

CCDP Community Events

Neurodiversity and Pacing

Complex Chronic Diseases Program at the BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre

I acknowledge with gratitude, that we are gathered on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish Nation) and sə́lílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) who have cared for and nurtured the lands and waters around us for all time. I give thanks for the opportunity to live, work and support care here.

Welcome to each and everyone!

We acknowledge participants are presenting with a diversity of backgrounds, identities and functional capacities.



Webinar Details & Group Guidelines

- 90 min session
- Look after your comfort. A 5-minute break will be offered for pacing.
- Please respect confidentiality. Use headphones, if you are not alone.
- By attending, you are consenting to participate in this webinar. You can withdraw your consent at any time, by leaving this webinar.

Reminder – No Recording

- It is against PHSA policy to record any video or audio during any group session.
- Please help us protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participants by not recording our sessions.



General Disclosure


- The information provided in group is intended for information purposes only, and is not intended as, nor should it be considered a substitute for, professional medical advice, diagnosis, treatment, or individualized care. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider, with any questions you may have regarding your medical condition.
- External resources are provided for informational purposes only and does not reflect an endorsement of specific practitioners or products, whether or not they are affiliated to the CCDP. The CCDP does not stand to benefit from community resources or external referrals and choosing or refraining from access to any services outside of the CCDP, will not affect your care and treatment within the program.

Overview

- Neurodiversity
- Spectrum to Wheel
- Masking
- Executive functions: strengths and challenges
- What does this mean for Pacing

What is Neurodiversity


Neurodiversity



There are many different types of neurodivergent brain.

Often, people are a mix of more than one neurotype.

This isn't even all of them.



Neurodiversity



Neurotypical brains are the ones most people are used to.

Any brain that is NOT neurotypical is said to be neurodivergent



Getting the language right

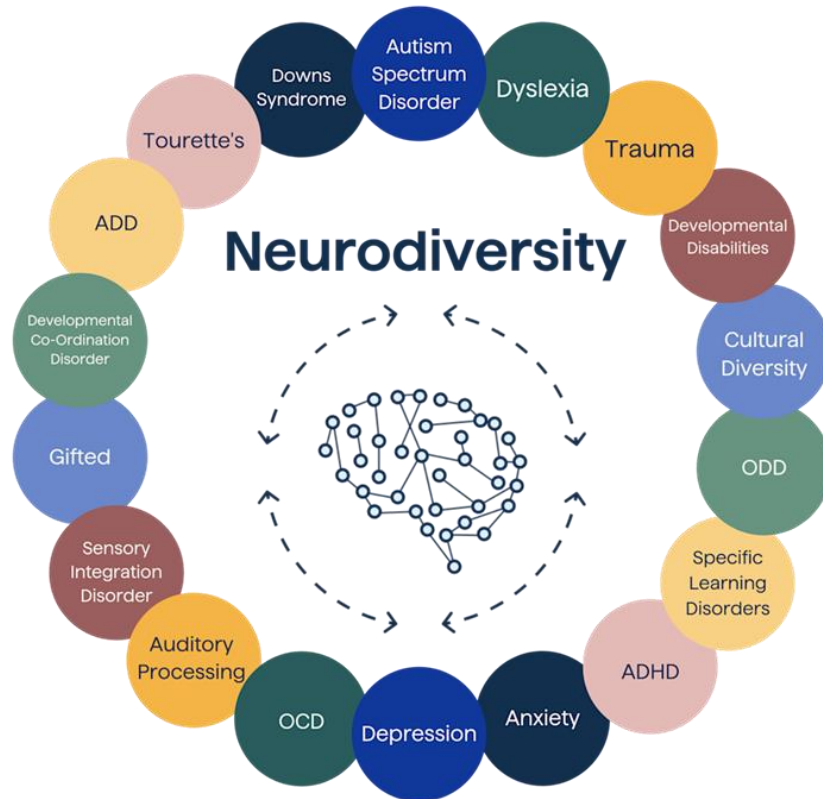


This group is NEURODIVERSE.
It has more than one type of brain.
(including a neurotypical brain!)

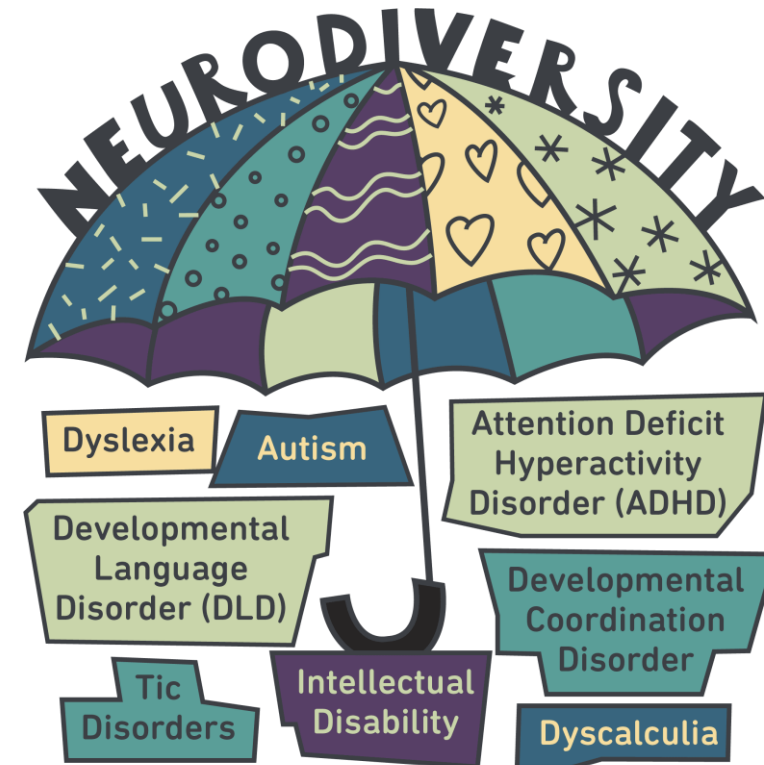


(Credit: @neurowild_)

Neurodiversity



<https://www.corticacare.com/care-notes/what-is-neurodiversity>



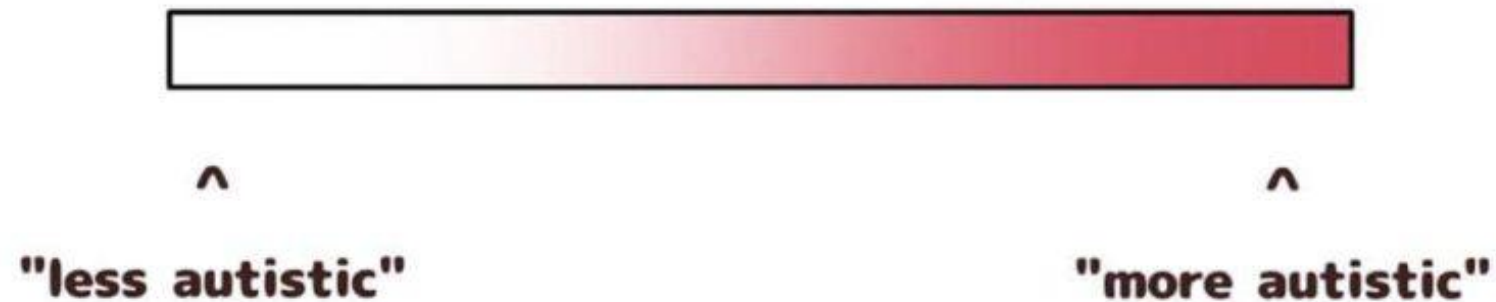
<https://therapyfocus.org.au/on-the-blog/understanding-neurodiversity/>

Context

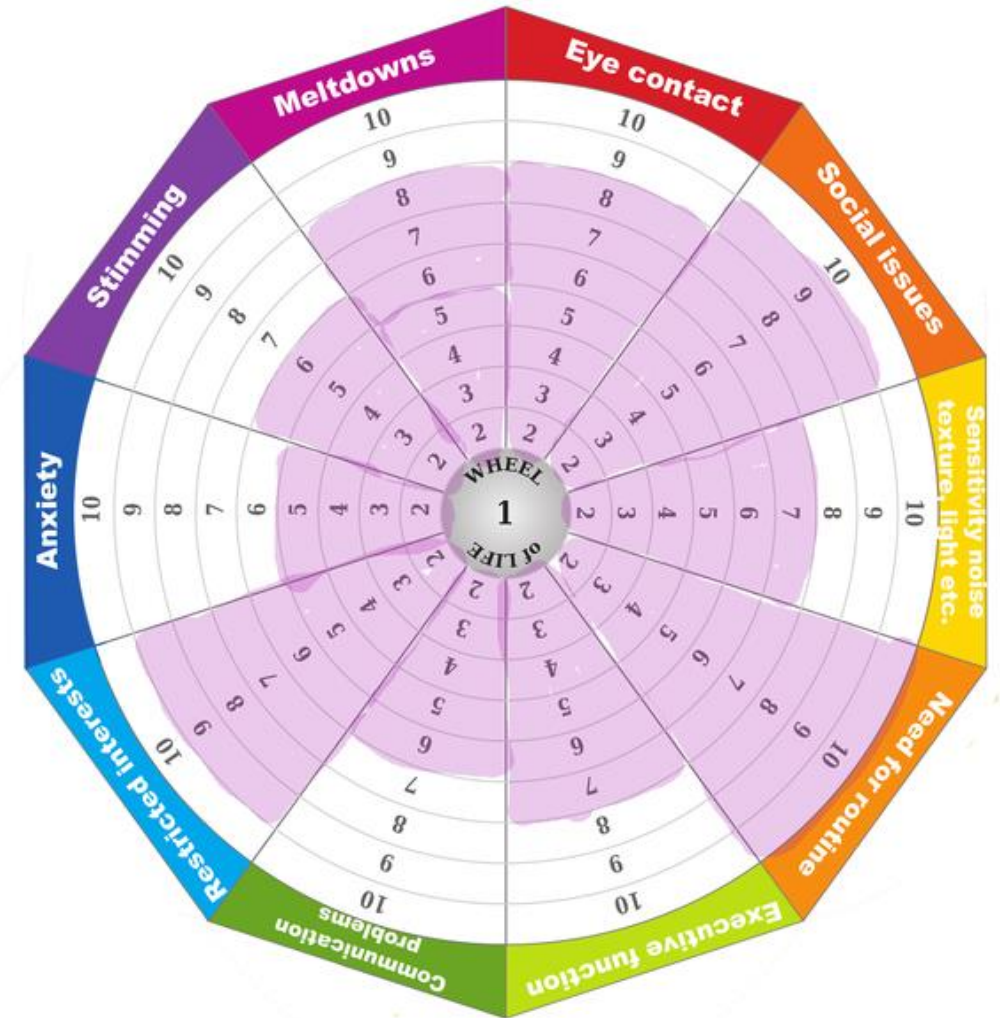
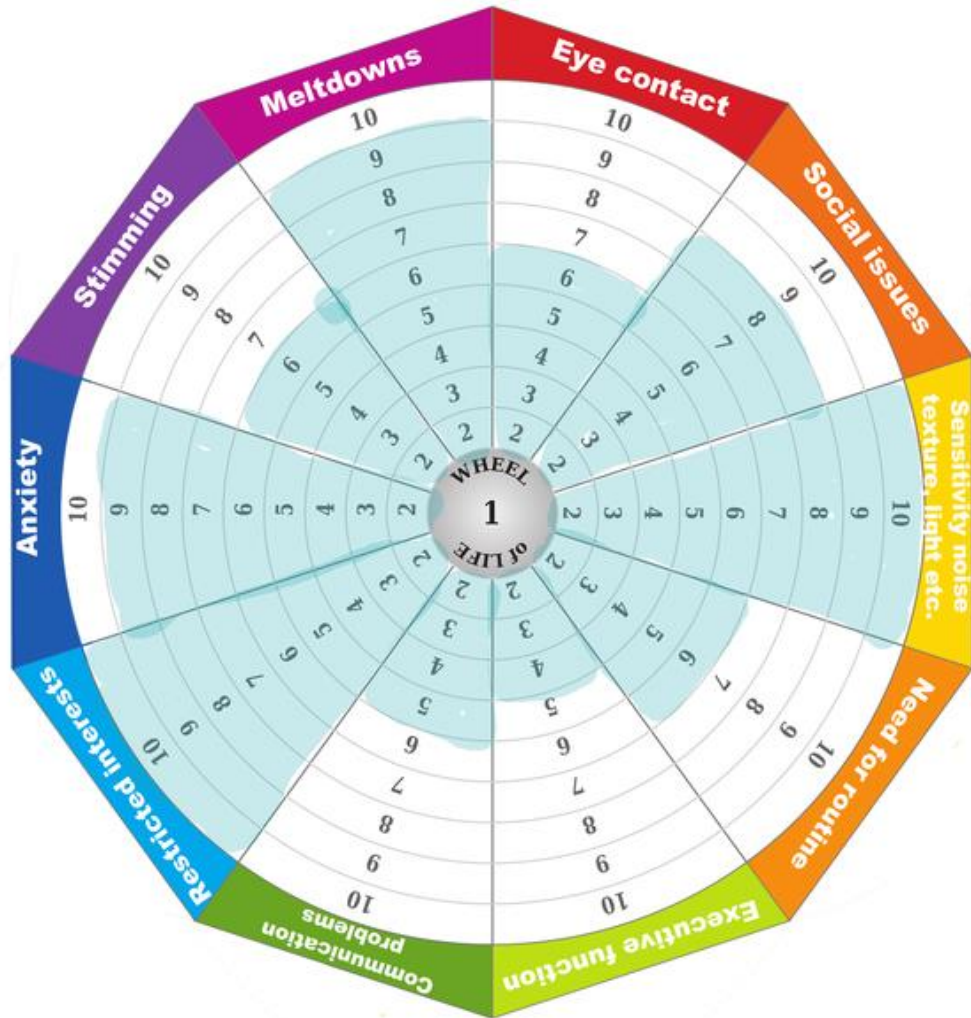
- A neurodivergent brain does not need fixing!
- Your value is not determined by your strengths and challenges

ASD: Spectrum to Wheel

what people think the autism spectrum looks like:



Images: <https://themighty.com/topic/autism-spectrum-disorder/autism-spectrum-wheel/>



ADHD

- 3 subtypes (inattentive, hyperactive/impulsive and mixed).
- Women with ADHD are more likely to go undiagnosed or get a misdiagnosis.
- Not a personality or character flaw – it's a brain that developed and works different.
- Medication can be helpful for some- talk to your PCP

Neurotypical Expectations

Masking is when a neurodivergent individual hides or controls behaviors that are not considered neurotypical.

They are also sometimes referred to as “compensatory strategies”

Impact:

- Can have effects in mental and physical health
- Costs a lot of energy to maintain

Why masking happens:

- Done so frequently it becomes automatic
- Safety

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/masking>

Neurotypical Expectations

Unmasking:

- Personal choice
- It's hard and takes time and effort
- Get support (peers, counseling, friends and family)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9COmZ2HwXY>

Book: A Radical Guide for Women With ADHD Embrace Neurodiversity, Live Boldly, and Break Through Barriers by Sari Solden

Executive functions

- A set of cognitive skills that enable individuals to plan, organize, and execute tasks.
- Key components: Working memory, cognitive flexibility and inhibition control. They can be divided more detailed into these common categories:
 - Impulse Control
 - Flexible Thinking
 - Emotional Control
 - Working Memory
 - Self-Monitoring
 - Planning and Prioritizing
 - Task Initiation
 - Organization

Executive functions



Image: Abbey Neuropsychology Clinic

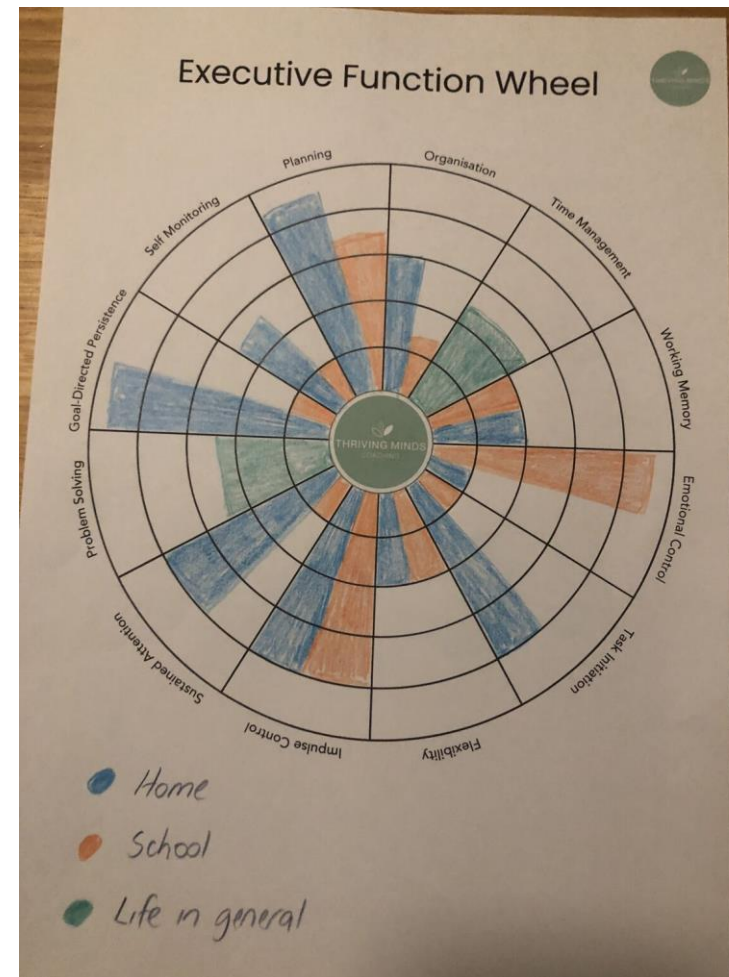


Image: https://au.linkedin.com/company/thriving-minds-coaching-aus?trk=public_post_feed-actor-name

Adjusting pacing to strengths and challenges

What “Duh” messages have you heard?

- Why don't you just use a timer?
- Have you tried leaving earlier?

....

Have you thought about your strengths and talents? Or only challenges?



Strengths and Challenges

- Which areas in your life need support and accommodation
- This focus shift can be used instead of focusing on traits or symptoms?

How is neurodivergence or other things impacting your life?

- Relationships
- Sleep
- Work & Study
- Communication
- Daily Living
- Sensory
- Finances
- Eating and Meal Prep

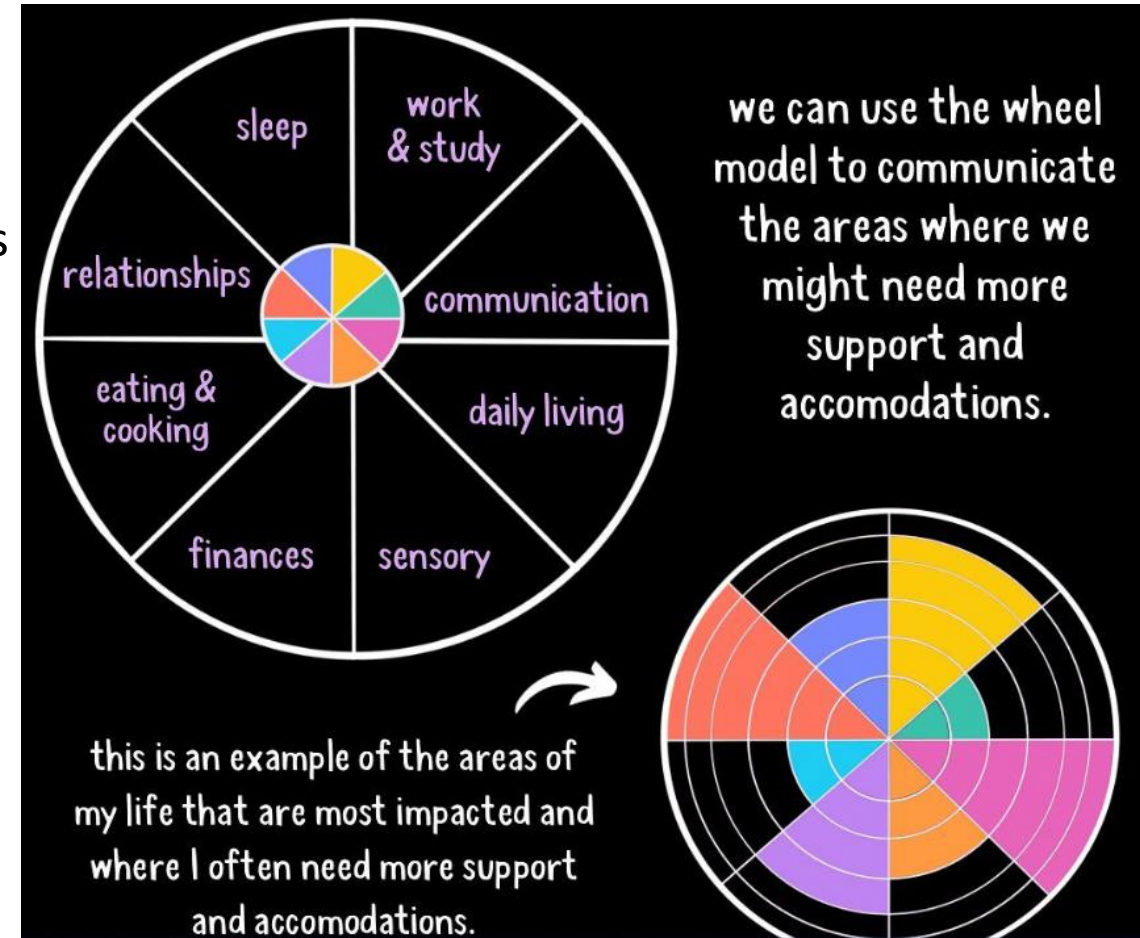


Image:

<https://www.instagram.com/livedexperienceeducator/p/CWdVhmfVt1/>

Strength's checklist

Another way to look at
this is a strengths
checklist

For the entire list check
out:

<https://literallyausome.com.au/cms/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Neurodiversity-Strengths-Checklist.pdf>

Neurodiversity Strengths Checklist



Personal Strengths

- ☐ Enjoys working independently
- ☐ Has a good sense of his/her personal strengths and weaknesses
- ☐ Learns from past mistakes
- ☐ Has persistence in carrying out assignments or activities
- ☐ Is courageous in dealing with adversity and/or the unknown
- ☐ Keeps a personal diary or journal
- ☐ Has a good sense of humor
- ☐ Possesses a sense of responsibility
- ☐ Has strong opinions about controversial topics
- ☐ Marches to the beat of a different drummer
- ☐ Handles stressful events well (e.g. is resilient)
- ☐ Has good character (e.g. honesty, integrity, fairness)
- ☐ Has the ability to set realistic goals for him/herself
- ☐ Has a sense of confidence or high self-esteem
- ☐ Has good self-discipline
- ☐ Has personal ambitions in life
- ☐ Displays good common sense
- ☐ Possesses personal vitality, vigor, or energy

Communication Strengths

- ☐ Explains ideas or concepts well to others
- ☐ Asks good questions
- ☐ Is a good storyteller
- ☐ Is a good joke teller
- ☐ Has good listening skills
- ☐ Handles verbal feedback (especially negative feedback) well
- ☐ Has good articulation ability
- ☐ Is able to effectively use non-verbal cues to communicate with others
- ☐ Is persuasive in getting someone to do something
- ☐ Has good assertive skills without being pushy

Emotional Strengths

- ☐ Is emotionally sensitive to perceiving the world around him/her
- ☐ Has an optimistic attitude toward life
- ☐ Can tell how he/she is feeling at any given moment
- ☐ Can easily pick up on the emotional state of another person
- ☐ Is able to handle strong internal feelings in a constructive manner
- ☐ Receives gut feelings about things

Finding things that are helpful

- To communicate areas that need extra support and accommodations you need to know what they are.

Connecting this to pacing:

- Are there strengths that you have that are helpful for some pacing ideas?
- Which areas need extra support or a different approach?
- For example: What are your motivators?





5-Minute Break

Adapting Activity

- Breaking up tasks
- Activity Shifting
- Timer use
- Reduce activity (Simplify, Delegate, Eliminate)

- Don't put it down, put it away
- Visual timers
- Body doubling
- "Dumping" thoughts when the brain is busy
- Box your time (move away from task orientation)
- 2 minute approach (if it takes more than 2 min do it now, otherwise only do the first 2 min)

Adapting Activity

- What is the reward? Scrolling etc.
- Pair it, something fun or interesting (music, smoothie, fun highlighters, podcast etc.)
- Talk out loud/sing to yourself as you do it (can increase focus and reward)
- Stay with one energy type
- Use AI for example with meal prep



Success Stories: Activities

Rest

Frequent rest breaks:

- Recovery rest
- Preemptive rest
- Micro breaks

Often the lying down in a quiet room does not work.

- What do you need?
- Rest one energy type at a time
- Sensory soothing
- Game it: Selfcare and rest (example: Finch)
- Make it different every time (change up relaxation techniques)

Sensory

- What type of sensory stimulation is calming for you?
- You can use stimming or other sensory soothers on purpose; they can be part of rest too.

Sensory checklist examples:

- <https://neurodivergentinsights.com/sensory-calming-techniques/>
- https://www.ot-innovations.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/sensory_diet_checklist_2007pdf.pdf
- <https://www.theottoolbox.com/sensory-diets-for-adults/>



Success Stories: Rest and Sensory

Adapting Environment

- Clear and consistent visual information (schedule, workspace)
- Remove or dampen distracting or disturbing stimuli
- Transitions (give yourself time and a heads up)
- Creating labels for containers so you don't forget what's in them
- Subscriptions for products that you use often so you never run out (toilet paper, hygiene products, etc.).
- Grocery shop only during “sensory friendly” hours



Success Stories: Environment

Thank you

Questions?

Resources

- <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/masking>
- National Autistic Society (UK) ME/CFS query: <https://community.autism.org.uk/search?q=cfs%2Fme>
- <https://literallyausome.com.au/cms/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Neurodiversity-Strengths-Checklist.pdf>
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9COMZ2HwXY>
- Book: A Radical Guide for Women With ADHD Embrace Neurodiversity, Live Boldly, and Break Through Barriers by Sari Solden
- Blog Post: <https://www.planetneurodivergent.com/chronic-pain-fatigue/>

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- https://www.ot-innovations.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/sensory_diet_checklist_2007pdf.pdf
- <https://www.theottoolbox.com/sensory-diets-for-adults/>
- Autism Support Groups in BC: <https://www.autismbc.ca/blog/support-groups-community-groups/>