

Working Smarter Together: The Impact of Accommodations in Business and the Neurodiverse Community



Pam Cusick, Rare Patient Voice
Learning Disabilities Association 2024 Conference



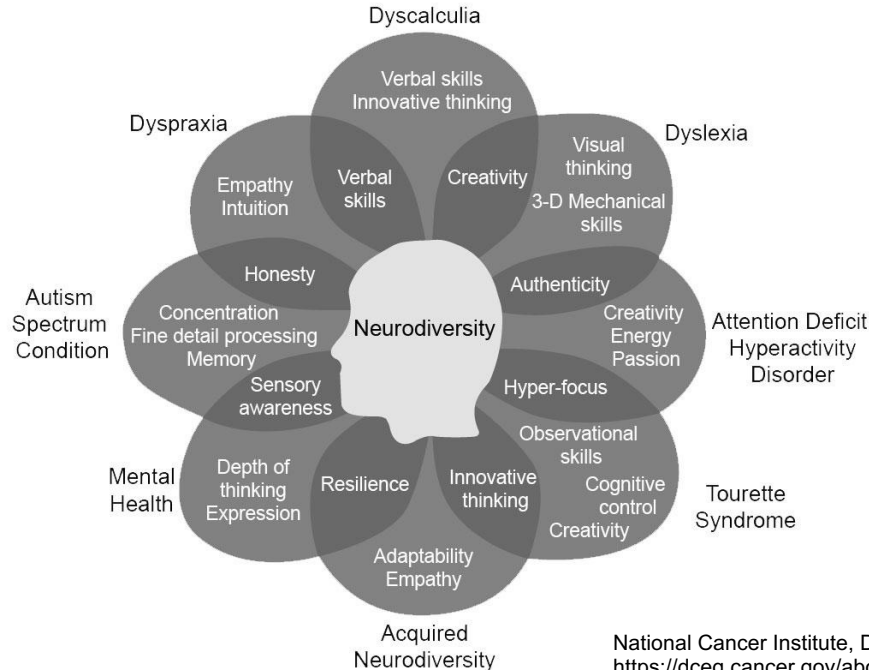
Pam Cusick
Senior Vice President
pam.cusick@rarepatientvoice.com

Helping Patients and Caregivers Share Their Voices

What is Neurodiversity?



Skills and Strengths of Neurodiversity



National Cancer Institute, Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics
<https://dceg.cancer.gov/about/diversity-inclusion/inclusivity-minute/2022/neurodiversity#:~:text=Neurodiversity%20describes%20the%20variation%20in,exhibits%20some%20form%20of%20neurodivergence.>

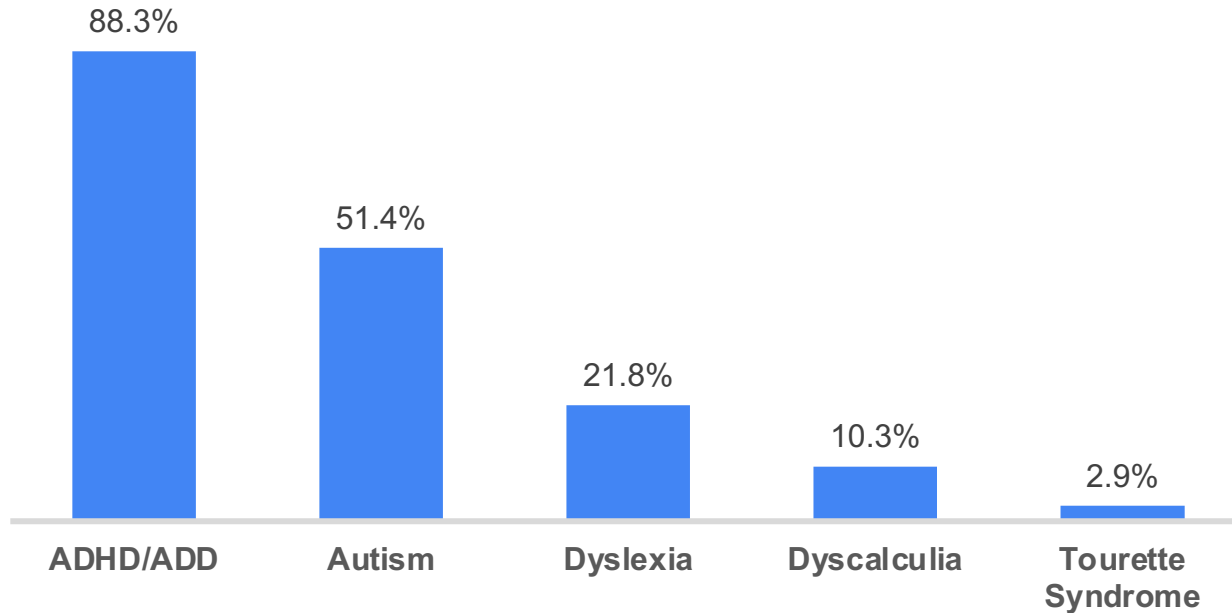
Some Inspiration from Rick Riordan, Author of the Percy Jackson Series



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itcTiQEVIo0>



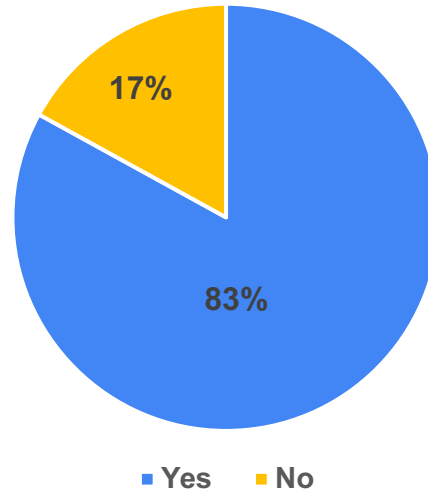
Do You Live with Any Neurodiverse Conditions?



Respondents n-1197

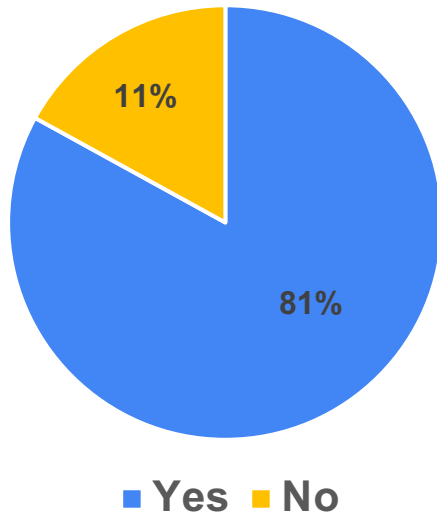
Neurodiversity and Employment

Are you now, or have you ever been employed, either part-time or full-time?

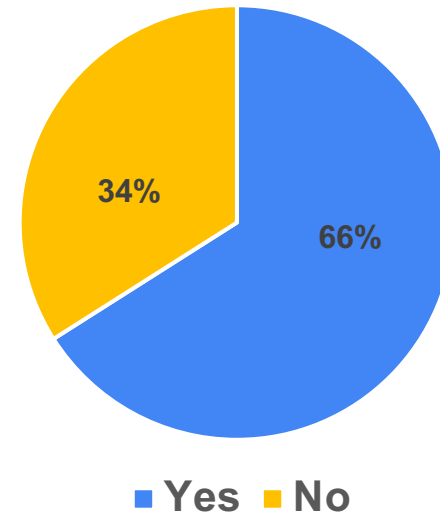


Impact of Neurodiversity on Getting and Keeping a Job

Do You Think Neurodiversity Has Impacted Your Ability to Get a Job?



Do You Think Neurodiversity Has Impacted Your Ability to Keep a Job?



Where Do Participants Work?

- Teaching
- Healthcare
- Retail
- Administrative/Office
- Customer Service
- Self-Employed
- Restaurant Service



Top 10 Reasons Neurodiversity Has Impacted Their Ability to Keep a Job

- Getting easily bored
- Difficulty with focus and concentration
- Issues with burnout
- Problems with time management and time blindness
- Executive dysfunction
- Social & communication challenges
- Sensory sensitivity
- Organization and planning problems
- Emotional dysregulation
- Issues with consistency and reliability

There Are So Many Successful People Living With Neurodiversity



Entertainers

- Whoopi Goldberg
- Tim Tebow
- Orlando Bloom
- Tom Cruise
- Justin Timberlake
- Jay Leno
- Kiera Knightley
- John Lennon
- Danny Glover
- Jennifer Aniston
- Christopher Knight
- Kelly Ripa
- Keanu Reeves
- Vince Vaughn
- Anderson Cooper
- Jaimie Oliver
- Trevor Noah

Artists and Musicians

- Pablo Picasso
- Mozart

Scientists

- Albert Einstein
- Thomas Edison
- Alexander Graham Bell

Athletes

- Magic Johnson
- Carl Lewis
- Bruce Jenner
- Richard Engel
- Michael Phelps
- Greg Louganis

Politicians

- Nelson Rockefeller
- Woodrow Wilson
- Winston Churchill
- Benjamin Franklin

Business Executives

- Walt Disney
- Charles Schwab
- Craig McCaw
- Richard Branson
- John Chambers
- John Reed
- David Boies
- Karina Smirnoff
- Gaston Caperton
- Paul Orfalea, CEO Kinko's
- Barbara Corcoran
- David Neeleman, CEO JetBlue
- Tommy Hilfiger

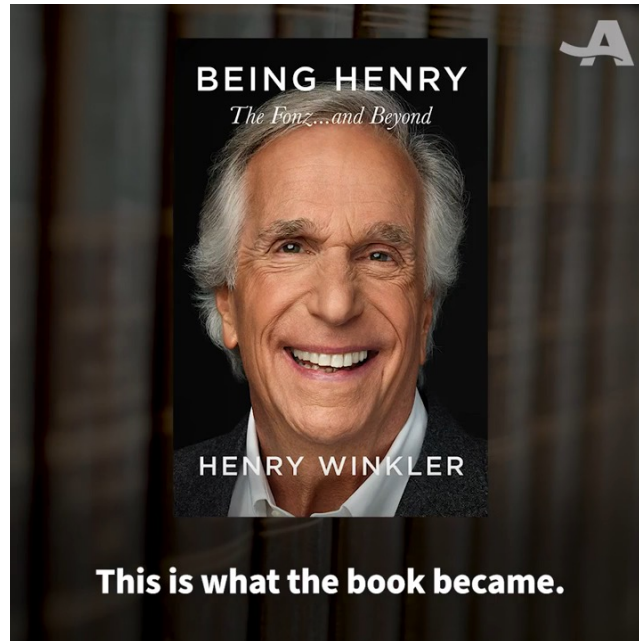
General, Judge, Director

- General George Patton
- Judge J.H. Galleta
- Steven Spielberg

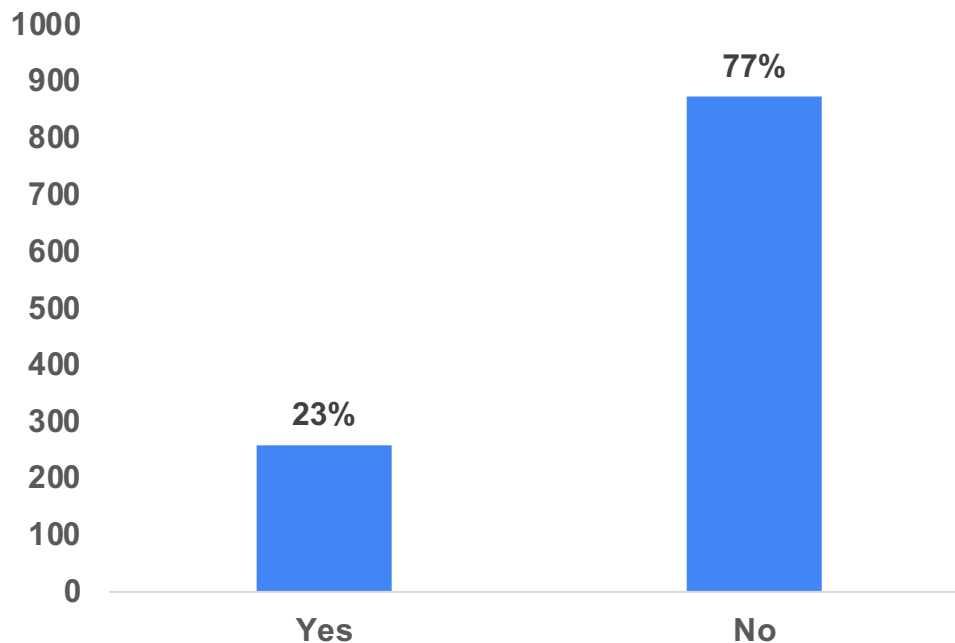
Many Celebrities Have Struggled with Learning Disabilities, Like Actor Henry Winkler



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOX9qH3O9wU>



Did You Disclose Your Neurodiversity During the Hiring Process?

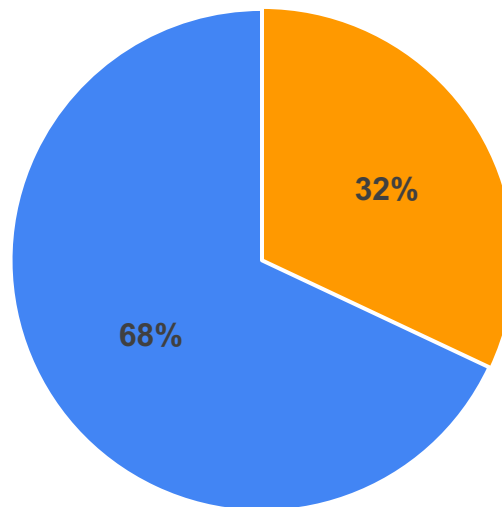


Why Didn't Participants Disclose Neurodiversity?

- Fear of discrimination or bias in hiring decisions
- Had not received an official diagnosis yet
- Did not think it was relevant or necessary to disclose
- Concerns about stigma or being viewed negatively
- Worried about ability to perform job duties

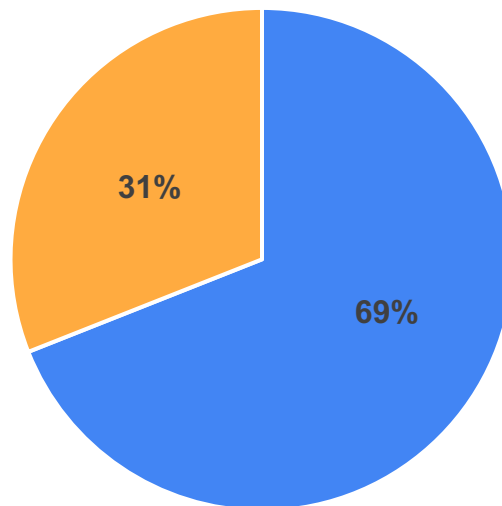


Have You Ever Asked for Accommodations at Work?



■ Yes ■ No

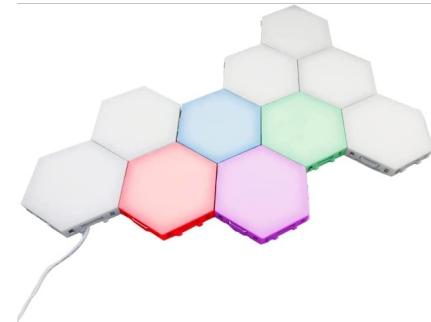
If You Asked, Were Your Accommodations Granted?



■ Yes ■ No

Most Requested Accommodations

- Flexible scheduling or remote work options
- Extra time or breaks
- Written instructions or visual aids
- A comfortable chair or special lighting
- Noise cancelling headphones or a quiet workspace



Why Not Ask for Accommodations?



- Fear of negative perception or stigma
- Uncertainty about needs
- Confidentiality concerns
- Desire for self-reliance
- Lack of formal diagnosis

How Accommodations Helped Respondents with Success at Work

- Reduced stimuli
- Flexibility
- Allowance for recovery
- Clear communication
- Supportive environment



An Example of Support in the Workplace – Actor Leo Long



<https://youtu.be/yNi-jH2qHaY?feature=shared>



Why Some Accommodations Did Not Help

- Not fully implemented
- Still felt burned out
- Needed more help
- Felt stigmatized
- Perceived as less competent
- Created additional stress
- Environment still caused sensory issues



No Accommodations – No Impact

- Used coping strategies
- Remained fully productive without accommodations
- Accommodations unrelated to job tasks
- Made effort to push through the difficulties



How Has Neurodiversity Helped You Be More Successful?



- Hyperfocus/intense focus
- Creativity & innovation
- Empathy & understanding
- Multitasking
- Big picture thinking



Diane Swonk, Economic Advisor and Chief Economist at KPMG



Workplace Discrimination Respondents Faced Due to Neurodiversity



Advice for Other Neurodivergent People Entering the Workforce

- **Advocate** for your needs/know your rights and options
- Find work **compatible** with your strengths and interests
- **Be open and honest** about neurodiversity
- **Use medication** if helpful for managing symptoms
- Develop **effective coping strategies**
- **Be patient** with yourself
- **Connect** with other Neurodivergent people



Armani Williams, a Professional Racecar Driver Who Lives with Autism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v6MQYqx-qs>



Final Thoughts on Neurodiversity in the Workplace

- We need more education, awareness, and acceptance of neurodiversity.
- Flexibility around schedules, sensory needs, communication styles are essential.
- Recognition that neurodiversity brings strengths as well as challenges is key.
- Neurodivergent thinking can provide creativity, innovation, unique perspectives and problem-solving.



Final Thoughts Continued....



- Disclosing one's neurodivergence can be difficult and stressful.
- The standard workplace structure, culture, and expectations may cause extra difficulty in terms of thriving and often burn out for neurodiverse individuals.
- **Fundamental changes to how we work could be beneficial to everyone.**



**Thank
You!**



**Visit us at
www.rarepatientvoice.com**

Helping Patients and Caregivers Share Their Voices