Neurodiversity Celebration Week

In partnership with

Lexxic
Empowering Neurodiversity

Celebrating our unique strengths and differences

March 16 - 22, 2026

www.neurodiversityweek.com

Agenda

- What is Neurodiversity?
- Do These Differences Have a Name?
- What Is Neurodiversity Celebration Week?
- What Can You Do To Help?

Neurodiversity Celebration Week

What is Neurodiversity?

- Everyone has a differently-wired brain and their own unique way of thinking, interacting and experiencing the world.
- **Neurodiversity** is based on the concept that neurological variances should be recognised and respected just like any other human variation, such as gender, race or sexual orientation.

Neurodiversity is about recognising that everyone's brain works differently.

No Human Brain Is Exactly Alike

- There is no ‘standard’ human brain against which all other human brains can be compared.
- On the contrary, the human brain is so complex that no brain is exactly alike.
- The wide range of natural neurological variations of the brain affect the way that people think, learn and process information.

Respecting Differences

- Neurological differences in the way that our brains are wired means that you may find some things challenging that others find easy.
- You may also find things easy that other people find challenging.
- **Neurodiversity** is about recognising that there is a wide range of neurological variations in the human brain, instead of viewing these variations as being "abnormal."

Neurological variations in the human brain are natural.

Do These Differences Have a Name?

Some of the different ways of thinking, learning, interacting and perceiving the world have been given labels, such as:

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC)
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia
- Tourette’s Syndrome

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- About 4% of the population have ADHD.
- ADHD affects a person's ability to focus. It can cause inattention, hyperactivity and impulsiveness.
- People with ADHD can be some of the most creative members on a team, bringing energy and new approaches to their projects
- Several studies have shown that adults with ADHD tend to be out-of-the-box thinkers and calm under pressure.

Focusing on Success

Like many kids, these pros have ADHD. Here's how they succeeded.

By Marty Kaminsky
Art by Chris Arran

Living with ADHD

ADHD is treatable. Some things that help include skill therapy, support at school, and sometimes, medication. If you think you might have ADHD, talk to a parent, guardian, doctor, school counselor, school nurse, teacher, or another adult you trust. Professionals can help kids with ADHD, and the adults in kids' lives can help set them up for success.

Many students have trouble sitting quietly. They fiddle with pencils, talk out of turn, and jump to do things before thinking. Others can sit still but find it hard to focus on classwork. They may daydream, struggle to organize their work, and forget to do assignments.

Most people feel restless or distracted from time to time, but some feel this way almost all the time. Nearly 2.5 million elementary-school children in the United States have ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder). That's about one out of ten kids.

But ADHD does not have to be a roadblock to achievement. Here, some pros in their fields share the secrets of their success.

"A lot of very successful people have ADHD, so wear it with pride."
—Katherine Ellison, author

Astronaut SCOTT KELLY has flown on four space missions, including one that lasted close to a year. But when he was growing up, he had trouble focusing in school. As a result, he earned low grades.

"I read a novel in college about the space program. The book motivated me to study harder and become a much better student and, eventually, an astronaut. The lesson I learned was, Don't ever give up on yourself. Find something or someone that motivates you and use that to help motivate yourself."

As a defensive tackle for the New England Patriots, LAWRENCE GUY is successful today. But he struggled with ADHD and other learning disabilities throughout his school days. Still, he never gave up.

"In school, I lost focus a lot. I was always playing with things in my hands. My sophomore year in high school was my turning point. I wanted to succeed so badly on the football field. I realized that if I could apply myself, focus, and pay attention there, I could learn all the plays. I took that self-control back into the classroom. I learned that I needed a place to release my extra energy, but I did have the ability to focus."

Author KATHERINE ELLISON was a newspaper reporter, often taking dangerous assignments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Her work earned her a Pulitzer Prize. She did not know she had ADHD until her son filled out a questionnaire to find out if he had it. Reading the form over his shoulder, she realized that he did have ADHD, and so did she. Today, she accepts ADHD as part of her toughest challenges and her greatest successes.

"A lot of very successful people have ADHD, so wear it with pride. Know that you are going to make a lot of mistakes. Learn to forgive yourself without making excuses and try to learn a lesson from each one. I use exercise as one way to cope. I've learned that I need structure in my life."

Figure skaters ZACHARY DONOHUE and Madison Hubbell won a silver medal for ice dancing at the 2018 International Skating Union World Figure Skating Competition and placed fourth at the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea. In elementary school, Zachary had a hard time making friends because his classmates thought he was wild, scattered, and overly excitable.

"When I was 16, I realized that it was OK for me to be different than others. Now, at 27, I'm learning to understand my own emotions. I still struggle with ADHD, but I've learned that I'm responsible for more than just myself. I've learned how important it is to be organized and to be a step ahead—it helps slow me down, which is important for someone with ADHD."

Photos (from left): Science History Images/Alamy Stock Photo; Cal Sport Media/Alamy Stock Photo; courtesy of Katherine Ellison; Aflo Co. Ltd./Alamy Stock Photo.

Autism

- About 2% of the population is autistic.
- Autism affects how a person perceives the world and interacts and socialises with others, making it challenging for them to pick up social cues and interpret them.
- Autistic people can be sensitive to lights, noise, touch and smells, which can sometimes cause them distress.
- People on the autistic spectrum can be highly logical and can be good at absorbing and remembering facts, attention to detail, and recognising patterns.

Dyslexia

- About 10% of the population are dyslexic.
- Dyslexia is a language processing difficulty that can cause challenges with reading, writing and spelling.
- It can cause challenges with processing information quickly, organisation, sequencing, spoken language and motor skills.
- Dyslexic people can be very good at creative thinking, problem-solving and verbal communication.
- About 35% of entrepreneurs (business owners) are dyslexic.

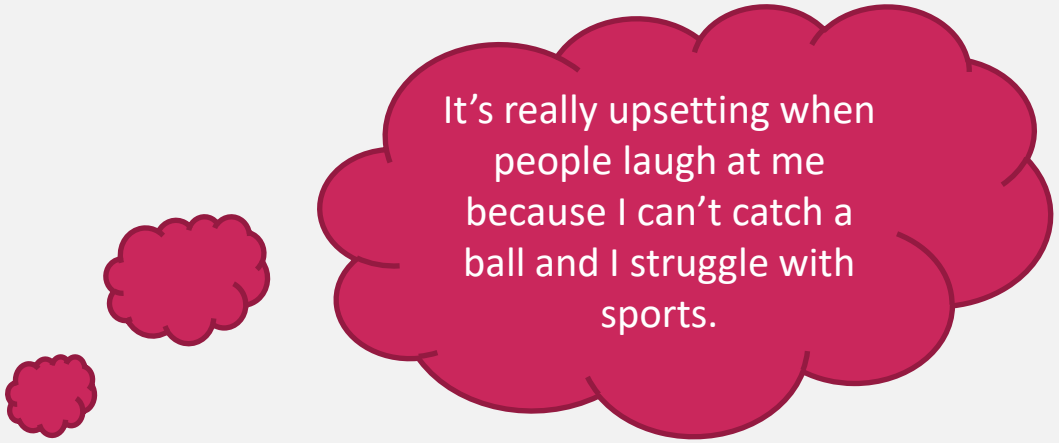
Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD, Dyspraxia)

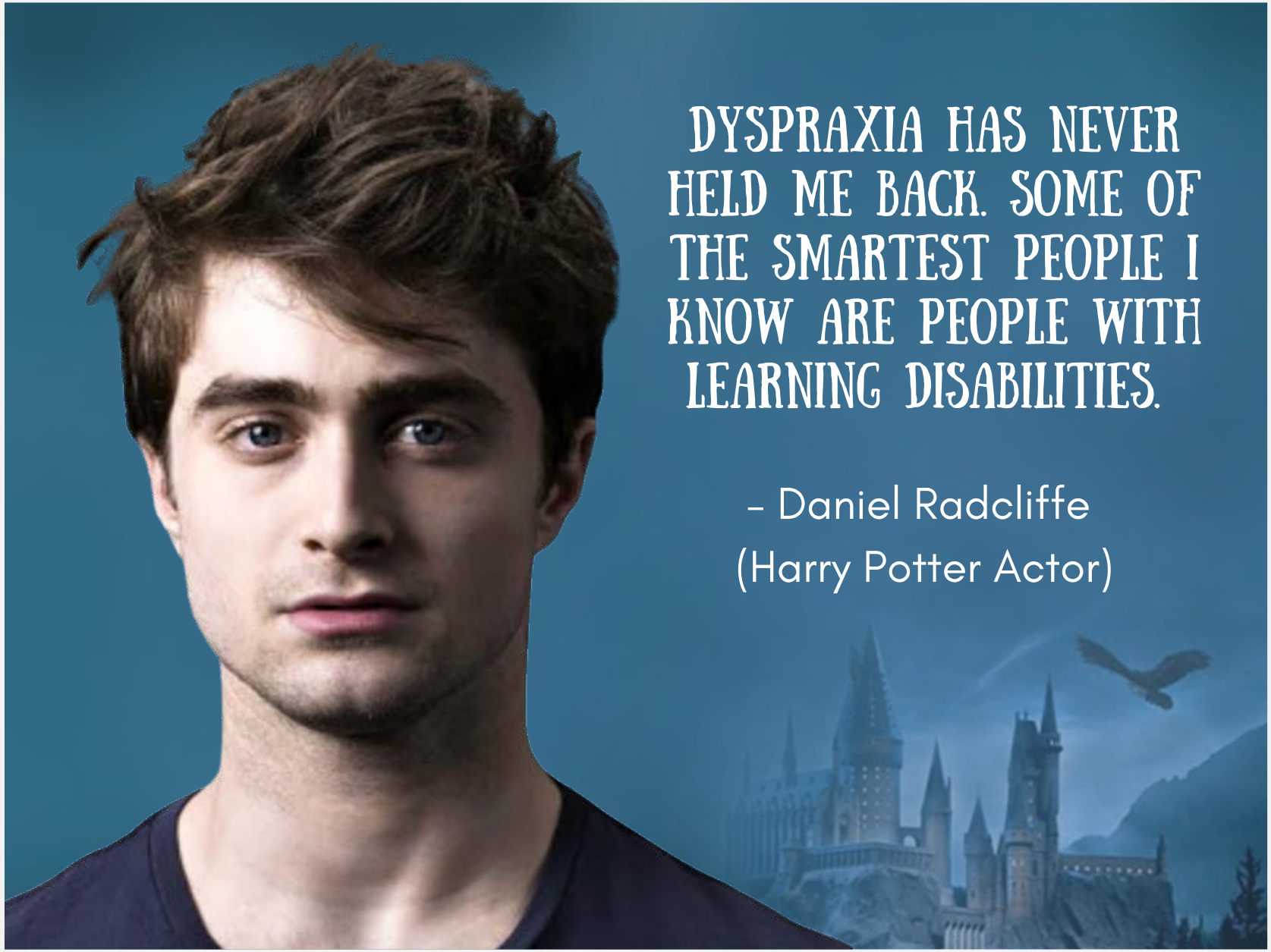
- About 6% of the population are dyspraxic.
- Dyspraxia affects your physical coordination.
- Sometimes dyspraxia can be misperceived as clumsiness.
- Dyspraxia can affect your fine motor skill, such as your handwriting, ability to tie your shoes and doing up buttons.
- It can also affect your gross motor skills, such as being able to catch and kick a ball, run and ride a bicycle.

Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD, Dyspraxia) Continued…

- Dyspraxia can also affect your ability to organise yourself.

- Dyspraxic people are creative, determined and really good at developing their own strategies to overcome difficulties.




DYSPRAXIA HAS NEVER HELD ME BACK. SOME OF THE SMARTEST PEOPLE I KNOW ARE PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES.
- Daniel Radcliffe
(Harry Potter Actor)

Dyscalculia

- About 5% of the population have dyscalculia
- Dyscalculia affects an individual’s ability to acquire and use mathematical skills
- For some, it affects how they see numbers. For others, it might make symbols difficult to read, or they may have trouble understanding finances, data and using numbers in everyday life
- People with dyscalculia often have strengths such as intuitive and strong strategic thinking, are very creative and have a love of words

Tourette Syndrome (TS)

- About 1% of the population have Tourette Syndrome.
- Tourette Syndrome (TS) causes sudden, uncontrolled, repetitive muscle movements and sounds called “tics.”
- Stressful situations can make the tics more frequent, longer and more severe.
- People with TS can be faster at assembling sounds into words (phonology) and are often high-achieving, creative and empathetic (understanding and caring).

What is Neurodiversity Celebration Week About?

- Neurodiversity Celebration Week is about celebrating the strengths and talents of people with learning differences.
- Sadly, these students are often misunderstood.
- Neurodiversity Celebration Week is one way of reminding everyone of the importance of being kind, tolerant and accepting of everyone.

Why Does Neurodiversity Matter?

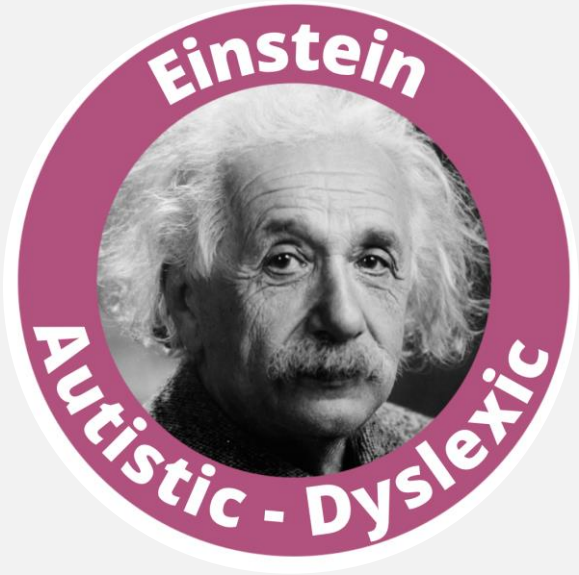
- The concept of neurodiversity is the acceptance that all humans are different, with unique minds, needs and abilities.
- This approach moves beyond labels such as autism, dyslexia or ADHD and recognises that difference in ability are natural in the human genome and can contain unique gifts and contributions.
- The human brain has a wide spectrum of functions and any differences should be acknowledged as just another way of being or doing things.

Recognising Determination

- Neurodiversity Celebration Week is also about recognizing hard work, resilience and determination.
- The university environment is not always the ideal place for special educational needs (SEN) students to use and showcase their unique strengths and talents.
- Quite often universities focus on skills SEN students find difficult and may not naturally excel at, such as reading, writing and spelling.
- Doing badly in university can be very frustrating and discouraging, because SEN students often work extremely hard to compensate for their challenges.

Recognising and Celebrating Strengths and Talents

- Neurodiversity Celebration Week serves as a reminder that no matter what our differences and challenges, everyone also has their own strengths and talents.
- Many people who have ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia or Tourette Syndrome and struggled in school, are now very successful.
- Many attribute their success to their unique way of thinking and perceiving the world around them.


Einstein
Autistic - Dyslexic

Cara Delevigne
Dyspraxic

Bill Gates
Dyslexic

Emma Watson
ADHD

Tommy Hilfiger
Dyslexic

Keira Knightley
Dyslexic

What Can You Do To Help?

- Don’t tease or make fun of anyone in your class who is different or who is finding something difficult.
- Instead, be kind, understanding and encouraging.
- Never forget that you have the power to make a positive difference to someone who may be having a difficult time.
- Make someone’s day by being understanding and kind.

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