

Types of Neurodivergence: A Quick Guide

A friendly starting point on the most common types of neurodivergence, and why no two people experience them the same way.

TL;DR · QUICK SUMMARY

- Neurodivergence is an umbrella term covering many different types of brain wiring.
- Autism, ADHD, AuDHD, OCD, dyslexia and dyspraxia are some of the most common, but not the only ones.
- Each type has its own common traits, but every individual's experience is unique.
- Many people are neurodivergent in more than one way at once.

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

Knowing the basics of different types of neurodivergence helps you recognise strengths, understand challenges, and avoid one-size-fits-all assumptions.

It also helps reduce confusion between conditions that can look similar but need different support.

What This Might Look Like

- A team member who's brilliant with numbers but finds unstructured social events overwhelming (could be autism).
- Someone who has bursts of brilliant ideas but struggles to finish routine admin (could be ADHD).
- A colleague who re-checks their work repeatedly to feel able to move on (could be OCD).
- Someone who's a strong verbal communicator but takes longer to read written reports (could be dyslexia).
- A person who's articulate and organised on paper but finds handwriting or coordination tasks tricky (could be dyspraxia).

Common Types, In Plain English

This isn't an exhaustive clinical list, just a friendly starting point.

Autism

- A different way of processing sensory information, social interaction and communication.
- Often involves strong focus on specific interests, preference for routine, and direct communication style.

ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)

- Affects attention regulation, impulse control and activity levels.
- Can show up as difficulty focusing on “boring” tasks alongside intense focus on interesting ones (hyperfocus).

AuDHD (Autism + ADHD together)

- A common combination: traits of both can sometimes pull in different directions.
- For example, needing routine (autism) while also craving novelty (ADHD).

OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder)

- Involves intrusive, unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and repeated actions or mental rituals (compulsions) done to ease the anxiety they cause.
- Not the same as being “a bit tidy” or particular: OCD is often distressing and time-consuming.

Dyslexia

- Affects reading, spelling and processing written language.
- Often comes with strong verbal, big-picture or problem-solving skills.

Dyspraxia (Developmental Co-ordination Disorder)

- Affects physical co-ordination, motor skills and sometimes organisation or time-management.
- Can affect handwriting, driving, or tasks needing fine motor control.

Other types worth knowing

- Dyscalculia (numbers and maths), dysgraphia (writing), Tourette's (tics), and sensory processing differences also fall under the ND umbrella.

Helpful Phrases You Can Borrow

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

"I'm dyslexic, so I process written information best if I can also hear it. Could we cover this on a call too?"

"I'm autistic and ADHD, so routine helps me a lot, but I also need flexibility to follow ideas when they come."

Quick Tips

- Many neurodivergent people have more than one type, e.g. AuDHD.
- Traits exist on a spectrum: two autistic people can look completely different.
- OCD is a recognised form of neurodivergence, not just a personality quirk.
- Dyslexia and dyspraxia are about processing, not intelligence.
- Labels are a starting point for understanding, not a full description of a person.
- It's fine to ask someone how their neurodivergence affects them personally, if they're comfortable sharing.

Want to Know More?

- See our companion guide: “What Is Neurodivergence?” for the bigger picture.
- The British Dyslexia Association and Dyspraxia Foundation offer type-specific information.
- A GP or specialist assessor can advise on formal diagnostic pathways if wanted.

Before You Go

Whatever type, or combination of types, you identify with, your traits are a valid part of how your brain works.

You don't have to fit a textbook description to belong under the ND umbrella.