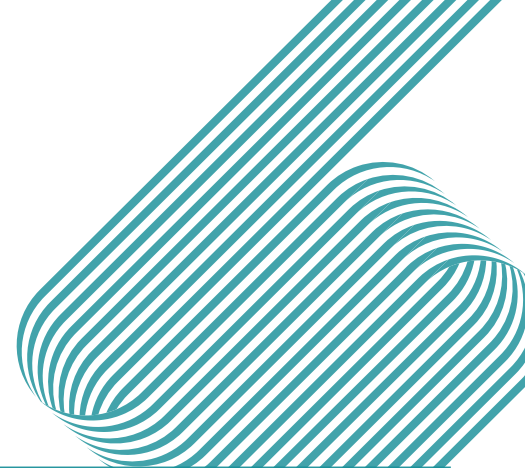


# NEURODIVERSITY

## NAVIGATOR TOPIC GUIDE

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### What is neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is “the idea that people experience or interact with the world around them in many different ways—some that may not be considered typical. It is based on the framework that ‘different’ is not the same as ‘deficient’” (Gregory, 2022).

### A 15-minute meeting?

The Journey for Teams educational modules are designed for a 15-minute block because veterinary workplaces are busy! We recognize that more than 15 minutes is needed to discuss neurodiversity in the workplace in depth. After the meeting, we hope the team will be inspired to explore this topic further as a team or individually. Check out Dr. Brandt’s resources at the end of this guide.

### Let’s begin!

Refer to the [Navigator Handbook 1.0](#) and the steps below to help you lead and facilitate discussion about neurodiversity.

**1** To begin the meeting, welcome everyone to the room by name.

**2** Remind the group that the culture of a Journey for Teams meeting embodies engagement, open-mindedness, respect, and compassion.



ENGAGED



OPEN-MINDED



RESPECTFUL



COMPASSIONATE

**3**  Play the “Neurodiversity” video.

**4** Read aloud the 3 take-home messages from the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide:

- **Instead of viewing differences as deficits, recognize that neurodivergent individuals contribute unique talents and skills to the team.**
- **Support neurodivergent team members by asking them what they want and need.**
- **Regularly seek input, feedback, and perspectives from employees who are neurodivergent.**

**5** Ask for 1-2 comments on the take-home messages.

Try to keep it brief to respect the 15-minute time commitment.

**6** Read aloud the 2 questions from the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide.  
Share your thoughts with your team.

Question for the team:

**How can we create a more inclusive work environment for neurodivergent individuals?**

*Spend a maximum of 5 minutes discussing the team question.*

Question for individual self-reflection:

*No need to share answers or thoughts with anyone.*

**What are my preconceptions about neurodivergent individuals, and how can I challenge them?**

## The most important part of the meeting

**7** As a team, decide on **1 actionable and measurable behavior change** to implement in your workplace. Consider 1 from the list below, or come up with your own idea.

- Get a helpful checklist to foster neurodiversity inclusion in your workplace from the Employer Assistance and Resource Network:  
<https://askearn.org/publication/neurodiversity-inclusion-checklist>
- Learn seven easy ways to make your job descriptions more accessible for neurodivergent job seekers:  
<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/pages/how-to-optimize-job-descriptions-for-neurodivergent-job-seekers.aspx>
- Designate certain areas of the workplace as sensory-friendly—where lighting, sound, equipment settings, and privacy levels can be adjusted to meet individual needs. Check out the attached sheet to the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide about universal design for ways to implement changes that benefit everyone.

Our actionable idea

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**8** Invite the team to self-reflect. Team members may consider and commit to **1 personal behavior change** (no need to share them with anyone).

- When you meet new people who may behave in a manner you don't expect, lead with curiosity instead of judgment. Judgment says, "My assumptions are true and are all the information I need." Curiosity says, "Let's ask questions, consider alternative viewpoints, and gather additional information."
- Read an article on neurodiversity and reflect on how individuals experience and interact with the world around them:  
<https://hbr.org/2021/12/autism-doesnt-hold-people-back-at-work-discrimination-does>

**9** Thank everyone for contributing, and congratulate yourselves on how much you accomplished in 15 minutes!

## RESOURCES

Bell, C. (2023). Neurodiversity in the general practice workforce. *InnovAiT*, 16(9), 450–455. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17557380231179742>

DeEtta Jones and Associates. (n.d.). *Inclusive onboarding checklist*. <https://info.deettajones.com/inclusive-onboarding-checklist>

Differing Minds. (2023, October 4). *The intersection of being black, female and neurodivergent in the workplace* [video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN6mRcWmp30>

Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion. (n.d.). *Neurodiversity in the workplace*. <https://askearn.org/page/neurodiversity-in-the-workplace>

Engelbrecht, N., & Silvertant, E. (2021). *The ultimate autism resource*. Embrace Autism. <https://embrace-autism.com/>

Silver, E., Nittrouer, C., & Hebl, M. (2023). Beyond the business case: Universally designing the workplace for neurodiversity and inclusion. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 16(1), 45–49. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2022.99>

The inclusion of resources by this author does not imply or constitute an endorsement by the American Veterinary Medical Association or the Veterinary Medical Association Executives.

### References

Gregory, E. (2022, October 4). *What does it mean to be neurodivergent?* Forbes Health. <https://www.forbes.com/health/mind/what-is-neurodivergent/>