

Explaining Your ND to Others: Scripts

TL;DR · QUICK SUMMARY

- Different relationships call for different levels of detail; you can scale your explanation up or down.
- Short, simple scripts are often more effective than long explanations.
- You're allowed to explain on your own terms, or not explain at all.
- Prepared scripts reduce the pressure of finding the right words in the moment.

A Note Before You Read On

This resource offers general guidance and reflects common experience, not professional, legal, medical or financial advice. It is not a substitute for employment law, HR policy, occupational health guidance, or individual professional assessment. Every person's experience of neurodivergence is different, so please adapt anything here to your own situation. The Uniquely Wired Network does not accept liability for decisions, actions or outcomes arising from the use of this material. If you need advice specific to your circumstances, please consult a qualified professional (e.g. HR, legal, medical, or financial advisor).

Why This Matters

Explaining neurodivergence to colleagues, friends or family can feel high-pressure in the moment. Having a few ready scripts takes the edge off, whatever the relationship or context.

What This Might Look Like

- A colleague asking why you wear headphones at your desk.
- A friend noticing you've cancelled plans again and wanting to understand why.
- Wanting to explain a specific need without going into your whole diagnostic history.

Short, Casual Explanations

- “I’m neurodivergent: it just means my brain works a bit differently. It’s really not a big deal.”
- “I process things differently to some people; headphones help me concentrate.”

More Detailed Explanations (For Closer Relationships)

- “I’m autistic/ADHD/AuDHD: it affects how I focus, communicate and handle sensory input. Happy to answer questions if you’re curious.”
- “This is something I’ve only recently understood about myself, so I’m still figuring out how to talk about it.”

Setting the Terms of the Conversation

- “I’m happy to share a bit, but I’d rather not get into all the details right now.”
- “I’ll let you know if there’s anything specific that would help, for now, just knowing is enough.”

Helpful Phrases You Can Borrow

You don’t have to use these exact words. Take what fits and leave the rest.

“I’m neurodivergent: it’s really not a big deal, just means my brain works a little differently sometimes.”

“I’d rather not go into detail today, but happy to chat about it another time if you’re curious.”

Quick Tips

- You control the level of detail; casual and detailed explanations are equally valid.
- Prepare a couple of go-to lines in advance so you’re not caught off guard.
- It’s okay to say “I’d rather not talk about that right now.”
- Different scripts for different audiences (colleagues vs close friends) is completely normal.
- You don’t owe anyone your full diagnostic history to justify a need.

- Practice scripts out loud a few times; it makes them easier to use naturally.

Want to Know More?

- See our companion guide: “How to Talk to Your Employer About ND” for workplace-specific wording.
- See our guide “Educating Colleagues (Without Emotional Labour Burnout)” if this comes up often.

Before You Go

There's no perfect script, just one that feels honest and comfortable enough for you, in that moment.

You get to decide how much of yourself to share, and with whom.