
ADDitude Adjustments

with Kelli Jean Cunningham





What is Neurodiversity?

“1: individual differences in brain functioning regarded as normal variations within the human population

2: the concept that differences in brain functioning within the human population are normal and that brain functioning that is not neurotypical should not be stigmatized”

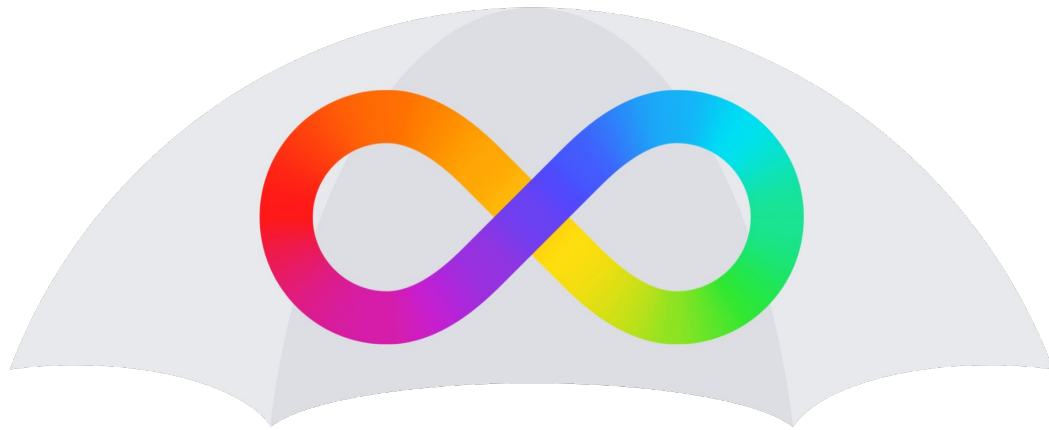
“Neurodiversity.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/neurodiversity>. Accessed 9 Feb. 2023.



What does Neurodivergent mean?

An umbrella of conditions that cause the brain to form or function differently including variations in mental processes such as thought and behavior.

As this is not a diagnosis or medical definition there is no completely comprehensive or universal list of conditions that fall into this category. Much of the ND community is self identified.



Dyspraxia OCD Prader-Willi Syndrome
Williams Syndrome Dyslexia
Dyscalculia Down Syndrome
Autism/ASD Dysgraphia ADD/ADHD
Tourette Syndrome Bipolar Disorder
Sensory Processing Disorders Social Anxiety
and more...

These are a few examples of conditions that fall under the umbrella of “neurodivergent”.



What is ADD/ADHD?

“a developmental disorder that is marked especially by persistent symptoms of inattention (such as distractibility, forgetfulness, or disorganization) or by symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsivity (such as fidgeting, speaking out of turn, or restlessness) or by symptoms of all three and that is not caused by any serious underlying physical or mental disorder

NOTE: While hyperactivity and impulsivity are not always present as symptoms, attention deficit disorder is commonly referred to as *attention deficit hyperactivity disorder*.”

“Attention deficit disorder.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attention%20deficit%20disorder>. Accessed 9 Mar. 2023.



A Few Problem Areas for ADD

- 1. Focus & Memory**
- 2. Organization**
- 3. Impulse Control**
- 4. Motivation & Productivity**
- 5. Perfectionism & Burn Out**



Focus & Memory

- Take notes
 - Writing & doodling can be helpful for staying engaged and focused in the moment.
 - For important information, take digital notes when possible or copy notes over immediately after meeting or appointment.
 - Schedule time for this step!
 - Gives you a second chance to organize ideas.
 - Ask for an agenda or outline in advance.



Focus & Memory

- **Timers, Reminders & Breaks**
 - Set alarms and reminders through your phone or calendar.
 - Set up specific time blocks for tasks in calendar
 - Try a modified pomodoro technique - 25/5; 45/15
 - Pomodor web apps.
 - Forest & Toggl Track mobile apps.
 - Be aware of Time Blindness.
 - Take advantage of hyper-focus/hyper-fixation.
 - Acknowledge and address distractions but don't let them consume you.



Focus & Memory

- **Linked Task**
 - Physical links
 - Put items you need to take with you by the door, your shoes or car keys.
 - Combine important items ex. Phone/Wallet; Keys/Lunchbox.
 - Mental links
 - Pair a task you enjoy with a task you struggle with or build on a task you already do well.
 - Find a time that works best for you.



I use a sticky wallet because the lower profile fits in my pocket- this way I can link my phone to my wallet and my wallet to my pants/coat.



Focus & Memory

- **Managing Sensory Processing**
 - Control what input you can.
 - Noise
 - Lighting
 - Clothing
 - Regulate output
 - Stimming
 - Sensory & Fidget Toys
 - Flex desks/seating
 - Mindfulness



Fidget & sensory toys are available at the Adult and Teen Services desk! Make your own fidget spinner in the Studio starting April 1st.



Focus & Memory

- **Boomerang/ Send Later**
 - Schedule emails and texts.
 - Send to yourself to use as reminders.
 - Send to others to help address distractions and cope with anxious thoughts as they come while communicating at more appropriate times.



Organization

- **Digital Organization**
 - Use digital notes to avoid clutter.
 - Digital files are easier to search and refer to.
 - Variety of apps and websites available to suit different needs.
 - Google Drive (Docs, Sheets & Jamboard)
 - MindNode
 - Speech Notes (Voice to Text or Text to Voice)

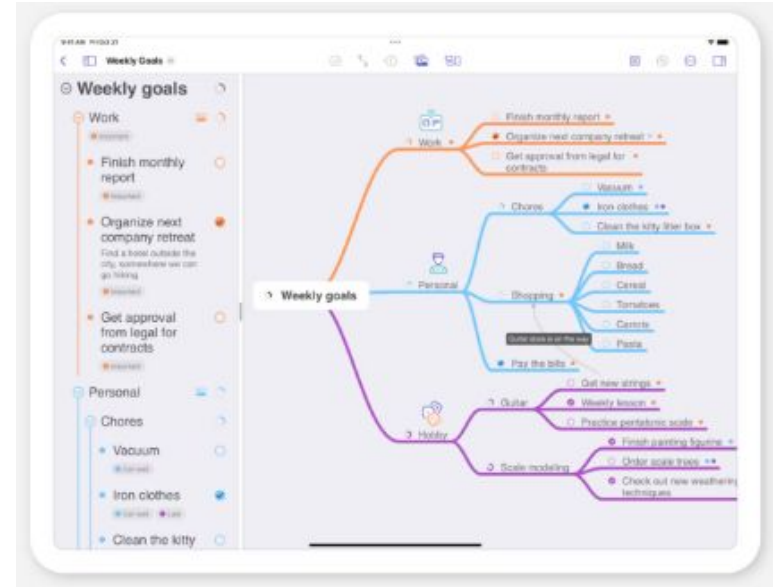
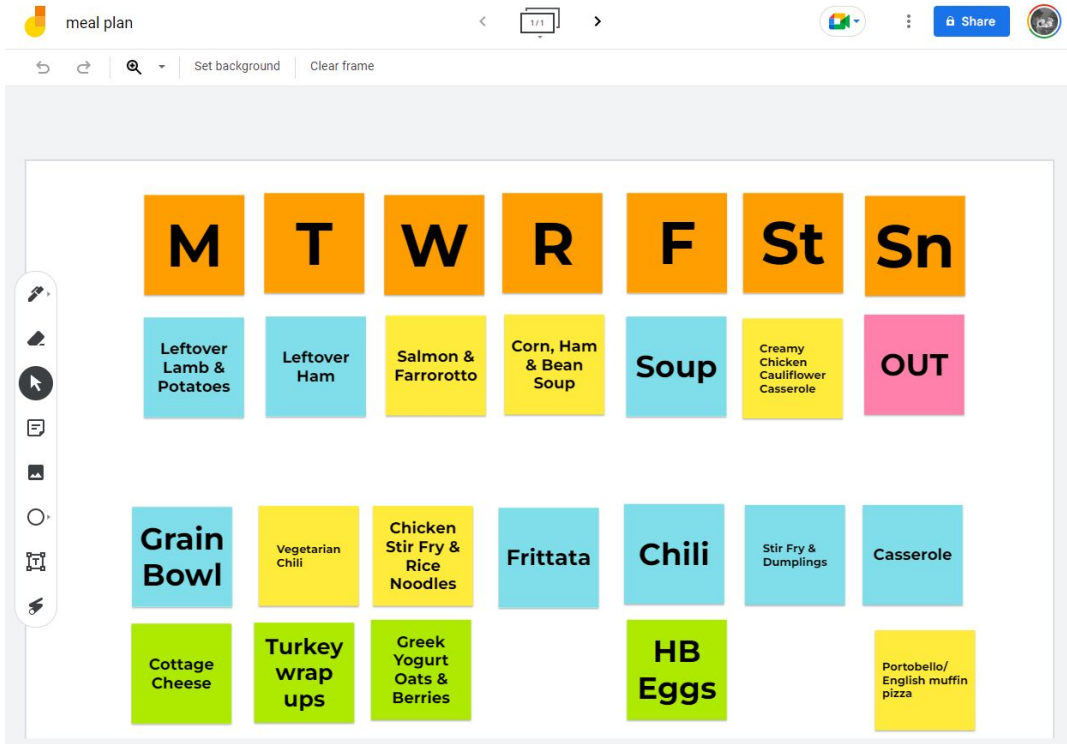
- Finish sorting and removing furniture and other remaining misc. items
- Move beds out
- Take pictures of other items to sell
- Get amnesty items into garage or back to house
- Clean refrigerator
- Clean Freezer
- Replace front screen
- Replace lightbulb in office bathroom
- Set up patio furniture
- Buy new shower head connector
- Remove shelves in pantry
- Spackle holes in pantry
- Prime and paint pantry
- Put in new shelves
- Replace kitchen faucet
- Put in new boards under sink
- Put new board in bottom cabinet next to sink/stove
- Remove wallpaper
- Paint great room
- Replace outlet/lightswitch plates
- Replace cabinet handles
- Winterize windows
- Replace blinds with curtains
- Replace bar paneling with peel and stick backsplash
- Prep and paint vanity table
- Prime garage
- Replace carpet
- Replace great room carpet with Luxury Vinyl
- Retile master bath
- Paint 2nd floor

Day	Meal Plan	Ingredients	Plan B
Sun 1/3	Beefy Burrito Casserole + FIBER Add Corn, add Collards, add Beans, add Quinoa, add Avocado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beef/veggies ● Rice ● Shredded Cheese ● Refried Beans ● Cheddar Soup ● Salsa ● Sour Cream 	Taco Salad/Bowls -or- Quesadillas
Mon 1/4	LEFTOVERS	-	-
Tue 1/5	LEFTOVERS	-	-
Wed 1/6	Soup	-	-
Thur 1/7	Venison Backstrap & Warm Cabbage with Bacon and Pickled Onions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Venison ● Cabbage ● Bacon ● PRO 	Leftover Soup/Casserole
Fri 1/8 Shopping Day	Eggroll in a Bowl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cabbage ● Carrots ● Ground Pork 	Ramen
Sat 1/9	Shepherd's Pie + FIBER Leave peels, Add greens, Add corn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beef ● Peas ● Potatoes 	Jacket Potatoes
Sun 1/10	French Onion Soup + FIBER Switch out bread for whole grain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Onions ● Gruyere ● Beef Bones ● Baguette* 	Canned Soup & Grilled Cheese
Mon 1/11	Cowboy Quiche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pie Crust ● Bacon ● Heavy Cream 	Scrambled Eggs & Bacon
Tues 1/12	Freezer Meal	-	Leftovers/Takeout

Christmas 2019 Louisa - Very Hungry Caterpillar Gray - Peek-a-Who? Rian - The Hippopotamus Uriah - If Animals Kissed Goodnight Ezra - If I Built a Car Beatrice - The Best Birthday Ever (Frozen) Samson - Detective Gordon: A Case for Buffy	Summer 2020 Louisa - Never Touch a Dragon Gray - Spots Rian - Tiny T Rex and the Impossible Hug Uriah - What to Do With an Idea Ezra - Seeds and Trees Beatrice - Do Princesses Wear Hiking Boots Samson - Legend of the Star Runner
Christmas 2020 Louisa - Dream Big, Little One Gray - Whistle for Willie Rian - The Book with No Pictures Uriah - What We'll Build Ezra - Underwear Beatrice - Rosie Revere, Engineer Samson - Pax	Summer 2021 Louisa - Fourteen Animal Gray - Ferdinand Rian - Big Road Race Uriah - Ooh Odd Zoo Ezra - Risky the Rock Beatrice - Bear and Fern Samson - Escape from Lemongello's Library
Christmas 2021 Personalized Books!	Summer 2022 Louisa - Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story Grey - Adventures with Barefoot Critters Rian - Car Science Ezra - The Horse, The Boy, The Mole, The Fox Uriah - Group Hug Beatrice - The Beatrice Prophecy Samson - Chasing Vermeer
Christmas 2022 3 Louisa - A Is for Bee 4 Grey - Twilight Library 6 Rian - A Family Secret 6 Uriah - I Spy 8 Ezra - New Kid 8 Beatrice - Little Women 11 Samson - Complete Baking Book Young Chef	Summer 2023 Louisa - Grey - Rian - Uriah - Ezra - Beatrice - Samson -



I prefer lists, outlines & spreadsheets so Google Drive is perfect for me!



If you are more visual then Jamboard or Mindnode might be for you!



Organization

- **Physical Organization**
 - Avoid “Doom Boxing” by ensuring everything has a defined space.
 - Use containers you can see the contents of or make sure they are clearly labelled.
 - Keep items you use often in areas of high traffic or visibility to overcome “object constancy”
 - Don’t get overwhelmed by an “all or nothing” attitude
 - Try at 10 minute tidy, take one just one room or divide the work into specific tasks



In addition to clear containers and labels, more shallow shelves help me keep track of what I have!



Impulse Control

- **Grocery Store**
 - Lower impulse buying ordering groceries for pick up.
 - Many stores have their own websites and mobile apps for ordering, but those that don't can be ordered through 3rd parties like Instacart.
 - This can also help you stay organized with built in meal plans!



What is the “ADD Tax”?

- **Additional emotional and financial costs due to symptoms and traits of ADD/ADHD**
 - Examples:
 - Paying fees on missed bills or deadlines*
 - Food waste – especially produce
 - Unintentional subscription payments
 - Impulsive or under researched purchases
 - Losing or forgetting items and buying them twice (or more)
 - In addition to the literal cost, many of these items come with shame, guilt, and time costs as well.

* Did you know? NLPL is “fine free” meaning there are no late fees for most material!



Impulse Control

- **Learning to Wait**
 - Find ways to limit your time or access to places that you tend to have more trouble with impulse control– such as the grocery store example.
 - Have a plan or list for when it cannot be avoided.
 - Identify underlying emotions and causes then address them in other ways.
 - “Sleep on it” (or wait a day, week, ect.) then check in with yourself to see if you still want or need the item.
 - Set up rewards to practice delayed gratification (more on that next).



I lower my food waste by buying food that are less labor intensive or have a long self/freezer life.



Motivation

- **Gamification**
 - Turn tasks into “challenges” and “quests”.
 - How many can I do?
 - How long can I keep my streak?
 - How fast can I get this done?
 - Use visuals like charts, lists or sticker boards to keep track of goals and accomplishments or try using apps.
 - Finch
 - Habitica

The Chore Challenge

Cleared Dirty Dished	Made an Appointment	Cleaned Bathroom
Washed countertops	Completed One Load of Laundry	Folded clothes and put them away
Unloaded Dishwasher	Vacuumed Rugs	Put Away Items without a home

Habit Tracker

Goals:

ACTIVITY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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@reallygreatsite

How can you make unpleasant tasks more fun? Try a bingo board or use cool stickers on a habit tracker!



Motivation

- Rewards
 - Material
 - “Traditional” material rewards
 - Great way to keep practicing impulse control
 - Immaterial
 - Take a moment to acknowledge your accomplishments and give yourself praise!
 - Snowball/Avalanche rewards
 - Incorporate your self-care (see burn out).
 - Intentional use of free time for hobbies and interests.



Perfectionism & Burnout

- **Routines & Habits**
 - Remember linked tasks.
 - Limit decision fatigue by limiting your options.
 - Find ways to keep your habits interesting and novel while still accomplishing what you need to.
 - Ex. Pick out clothes that make you excited about getting up and dressed in the morning. Set them out the night before.
 - Remember– broken habits are better than no habits at all.



Perfectionism & Burnout

- **Overcoming Negative Emotions**
 - Acknowledge your feelings and give yourself grace.
 - Make self-care a priority in your routine.
 - Improve your sleep hygiene.
 - Your hobbies should serve you.
 - Practice saying no.
 - Invite a friend over.
 - Pressure (aka Accountability)
 - Perspective
 - Parallel “Play”