.org/>

<https://www.additudemag.com/>

<https://neurodivergentinsights.com/resources>

<https://www.neurodiversityhub.org/>

<https://www.additudemag.com/>

<https://www.thecenterforconnection.org/ot-resources>

<https://studentnews.manchester.ac.uk/2023/03/13/successful-people-with-neurodivergent-disabilities/>

### **Resources for Accommodating for Neurodiversity:**

<https://ctive.com/our-blog/neurodiversity-what-is-it-and-why-companies-should-care>

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/resources/accessibility/#planning-accessible-and-inclusive-organizing-trainings-strategies-for-decreasing-barriers-to-participation-for-people-with-i-dd>

