



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY



evolve

We all have talents to share.

Today's Agenda

- General introduction, What OVR does and how OVR supports employers
- What Neurodiversity is, What Evolve does, and why it matters to your hiring practices.
- OVR's Services
- Cultural Humility, The Cost of "Group Think," Sensory issues and accommodations



Why is Employment Coaching important?

Graying workforce and low unemployment = difficulty hiring



But wait! Here's an eager-to-work & underutilized workforce....

The *Varied* experiences of autism, ADHD, and others

Passionate about interests

Strong advocates

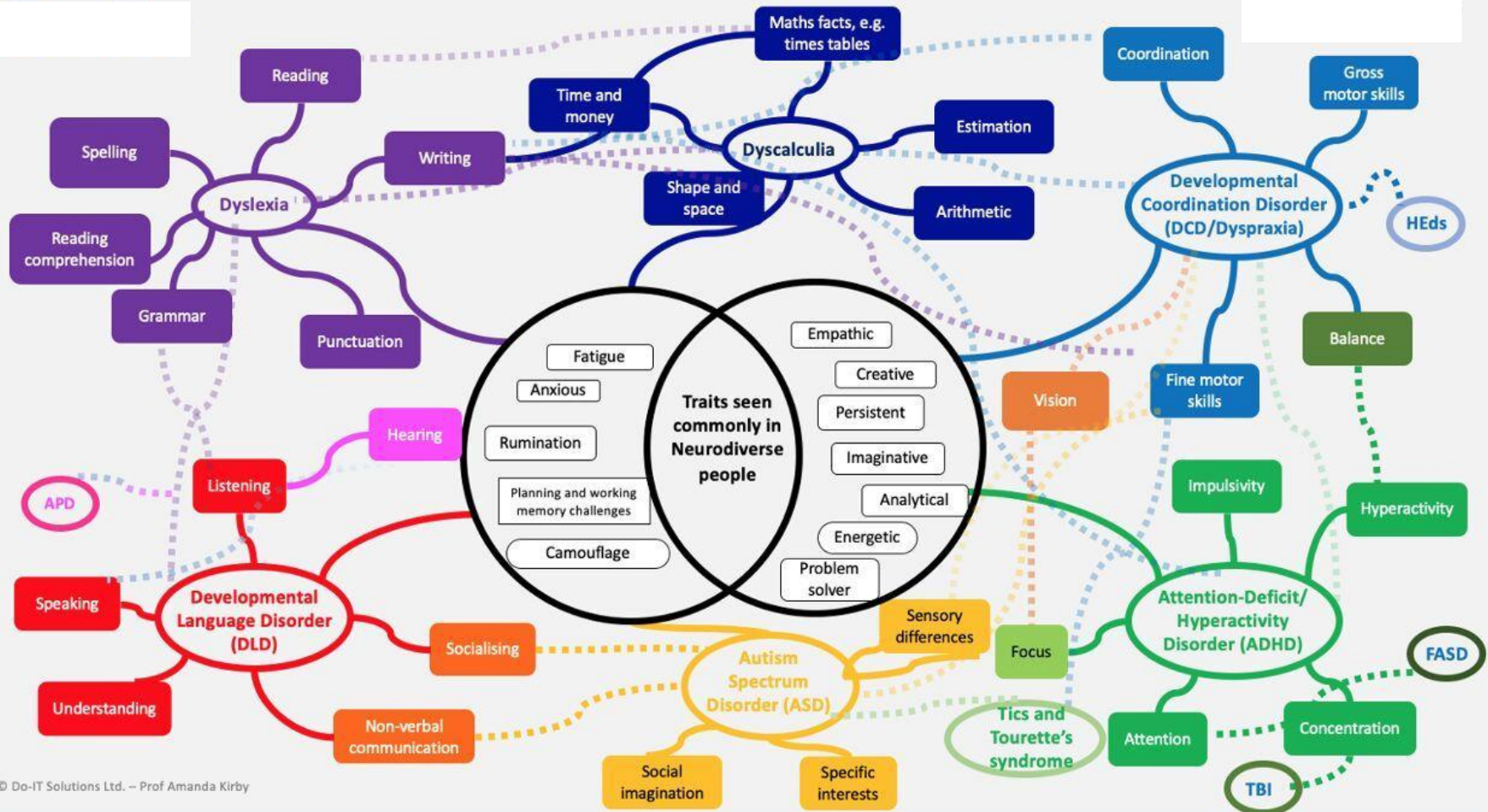
Hyper focus vs. lack of focus

Social nuance

Empathy

Sensory experiences

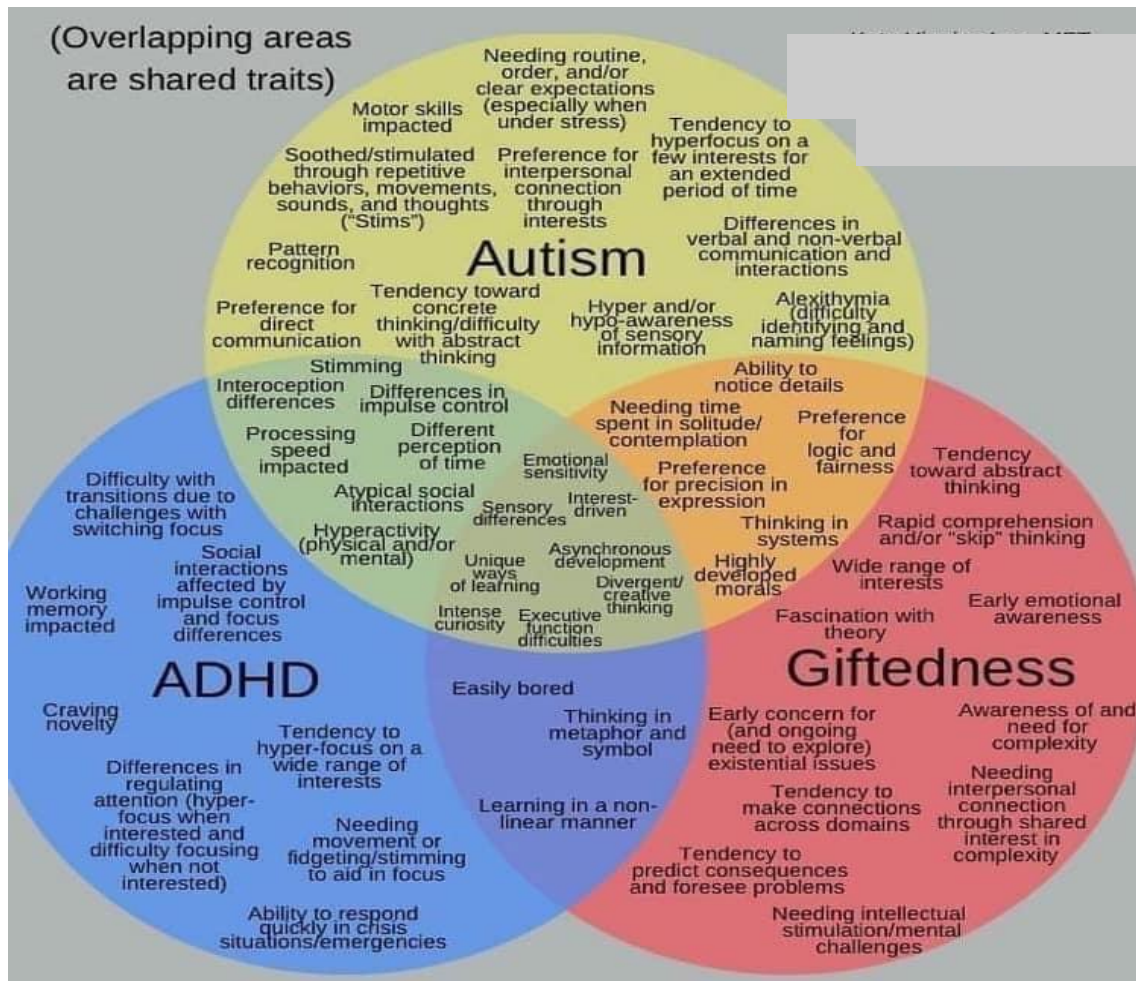
"Meltdowns"



Neurodiversity

Isn't always what you
think it is:

Giftedness



Executive Functioning

11 Sub-Skills of Executive Function



Language & the Social Model of Disability

Person first:

- Person with autism
- Person with a disability

vs

Identity first:

- Autistic person
- Disabled person

OVR

- OVR's Mission: To assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment and independence.
- OVR is mostly federally funded with a small state match.
 - There is an “OVR” in every state and US territory.
 - State VR has been around since 1920!
- OVR is a Jobs Program for people with disabilities.
 - OVR's customers with disabilities want to work.

Who Does OVR Serve?

OVR has Two Primary Customers

- People with disabilities who have an impediment to preparing for, attaining, or maintaining employment and independence.
- Businesses-who hire or may want to hire or retain qualified people with disabilities.
 - Job Retention cases are a high priority for OVR.
 - We can open these cases immediately

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- Early Reach Initiative
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Diagnostic Services
- Vocational Evaluation
- Counseling and Guidance
- Transition Services
- Restoration Services
- Training Services
- Vehicle/Home Modification
- Placement Services

Additional Blindness and Visual Services

- Blindness Skills Training
- Instruction: Mobility
- Instruction: Daily Living
- Independent Living Skills
- Specialized Children's Services
- Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program (BEP)



Services to Business Customers

- Pre-screened candidates who have the appropriate skills, abilities, training and qualifications to perform essential job duties.
- Consultation services to help retain current employees.
- Accommodation solutions to allow new or current employees to achieve productive employment.
- Job analysis and worksite modification consultation.
- Information about assistive technology and available resources.

➤ Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities

- Benefit(s) to the business/employer
 - Affirmative action priorities-OFCCP compliance
 - Increased diversity, different abilities, ideas
 - Allow employers to tap into a pool of workers as option to address staffing challenges.
 - Many hiring incentives

Hiring Incentives

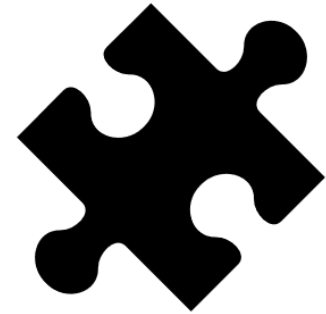
- OVR's On-the-Job-Training (OJT) wage reimbursements
 - Very generous percentage of reimbursement
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
 - Tax exempt organizations can claim the WOTC for hiring people with disabilities, Veterans and others.
- Federal Bonding Program
- OVR's Single Point of Contact (SPOC), Pre-Screened Candidates
- OVR Consultation/Evaluation for Accommodations

- (Arguably) The most common category of disability in the US
- Are covered by the ADA and the ADAAA just like obvious disabilities
- Disabilities that may be misunderstood, leading to a unique dynamic in the workplace



Possible Limitations of Non-obvious Disabilities

- Learning in one or more areas (reading, writing, mathematics)
- Processing information/Memory
- Communication
- Interpersonal relations
- Decision-making
- Physical/mental stamina



LD is a childhood disorder characterized by difficulty with certain skills such as reading or writing, and math computations.

LD may affect the ability to interpret what one sees or hears or the ability to link information from different parts of the brain.

Often LD is accompanied by other disorders, especially ADHD, which can compound the learning disability by making it difficult to listen, focus attention, or absorb new material.



- Do not associate LD with lower intelligence
- Do not assume people with LD cannot read
- Recognize that people with LD may need to be given information in a different way

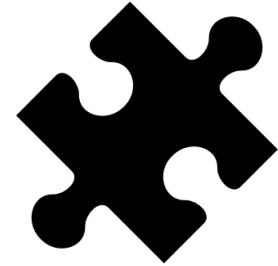


About Neurological Disabilities...

(e.g. Alzheimer's, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, stroke)

May affect:

- Physical functioning
- Interactions with others
- Learning and memory
 - The cause and effects of the disability are unique to each individual.



Neurological Disabilities, Some key points...

- Treat adults like adults
- Don't make assumptions! For example...
 - People with neurological impairments may use different ways of communicating – don't assume they are less intelligent
 - People with neurological impairments may walk differently; some may appear to be intoxicated
- Offering help ... ask if/how they would like assistance



- Examples: depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder,
- Schizophrenia
- Approximately 5 – 10% of the U.S. population has a
- mental illness
- Many myths about this disability but the reality is...
 - Most mental illnesses are treatable.
 - Psychiatric disabilities are the result of a brain disorder- not of a poor character or a “weak” personality.
 - Don’t assume people with psychiatric disabilities are violent

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 2008



“Signature Disabilities” of veterans of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq

PTSD:

- About 20% of recently returned veterans screened positive for depression or PTSD (RAND, 2008)
- Rate of PTSD among returning service members was 6 % diagnosed, with an additional 27% estimated to be undiagnosed (Erbes, Westermeyer, Engdahl & Johnson, 2007)

TBI:

- 19% of soldiers received a probable TBI, with more subtle (and more difficult to diagnose) blast-related injuries being the most common (RAND, 2008)

Many veterans have more than one disability - 30% of returning veterans screened positive for PTSD, TBI and/or major depression

(RAND, 2008)



- 1.8 million people have a severe visual impairment or blindness
- Varying levels of visual disability
- Not all people with visual disabilities read Braille
- Many new developments in IT aid people with visual disabilities

Steinmetz, 2006





- Give the person conversation cues:
 - Identify yourself when you start to speak
 - Say goodbye when you leave the conversation
- Give the person a brief description of their surroundings
 - “There’s a table about two feet in front of you. The door is about 5 feet away on our left.”
- Ask them if they would like assistance and what kind



- 1 million Americans have trouble hearing normal conversation; the number increases sharply with age
- About 30% of people over age 65 have difficulty hearing
- Human speech is often the most challenging sound
- Most difficult to hear when there are a lot of “ambient” sounds
- Hearing aids may not totally “fix” the problem

Steinmetz, 2006





- To get a person's attention, wave or gently tap the person on the shoulder
- Look directly at the person when you are speaking
- Make a true effort to communicate, don't try to be "polite" by saying you understand when you don't
- Look directly at the person, not at their signer/interpreter
- Offer to write back and forth if necessary
- Communicate your willingness to serve the person by your facial expression, not your tone of voice



- Characterized by lower test of functional and mental ability
- 3 out of every 100 Americans (The Arc, 2001)
- About 87% of people with this disability will be only slightly below average in learning new things
- Can arise from a number of different causes
- Varying levels of intellectual disability also means varying levels of intellectual *capability*
- Not the same as mental illness
- Not always present with other developmental disabilities!

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities



In general, when interacting with people with intellectual disabilities, it is helpful to...

- Use familiar wording and rephrase if necessary
- Use “concrete” reasoning, avoid abstractions
- Avoid assumptions — there is a wide range in capabilities among people with intellectual disabilities



Communication goes in both directions...

www.nature.com/scientificreports

SCIENTIFIC REPORTS



OPEN

Neurotypical Peers are Less Willing to Interact with Those with Autism based on Thin Slice Judgments

Received: 10 October 2016
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Brain “variety” is exactly what we need

ND as a business advantage

Group Think

NASA Challenger Explosion



How do we incorporate Neurodiversity Friendly Policies?

- Don't let the word "accommodations" scare you
- Most "sensory accommodations" cost nothing
- The most important policy is that of humility and openness is communication: never assume that there is one "proper" way to experience something, never assume that the way things have always been done works for everybody, or that only one type of thinking is best.
- The good news is that these policies benefit your customers and existing staff as well.

Supporting your team members

Commonly known accommodations:

Interpreters

Braille

Access ramps

Adjustable desks

Dictation software

TTY (teletype machines)

Less commonly known accommodations:

Extended time for some work duties

Low light/low noise/low sensory workspace

Clearly described expectations (in writing)

Work-from-home allowances

Visuals to support verbal or
written communication

Job coaches

Universal Design

Universal Design = meeting the needs of as many people as possible - and reducing the need for disclosure



Representation

Give examples via auditory, visual, textual and pictorial examples

Action and
Expression

Allow for feedback in auditory, visual, textual and pictorial examples

Allow for access to technology, resources and equipment that will aid their process

Remove possible impediments to execution: stool for cashier

Engagement

**Allow participants to choose the way they engage:
example museums audio tours or self-guided with placards**



Cultural / Universal Approaches

- An all-around culture of mentorship and diplomacy and support
- A customer service approach for everyone, including your team members
- “[Working with Me](#)” document for new hires and all team members
- Go-to “ask me anything” peers
- **Clear expectations** for team members
- Check-ins to ensure understanding
- Offer info in many formats
- Universal Design → ALDI
 - (it can be simple!)
- Individualized accommodations



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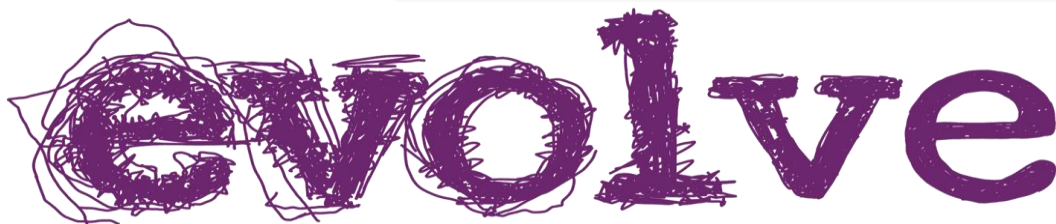
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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY



We all have talents to share.

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Additional Information about Universal Design

What are principles of universal design?

Equitable Use: The design is usable and marketable to individuals of various capabilities.

An example of this principle is a web page designed to be accessible to everyone, including users with visual impairments and those who use text-to-speech technology.

Flexibility in Use: The design is adaptable to many preferences and abilities.

An example of this principle is a museum that allows visitors the choice to read or listen to a description of the items on display.

Principles continued...

Simple and Intuitive Use: The design is simple to use regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language abilities, or concentration level. An example of this principle is a remote control with buttons that are labeled with basic language and symbols that are easy to understand.

Perceptible Information: The design efficiently conveys important information regardless of ambient circumstances or the user's sensory abilities. An example of this principle is a video that provides both captions and audio.

Tolerance for Error: The design minimizes dangers and the negative consequences of unintentional or accidental activities. An example of this principle is an educational software that offers instruction and context when a student answers a question incorrectly.

Low Physical Effort: The design allows for efficient and comfortable usage with little fatigue. An example of this principle is a sink faucet that automatically activates when a user places their hands underneath it.

Size and Space for Approach and Use: The design provides appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulation, and usage regardless of body size, posture, or mobility of the user. An example of this principle is a desk that is readily usable for a person in a wheelchair.

Accommodating the Community *and* Team Members

- Exhibit a can-do attitude when community members share needs you may not be prepared for
- Understand that your interpretation of one's affect may or may not match their experience
- Use a *customer service approach for everyone*, including your team members
- An all-around culture of mentorship and diplomacy
- “[Working with Me](#)” document for new hires and all team members
- Individualized accommodations and a culture of support