

Neurodiversity and Mental Health

Workshop Handout



Neurodiversity

the full spectrum of brain-based differences.

Neurodivergent

the natural variance of brain function and ways of processing information.

Neurotypical

brain functions and ways of processing information seen as “standard” (i.e., the opposite of neurodivergent).

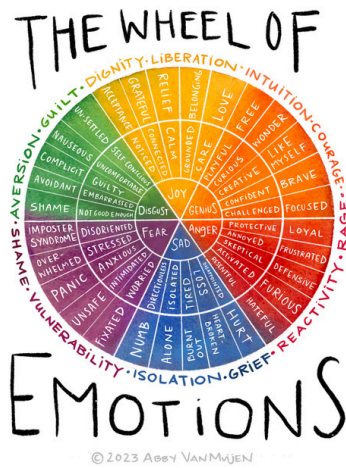
Neurodiversity is a natural and valuable form of human diversity and that the idea of a “normal” brain is culturally constructed.

Mental Health

The ability to feel, think, and act in ways that help us enjoy life and stay resilient through difficulties.



Wheel of Emotions



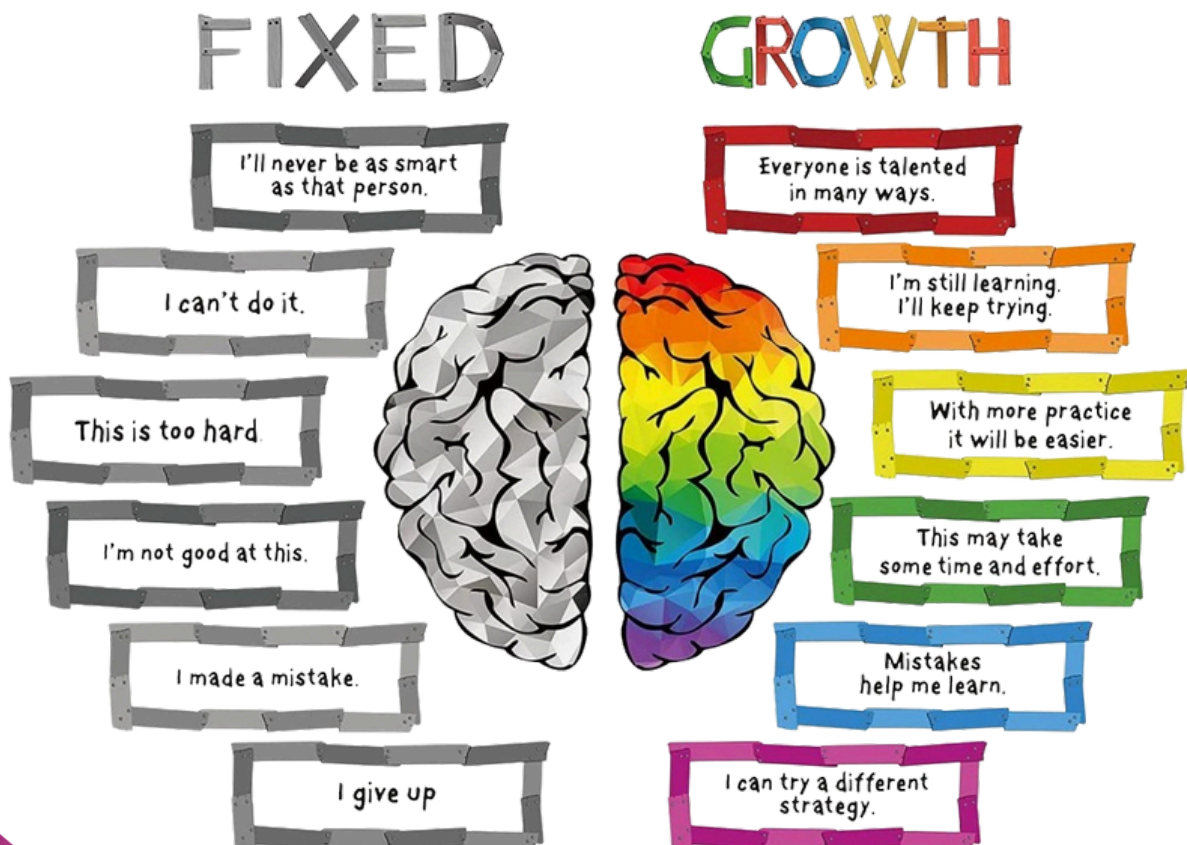
HOW WE THINK FEELINGS WORK:



HOW FEELINGS **ACTUALLY** WORK:



Growth Mindset



Zones of Regulation

SADNESS *I FEEL...*

TIED	BURNT OUT
BORED	NUMB
LEFT OUT	LOST
I MISS... (SOMEONE/SOMETHING)	DISCONNECTED
DISAPPOINTED	HEARTBROKEN
ISOLATED	GRIEF

I NOTICE...

CRYING/RELEASE OF WATER/FLUID
HEAVY/HEAVY EYES/MOUTH/FACE
LOW BLOOD FLOW/HEAVY BODY
"HEAVY" HEART & BREATH
"WELLING UP" CHEST/STOMACH PRESSURE
NUMBNESS OR LACK OF SENSATION
COLD
LESS TENSION IN MY BODY
NOTICEABLE TOES & FEET

SOMETHING ELSE:

I NEED: CONNECTION TO SELF, OTHERS OR PURPOSE

- ☐ TO REST
- ☐ TO SLEEP
- ☐ A BREAK
- ☐ TO BE DONE
- ☐ TO ASK FOR ATTENTION
- ☐ CONSENSUAL PHYSICAL TOUCH ~ A HUG • A SNUGGLE • A PAW ~
- ☐ TO CRY
- ☐ FRIENDSHIP
- ☐ TO REMEMBER

SOMETHING ELSE:

JOY *I FEEL...*

CALM	RELIEF
CARE	SETTLED
GRATITUDE	CONNECTED
SATISFIED	PLEASURE
AWE	ACCEPTANCE
BELONGING	SAFETY

I NOTICE...

CLOSED/SOFT EYES
SOFT JAW
RELAXED SHOULDERS
EASIER BREATH
SPACIOUS HEART & GUT
SOFT HANDS
NOTICEABLE TOES & FEET

SOMETHING ELSE:

I NEED: MY NEEDS ARE MET IN THIS MOMENT ♥

- ☐ SAVOR IT
- ☐ CELEBRATE!
- ☐ REST
- ☐ REMEMBER THIS FOR LATER
- ☐ SOMETHING ELSE:

GENIUS *I FEEL...*

CURIOUS	CREATIVE
EXCITED	SILLY
FOCUSED	CONFIDENT
INTERESTED	CHALLENGED
BRAVE	IN FLOW
FREE	LIKE MYSELF

I NOTICE...

ACTIVE MIND/IMAGINATIONS
PERCEPTIVE EYES, EARS, TONGUE, NOSE
ACTIVE HEART
WILLY LIMBS
ACTIVATED GUT
WIGGLY HANDS & FEET

SOMETHING ELSE:

I NEED: TO EXPRESS MYSELF

- ☐ TO SHARE MY WISDOM
- ☐ TO SING
- ☐ TO DANCE
- ☐ TO PLAY
- ☐ TO EXPLORE
- ☐ TO TAKE ACTION
- ☐ TO WRITE
- ☐ TO MAKE SOMETHING

SOMETHING ELSE:

DISGUST *I FEEL...*

NAUSEOUS	AWFUL
UNCOMFORTABLE	GUILT
AVOIDANCE	AVERSION
NOT GOOD ENOUGH	EMBARRASSED
SELF-CONSCIOUS	JUDGEMENT
PITY	SHAME

I NOTICE...

URGE TO LOOK AWAY OR AVOID
GROWTH?
"YUCKER" THROAT CLENCH/CLOSING
LUMP IN THROAT
ACTIVATED/CLENCHED STOMACH
DIZZINESS/NAUSEA
"PIT IN STOMACH"

SOMETHING ELSE:

I NEED: SUPPORT DIGESTING SOMETHING OR TO AVOID SOMETHING TOXIC TO ME

- ☐ TO SUSPEND JUDGEMENT ~ MY OWN • SOMEONE ELSE'S ~
- ☐ TO TALK ABOUT/SHARE SOMETHING CAUSING DISCOMFORT
- ☐ TO ENGAGE OR BREATHE INTO MY BELLY
- ☐ TO RELEASE SOMETHING
- ☐ SOMETHING ELSE:

FEAR *I FEEL...*

WORRIED	NERVOUS
BUSY	OVERWHELMED
STRESSED	IMPOSTER SYNDROME
FIXATED	ANXIOUS
INTIMIDATED	INSECURE
PANIC	TERRIFIED

I NOTICE...

WIDE EYES/PUPILS
TIGHT CHEST
QUICK MIND
SENSITIVITY TO SOUND/LIGHT
POUNDING HEART
SHALLOW BREATH
BUTTERFLIES
SENSITIVITY TO TOUCH
TICKLY HANDS & FEET

SOMETHING ELSE:

I NEED: A GREATER SENSE OF SAFETY

- ☐ TO TAKE A BREATH OR CHANGE MY BREATHING
- ☐ TO DISCHARGE ENERGY MOVE • SHAKE • GRUNT
- ☐ TO LEAVE OR BE FURTHER AWAY
- ☐ TO SLOW DOWN
- ☐ TO SPEED UP
- ☐ TO GROUND IN THE PRESENT
- ☐ SOMETHING ELSE:

ANGER *I FEEL...*

TENSE	ANNOYED
FRUSTRATED	SKETCHY
LOYAL	PROTECTIVE
RESISTANT	DEFENSIVE
RESENTFUL	ACTIVATED
HATEFUL	RAGE

I NOTICE...

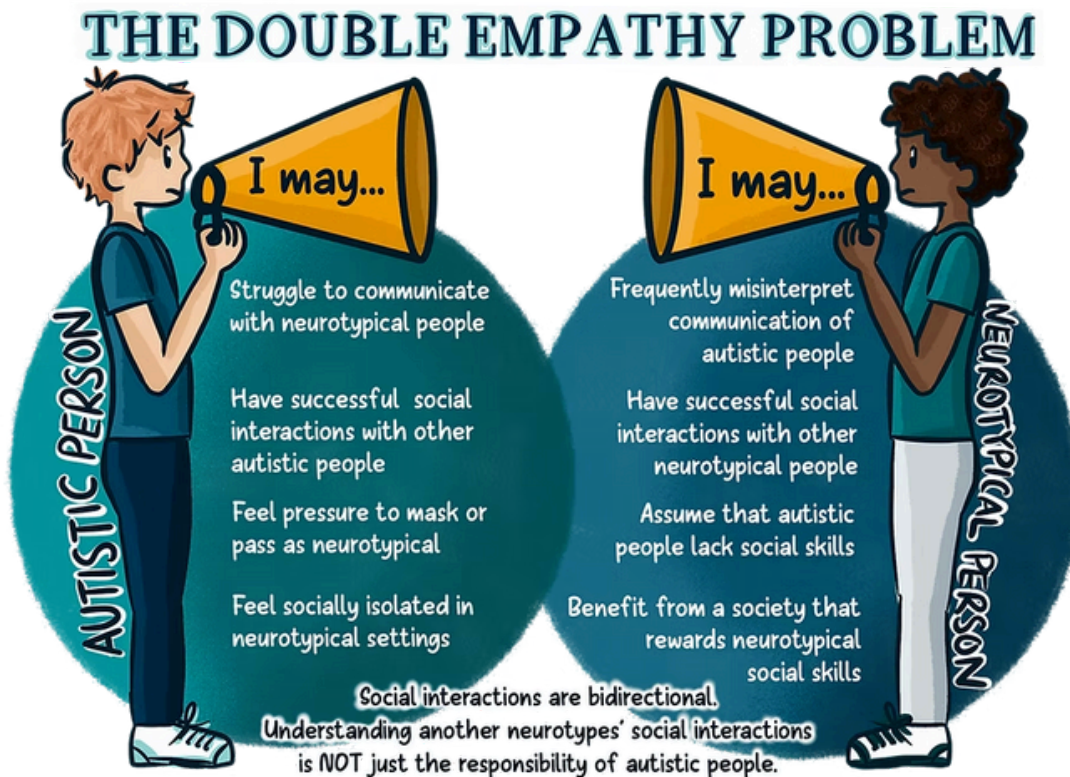
NOT FACE
FURROWED BROW
CLENCHED JAW
TIGHT SHOULDERS
FLEXED BICEPS
TIGHT ABS
↑ BLOOD FLOW TO LIMBS
CLENCHED FISTS
CURLED TOES

SOMETHING ELSE:

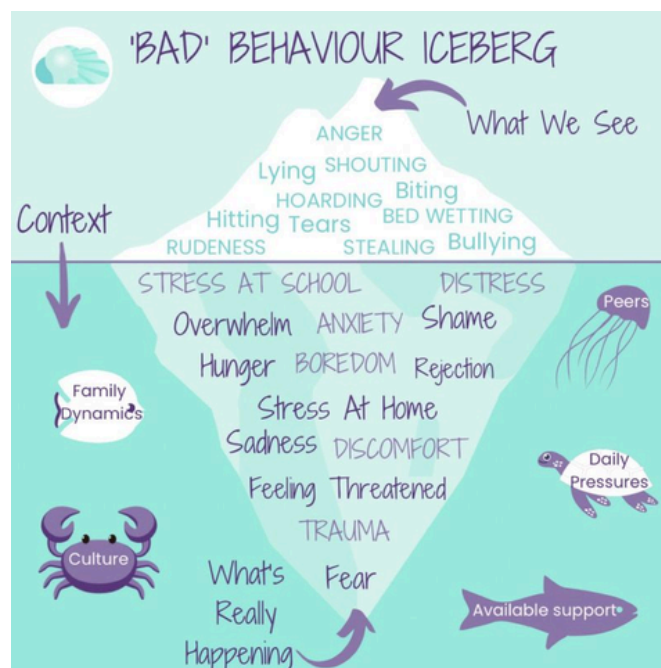
I NEED: SOMETHING TO MOVE OR CHANGE

- ☐ MORE INFORMATION, CLARITY OR UNDERSTANDING
- ☐ TO BE HEARD/NOTICED
- ☐ TO SAY "NO"
- ☐ TO DISCHARGE ENERGY ~ SQUEEZE • YELL • MOVE ~
- ☐ TO SET A BOUNDARY
- ☐ A SNACK/MORE GLUCOSE
- ☐ SOMETHING ELSE:

Double Empathy Model



Behaviour Iceberg



Regulation



Self-Advocacy

