

# Neurodiversity on the Field and How to Help

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## Neurodiversity

“The term “neurodivergent” describes people whose brain differences affect how their brain works. That means they have different strengths and challenges from people whose brains don’t have those differences... Neurodivergent isn’t a medical term. Instead, it’s a way to describe people using words other than “normal” and “abnormal.” That’s important because there’s no single definition of “normal” for how the human brain works.” - Cleveland Clinic

## Neurodiversity

- Autism - Levels 1, 2, 3
- ADHD
- Learning Disabilities
- Sensory Processing Disorders
- Slow Processing
- Some mental health disorders

## Neurodiversity

- Adults and children can be diagnosed
- Family/Relationship Impact
- Hereditary - 80%
- Biological Brain Differences
- Superpowers
- Deficits

## Executive Function

- Response Inhibition
- Working Memory (Short term)
- Task Initiation
- Sustained Attention
- Planning/Prioritizing
- Organization

## Executive Function

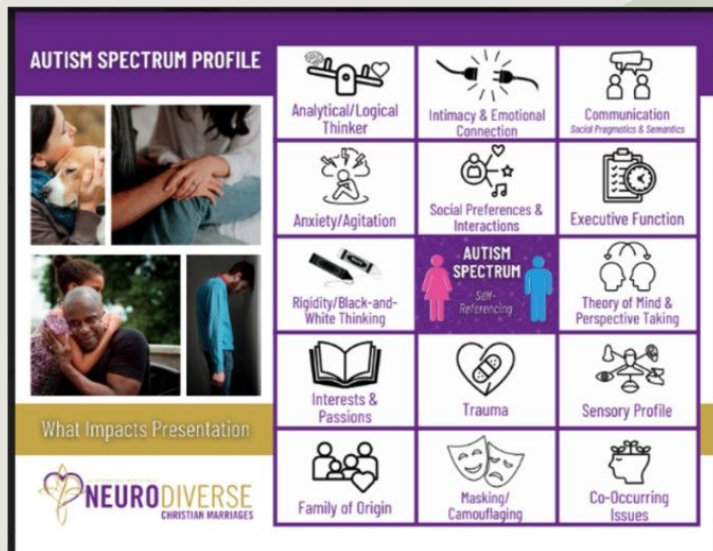
- Time Management
- Lack of Flexibility
- Low Self-Motivation
- Low Stress Tolerance
- Challenges with Resilience
- Demand Avoidance

## Other Challenges

- Slow Processing
- Spatial Awareness/Auditory
- Learning Disabilities
- Social Fatigue
- Shutdown/Meltdown/Burnout
- Hypermobility is common
- ND is often paired with another diagnosis

## Autism

- Neurological and developmental disorder
- Eye contact, social interaction, social context challenges
- Repetitive behaviors
- Rigid, B&W thinking
- Special Interests
- Collections
- Intense Reactions
- Staying Regulated



# Stop Light

Green

Yellow

Red

What signs are you seeing?

What signal does it give?



# ADHD

American Psychiatric Association's, Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5 TR Diagnostic Criteria Text Revision

"Chronic in attention and/or impulsivity/hyperactivity that impaired functioning and development. Manifested by frequent inability to sustain interest in an activity or maintain mental focus required by a task, distraction, and forgetfulness of routine activities, difficulty sitting still or remaining quiet and garrulous and impatient behavior." (DSM-5-TR Overview)

# ADHD

Three Types:

Inattentive (Formerly ADD)  
Hyperactive Impulsive  
Combined Type

ADHD is not deficient of attention-it produces a surplus of attention in those who have it

# ADHD

## Helpful Facts

- Generally believed to be a lifelong disorder.
- 10% of children diagnosed overcame ADHD symptoms as Adults.
- ADHD expresses it self different in Children vs Adults.
- ADHD expresses itself different in Men vs Women.

## Treatment Options and/or ADHD Helps

- Get a Proper diagnosis
- Therapy and/or ADHD coach
- Executive Functioning Coach
- Neurofeedback
- Medications

## Other ADHD Helps

1. Vitamins/minerals, Exercise, Nutrition, Improving sleep, Nature, Positive emotion
2. Finding Yourself, Your Passions, and Your Purpose
3. Addressing Trauma, Big Emotions and Overwhelm

# ADHD Superpowers

Hyper-focus, Empathy, Spots Performance, Entrepreneurship, Optimism, Very high Intelligence (Often), Creativity "Creativity is impulsivity gone right." Dr. Hallowell, Better able to problem solve, Outside the box thinking, When interested; get things done more effectively and efficiently. Increased Drive (at times), Often takes more risks, Can be nonconformists, Can do big hard things, Increased empathy and Justice sensitive.

Increased Intuitions - Brains tend to focus on the connections or relationships between things rather than on specific bits of information

# Highly Sensitive People (HSP)

Understanding the HSP Trait-*The Trait of Sensitivity*

A mind and nervous works differently-

Built to react to subtle experiences

Aroused more easily by stimulation

More aroused by new or prolonged stimulation

20% of the population are thought to be HSP's

# Highly Sensitive People (HSP)

## Common HSP Traits:

High empathy levels

Tuned into others emotions. HSP's show in studies to have more active mirror neurons. Better at communication, conflict resolution and inspiring others to action.

Better at spotting errors and not making errors.

Highly conscientious

Ability to concentrate deeply (We do better without distractions)

Detailed oriented

Excellent at processing "semantic memory"

Think about their thoughts

Awareness about what we have learned

# Highly Sensitive People (HSP)

## **Vulnerabilities to the Trait (Disadvantages)-**

Difficulties with over stimulation and arousal.

High Cortisol production- The stress hormone

More likely to respond to external stimuli.

## **Examples**

Difficulties in nervous system management

Stimulation and arousal wake up the nervous systems

Individuals avoid interaction with stimulation (more cautious)

Sports, games, kids, interactions generally

More susceptible to anxiety and depression

# Highly Sensitive People (HSP)

## **Strengths to the Trait (Advantages)**

Quiet alertness

Rich internal world

Deep insights

Soul/Spirit insights

Intuition

Seeing things before they are “seen”

Deep spiritual insights and understanding

Conscientious, kind, problem solver

# Resources

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

<https://jenileerachel.com/neurodiversity-ministry-missions/>

<https://drhallowell.com/read/neds-recommended-reading/>

<https://drhallowell.com/read/books-by-ned/>

<https://drhallowell.com/watch/ned-talks/>

<https://drhallowell.com/listen/podcast/>

<https://adhdforSMARTwomen.com/about-tracy>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/different-kind-therapy/202204/the-gift-adhd>

The Highly Sensitive Person (How to Thrive when the World Overwhelms You); Elaine N. Aron, Ph.D.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests/personality/highly-sensitive-person-test>

<https://embrace-autism.com/autism-tests/>