Workplace Pride

#WPCONF2024

Breakout Room 1.6 13:45-15:00

1 NEURODIVERSITY IN PRIDE

MODERATOR: KIM VAN OEL (She/Her)

Tata Steel / Tech community

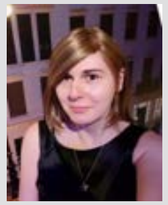
1. Neurodiversity in Pride

Moderator:

Kim van Oel (She/Her)

Tata Steel / Tech community

Panel members:



Martine Danda (she/her)

Trans+ community

Daphne Zoetmulder (she/them)

Saxion University of Applied Sciences

Ilonka van der Sommen (she/her)

Fontys University of Applied Sciences

Joint effort of 5 Workplace Pride communities & multiple organisations

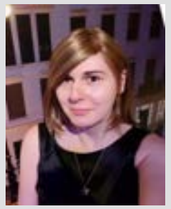
Maureen Schoonheyt (she/her)
Arcadis / Tech community

Kim van Oel (she/her)
Tata Steel / Tech community

Sanne Brons (she/her)
Aegon / Young community

Kim Verspuij (she/her)
ASML / Board member Atypical Neurodiversity Network

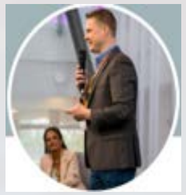
Martine de Vries (she/her)
LUMC / Women community



Martine Danda (she/her)
Trans+ community

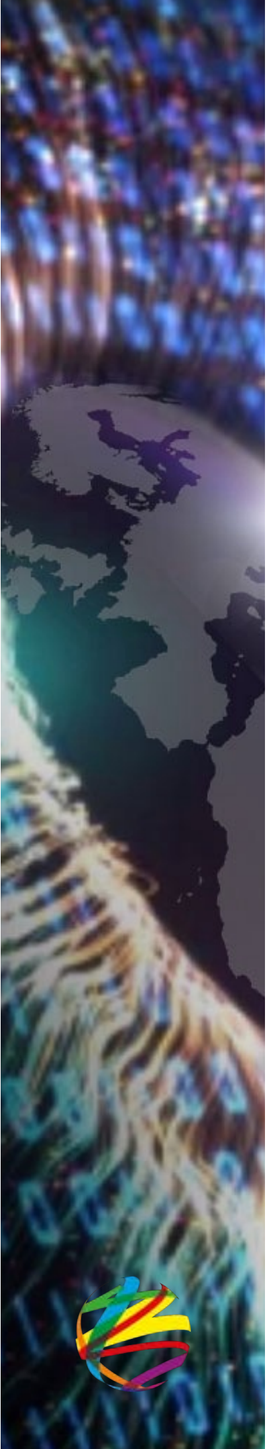
Koos Kegel (they/them)
TU Eindhoven / Trans+ community

Marco Strijks (he/him)
Saxion / Academia & Tech community



Martijn van den Tillaart (he/him)
Board Member Workplace Pride

Christine Holtkamp (she/her)
Director of Workplace Pride Communities



Neurodiversity break-out programme

Welcome 5 min

Maureen Schoonheyt

Presentation 15 min

Ilonka van der Sommen (Fontys)

Panel discussion 40 min

Kim van Oel (moderator)

“What is required to make organisations more neuro-inclusive for (queer) people?”

Closure 5 min

Maureen Schoonheyt

Communities as a key for sense and a place of belonging

‘connecting the dots’

@Fontyspride
@ilonkavdsommen

Fontys
UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES

› FOR SOCIETY

Fontys Lectoraat Waarderen van Diversiteit

Fontys Autisme Community

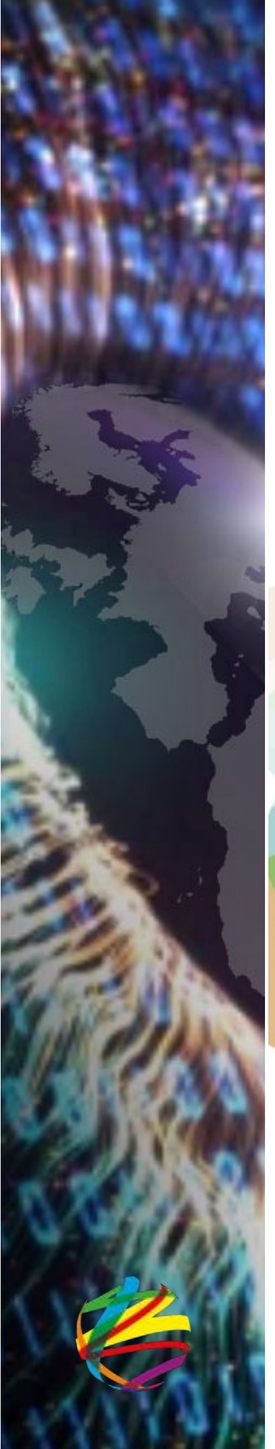
Samenwerkingsverband
Autisme Zuidoost Brabant

Fontys

ibva
Internationale beroepsvereniging van autismespecialisten

CAREER JUMPSTART

AUTIROZE
AUTISME IS OOK DIVERSITEIT



Neurodiversity thinking
(Vanaken, 2024)

Jeroen Dewinter & Anna van der Miesen
Autism, Gender-diversity, gender dysphoria

Amanda Kirby
Neurodiversity at work (2021)

neurodiversity

neurodivergent

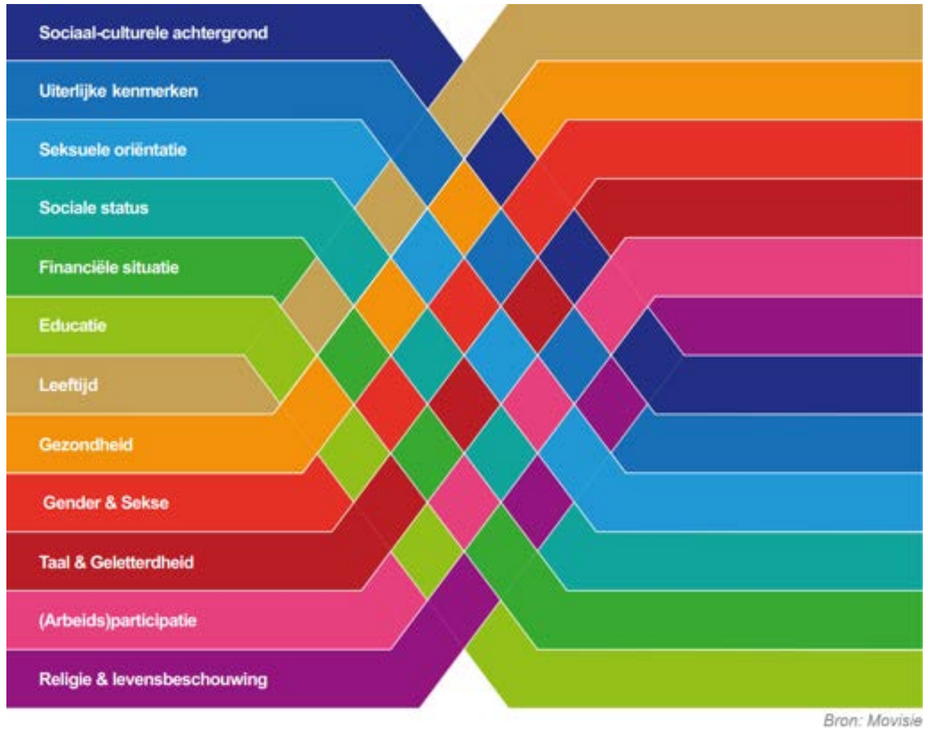
neurotypical

Saskia Schepers
Als Alle Breinen werken (2023)

Lars Veerhoff
School to work transition
PhD, Fontys, Career Jumpstart

Participative research → experiences from within

Moving forward from lived experiences



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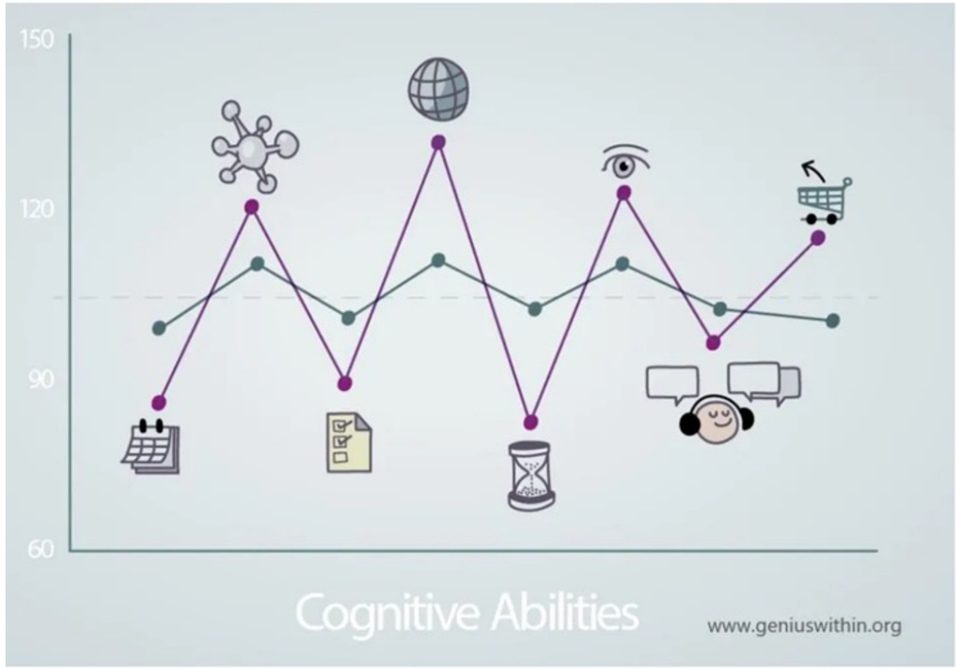
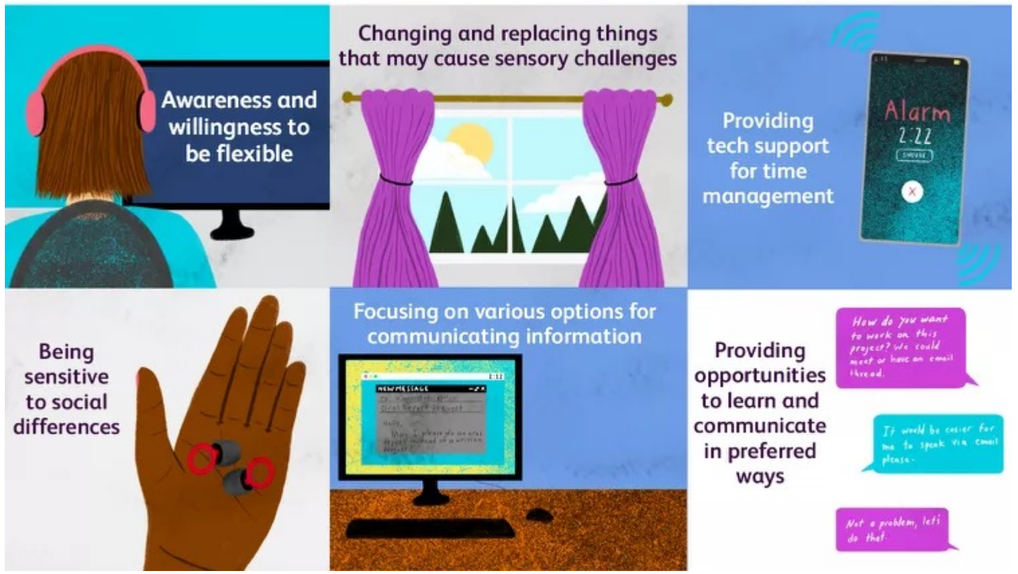
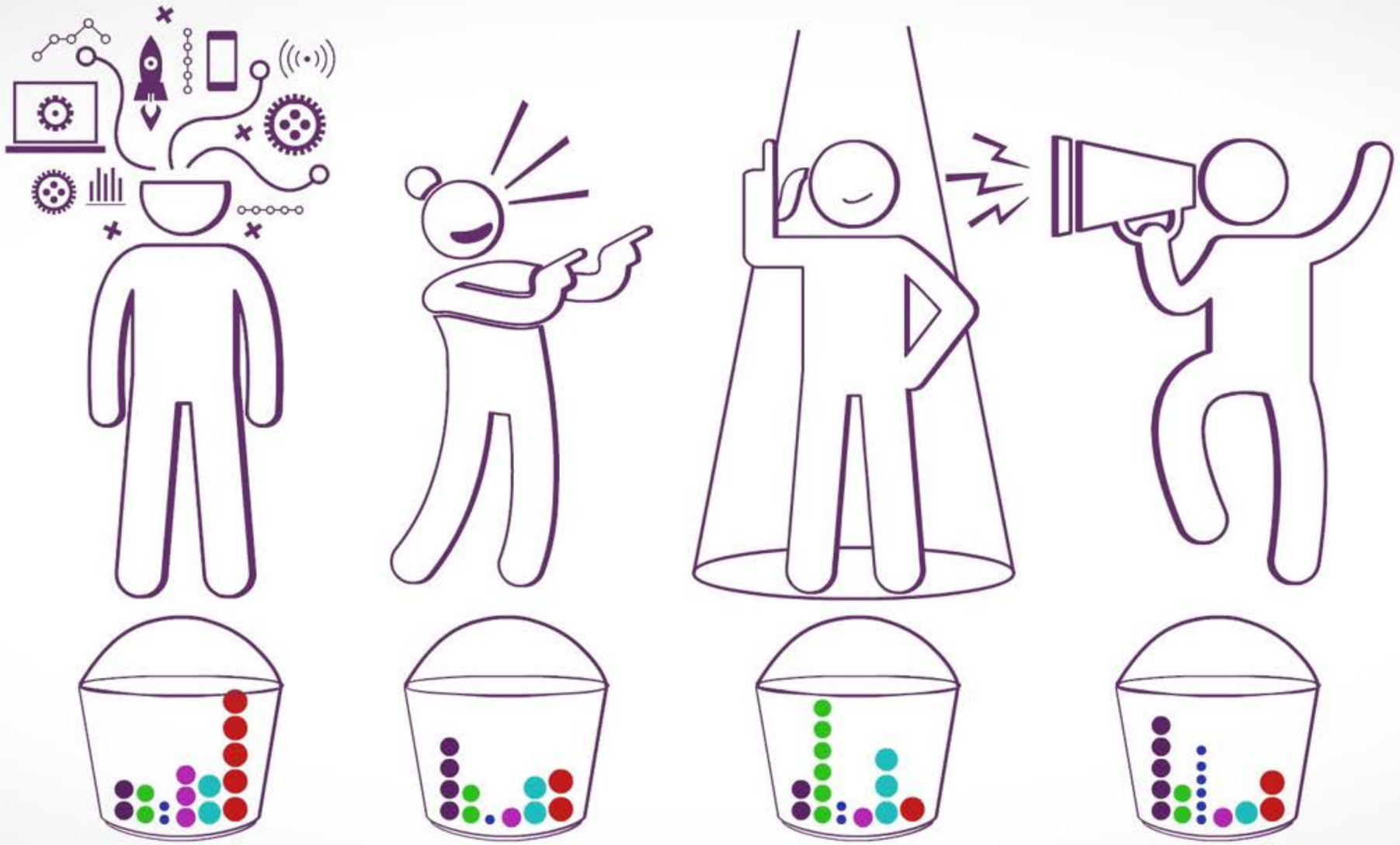


NEURODIVERSITY

NEURODIVERSITY
Dyslexia
Autism
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
Developmental Language
Intellectual Disability

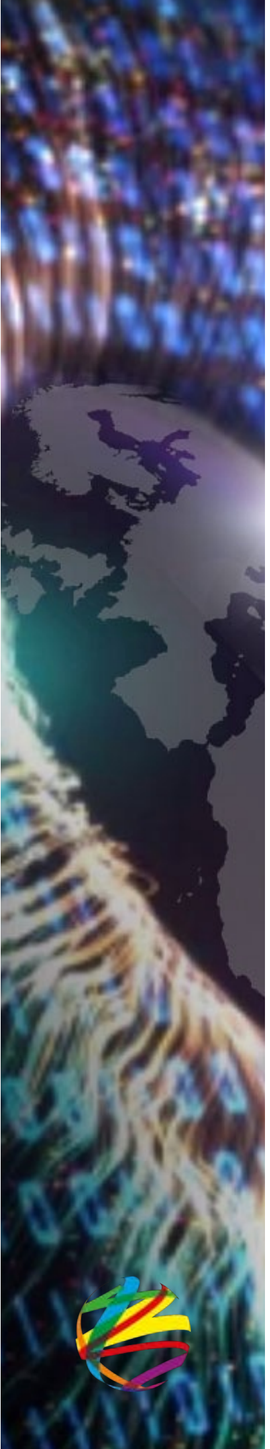
&

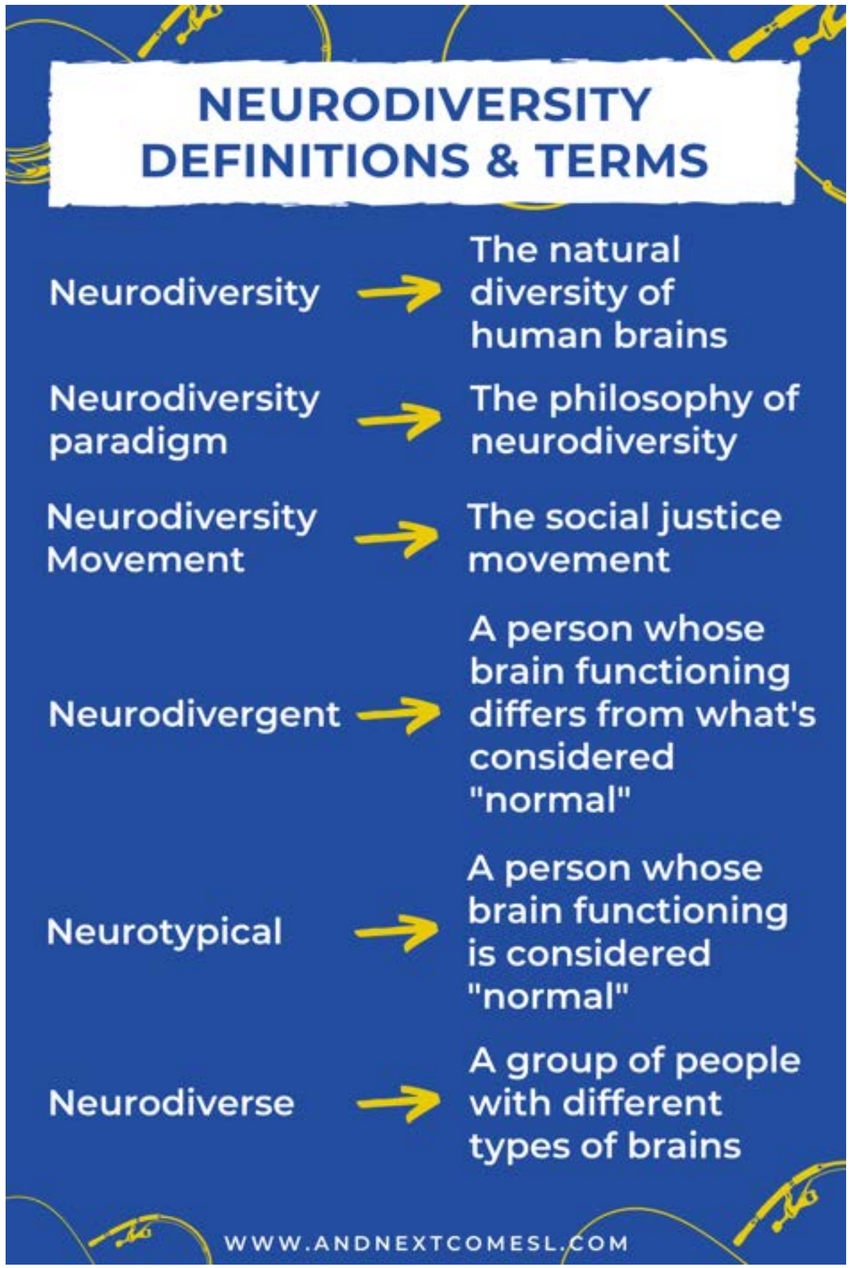

Easy and Effective Accommodations for Someone Who is Neurodivergent
Awareness and willingness to be flexible
Changing and replacing things that may cause sensory challenges
Providing tech support for time management
Alarm
Being sensitive to social differences
Focusing on various options for communicating information
Providing opportunities to learn and communicate in preferred ways
How do you want to work on this project? We could meet or have an email thread.
It would be easier for me to speak via email please.
Not a problem, let's do that.



https://www.10to3.co.uk/

Neuro Inclusive workplace



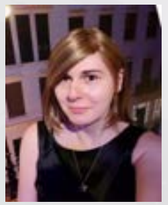


- We need communities: be your authentic self
- We need more knowledge about neurodiversity, workplace possibilities, stories and insights from within
- More workplace Sensitive Managers and co-workers

We need …. each other to connect the dots!

Panel discussion

Panel members:



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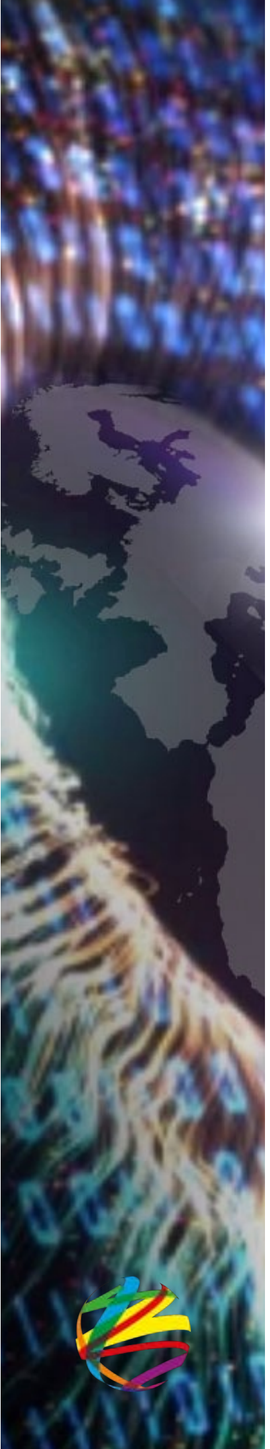
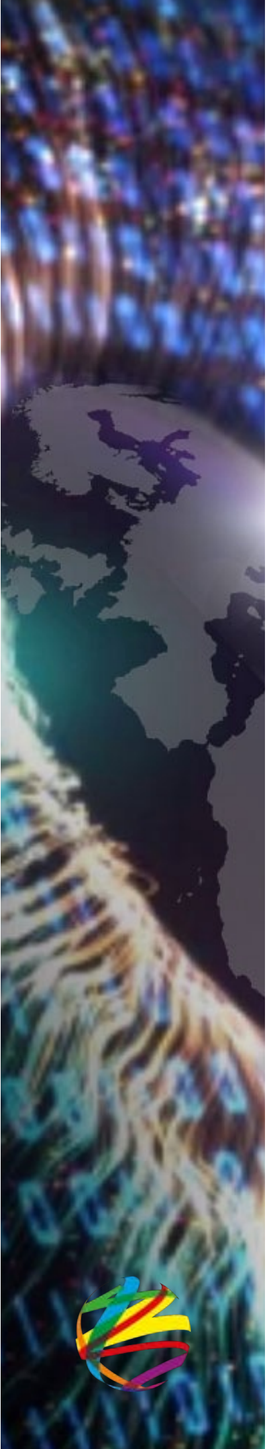


Panel discussion

Question:

What is required to make organisations more neuro-inclusive for (queer) people?



Panel discussion

Sub questions :

- What do you need as a neurodiverse person?
- What is required from management?
- What doesn’t work?
- What good practice do you have in your organisation which can help others?

Best practices collected by neurodiversity working group

- Encourage an open culture and create a safe environment where people are able to freely ask, propose and discuss their needs.

- Encourage the culture of asking and listening instead of assuming and telling (e.g. lack of empathy)

- Personal space :
    - foresee more seats than the number of people expected so there is a possibility to change seats
    - Allow people to stand-up (standing tables)

- Sources of overstimulation :
    - Light (e.g. backlight, sunbeams) preferred dimmed light
    - Noise
    - Temperature
    - Smells
    - Material textures (of one's chair, desk, clothing, food)

- Facilitate time and room for thinking and participation
    - Send presentations and goals ahead of meetings
    - Allow people to provide input after plenary/group sessions offline

- Other

Closure

“Encourage an open culture and create a safe environment where people can freely ask, propose and discuss their needs”

A follow-up event will be organised, online or at location of one of the members

Final take-away's, summary

Summary

A joint working group with representation of the Workplace Pride communities Tech, Trans+, Academia, Women & Young and various organizations prepared the neurodiversity break-out. The break-out room was organized in the quietest room with extra space between the chairs and the possibility of standing at the standing tables. The windows were blinded from the outside light and people passing by.

After the welcome word a presentation was given by Ilonka van der Sommen (teacher at Fontys) introducing the topic of neurodiversity and how being neurodiverse affects working at workplace, illustrated by many lively examples as well as personal stories.

Next, a panel discussion was held with active interaction with the audience aimed at answering the question **"What is required to make organizations more inclusive for neurodiverse (queer) people?".** Themes tackled ranged from "What do you need as a neurodiverse person?", "What is required from management?", "What doesn't work?" and "What good practices do you have in your organization which can help others?".

The insights gained will serve as input for a follow-up event either online or at the location of a Workplace Pride member.

Final take-away's, key take-away's

Key take-aways from the neurodiversity break-out session:

- Not all (neurodiverse) people are the same, during the break-out some people seemed to experience overstimulation and other under stimulation. There was a tendency to pay most attention to overstimulation than to under stimulation. This is a clear learning for future events.
- Community building: to help to be your authentic self
- More knowledge sharing about neurodiversity, workplace possibilities, personal stories and insights from within to create more awareness.
- Train workplace-sensitive managers and co-workers on neurodiversity.
- Encourage an open culture and create a safe environment where people can freely ask, propose and discuss their needs.
- Understand the neurodiverse way of communication, it might be a different way of communicating than you are used to, try to be empathic and don't see their style as being uninterested.
- Create policies in companies → that support the adjustment of procedures
- Committing: Signing of UN guidelines would be very beneficial to the implementation of reasonable adjustments *Place to sign – link or statement of intent link to statement of intent in educational places
- Hidden disabilities lanyard, to make the unseen visible people can wear the lanyard to make their unseen disabilities visible to others. Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard - Link
- Encourage Rebellion ship *'Neurospicy'*: do not adjust yourself to the norm at all costs, being a rebel can contribute to change.
- Organize research about Neurodiverse & queer: audience expressed a need for further insights/data into the relationship between neurodiversity & being queer.
- During preparation for the break-out, the working group including several neurodiverse people, discovered on the job several elements which can make a huge difference for neurodiverse people.
- Awareness overall, among the participants to the break-outs few people had experience from their organization on dealing with neurodiversity, limiting sharing & learning. Hence, the importance of organizing a **follow-up** event with different members.

Final take-away's, practical tips

Practical tips to make workplaces more neurodiverse inclusive

Some practical good practices:

- *Personal space:*

- Foresee more seats than the number of people expected so there is a possibility of changing seats
- Allow people to stand up (standing tables)

- *Sources of overstimulation:*

- Light (e.g. backlight, sunbeams), preferred dimmed light
- Noise
- Temperature
- Smells
- Material textures (of one's chair, desk, clothing, food)
- Facilitate time and room for things and participation

- *When planning meetings:*

- Send presentations and goals ahead of meetings
- Allow people to provide offline inputs after plenary/group sessions
- Don't plan back-to-back, for rest moments
- Avoid sudden change and planning, and last-minute scheduling

- **Job interviews**

- During job interviews ask **all people** what they need at the workplace, not only the people who appear to be different at first sight. Regardless of whether this is related to neurodiversity or any other difference avoid sudden change and planning, and last-minute scheduling
- Fun fact (maybe not so fun, but very important): 80 - 90% of all functional diversity (formerly known as disabilities) are hidden.