

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Because we honor everyone, this work is for everyone.

## Neurodiversity

MACC is a place where all belong. Diversity fuels the MACC spirit empowering people in our inclusive community. We celebrate uniqueness of each individual, and multiple points of view. Be who you are. We like it that way.

Did you know that April is Autism Awareness month? This month we would like to celebrate those on the Autism spectrum and their families. MACC values and supports the need for acceptance and inclusion, empowering all people on the Autism spectrum.

Autism is just one example of a neurodevelopmental difference, falling under the umbrella of **neurodiversity**. This term refers to the neurological variations of **all people**, but often seeks to include many developmental conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and/or a wide range of Learning Disabilities<sup>1,8</sup>.

Dr. Stephen Shore notably said, *if you know one person with Autism, then you know one person with Autism*<sup>2</sup>. While there are a few shared common characteristics of ASD, it is a spectrum exhibiting a wide range of indicators in varying degrees. Autism is a single word used to describe millions of different stories<sup>3</sup>.

People often think of ASD like this:



However, ASD is experienced more like a soundboard with lots of different sliders with a wide range of settings. Some sliders may be “locked in” while others are “variable” depending on the individual and/or situation<sup>4</sup>.



Shared Common Characteristics of ASD may include<sup>5,7</sup>:

- **Social Communication and Interaction** skill deficits such as: difficulty with eye contact, limited facial expressions, limited tone or speech rhythms, unusual peer-peer interactions, and/or delayed or limited language skills.
- **Repetitive Behaviors and Restrictive Interests**, for example: lining up objects, repeating words or phrases, difficulties with minor or major changes in routine, intensively narrow-focused interests, and/or patterned motor movements like flapping hands, spinning, body rocking, or pacing.
- **Other Characteristics** like: delayed or limited body movements, delayed or limited executive functioning skills, sensory sensitivity, unusual sleeping or eating habits, and/or unusual emotional reactions.

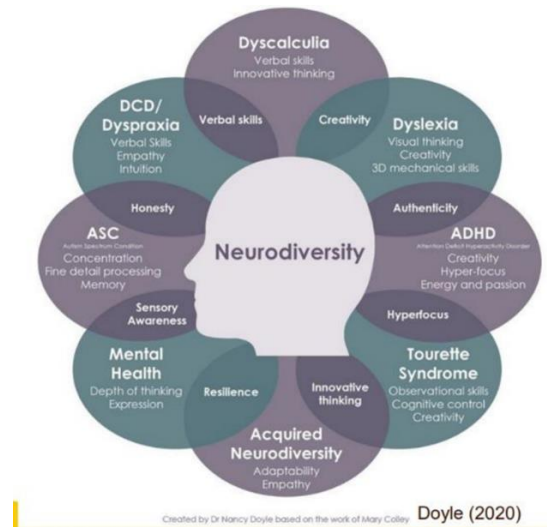
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## Neurodiversity

While it may be perceived that many characteristics of Autism are limiting, it is important to also emphasize that there are a lot of **strengths** of those on the Autism spectrum:

- Exceptional loyalty and honesty
- Precise and detail-oriented
- Dependable
- Highly motivated and passionate about unique interests
- Specialist in topics of interest
- Bring rare insight to a problem or situation
- Quirky sense of humor



Considering Students through a Strengths Perspective

Like Dr. Shore stated, it is important that we not pre-judge the abilities or difficulties of someone with ASD simply because of this label. There are numerous myths<sup>6</sup> about ASD that circulate from blogs, social media, and other unreliable websites. While we can't dispel all of these myths in a brief newsletter, it is important that we as a community **educate ourselves** when working with someone who may be perceived as neurodivergent. For additional information, we encourage you to check out the resources on the next page.

## Making our College Community More Neurodivergent-Friendly

### Faculty

- Adopt Universal Design practices<sup>13, 14</sup>

### Staff<sup>14</sup>

- Hold student orientations
- Provide multiple points of contact
- Use roadmaps/checklists
- Initiate frequent "check-ins" to identify students who may need additional supports

### All/College Community

- Work as partners with MACC Access & ADA Services
- Support self-advocacy for neurodivergent people
- Address distractions that lead to sensory overload/distress<sup>14</sup>

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## Neurodiversity

### Resources

1. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/what-is-neurodiversity-202111232645#:~:text=Neurodiversity%20describes%20the%20idea%20that,are%20not%20viewed%20as%20deficits.>
2. <https://ibcces.org/blog/2018/03/23/12748/>
3. <https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/autism-one-word-attempting-describe-millions-different-stories>
4. <https://okcmom.com/relax-its-just-autism/>
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/signs.html>
6. <https://adsd.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/adsdnvgov/content/Programs/Autism/ATAP/Autism%20Myths%20and%20Misconceptions.pdf>
7. <https://thompsoncenter.missouri.edu/>
8. <https://www.woodhaventeam.org/encircle-technologies/>
9. <https://www.macc.edu/access-ada/>
10. [https://www.amazon.com/Neurotribes-Legacy-Autism-Future-Neurodiversity/dp/0399185615/ref=asc\\_df\\_0399185615/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=266076169372&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=12465567698563135152&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=1020268&hvtargid=pla-326514704337&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/Neurotribes-Legacy-Autism-Future-Neurodiversity/dp/0399185615/ref=asc_df_0399185615/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=266076169372&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=12465567698563135152&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=1020268&hvtargid=pla-326514704337&psc=1)
11. <https://www.templegrandin.com/>
12. [https://www.amazon.com/Smart-but-Scattered-Teens-Executive/dp/1609182294/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=3A4LCDREERBND&keywords=smart+but+scattered+teens&qid=1676569937&s=books&srefix=smart+but+scattered+teen%2Cstripbooks%2C100&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Smart-but-Scattered-Teens-Executive/dp/1609182294/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3A4LCDREERBND&keywords=smart+but+scattered+teens&qid=1676569937&s=books&srefix=smart+but+scattered+teen%2Cstripbooks%2C100&sr=1-1)
13. <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>
14. <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/aut.2021.0042>

## From the Access Office

Reminders from the Access Office when working with neurodivergent students

- Each student will have individualized strengths and weaknesses. For example, some neurodivergent students may lack time-management and organizational skills, while others excel with timelines and surpass all expectations with their ability to organize.
- Regardless of the disability, the previous experiences faculty have had with students should not set up low or high expectations for another student.
- Students are not obligated to disclose personal information or their disability when arranging accommodations.
- Conversations between students and faculty about accommodations should take place in a private setting.
- Encourage students who disclose their neurodiversity to consult with the Access Office about possible accommodations. Students may not need them now in your class, but they might need them in another class.

## Ambassador Corner

~ Stephanie Hills, DEI Ambassador

MACC embraces an inclusive environment where we can all enjoy the same opportunities and access to resources. We are each unique individuals with our own mental, physical, and emotional differences and this month we are honoring neurodiversity. Judy Singer, who coined the term neurodiversity, states “ND is not a classificatory term dividing us from them.



We are all Neurodiverse. We live on a Neurodiverse planet in which amoral nature generates endless genetic diversity, while we humans have evolved the capacity to make judgments about nature’s bounty. What Neurodiversity brings us is a challenge to find a place for everyone and to distribute the bounty fairly” (Meadows, 2021). Neurodiversity is about more than just restructuring the negative connotation associated with certain diagnostic labels. Just because we process information differently or don’t behave the same as someone else, that doesn’t always mean something negative. Life is experienced differently for all of us, but at MACC, the same resources are accessible to us all. If anyone is struggling with classes, there are services available that might be able to help. LARC offers free tutoring services for all students and for those with a documented disability, the MACC Access and ADA offices have options for classroom adaptations, test readers, extended times on tests, and many more services are available. When it comes to neurodiversity, I think our DEI mission statement says it best, **Be who you are. We like it that way.**

For anyone wanting more information on MACC accommodations and services offered, please visit our website at <https://www.macc.edu/access-ada/> or view a copy of our Access and ADA handbook by copying and pasting this link into your browser: <https://www.macc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FINAL-Access-ADA-Handbook-Fall-2023.pdf>.

Sources used:

Meadows, J. (2021, August 12). You're using the word neurodiversity wrong. Medium. Retrieved March 22, 2023, from <https://jessemeadows.medium.com/youre-using-the-word-neurodiversity-wrong-e579ffa816a8>

Resnick, A. (2023, January 12). What is neurodivergence and what does it mean to be neurodivergent? Verywell Mind. Retrieved March 22, 2023, from <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-neurodivergence-and-what-does-it-mean-to-be-neurodivergent-5196627>

Access and Ada. MACC. (2022, July 26). Retrieved March 22, 2023, from <https://www.macc.edu/access-ada>

MACC DEI Committee sponsors:

### **Period Product Supply Drive**

All donations will directly benefit the MACC community through the Bare Necessities Pantry.

#### **Get Informed!**

- 1 in 6 MO women between 12 and 44 live below the poverty line.
- 1 in 4 U.S. students have missed class due to lack of access to period supplies.
- In MO, period products are taxed at 4.25% creating a burden on many to access these products.

#### **Donate!**

Drop off donations to:

- Financial Aid Office at any location
- Bare Necessities Pantry at any location
- Lindsay Reustle in Columbia Room B32

The MACC DEI Committee supports menstrual equity and offers these complimentary products through donations from people like you.

#### **Want help?**

Please contact [dei@macc.edu](mailto:dei@macc.edu).