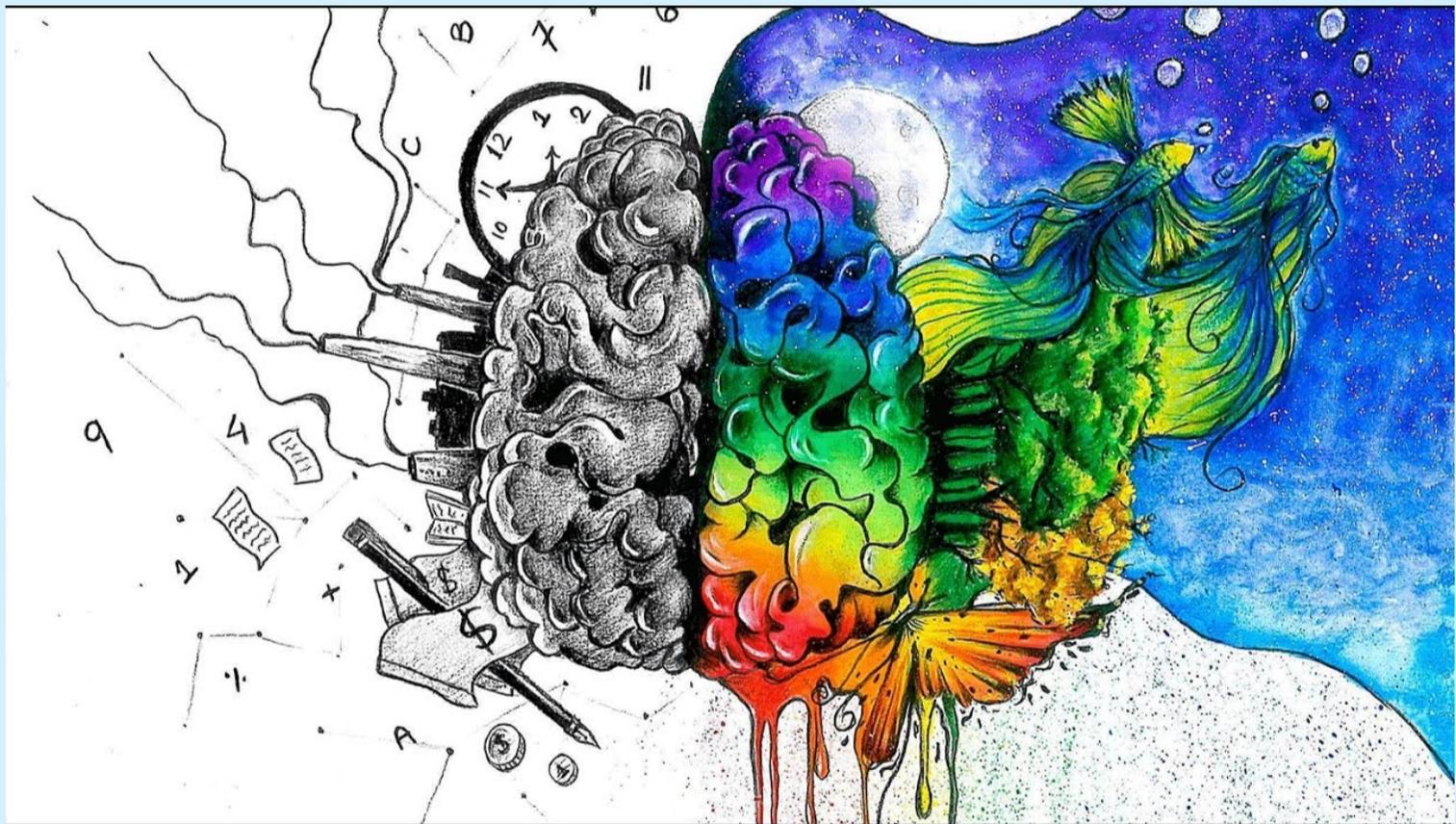


The Neurodiversity Paradigm Explained

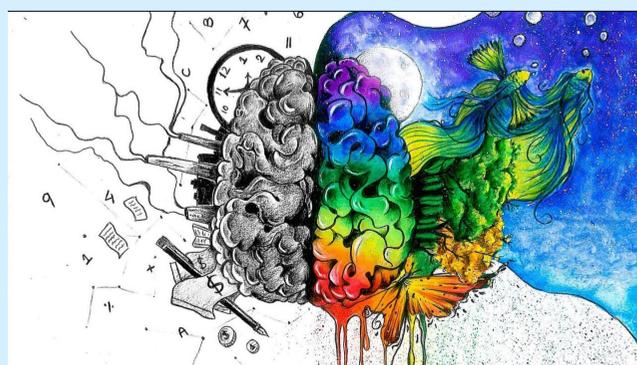


The Neurodiversity Paradigm

Neurodiversity Paradigm is a perspective of Neurodiversity that is built off of three basic premises (see page 3).

Neurodiversity is a term coined by Judy Singer (Australian sociologist) in 1998. The Autistic activist community picked up this term and it has been further developed through the work of Dr. Nick Walker

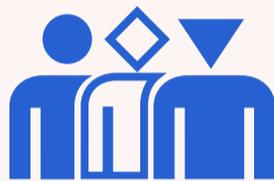
*The **Neurodiversity Movement** draws on the Neurodiversity paradigm as its philosophical foundation. The Neurodiversity movement has its roots in the Autistic Rights movement and is a social justice movement that seeks equality, respect, civil rights, and societal inclusion for neurodivergent individuals.*



Three Basic Premises

Neurodiversity Just Is

Neurodiversity is simply just that—another form of human diversity. Neurodiversity is a biological fact. It is a natural (and beneficial) part of human evolution. Neurodiversity is a valuable and beneficial form of human diversity.



The Concept of a “Normal” Brain Is a Social Construct

The idea that there is one “normal” or “right” kind of social cognition, neurocognitive functioning, or mode of processing sensory information is a social construct. In the same way that there isn’t a “right” gender, race, class, or sexual orientation, there isn’t a “right” way for the brain to be wired. Having neurodiversity can be a powerful asset for society, a business, or a family.



Social & Power Dynamics

Like other groups with non-majority identities, neurodivergent individuals experience imbalanced social dynamics and unequal power distribution. Such power dynamics may include—unequal distribution of social power, limited social-cultural representation (or stereotyped and biased representation), and difficulty navigating environments tailored towards neurotypicals (education, work environments, conventional social practices).



Neurodiversity Paradigm in Action

Moving Away from Pathologizing Language

- Moving away from the language of ‘disorder’ to describe neurocognitive variants like Autism, OCD, or ADHD (toward language of difference).
- Psychotherapists who integrate a *Neurodiversity Paradigm* don’t label neurodiversity as intrinsically pathological.



Moving from “Cure” to “Embrace”

Emphasis shifts from trying to “cure” neurodivergent individuals to helping neurodivergent individuals embrace their diversity. Therapists work with neurodivergent individuals to find ways of living that are more in sync with their natural neurological wiring and help them to heal from internalized ableism and oppression.



Understanding the Context of Suffering

Neurodivergence doesn't intrinsically cause suffering; much of the struggle and strain comes from navigating a world built for Neurotypicals. We often experience the world as chaotic, busy, smelly, noisy, intrusive, and high-touch. Social constructs, communication patterns, and role shifting can often lead to confusion and distress and we crave authentic encounters with others.

