Neurodiversity Training for Construction

Neurodiversity Awareness
Bite-Sized Learning



Provided by:

Interclass

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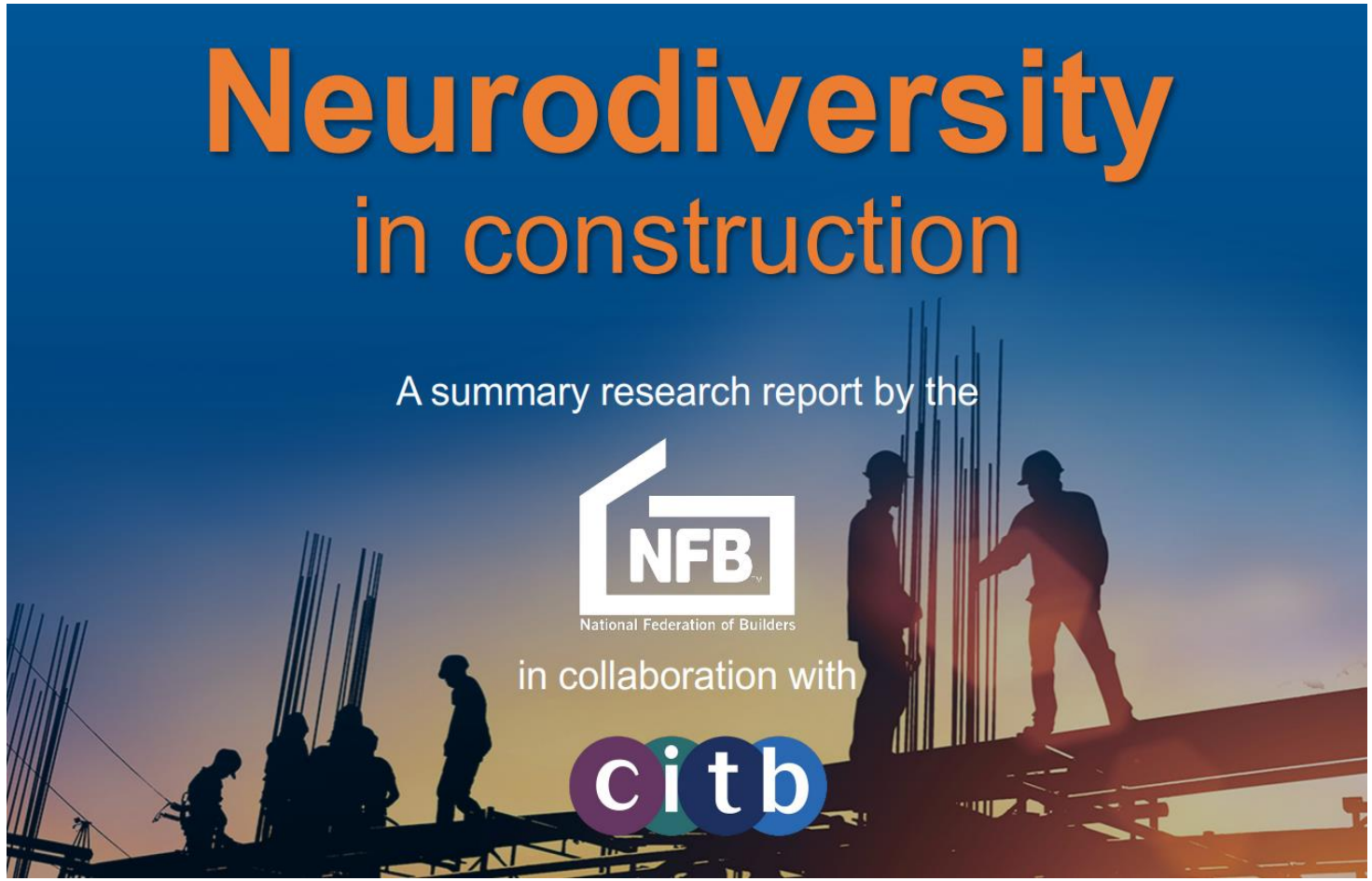
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Delivered in partnership with:

NFB™ National Federation of Builders

Genius WITHIN

Research - Why Is It Important?



The Wider Programme and Why Genius Within?

SUPPLY CHAIN SUSTAINABILITY SCHOOL



Self paced e-Learning
Neurodiversity Awareness
8 modules

Self paced e-Learning
Neurodiversity For Managers
6 modules



Neurodiversity Awareness Half Day Workshop
In-depth look at Neurodiversity in Construction

Neurodiversity Awareness Bite-Sized Learning
Shorter session covering core concepts on Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity for HR & Leaders Half Day Workshop
Provides strategies for creating neuroinclusive teams

Clean Set-Up



If this training were ideal for you, it would be like what?



Session Outcomes



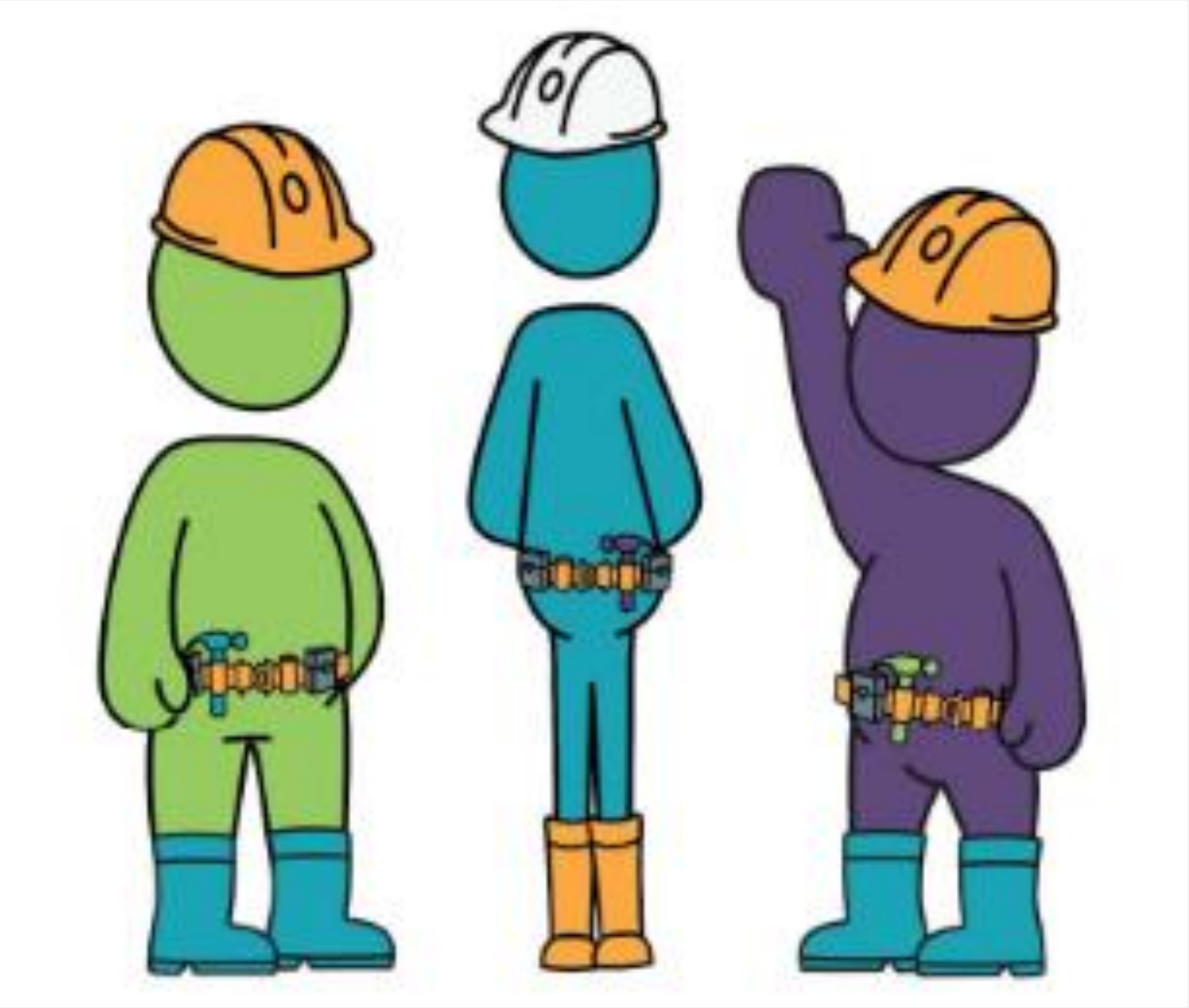
Neurodiversity in Construction

What is Neurodiversity?

Workplace Impact

Individual Support

Becoming a Neuroinclusive Organisation



What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity means that there are naturally occurring differences in human neurocognition.

Most people have **neurotypical** brains.
Others have brains that have pronounced strengths and weaknesses. These can be called **neurodivergent, neurodiverse, neurodistinct**, or they may want to be identified as their diagnosis condition, e.g. "I am dyslexic."

Collectively, we can refer to **neurominorities, neurodivergence**. These terms have replaced neurodevelopmental disorder or specific learning disability as umbrella terms, because they are neutral and don't insinuate ill health.



Neurominorities

1 in 4 construction workers consider themselves neurodivergent



Source: Dr Nancy Doyle, based on the DANDA Chart work of Mary Colley

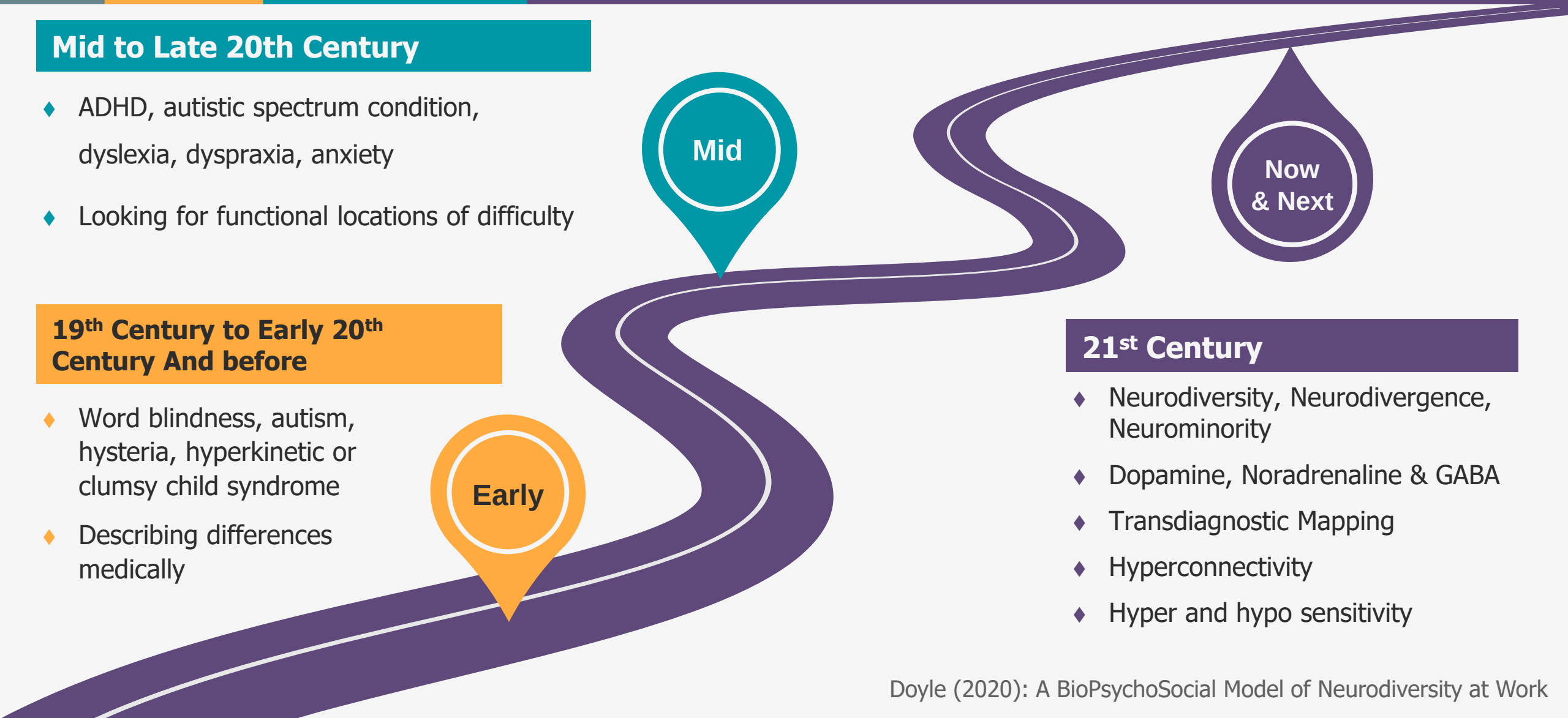
History & Language of Neurominorities

Mid to Late 20th Century

- ADHD, autistic spectrum condition, dyslexia, dyspraxia, anxiety
- Looking for functional locations of difficulty

19th Century to Early 20th Century And before

- Word blindness, autism, hysteria, hyperkinetic or clumsy child syndrome
- Describing differences medically

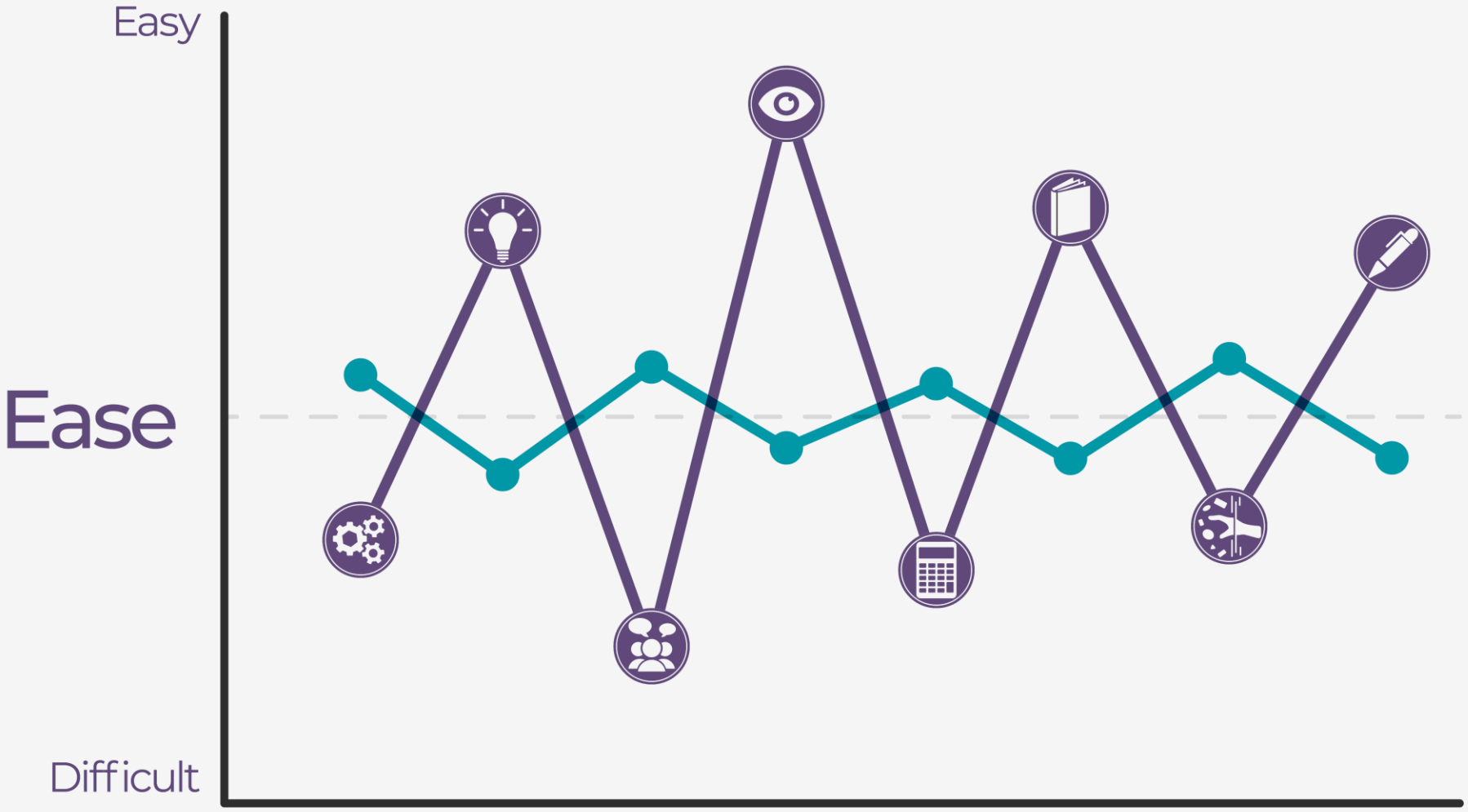


21st Century

- Neurodiversity, Neurodivergence, Neurominority
- Dopamine, Noradrenaline & GABA
- Transdiagnostic Mapping
- Hyperconnectivity
- Hyper and hypo sensitivity

Doyle (2020): A BioPsychoSocial Model of Neurodiversity at Work

The common thread: a spiky profile



"Specialist"

Versus

"Generalist"

Thinkers

Grant (2009) Neurodiversity in Education

What conditions are included?

Applied	Clinical	Acquired (transient)	Acquired (chronic)
Dyslexia	**ADHD**	Anxiety	Neurological illnesses e.g., long covid, Multiple Sclerosis, Chronic Fatigue
Dyspraxia	**Autism**	Depression	Brain injury
Dyscalculia	**Tourette Syndrome**	OCD	And more…..
Dysgraphia	Learning disabilities	Phobias	
		And more….	

Weinberg & Doyle (2017): Neurodiversity at Work

Different thinking styles

DYSLEXIA

Dyslexics are famed for general inventiveness & creativity, can excel at pattern-spotting.

DYSPRAXIA

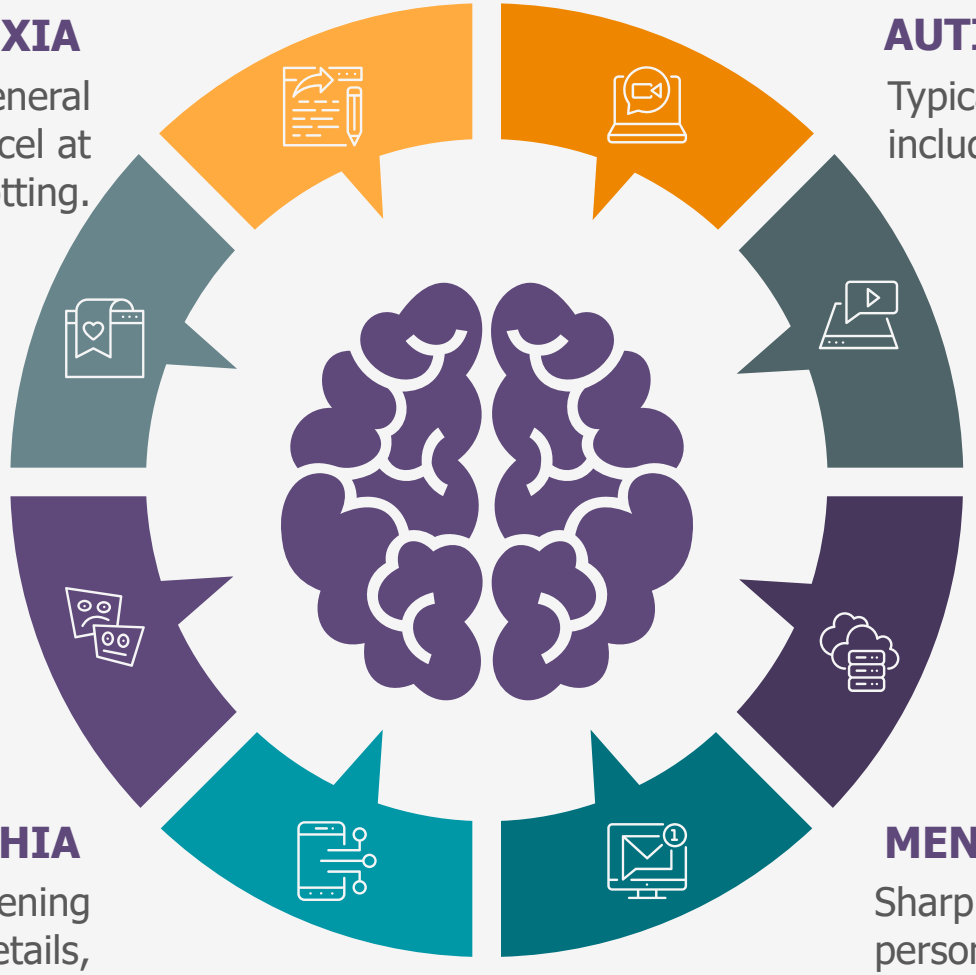
Dyspraxics tend to be good at 'big picture' thinking, pattern-spotting & inferential reasoning. They are often resourceful & determined problem-solvers.

DYSCALCULIA

Creativity, strategic thinking, practical ability, intuitive thinking & problem-solving are standout strengths.

DYSGRAPHIA

Strengths include enhanced listening skills, ability to recall oral details, memorisation, & storytelling.



AUTISM

Typical strengths associated with autism at work include problem-solving & analytical thinking.

ADHD

Insightfulness, creative thinking & problem-solving are strengths often associated with ADHD, with an ability to multitask & take calculated risks.

TOURETTE SYNDROME

Often creative & energetic, with acute perception. Humorous, empathetic & completer-finishers.

MENTAL HEALTH

Sharp memory, empathy, personal strength & resilience.

Intersectionality



Girls less frequently diagnosed, diagnosed later in life so miss scaffolding in adulthood; misdiagnosed with anxiety, depression and eating disorders

People marginalised by poverty, race, or ethnicity, are more likely to be missed as neurodivergent and instead treated as wilfully disobedient or criminal





Higher rates of neurodivergence in transgender communities

Intersectional marginalisation leads to double and triple masking, which leads to higher rates of burnout for neurominorities





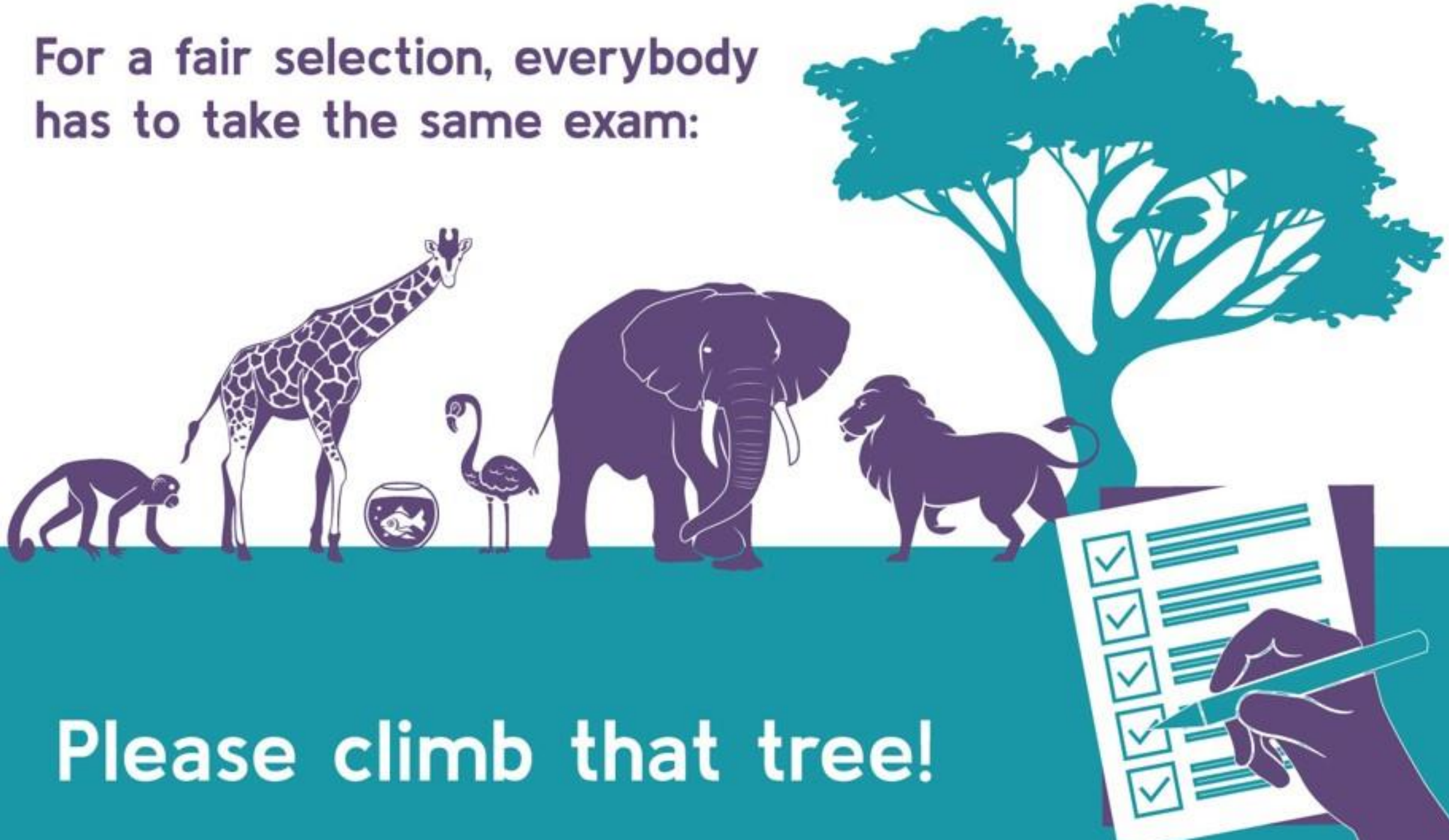




Workplace Impact



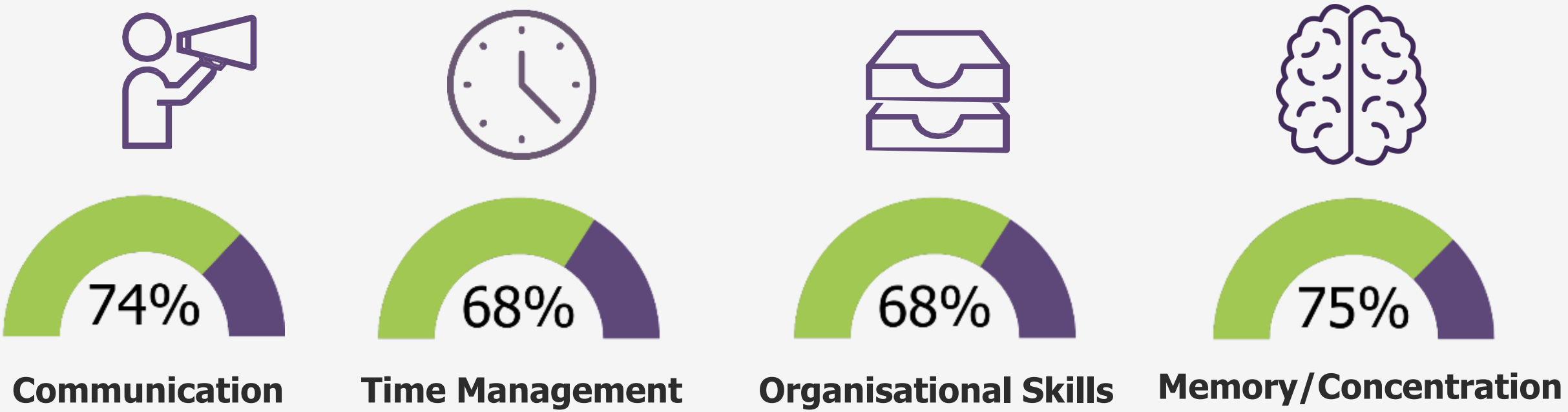
For a fair selection, everybody has to take the same exam:



Please climb that tree!

The Common Theme:

Executive Functions



Representing the percentage of individuals (N=409) requiring support in key areas of challenge, Doyle % Bradley 2022

Legal definitions

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has substantial and long term (12 months+) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- **There is no need for a diagnosis, it is the effect, not the cause, or the impairment that matters…**
- **…employers are required to make reasonable adjustments to enable employees meet their potential.**

The Equality Act 2010

Case Study

Dave, a newly hired site supervisor, is a hardworking and skilled professional. However, his supervisor, John, notices that **Dave often appears restless, struggles to stay focused on tasks, and seems overwhelmed in noisy environments with heavy machinery, drilling, and other loud construction activities**. Understanding that noise sensitivity, John decides to take proactive steps to help Dave thrive.

Discuss in your groups:

- How can construction teams implement practical adjustments to create a more supportive and inclusive environment for workers who face challenges such as sensory overload or difficulty focusing on tasks?
- What specific strategies would you recommend to help someone like Dave thrive on-site while maintaining productivity and safety?

Case Study

James is a highly skilled **site manager** known for his **exceptional ability to interpret construction drawings and creatively solve problems on-site**. His talent for thinking outside the box has helped his team overcome numerous challenges, often saving time and costs for the project. However, James has **dyslexia**, which makes certain aspects of his role particularly challenging.

- He struggles with completing **daily diaries**, which require detailed written or typed records of site activities.
- **This task takes him longer than his peers and sometimes delays the project's reporting**.

James approaches you, his line manager, and explains:

- Writing these diaries has become a source of stress, but he wants to ensure it doesn't affect the team's performance.

Question: How would you support James in overcoming this challenge? What tools, systems, or adjustments could you implement to help him?







Individual Support



Direct discrimination

- Making assumptions about capability and treating differently as a result
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments
- Victimisation or harassment



We are all different – so the best support is individualised

Indirect discrimination



Here the spectators are being treated equally



This shows equitable treatment of the spectators



This image shows that everyone attending will be able to see the game.

Supporting colleagues

Discussion: How can we support each other to work at our best?



Adjustments – what works?



Schedule Flexibility



Literacy Coaching



Assistive Technology



Working Environment

Executive Functions Coaching
Memory, concentration, time management, etc.



Formal training
In house or commissioned



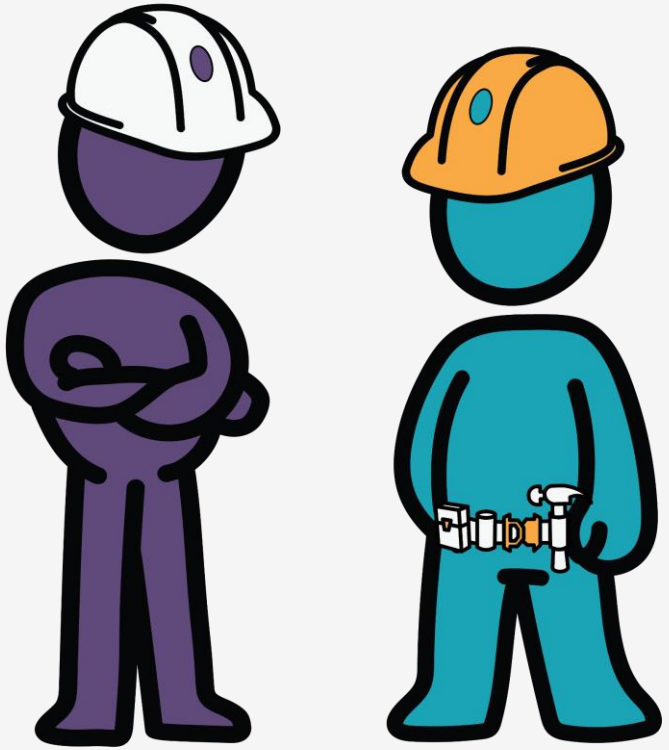
Supervisor Input
E.g., regular specific feedback, co-coaching



Doyle 2017 & 2019

Adjustments – Did you know…

The vast majority of adjustments can be implemented for little or no cost!



Extract from Psychology at work: Improving wellbeing and productivity in the workplace, written by Dr Ashley Weinberg and Nancy Doyle, 2017

Access to Work: Funding for support

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support programme.

It can cover adaptations to premises & equipment, special aids, strategy coaching, & awareness training for your colleagues.

Provides practical & financial support to disabled people or those with a long-term physical or mental health condition.

Neurodiverse conditions are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, making neurominorities eligible for support.

Department for Work & Pensions

www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Access to Work: Funding for support

Upon application, you can expect to receive an assessment within a few weeks.

Your employer can then purchase equipment or services & claim the funds back against the grant.

Access to Work will provide a grant value.

100% of the cost of coaching & awareness is covered.
Employers may need to contribute toward equipment or software.

Department for Work & Pensions

www.gov.uk/access-to-work







Becoming a neuroinclusive organisation



Workplace Universal Design

Avoiding structural exclusion by focusing on performance output, not input

Adapting standard wellbeing services to support NM needs

Optimising success with inclusive delivery



Ensuring all candidates can perform at their best during the process

Include terms & conditions of employment to increase access

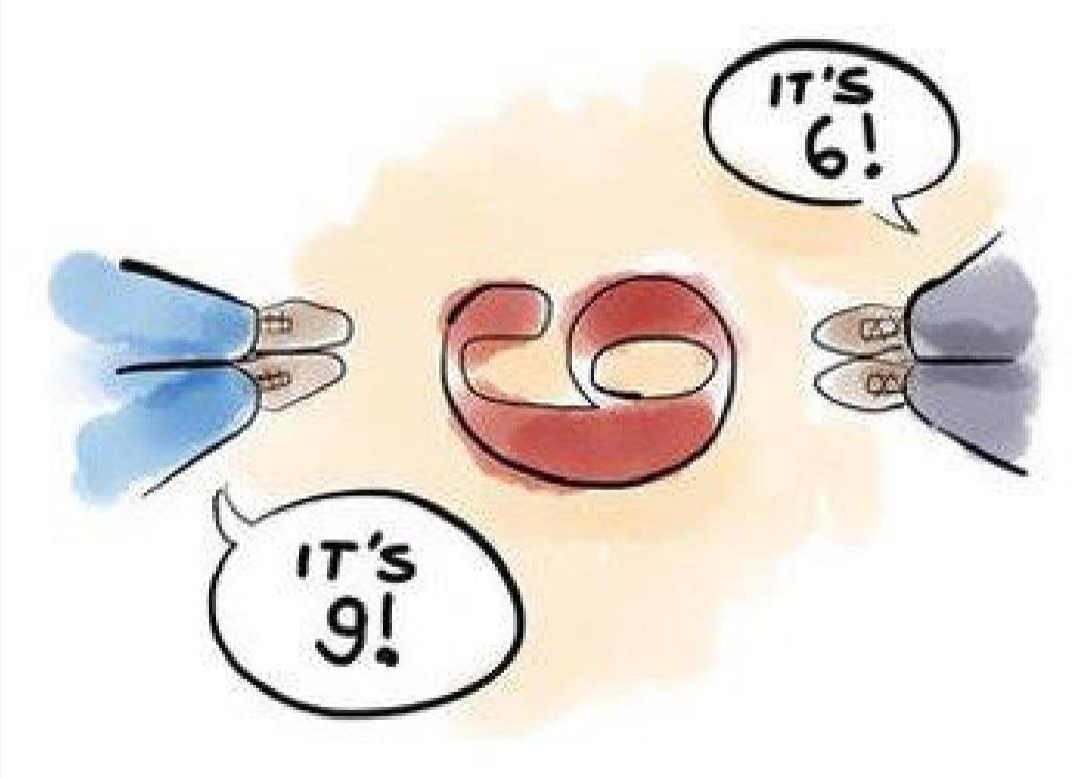
Embedding inclusion in standard

Doyle & McDowall (2021)

Neuroinclusive Communication

Communication

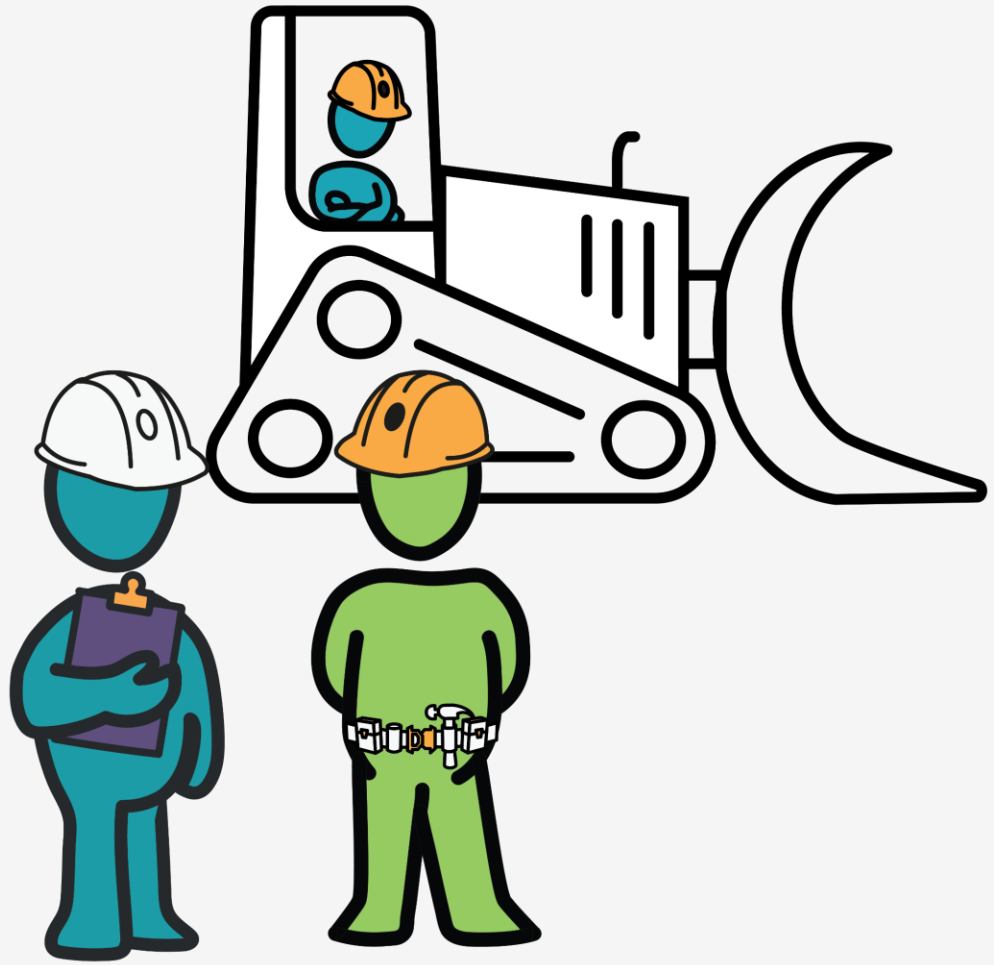
- Avoid written and verbal information when loud use of hand signals or radio communication
- Provide clear, concise, and preferably visual instructions with examples
- Be specific with instructions and make it clear people can ask questions
- Provide the wider picture, advance notice and implement an early warning system to flag any concerns or issues on projects at an early stage to allow for intervention
- Explain the hidden rules break down tasks into a checklist / to do list / schedules, listen without judging and blaming



Neuroinclusive Meetings

Meetings

- Provide a quiet meeting space with processing breaks avoid making assumptions
- Offer a verbal or written agenda before meetings help raise awareness to everyone else on site through toolbox talks, informal discussions or more formal face-to-face training sessions
- Give alternatives: E.g., updates via 1:1, chats for questions, Buddying and mentoring for personalised support and guidance.
- Be explicit when meetings are critical: E.g., safety critical learning



Neuroinclusive Environment

Environment
❖ Awareness of noise, light, smell, colour which can overwhelm
❖ Seek to understand when employees are at their best
❖ Allow people to have quiet time, use meeting rooms or standing against a wall
❖ Communal white board to provide additional space for memory aids and hold crucial information



Reflection



What are you going to do **differently** as a result of this awareness session?

Inclusion is a moral, social & economic imperative.

We all lose when **diverse human potential** is squandered.