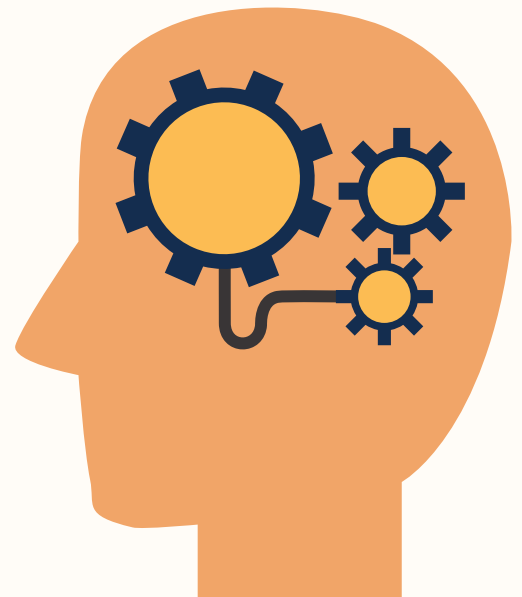
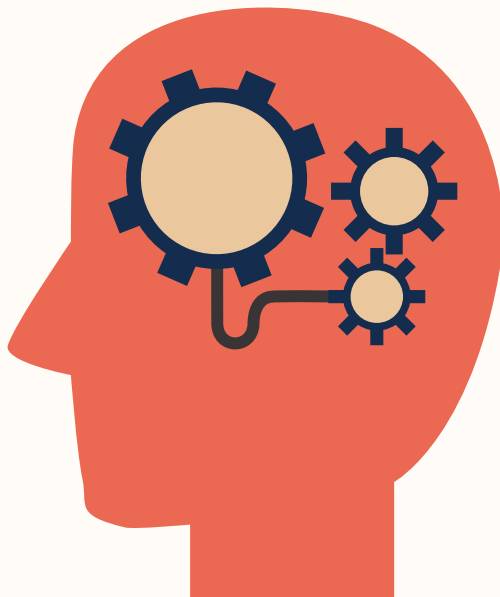
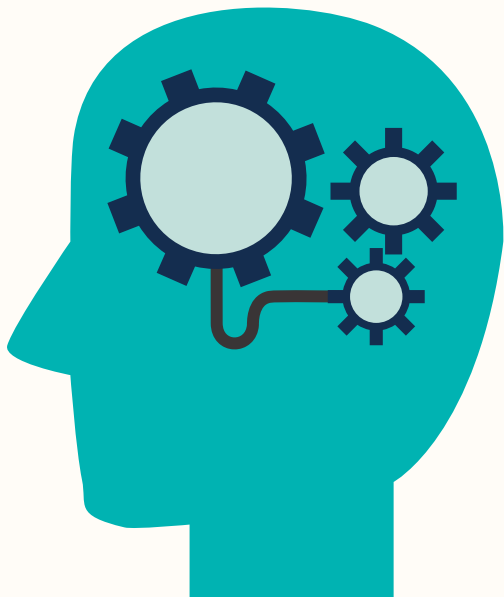


Wednesday WeBelong Monthly:



Neurodiversity



What is Neurodiversity?

"Neurodiversity refers to the diversity of the human brain and neurocognitive functioning."

- How the brain works
- How it functions, learns, and processes information
- Differences in the way we think, process, behave, function, and perceive
- Minds that diverge, vary, or are distinct from the mainstream norm

However, like religious or philosophical differences, neurodiversity is often invisible, making its identification or diagnosis harder.

The Human Impact:

- Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disorder yet the most underfunded.
 - Roughly 10–20% of the global population is considered neurodiverse.
- Autism affects all ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Racially marginalized groups tend to be diagnosed later and less often.
- Intersectionality is more prevalent in the neurodiverse community, with 20–30% of neurodiverse people also identifying as LGBTQIA+.
 - People who don't identify with their sex assigned at birth are three to six times more likely to be autistic compared to cisgender people.

The Stats:

85%

of people on the spectrum are unemployed.

36%

are able to find jobs in our current economy, but are many times under-employed.

1 in 44

Children are now diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Those assigned male at birth are 4 times more likely to be diagnosed.

How can we be more inclusive?

Talent Acquisition

- Rethink the way potential talent is recruited and evaluated.
- Develop talent acquisition programs and partnerships with organizations that can identify and attract qualified neurodiverse candidates.
- Think about broader methods of evaluating candidates like internships and temporary work.

How can we be more inclusive?

Retention

- Be open to employees who may have a reasonable request for adjustments to meet their specific needs.
- Train managers on how to support neurodiverse employees by helping to dispel or challenge neurodiversity assumptions.
- Engage with #ActuallyAutistic coaches and mentors to help the organization as a whole to learn and grow.

How can we be more inclusive?

Belonging

- Not all employees will disclose or identify with being neurodiverse, so creating a safe and welcoming environment is crucial.
- If leaders self-identify as neurodivergent, the rest of the workforce may feel comfortable coming forward too.
- Offer the same accommodations and opportunities to all employees, regardless of disclosure of status.

Best Practices:

- Avoid terms like “non-verbal.” Use “non-speaking” instead.
- Refer to Autistic people using identity-first language.
- Avoid labels like “high functioning,” “level I Autism,” “Aspie,” etc. This is ableist and demeaning.
- Develop practices across the talent journey using universal design.
- When building out a targeted talent acquisition plan, engage with service providers and universities, attend targeted conferences, and engage LinkedIn groups.

Call to Action:

- Incorporate neurodiversity into your DEIB review.
- Engage with ERGs and/or employee groups to advocate for the inclusion of neurodiverse talent and listen to their voices.
- During benefits renewals, ensure benefits are inclusive and will support ALL employees.
- Review your company's talent acquisition process from a universal design workplace perspective.

Resources:

Companies to Follow

- Ultranauts
- Autonomy Works
- Audicon
- Do Better Collective
- Spectrum Suite

Influencers to Follow

- Judy Singer
- Theo Smith
- Steve Silberman
- Dr. Amanda N Kelly aka BehaviorBabe