

Diverse Needs: People who are neurodivergent

About 15-20% of the global population is neurodiverse, meaning they process information differently from the majority. Around 11% of the workforce is neurodivergent. Common conditions are attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Autism, Dyslexia or Developmental coordination disorder. These conditions affect memory, self-regulation, concentration, communication, time management and emotions.

Experience of disadvantage

Older people may not have a diagnosis or support and struggle with sensory sensitivities and anxiety with change. Lifelong challenges can contribute to poor mental and physical health. Stigma and a lack of understanding can lead to social isolation.

Complex overlaps

Older people with neurodivergence may live with multiple conditions or mental illness due to stress. They may also face poverty, social isolation, language barriers or disadvantage as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. Environments to support sensory sensitivities are important as noise or stimulation can be overwhelming

The impact on end-of-life care

Neurodivergent people may struggle to access aged care or end-of-life support. Communication difficulties, strong routines and isolation may mean they avoid services. By recognising neurodiversity as part of human experience and adapting environments and communication, aged care can offer support and end-of-life care.

Download the
neurodiversity
toolkit from the
[Australian Disability
Network](#) here.

