

Introduction to Neurodiversity

Slide 1:

Welcome to the Introduction to Neurodiversity video by NEWMT.

Slide 2:

Neurodiversity is a paradigm of human diversity that affirms that there are many ways of thinking, learning, communicating, and interacting and that there is no one right way. The word neurodiversity refers to a group of people. It is not a way to describe or label one person. The neurodiversity paradigm is the foundation for the neurodiversity movement which is a social justice movement that seeks civil rights, equality, respect, and full societal inclusion for the neurodivergent. Neurodivergent is a word used to describe ways of thinking, learning, communicating, or interacting that diverge from a community's expectations of typicality or normalcy. Some people also refer to themselves as neurodivergent.

Slide 3:

It is important to note that, even though neurodiversity and disability are often spoken of together, neurodiversity does not mean disability and is not a synonym for any disability label. The neurodiversity paradigm, though, does value neurodivergence as it occurs in a neurotypical world and some people with neurodivergences (or neurodivergent people) also have a disability diagnosis. Invisible disabilities, those that might be called cognitive, learning, or developmental disabilities, are neurodivergences that have been deemed disorders or conditions of the mind by the medical system. Some neurodivergences can be labeled as disabilities, but not all.

Slide 4:

Although most definitions of neurodiversity focus on neurological or brain functioning, we focus on embodiment. Bodymind, a word used in disability studies, reminds us that the body and mind are not separate. Thinking and learning are affected by what the rest of the body is feeling and doing and what is happening in the rest of the body affects thinking and learning.

Slide 5:

Typically, schools in the US struggle to meaningfully include neurodivergent students because students are expected to learn the same things at the same time and in the same way. Most learning is expected to occur using language-reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and by sitting still for long periods. Virtual learning usually follows these same formats, only using screens.

Slide 6:

But we know that this is not the best way for all students to learn. It excludes students who do not or cannot think, learn, communicate, or interact in these ways, including students from cultures other than the dominant US culture.

Slide 7:

NEWMT curriculum, technology, and pedagogy is focused on encouraging multiple modes for thinking, learning, communicating, and interacting and on expanding the concept of inclusion. We want to reach all students in diverse classrooms and have planned for this by co-designing with teachers and students with labels that are often marginalized in schools. Increasing accessibility in this way also harnesses creativity because more diverse groups result in more innovative and creative ideas and problem solving.

Slide 8:

The neurodiverse pedagogy in NEWMT means multiple modes of interaction are built in from the beginning and an embodied, collective, creative, and improvisational type of teaching and learning is experienced by all. Thank you for viewing the Introduction to Neurodiversity video by NEWMT.