



# Momentum

## Embracing neurodiversity

Everyone's brain is different and develops in a unique way. Neurodiversity acknowledges and values these differences. No one should face stigma because they have conditions such as autism, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or learning disorders.

Consider these tips to help neurodiverse individuals feel supported:

- Encourage them to make use of their individual strengths in areas such as memory, mathematical skills, visual/spatial awareness or attention to detail.
- Recognize that people who are neurodivergent may feel misunderstood or left out. Be willing to listen to them and respect their choices.
- Make environmental adjustments (physical or sensory) so they have the tools to succeed.
- Communicate in ways that they prefer. Use instant messaging, texting or email with someone uncomfortable with telephonic or face-to-face conversation.

### Mind Your Mental Health

## April is Autism Acceptance Month

This is a time to acknowledge the challenges and celebrate the differences of those affected by autism. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental condition that affects how a person communicates, interacts with others and perceives the world around them. April's observance calls for acceptance and inclusion of persons with ASD.

Acceptance empowers people with autism to embrace their uniqueness, which boosts their self-esteem and helps reduce the stigma associated with this condition. Learn more about ASD.

- Approximately one in 36 children in the U.S. is diagnosed with ASD; ASD is four times more likely in boys than girls.
- About 50% of individuals with ASD have average or above-average intelligence, but only 21% of adults with autism are employed full-time.
- Many people with ASD have sensory sensitivities, such as being sensitive to loud noises or certain textures.
- Many individuals with autism have made significant contributions to art, entertainment, science, business and other fields.

Visit [MagellanHealthcare.com/about/bh-resources/mymh](https://MagellanHealthcare.com/about/bh-resources/mymh) or call your program for confidential mental health resources.





April is Autism Acceptance Month

# Tips to support neurodiverse colleagues

Fostering inclusivity helps people to thrive in a diverse world. One vital aspect of inclusivity that often goes unnoticed is neurodiversity—the recognition and acceptance of neurological differences. By embracing neurodiversity, we can foster inclusive and thriving environments that celebrate unique minds and promote the success of all individuals. Consider the following tips to support your neurodiverse colleagues.

## Avoid sensory overload

Sensory overload can be a significant issue for neurodiverse individuals. This can include bright lights, loud noises and strong smells. Be mindful when engaging with your neurodiverse colleagues by offering to collaborate in a quiet workspace and reducing visual clutter.

## Adapt your communication

To better accommodate neurodiverse colleagues, vary your communication style and the channels you use. When working on a project together, provide clear instructions, avoid confusing language and offer multiple channels for feedback. Consider circulating a meeting agenda in advance, recording the meeting so colleagues can watch it again and presenting ideas in visual and text formats.

## Foster empathy and understanding

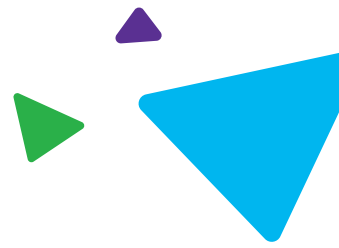
Take time to learn about neurodiversity and the unique challenges faced by individuals with conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia and others. If you have a neurodiverse team member, listen, learn and seek to understand their experiences and perspectives.

## Be an advocate

Stand up for your neurodiverse colleagues by challenging stereotypes and misconceptions, advocating for their needs and celebrating their unique strengths. If you see or hear something potentially harmful or offensive, address it. Your support will not go unnoticed.

For more information and helpful resources, contact your Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-327-2640 (TTY 711) or go online to [Member.MagellanHealthcare.com](https://Member.MagellanHealthcare.com).





April is Autism Acceptance Month

# Neurodivergent trailblazers

Many well-known individuals are neurodivergent and have made extraordinary contributions to our world. Below are profiles of a few. Draw lines to match each person with their notable impact.

English writer, mathematician and photographer who is best known for his literary works, particularly "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking-Glass"

**Benjamin Banneker**

Italian Renaissance sculptor, painter, architect and poet who is renowned for masterpieces like the Sistine Chapel ceiling and the statue of David

**Bill Gates**

Self-taught African American mathematician, astronomer and inventor who was appointed by President George Washington to assist in the surveying and planning of Washington, DC

**Emma Watson**

Co-founder of Microsoft and a leading figure in the development of personal computing

**Lewis Carroll**

American filmmaker, artist, writer and animator known for his unique and imaginative film style, including "Edward Scissorhands" and "The Nightmare Before Christmas"

**Michaelangelo**

One of the Founding Fathers of the United States, principal author of the Declaration of Independence, and third president of the United States

**Nikola Tesla**

**Simone Biles**

English actress and model known for her role as Hermione Granger in the "Harry Potter" film series and being an advocate for women's rights

A Serbian-American inventor who made significant contributions to the development of alternating current (AC) electrical systems and other inventions.

**Thomas Jefferson**

African American gymnast who has won numerous Olympic and World Championship medals and is considered one of the greatest gymnasts of all time

**Tim Burton**

For more information and helpful resources, contact your Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-327-2640 (TTY 711) or go online to [Member.MagellanHealthcare.com](http://Member.MagellanHealthcare.com).



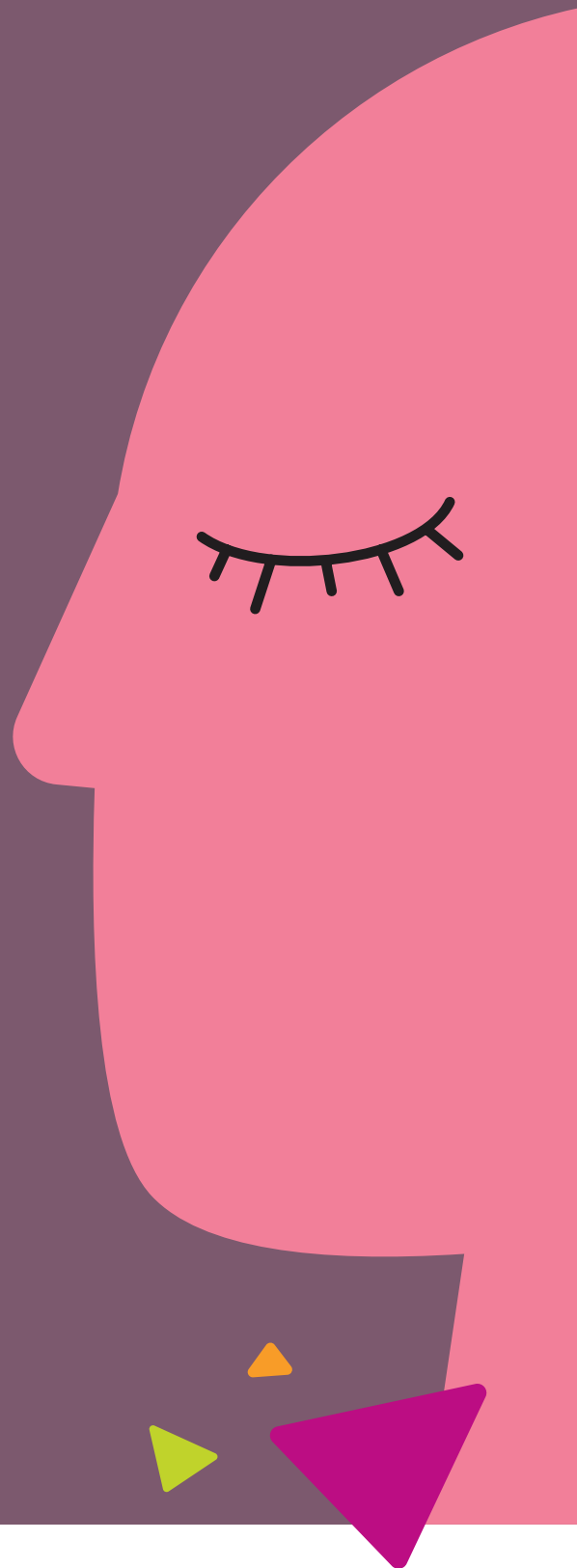
April is Autism Acceptance Month

# Understanding neurodiversity

Neurodiversity refers to the diverse ways in which people experience the world, be it at school, at work or in social settings. Neurodivergence affects 15 – 20% of the population.

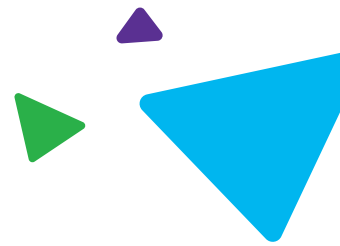
Some of the most prevalent conditions among individuals who identify as neurodivergent are:

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Down syndrome
- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Intellectual disabilities
- Mental health conditions like bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, etc.
- Prader-Willi syndrome
- Sensory processing disorders
- Social anxiety
- Tourette syndrome
- Williams syndrome



For more information and helpful resources, contact your Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-327-2640 (TTY 711) or go online to [Member.MagellanHealthcare.com](https://Member.MagellanHealthcare.com).





# Embracing neurodiversity

## Dispelling myths to foster inclusive and thriving environments

Everyone's brain is different and develops in its own way. Neurotypical individuals' brain functions are considered "usual" or "expected by society." Neurodivergent individuals' brains, however, are unique and their behaviors or responses differ from what is expected socially, physically or verbally. Knowing the myths and facts about neurodiversity helps foster inclusive and thriving environments for neurodivergent individuals.

MYTH	FACT
<i>Neurodiversity is the same as ASD.</i>	Neurodiversity includes ASD, as well as other neurological conditions, such as ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, intellectual disabilities, Tourette's syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and other mental health conditions.
<i>All neurodiverse individuals are the same/similar.</i>	All individuals, whether neurotypical or neurodiverse, are unique in their learning and experiences. Recognizing the diversity within neurodiverse individuals is key to developing inclusive environments.
<i>Neurodivergent individuals lack communication skills.</i>	Like neurotypical individuals, neurodivergent individuals have diverse communication styles. Many communicate effectively in their own unique ways. Tailoring communication strategies to diverse styles fosters inclusivity and supports personal growth.
<i>Neurodivergent individuals choose not to engage in forming relationships.</i>	Many neurodivergent individuals genuinely desire connections with others but often feel sadness or a sense of isolation when faced with difficulties in forming those connections. Nonetheless, they can have authentic, enduring relationships, particularly when others are accepting and mindful of their differences.
<i>Neurodivergent individuals have little chance of succeeding in school, at work or in their communities.</i>	With equitable opportunities and tools, neurodivergent individuals can be just as successful as others.

For more information and helpful resources, contact your Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-327-2640 (TTY 711) or go online to [Member.MagellanHealthcare.com](https://Member.MagellanHealthcare.com).





# Stress management

Stress is what you feel when you have to handle more than you are used to. When you are stressed, your body responds as though you are in danger. It makes hormones that speed up your heart, make you breathe faster and give you a burst of energy. This is called the fight-or-flight stress response.

Some stress is normal and even useful. The right level of stress can help if you need to work hard or react quickly. For example, it can help you win a race or finish a job on time. Too little stress leads to performance below your potential and too much impairs performance. The right level of stress for maximum performance is different for each of us.

If stress happens too often, lasts too long or is too high it can have bad effects. It can be linked to headaches, an upset stomach, back pain and trouble sleeping. If you already have a health problem, stress may make it worse. It can make you moody, tense or depressed. Your relationships may suffer, and you may not do well at work or school.

## Tips to cope with stress

Stress is a fact of life for most people. You may not be able to get rid of stress, but you can look for ways to lower it.

- **Manage your time.** Make a schedule, think about which things are most important and do those first.
- **Find better ways to cope.** Look at how you have been dealing with stress. Be honest about what works and what does not.
- **Take good care of yourself.** Exercise regularly. Get plenty of rest. Eat well. Don't smoke. Limit how much alcohol you drink.
- **Reevaluate your thinking.** Write down your worries and work on letting go of things you cannot change.
- **Focus on the present.** Try meditation or guided imagery exercises.
- **Let your feelings out.** Talk, laugh, cry and express anger when you need to.
- **Do something you enjoy.** A hobby can help you relax. Volunteer work or work that helps others can be a great stress reliever.
- **Ask for help.** Building a strong network of friends, supporters and family can be a positive tool in managing stress.

Sometimes stress is just too much to handle alone. Talking to a friend or family member may help, but you may also want to speak to a professional.

Help is available. Contact your Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-327-2640 (TTY 711) or visit [Member.MagellanHealthcare.com](http://Member.MagellanHealthcare.com) for helpful resources.





April is Autism Acceptance Month  
**Celebrating all  
minds**

Individuals naturally approach thinking in various ways. For neurodivergent individuals, this diversity may extend to social, physical and verbal behavior. Different ways of thinking make life more interesting.

**Nearly 3%** of children have ASD

**20 million** individuals are impacted by dyspraxia

**Over 13 million** children and adults have ADHD

**1 in 5 children** have dyslexia

Between **350,000** – **450,000** children and adults have Tourette syndrome

**Nearly 20%** of individuals have mental health needs

For more information and helpful resources, contact your Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-327-2640 (TTY 711) or go online to [Member.MagellanHealthcare.com](https://Member.MagellanHealthcare.com).

**Magellan**  
HEALTHCARE®

B-AAP011E (2/24) ©2024 Magellan Health, Inc.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

