

EMPOWERING NEURODIVERGENT WOMEN*

IN THE WORKPLACE

A booklet for employers and
neurodivergent people

*and gender minority people



By Megan Pickles

Foreword



Women, Neurodiversity and Employment: Towards a More Productive and Inclusive Workforce

The Growing Club is a social enterprise that has been providing employment and business skills training and support for women since 2016. We encourage women to reconnect with their skills and ambitions for a stronger and healthier economy.

Being a neurodivergent woman myself, I was interested to notice that a disproportionately large number of women who come to us are also neurodivergent. Most want to set up a small business because they do not fit well into the workplace. I went self-employed in 2010 for the very same reason.

It was an exciting time for us when The Rosa Fund awarded us a grant to run a campaign about women, neurodiversity and the workplace.


Because neurodivergency has traditionally been identified amongst men, too many women have gone undiagnosed, misdiagnosed, or had a late diagnosis. This has resulted in high levels of stress, burnout and under-employment, despite the fact that many of these women possess a wealth of talent and skill.

We are an organisation that works towards change so all women can thrive. As such, we want to shift the narrative around neuro-diversity away from us being a problem and embrace a strengths-based approach, one which will benefit all.

Megan Pickles has spent the past few months interviewing neurodivergent women, exploring what effective workplace structures have looked like for them. And so, if you are an employer, policymaker, researcher or fellow advocate, this report will help you to explore strategies for creating universally supportive work environments. Because, an attitude of willingness and some simple adjustments can lead to a more productive and healthy workforce.

Jane Binnion MBA
Co-founder and MD of The Growing Club CIC





I've long been passionate about neurodiversity and women's equality. Given the chance to speak to neurodivergent women and create a resource for people like us, I jumped at the chance.

Being both dyspraxic and ADHD, life can be quite chaotic - thankfully, I have many neurodivergent women and other minority-gendered people around me who I have long shared tips and tricks with.

Joining the Growing Club was pivotal; Jane, a fellow neurodivergent, showed me that employment doesn't have to be an insurmountable challenge. I did, however, notice that so many women who came through the doors of The Growing Club were leaving employment to start their businesses as the only way to get by, many citing they did not fit in with employment.

Empowered by Jane and those wonderful neurodivergent souls around me, I thought I could use this opportunity to provide at least some of the guidance I have trawled the internet looking for. Most of the information online is geared towards either parents of small white boys or students/teenagers in education. The neurodivergent people I know are neither of these things, nor am I, so to be able to contribute some information to help people like me, and maybe like yourself or the people you employ, is a delight.

I've worked very hard on this. Thank you to every volunteer I interviewed, the staff at the Growing Club; without their help, this booklet wouldn't have taken form. And, a huge thank you to my partner Annie, who is also neurodivergent. Her continued support and contributions have been invaluable in putting this together into something which reads well and makes sense!

I hope you enjoy this and can take something from it. Please share it with others who you think could benefit from reading it!

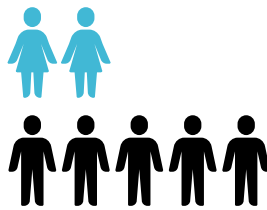
Megan Pickles



NAVIGATING THE NEURODIVERSITY GENDER GAP

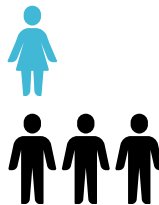
Rates of Misdiagnosis and Underdiagnosis

Dyslexia: a ratio of 2:5

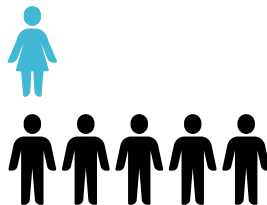


ADHD: a ratio of 1:3

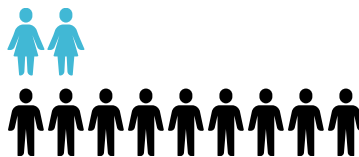
The average age a woman is diagnosed is their late 30s, compared to 7 for boys



Dyspraxia, a ratio of 1:5



Autism: ratio of 2:9



Due to gender-biased medical tests, many women are undiagnosed neurodivergent.

Some key points about neurodiversity in women:

1. Masking and camouflaging

Neurodivergent women develop coping mechanisms to camouflage neurodivergent traits, such as imitating social behaviours, and suppressing stemming. This can delay diagnosis.

2. Misdiagnosis or underdiagnosis

Neurodivergent traits in women are often misdiagnosed or overlooked.

3. Social coping strategies

Women are more likely to develop social coping strategies to appear as neurotypical. This could be down to deep-rooted societal expectations of women and the pressure to fit in.

4. Differences in special interests

Special interests are common in neurodivergent people, but special interests in women can differ and manifest in areas such as social justice, reading, animals etc. They are more likely to go unnoticed.

5. Emotional regulatory challenges

Neurodivergent women may struggle with emotional regulation and managing their internal feelings. This can lead to anxiety, depression and emotional breakdowns. This is a reason many women get misdiagnosed with mental health conditions.

6. Camouflaging in professional settings

Neurodivergent women are very likely to mask in professional settings due to fears of stigma and career implications. This can lead to them being less likely to receive support.

Please bear this in mind when implementing policies and accommodations. It is recommended to adopt many of these policies for everyone, as many people may not have access to a diagnosis.

Benefits of employing neurodivergent women

Different perspectives

Neurodivergent individuals bring a different perspective to the workforce, and bring innovative thinking, creativity, and problem-solving ability

Problem solving

Adapting to a world which is not built for you can mean getting creative with your problem-solving - this can be a great addition to a work team.

Deep levels of focus

Neurodivergent people are able to focus to deeper levels than neurotypicals, meaning they can complete large amounts of complex or intricate work in a short amount of time - this does take a toll, but is an excellent addition to a team.

Increased productivity and employee retention

Many companies have reported that having better awareness of neurodiversity has made them better managers all around. This has led to increased employee retention and increased productivity!



Section 1 - For Employers

The needs of neurodivergent employees still need to be better understood.

With so many women being **diagnosed later in life**, many women are in employment but with little to no support.



This is for a variety of reasons:

- women are often misdiagnosed
- Women are found to mask more than their male counterparts, so employers might not see what is going on under the surface for them.
- Even women who are diagnosed still may not know what support is available.

Masking in the workplace and working without adequate support all contribute to burnout.

Consider investing in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training. Many neurotypical people don't know what different neurodiversities entail, and understanding is key! Many issues come from a lack of it.

In the UK, only 16% of autistic adults are in full-time paid employment (National Autistic Society, 2016) and are also more likely to be in the wrong employment for their skillset than the rest of the population. (Baldin et al., 2014)



Interview and Recruitment

Why are we treating the interview process like a closed-book exam?

We talked to a woman who **disclosed her ADHD before applying** to a Disability Confident employer. In the interview, she faced a **challenge; the questions were in two parts.**



For neurotypical interviewees, this may be fine. For someone whose disability causes her to have **issues with short-term and working memory, she struggled** with this.

The feedback from the interview was that the answers she gave were detailed and comprehensive, but she **only answered half of what each interviewer asked, so she didn't get the job.**

Workplaces must be better aware of neurodivergent individuals and different access needs, otherwise, barriers are being put in their way, resulting in employers missing out on talented staff.

This must begin with the interview process and initial recruitment to make a workplace more inclusive.

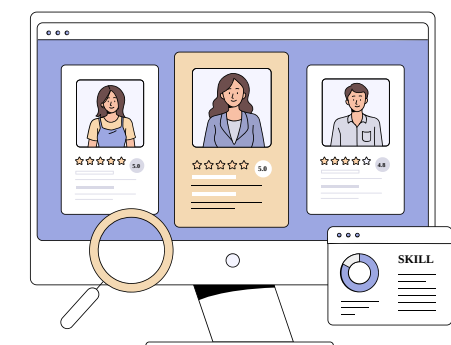
What can workplaces do differently?

Simple **adjustments** to the **recruitment process** include:

- Making adverts inclusive
 - Not using serif fonts which look overcrowded
 - Putting only the **essential skills** there. If **being a 'driver' is not essential, do not include it!**
 - Consider **avoiding ambiguous phrasing**; if you want someone to be able to collaborate with others, say so. **Phrases like 'team player' or 'group minded' are subjective and can be too vague.**
 - Keep **job descriptions short**; use bullet points.

Simple adjustments to the interview process include:

- **Pre-interview guides**
 - This should include the questions, format, length, participants etc.
- Ask one question at a time.
- **Good environment** for interviews
 - Avoid cluttered spaces with lots of noise and movement
- Adopt **sequential interviews** instead of a panel
 - This can be less overwhelming for the interviewee



“What can we do to make you more comfortable at your upcoming interview?”

As we know, many women are not aware they are neurodivergent. **Consider asking all candidates this question** and evaluating what the closed-book interview process is doing for your organisation.

Or consider a different interview method

WORK SAMPLE

Instead of phone or in-person interviews, perhaps try using a **‘work sample’ test**. This is where candidates will **complete a role-specific task**, which will help employers assess **skills relevant to the role**.

Common types of work sample tests are:

- **Portfolios;** this is where you can showcase paintings, graphic designs, marketing campaigns, sales pitches
- **Performance tests;** an employer provides a sample work assignment for candidates. The test requires a level of knowledge about the style of work expected at the role, and assesses candidates on merit!

Employers may try to use work sample tests in an exploitative way. These should be tasks which take ~ 30 minutes at most. **Work sample tests are not a way to get free labour.**



New on the job

Starting a new job can be exciting, daunting, and filled with uncertainty. One woman's journey, however, was marked by a lack of information and inadequate support.

Her line manager was unprepared and uninformed about the needs of neurodivergent people. This meant **her questions went unanswered** and were **misunderstood as rude and questioning authority**.

Starting a job when neurodivergent can present with the same challenges but can also present with more.

- **Change and transitions** mean adapting to new routines, which can be particularly stressful.
- **Communication** - misunderstandings and miscommunication

When your new employee starts, begin by going through the policies and guides but also the whole culture of the workplace.

This can include:

- What happens at **lunchtime**
- What happens during **birthdays**
- What are the expectations around the environment
- How important are workplace social activities for progression/success within the team



Flexibility in the workplace

Getting the balance of structure and flexibility right is important for all employees. The interviewees have said that **some structure is welcomed**, but a **rigid structure** is **ineffective** and **hinders productivity**.

Working from home

A **work-from-home policy** is one of the **easiest** and **most effective** policies to implement (if the sector allows).

Working from home allows individuals to tailor their working hours to their **specific needs and energy levels**, allowing them to work when they **feel most productive**.

Neurodivergent individuals may be hypersensitive to stimuli. The option to work from home allows for **greater control over their environment** and one which will **fit their sensory needs**, increasing productivity.



Having the option of hybrid working has also boosted the number of UK women, particularly mothers, in full-time employment (FT, 2023).

Flexibility continued

There are other ways to increase flexibility in the workplace

Schedule flexibility

Perhaps consider implementing flexible start and end times!

For example, an office may have core hours between 10-4, but employees have **flexibility on when they start and end.**

Schedule flexibility also refers to being able to **freely swap shifts or choose their shifts.** Shift choice flexibility allows for more sectors to be involved in the schedule flexibility conversation.

Structure and work patterns should be discussed case-by-case. Energy levels fluctuate greatly between individuals, so having an option to start later, take longer breaks or leave earlier is a great way to increase productivity and morale.

Mode Flexibility

Much like having the option to work from home, mode flexibility refers to choosing the mode best for an individual.

Types include

- **People-split** - this is where some employees mainly work from the office, and others mainly work from home
- **Time-split** - where part of the week employees are required to work from the office, and the rest of the week people can WFH
- **Remote-first** - in this model, employees mainly work from home, and may hardly come into the office
- **Office first** - offers some flexibility, but employees are required to work from the office most of the time.

Flexibility is a hugely powerful tool in making workplaces more accessible for marginalised groups. It unlocks work options for neurodivergent people as well as those with caring responsibilities.

Overworking and Overcompensating

Neurodivergent people are burning out due to an expectation to perform like “everyone else”. We perform differently, and that shouldn’t mean we have to work longer and harder to have job security.

Some tasks which **neurotypical employees may find easy, neurodivergent employees may struggle with and take longer to finish**. This leads to many employees working **unpaid overtime**, as they are doing a task that “*should*” take them less time than it does.

Neurodivergent employees **aren’t being recognised** for this overtime, but it is still **taking time and energy** and **contributing to burnout**.

Whilst terrible for the employee, it is also bad for the employer. This mentality can lead to **high levels of staff turnover**.

Burnout can come from neurodivergent employees trying to *mask* these difficulties and not to appear different from their coworkers.



Micromanagement

Supervisors may be tempted to micromanage employees which appear to not be filling potential.

But subconsciously, many are defining potential through a neurotypical lense...

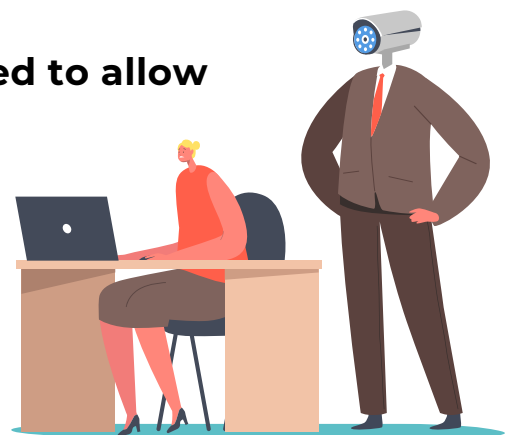
Believe it or not, this is a **structural form of neuroableism**. It can **reduce motivation** and cause other issues such as:

- reduced well-being and **poor mental health**
- reduced autonomy in a job
- **added distractions** and interruptions to the workflow
- pressure for **quick decisions** without **thorough consideration**, resulting in **undesirable outcomes**

Micromanagement can lead to a sense of powerlessness and reduced motivation

Many neurodivergent workers are **outcomes-focused**, and will arrive there in a way that is **different to neurotypicals**.

This means a level of freedom is needed to allow them to craft their own work styles!



Asking Questions

Many neurotypical people view questions as challenges to authority or queries to protocols or practices because they are **perceived as wrong or ineffectual**. This is **not the case** with neurodivergent people.

Many neurodivergent people **ask clarifying questions** to **aid understanding**, as throughout most neurodivergent people's lives, numerous mistakes have been made due to misunderstandings.

Many people **struggle to follow verbal instructions** due to issues with working memory or a lack of understanding of why a procedure needs to be followed. **“It’s just done like this” does not work as an explanation.**

Lack of communication can **lead to more questions**, which can be **perceived as needy or pedantic** - adding to low-level anxiety about getting things wrong. They will avoid asking questions and then get things wrong anyway.

To prevent misunderstandings:

- **Communicate expectations** clearly
- **Write down** instructions, procedures, and protocols to **refer** to later
- Offer to **explain how to do something** if they have not done it before to ensure your expectations are clearly set out
- Answer questions **concisely and avoid frustrated tones of voice**
- **Provide context and/or reasoning** - and encourage innovation where possible (Neurodivergent people are excellent as working more efficiently due to their brains operating differently)

Adopting a strengths-based approach

Employees adopting a strengths-based approach can address some of these challenges faced by neurodivergent employees, such as overworking and overcompensating

Identifying, and leveraging strengths

Recognise the skills employees bring to the team, rather than expecting everyone to conform to neurotypical standards.

Allocate tasks according to strengths.

Task Delegation and Team Collaboration

Encourage a team-based approach where tasks are assigned on the team member's strengths.

Customised Support and Accommodations

Provide support based on an individual's strengths. This can look like flexible working hours, alternative communication methods etc.

Recognition and Appreciation

Acknowledge the contribution of employees and ensure the value they bring to the team is celebrated. This can negate employee's need to overwork.

Redefine what "success" looks like

If success in your organisation is based on completion times or people having to complete things in a certain way, shift this to outcomes-focused success metrics and the quality of the work. This can alleviate pressure to overcompensate for any perceived shortcomings.

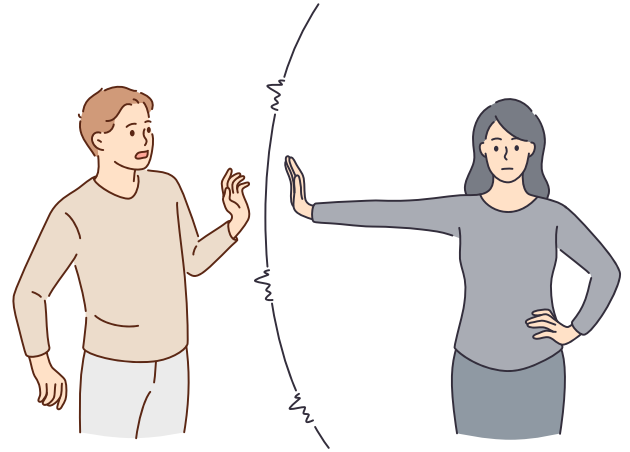


Boundaries

Following on from flexible working, just because an employee is working flexibly, this does not mean they should be expected to be always available.

Whilst many more people can now work flexibly due to the pandemic, the **boundaries between work and personal life** have **further blurred** for many.

Often, being **contacted out of working hours** via text or phone about **non-urgent** work-related stuff can cause an expectation that employees have to be **switched on all the time**.



Even if this is not the intention, without explicitly saying this, that may be misunderstood that way.

To make working from home actually work, workplaces need to have conversations around what is acceptable and what isn't.

Being able to switch off during non-work hours is an essential part of flexible working!

This can look like: saying there is **no expectation to reply** to WhatsApp messages sent at 9pm until working hours.

Many people are also now opting to explicitly put a message on their email signatures: "I work flexibly, so regardless of when this was sent, do not feel obliged to reply outside of your working hours."

Biases

There are many biases about neurodivergent people. There are also many biases around behaviours that neurodivergent people can exhibit.

It is vital to **unlearn these biases**, as they are hurtful and insidious in how they affect neurodivergent employees.

One woman we interviewed spoke about a workplace where she had been working for years and at a place she enjoyed working at. As soon as she disclosed her ADHD diagnosis, her employer began to nitpick and started to treat her differently.

Adjustments in the workplace

If someone asks for an adjustment in the workplace, **do not assume it is because they can't cope.**

Adjustments are here to make the playing field level.

Neurodiversity is a personal experience

For example, some autistic people may prefer not to do presentations. **Do not generalise** this to the entire autistic community.

Before generalising, please **speak to your employees about their comfort levels. Accommodating individual differences** and allowing everyone to contribute their unique strengths can hugely benefit the workplace.

You can **hinder their job progression by assuming** someone does/does not feel comfortable doing something! **This is an unconscious bias.**

Communication

One of the best things an employer could do for their neurodivergent staff is to adapt their communication.

8 women we spoke to mentioned their employer or coworkers using subtle hints, for example, about coming into work earlier or about a deadline. **Use clear language when asking things of employees.**

Clear Communication

Create environments where communication is **clear, concise and explicit.**

Ambiguous and indirect language can be very unhelpful and misleading.

Structured meetings

Give **advance notice** of agendas, and the timeline of meeting. This will allow for better preparation.

One-size-fits-all communication does not suffice!

Some people benefit from written, verbal, visual, and digital communication mediums to ensure information is received effectively.

Hold a team meeting where people can vocalise how they want communication to be given to them!

Be sensitive to information overload.

Information overload can impede task completion and result in poor decision-making.

- Identify what the **priorities** are, and stick to them.
- Have important information at **the top of emails**
- Bullet point longer emails



Barriers to Leadership

White men, like Richard Branson and Elon Musk, are painted by the media as the faces of neurodiversity in entrepreneurship. **Where are the neurodivergent women?**

Women, compared to men already share a small percentage of senior leadership positions. This **number is even smaller looking at neurodivergent women**

Women reported a **significant lack of role models** of neurodivergent women in leadership positions.

There are many factors contributing to why this has come about; some of these are explored here.

Biases

In society, often, women are expected to walk a tightrope of balancing being too likeable or “bossy”.

Often, neurodivergent women don't exhibit the skills which are **typically associated with leadership**, like strong communication and management abilities.

Gender biases **prevent women** from reaching leadership roles. For example, men who communicate directly can be praised, but **women are often perceived as rude and aggressive.**

Try challenging these biases.

The issue of masking

The sexist expectations of women to interact as neurotypical whilst at work negatively impacts on opportunities to progress in their careers (North, G. 2021)



What can employers do to smash this ceiling?

Part of what employers need to do is to be **proactive in including neurodivergent women:**

- **Education and training for employees** around neurodiversity. This will **reduce stigma** and increase understanding
- **Inclusive hiring practices** -
 - Accommodations and flexibility
- **Equal career development opportunities:** ensure that these are outcomes-driven, and adequate resources and mentorship are provided in the opportunity.

Employers should also rethink leadership

Leadership comes in all forms and can be empathetic and collaborative.

Inclusive decision-making

Inclusive decision-making processes will involve participation from all levels of the organisation. This will foster a culture where everyone's input is valued

Emotional Intelligence in Leadership

Self-aware, emotionally intelligent leaders will bring stronger relationships and resolve conflict more easily! Make a change to value this in organisations.

Embrace diverse perspectives

Value the diverse perspectives in organisations, and create environments where different ways of thinking are both accepted and appreciated.



Looking out for burnout

Deloitte's survey of 5000 women from 10 countries revealed alarming rates of burnout. Stress levels for 53% of the surveyed women have increased over the past year, leading half to experience burnout. Additionally, 1/3 took time off due to mental health struggles, yet only 43% feel comfortable discussing this at work. (Deloitte, 2022)

It can be difficult to spot signs of burnout in staff as an employer, but some symptoms you could look out for are:

1. **Physical symptoms of exhaustion:** this can manifest in difficulty of getting out of bed - this could look like underperformance or taking more sick days.
2. **Increased emotions** - burnout can make someone feel out of control with their emotions. This can lead to an autistic shutdown, meltdowns
3. **Struggling with social interactions** - this could manifest in avoiding calls, texts or not responding to emails
4. **Difficulties with organisation** - which can manifest in missing deadlines

The best thing to do is prevention; to do this, **educate yourself** and **your staff** about autism and neurodiversity more broadly. Engage in **open communication** with your staff, ensuring an environment where **needs, challenges and accommodations can be discussed.**

Recognise the signs of burnout, offer accommodations such as flexible work, sensory considerations and check-in on workloads!

Section 2 - For neurodivergent employees

With so few resources for neurodivergent adults, specifically women, out there on the internet, this is a space where information will be collated and shared openly.

In this section, you will find tips and information about the following:

1. Coworkers and loneliness in the workplace

Despite spending a significant part of our lives at work, many neurodivergent women we spoke to felt connections at work were challenging.

2. Overstimulation and distraction

Being in busy environments can be overstimulating for neurodivergent people and can lead to distraction.

3. Executive Dysfunction and Time Management

Executive dysfunction is the name given to the difficulties neurodivergent people have to plan, organise, complete and initiate tasks.

4. Burnout

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion. It can be a result of overworking and prolonged stress,

5. General tips and tricks

Here, we list out some tips and tricks which have helped others. This list is not exhaustive, but can serve as a starting point!

Coworkers and loneliness in the workplace

Many of the women interviewed for this project reported that they often felt misunderstood in the workplace and found **coworker relationships hard to navigate**. This can be difficult for people of all diagnoses or statuses and can result in using **masking techniques to conceal our true selves** and make ourselves more palatable.

One autistic woman interviewed reported that when she overheard colleagues talking about another member of staff, whom the interviewee perceived to also be autistic, as being “weird” and “unnerving”. She was put off telling anyone about her diagnosis for fear of others viewing her in the same way.

Loneliness in the workplace can discourage you from going to work and doing your best job, something you can be proud of - but you are not alone.

If you work for a larger organisation, see if there is a neurodiversity network you could join - this could be an opportunity to meet other like-minded people you could talk to about work. If there isn't one, perhaps consider creating one or asking your superiors to do it. You may be surprised how many of us there are out there that you don't know!

Overstimulation and Distraction

Being in a busy workplace environment can become overwhelming. This leads to overstimulation or distraction. Below, we've listed some of the tools and techniques available to help deal with this.

Noise cancelling headphones

- These are available through Access to Work.
- These can help block out ambient noise if you're in an online meeting, if your office space is crowded/busy, or you need to focus
- Can be used in conjunction with white or brown noise or binaural beats to boost productivity

Fidget toys

- Quiet ones, such as **popsockets** or **tangles**, can be very helpful to help maintain **concentration in meetings/workshops** where you need to keep your focus whilst not doing much with your hands.

Flexible working/hybrid working

- Many women stated that flexible working hours have allowed them to avoid the more stressful parts of the day, e.g. the beginning and end, by avoiding rush hour traffic, cutting down their commute, and circumventing the stress of everyone beginning their day at once.
- This also allows for much greater control over your environment, such as control over heat and noise (see flexible working section).

Hybrid working has allowed many women to adjust to their needs; if they feel more sensitive during the day or know they have a lot of online meetings, they can modify where they are working to ensure they are in the most suitable and comfortable place.

Executive Dysfunction and Time Management

Executive dysfunction and time management issues are key problems for many neurodivergent people, especially for those with ADHD.

Executive functioning problems can look like a difficulty or inability to start tasks, even those you actively want to do. It can manifest in time management, motivation, and organisation struggles.

Executive dysfunction can be very frustrating as it can be hard to marry up the parts of you which set out to do something and the part of you that is unable to. There are some strategies which have helped others to overcome these issues.

1. **Break tasks into smaller steps.** Even the smallest step like opening your laptop can be included, as sometimes even starting can feel overwhelming.
2. **Visual aids:** calendars, planners, sticky notes and labelling can help to organise tasks. Visual countdown timers can assist with knowing how long you have left of a task.
3. **Routines.** Consistency is more helpful than you may think. Structure in a day can help make remembering to follow through with other tasks easier.
4. **Realistic goals:** Achievable and specific goals can help to minimise overwhelming yourself with too many tasks.
 - a. Look at SMART Goals; there are loads of resources online about them. These are goals which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.



Burnout

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion which results from prolonged stress and overworking.

As with most things, prevention of burnout is far more effective than trying to treat it. This will ensure better well-being and will lead to a more sustainable (and productive) work environment.

1. Set boundaries and manage your workloads

Establishing a healthy work-home balance is a key part of preventing burnout. This also involves not overcommitting yourself.

2. Take self-care seriously

This includes both your physical and mental health and emotional well-being. A healthy diet and exercise is advised. Whilst mindfulness and yoga are good, self-care looks different for everyone - playing a video game, reading a book, or going on a 20 mile hike all will help people in different ways. Do what's best for you!

3. Learn to say no

This includes additional responsibilities when you just aren't feeling up to it, as well as feeling okay with saying no to personal activities, if your body is telling you to rest.

4. Utilise the green and blue spaces around us!

Spending time in green and blue spaces has been proven to have many benefits for reducing stress, anxiety, and generally improving well-being. Try get outside, even if it's just a 15 minute walk. Maybe even get yourself a little treat if you need an incentive!

General Tips

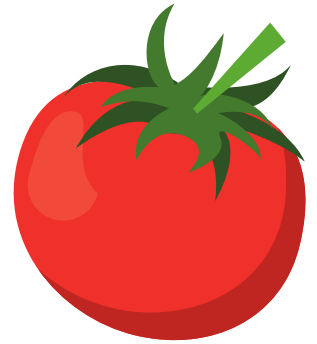
If you are neurodivergent, some tips and resources will be collated here which have helped others. This is intended to be an evolving resource, so if there are we have not mentioned which have helped you, please send them to: megan@thegrowingclub.co.uk

Tools and Resources

THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE

A productivity practice where you try to optimise your brain's productivity by doing 25 minutes of work, followed by 5-minute break. This is done 4 times, followed by a longer, 30-minute break.

Having a visual timer is helpful. I promise that you can focus for 25 minutes!



BODY DOUBLING

Body doubling operates by “tricking” yourself into doing something by having the perceived pressure of other people working around you. Try telling a colleague your plan, have them tell you, and then both report back after sitting together to do it.

Flown is an online tool that uses body doubling, intention setting and accountability. You can get a free trial and Access to Work can pay for a subscription



ACCESS TO WORK

Access to Work is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (England). It offers support for people with disabilities or health conditions in the workplace. Grants can go towards equipment, adaptations, support workers, software and more. These aim to increase employment opportunities, accessibilities and ensure equal access to work for individuals with access needs.

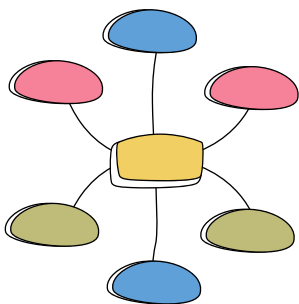


NOISE CANCELLING HEADPHONES

By reducing sensory overload and distractions, noise-cancelling headphones provide a quieter, controlled environment which can improve focus, reduce stress and promote self-regulation.

BULLET JOURNALS

Bullet journals are a good option for those who have tried so many different planners and journals but with none of them working out. You can create your own journal/planner/to do list/ notes book and everything is in one place.



MIND MAPPING TOOLS

Creating visual diagrams and mind maps for brainstorming, planning, and organising thoughts can help get thoughts out of your brain and reduce overwhelm. Apps include MindMeister, XMind.