

Neurodivergent Programming As a Superpower

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1: INTRODUCTION + DEFINITIONS

Hi! I'm Véronique autistic & artistic.

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Executive Director & Chief Curator, CEPA Gallery,
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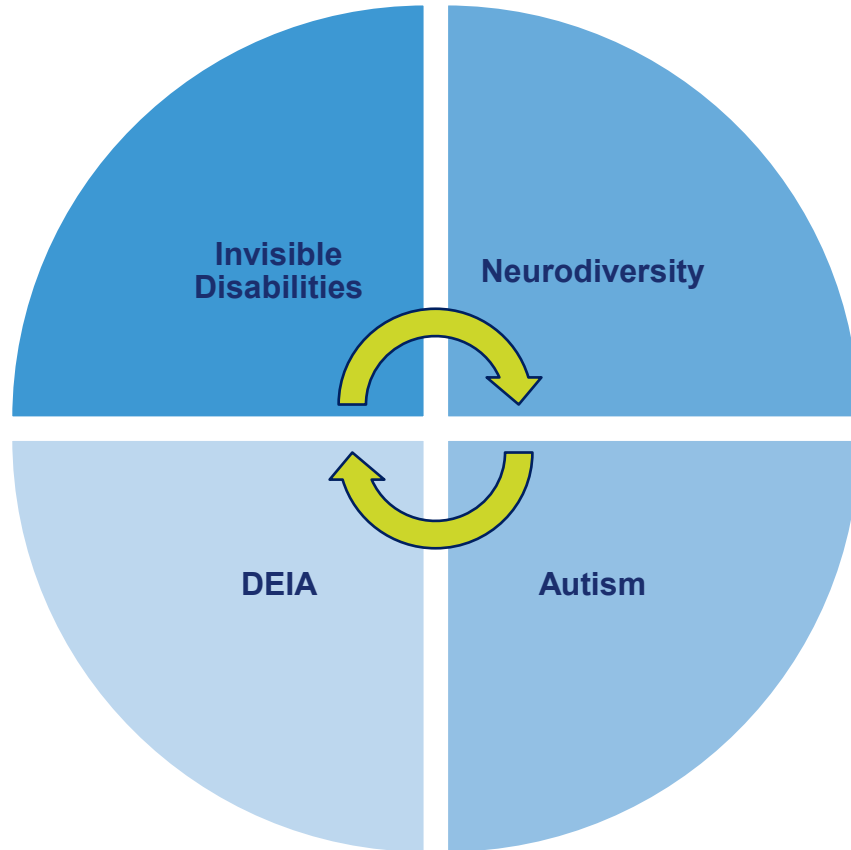
“Neurotypical” + sensory sensitivities

ABOUT IBCCES

- Founded in 2001
- Mission to provide multi-disciplinary, position and industry specific training and certification to professionals to improve experience and outcomes of neurodivergent individuals
- Certification programs for healthcare, education, hospitality and entertainment, public safety and corporate organizations
- Based in US, certificants in more than 90+ countries worldwide



Definitions



What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is a recognition that not all brains think or feel the same way.

Neurodivergence is an umbrella term representing over 15% of the world population (maybe even closer to 20%).

These are autistic people, individuals with Attention Deficit & Hyperactive Disorder, OCD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Tourette and many other neurological and sensory processing differences.

This presentation favors identity-first language (“autistic person”) because I don’t think of autism as a disability but as a trait; but person-first language (“person with autism”) is OK too.

Always ask.



Impact



1 in 6
people have a
sensory need

**Multi-generational
neurodiversity**



**Millions
of Adults** are on the
spectrum

*Sensory seeking,
sensory sensitive, or
in-between -
everyone still wants
to **have fun***



1 in 36
children diagnosed
with autism

\$29 BILLION

spent annually by travelers
with disabilities (on their own
travel, not including companions)



This is Frank

Agent F.
Service Dog, Comic Relief



Art by Patrick Moser @ FAU





Creating Safe Spaces

Frank's story.

slido



What would you do?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

2: VISITOR PERSPECTIVE

What Can You Do?

- Everyone has different needs – but there are some commonalities



Communication, communication, communication

- Long-term plans and programs – you don't need to be perfect, but don't want lip service (credibility)
- Options and flexibility – they know their own needs best
- Inclusivity ALL the time



Areas to Consider

❑ Communication

- Roll out the welcome mat – make it easy
- This helps EVERYONE not just a “special” group
- Videos, photos, and written content - direct line to contact
- Menus, re-entry, guides, partnerships

❑ Entry points

- Check in/ticketing process

❑ Sensory needs

- Low sensory or quiet areas

❑ Staff!

- Staff knowledge and supports



Remember:



- It's a journey!
- Not a “one + done” initiative - This is part of your DNA
- Make sure you implement/have access to: Continued Support, Ongoing Learning Opportunities
- Tangible Resources
- Be open to feedback and learning

Kinesthetic Learning Benefits Everyone!



Examples of Questions to Ask

These are just a few questions to ask when designing programs, exhibits and work spaces:

- Could I use an icon or image?
- Is my typeface/font “friendly”?
(dyslexia/visually impaired)
- Are my lines of sight and sound open or closed?
- How many senses do I engage?
- Can I make a touchable version?
- Did we try this from all angles?



3: INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE



- Universal design
- Consider communication styles and preferences
- Most accommodations for neurodistinct teammates are free or low-cost
- Can benefit MANY staff
- Don't wait for disclosure

Check Your Assumptions



**Different brains
work differently**



**Check your
assumptions,
again.**



**Communicate
unambiguously.**

Examples of Adjustments

Ensure your hiring practices are inclusive.

Take a strength-based approach to task assignment and challenge your own point of view.

Manage communication and schedules with productivity tools

Take step to provide stress and anxiety outlets for your employees, including transparent communication.



CEPA Hires Joseph Poloncarz as Flutie Fellow



Joseph Poloncarz

Joseph Poloncarz is a film photographer, and teaching artist in Buffalo, NY. He first came to CEPA in 2012 for a photography program through Autism Services. He became an assistant teacher and quickly was teaching his own classes to his Alma Mater, Autism Services Inc. Joseph was diagnosed with autism at the age of 3 and suffered depression since high school. Photography helped him battle his mental health issues.

In 2021, he was hired as a Grant Coordinator by CEPA Gallery.



www.cepagallery.org

CONCLUSION

IMPACTS



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RESOURCES:

AutismTravel.com

Implicit.harvard.edu

MacAccess.org