

Attracting New Members to Cohousing Through Celebrating Neurodiversity

MEGHAN BONDE

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I support leaders and entrepreneurs to grow their community and
impact while working the way they are wired!



Agenda



My Family Journey and
Neurodiversity
Concepts



Designing intentional
systems



Designing
neuro-inclusive
systems

Norms and Principles

Make space, take space, right to pass.

Take care of yourself and ask for what you need.

Listening is being prepared to be changed by what you hear.

Diversity of thought and experience is celebrated.


Ask curious questions if you aren't sure about something someone is saying.

Ask questions in the chat. I will check the chat during small group time.

Give honest feedback. I want to know what supported you and how I can grow!



Our Family's Neurodivergent Identities

- Highly sensitive
 - Autism
 - ADHD
 - Social anxiety
 - Generalized anxiety
 - Migraine
 - Traumatic Brain Injury
 - Gifted
 - Auditory Processing Disorder
 - Sensory Integration Disorder
 - Trauma
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Our Traits



- Preference for sameness
- Need routine, structure, and order
- Crave novelty and variety
- Stimming/repetitive movements
- Alexithymia: difficulty identifying feelings
- Concern for existential issues
- Interest based motivation
- Hyperfocus
- Quickly shifting attention
- Overexcitabilities
 - emotional
 - sensory
 - intellectual
 - imaginational
 - psychomotor
- Creative/divergent thinking
- Introverted: Recharge alone
- Extroverted: Recharge around people
- Intense and deep areas of interest and expertise
- Idealistic
- Realistic
- High need for autonomy
- Preference to feel in control

Connection



Think, Pair, Share

1. Prompt

- Name
- Connection(s) to cohousing or intentional community
- Intention for this workshop



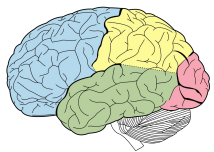
1. Think/write time (1 min)

2. Take turns to share response verbally (Alphabetical by first name)

- 4 min



Neurodiversity: Big word, simple concept



Neuro:
brain

Shift away from pathologizing traits and the deficit model often used in healthcare, education, and work.



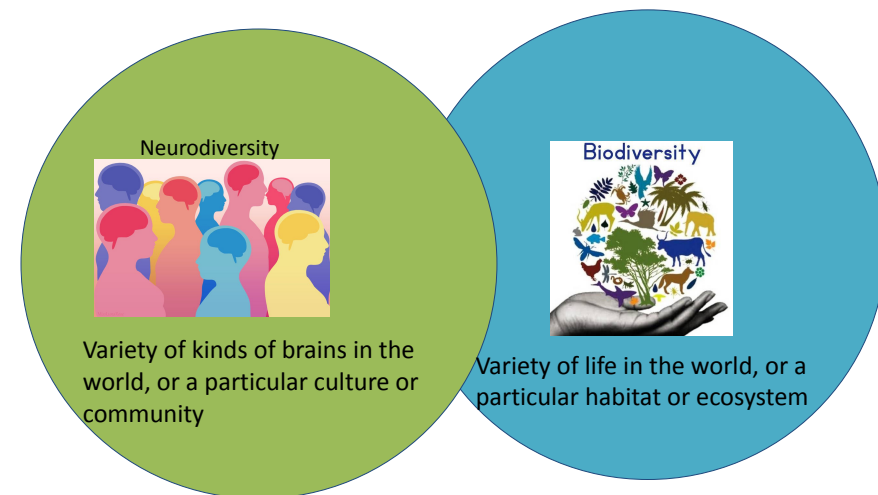
diversity:
natural range of
differences,
variation

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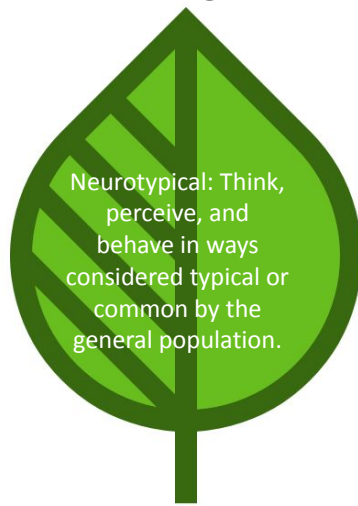


Neurodiversity:
natural range of
different or various
brain types
(think, feel, process, relate)

How are the concepts of neurodiversity and biodiversity similar?



Are we all Neurodivergent?



Note: not a comprehensive list



Masking and Disclosure



- Hiding differences which can be subtle but significant.
- Trying to fit in by blending in to neurotypical norms.
 - talking about a passion or interest at length
 - eye contact
 - sitting still in meetings
- Exhausting and leads to burnout.
- Disclosure
 - May not be identified as neurodivergent (inaccessible assessment, lack of awareness)
 - Biases in assessments (adults, non-male, non-White, multi-exceptionalities)



Attracting Neurodivergent Community Members

Problems of Change are Problems of Learning

"Change is the end result of all true learning."
- Leo Buscaglia

daring greatly (v.)
The courage to be vulnerable, to show up and be seen. To ask for what you need. To talk about how you're feeling, to have the hard conversations.

"Learning is a process not an event."
- Elliott Masie



Attracting Neurodivergent Community Members

- Design an intentional, neuro-inclusive learning journey for potential members
- Visibility
 - Show up in neuro-inclusive spaces
 - Share a valuable and neuro-inclusive lead magnet
- Relationship building
 - Share valuable and neuro-inclusive content
 - Invite to a neuro-inclusive learning opportunity (i.e. workshop, circle, retreat)
- Invitations to take the next step
 - Individual call for bigger steps
 - Clear roadmap of ways to engage/explore
 - Support navigation of bumps and barriers



Stretch break: Neurodiversity Quotes



“Neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial for the human race, as biodiversity is for life in general. Who can say what form of wiring will be best at any given moment.”

HARVEY BLUME

One way to understand neurodiversity is to think in terms of human operating systems-just because a PC is not running Windows doesn't mean that it's broken.

STEVE SILBERMAN



Develop a Lead Magnet

- Solve a specific problem that is relevant to neurodivergent adults and families
 - Address their unique goals and concerns
- Invite participants to take a clear and manageable next step
- Use neuro-inclusive language
- Examples
 - Quiz
 - Short guide
 - Social media group
 - Directory



Develop a Signature Talk/Workshop

- Create neuro-inclusive learning opportunities
 - Universal Design for Learning principles
 - E.D.G.E framework
 - Solve a specific problem that is relevant to neurodivergent adults and families
 - Address their unique goals and concerns
 - Integrate storytelling and take audience on an emotional journey
 - Teach to Change talk/workshop framework
 - Invite participants to take a clear, manageable next step
 - Ensure it is a valuable use of their time



Develop a partnership plan

- Partner with neuro-affirming leaders and organizations to help you share
 - virtual and in person, live and asynchronous opportunities
 - podcasts
 - Youtube/Tedx talk
 - summit/conference
 - support group visit
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - schools/educational groups
 - service providers
 - resource fair





Centering Neurodivergent Voices

- Critical thinking questions for neurodivergent learners to consider and share (similar to a focus group)
- Learning reflections (similar to a survey)
- Networking at neuro-affirming events
- Learning about neurodivergent people's passions



Maximizing efficiency

- Create systems and automations
 - Visibility
 - Schedule social media posts
 - Use templates to pitch your lead magnet and talk/workshop to podcasts, organizations, etc.
 - Developing Relationships
 - Automate content delivery after a lead opts in
 - email/blog/video sequence
 - calendar to schedule call, zoom links, reminders
 - Explorer process
 - Menu of accommodations, options, and/or supports



Intensities: Strength vs Deficit lens



Common mistakes

1. Intellectual: think very deeply about things, very curious, avid reader/listener/learner
2. Imaginational: amazing stories, creative, daydreaming, lots of ideas, idealistic, non-conformist
3. Emotional: big feelings, deep empathy, strong sense of fairness/justice
4. Sensual: more aware of senses than most (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste)
5. Psychomotor: high energy, need to move/talk, intense

- Lack of an overall intentional strategy to offer an inclusive and transformational learning journey
- Trying to set up systems without centering the voices of neurodivergent people
- Not leveraging your own strengths and needs to work the way you're wired



Reflect and apply



1. Prompts

- How can understanding neurodiversity lead to an advantage for cohousing communities?
- What is a strength in your community in the area of attracting neurodivergent people that you can continue to build on?
- What is a next step for your community to attract neurodivergent members?

2. Think/write time (1 min)

3. Take turns to share one idea that came to you

- 4 min



Final Reflection



Your time is valuable and I'm honored that you took time out of your day to connect and engage in learning and discussion.