

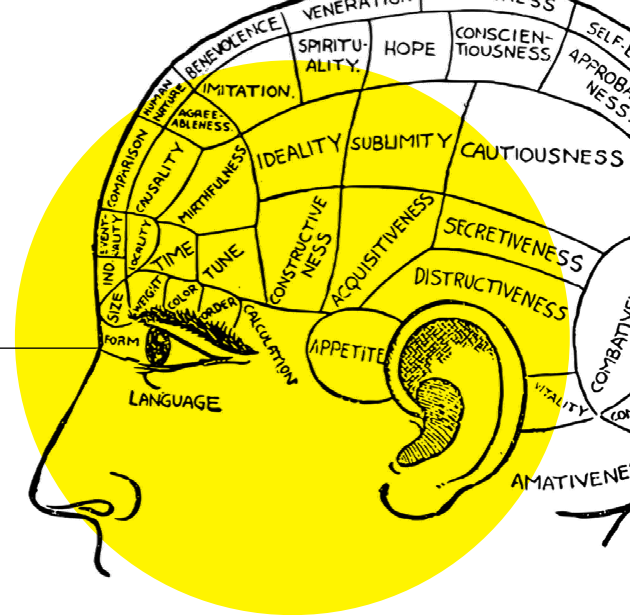
Designing for Neurodiversity

Aspirational societies strive to provide the widest range of people with choices that maximise their employment cycle. Designers have responsibility for helping society to achieve this goal.

There is not one factor that defines members of the neurodiversity community. The term loosely describes those who experience or see the world in a way that varies from those considered 'neurotypical'.

We need to be mindful of stereotypes and generalisations and ensure that the conversation around neurodiversity is focused on non-judgemental inclusion.

If a neurodivergent person is unable to do their job in the office, it is a failure of the workplace (physical environment, culture, management structures), not of the individual.



// HABITUATION

Habituation is the process whereby repeated stimuli are responded to less than new stimuli. If an individual struggles with habituation, they can struggle to sustain attention over time.

// SENSORY-GATING


Sensory-gating is the process whereby stimuli are filtered. Where filtering is a challenge, it could cause a sensory overload or challenges focusing on a task.

7 things designers can do →




Lighting

1 Provide areas of the office with lower lighting levels or locally controlled (desktop) lighting.




Acoustics

2 Create a variety of busy and quiet spaces. Materials like flooring to be considered to minimise contribution to background noise.



Wayfinding

3 Wayfinding and navigation should be consistent and clear throughout the space.




Choice

4 Offer choice and variety of spaces and seating.



Calm Spaces

5 Provide spaces where movement is minimal: desks away from circulation areas, screens for privacy, phone booths, designated low-distraction areas.



Temperature

6 Temperature should be moderate with no sudden changes. Poor air quality leading to smells could contribute to sensory overload.



Facilitate Planning

7 With agile desking policies, a digital walkthrough of the office space can enable a building user to book a desk or quiet room and plan their journey.