

Neurodiversity & Neuro-affirmative Practices in Education



Webinar: 6th March 2025

Meet the Panel - You are invited to join our panel of experts who will impart their wealth of knowledge and experience on what it means to be a neurodivergent student in Ireland in 2025 and how small changes can be made to systems, values and practices, to ensure all brain types are considered and included in education.



Davida Hartman, Adjunct Professor in the UCD School of Psychology and Educational and Chartered Educational & Child Psychologist with the Psychological Society of Ireland, founder of the Children's Clinic & Adult Autism Practices and co-author of the Adult Autism Assessment Handbook.



Julie Holmes, Speech & Language Therapist, Specialist in Gestalt Language Processing, Clinical Director of BeMe Therapy and creator of Let's Communicate Together, Parent & Carer Community & Training courses.



Jack Cairns, Senior OT and Clinical Practice Manager at Neurodiversity Ireland

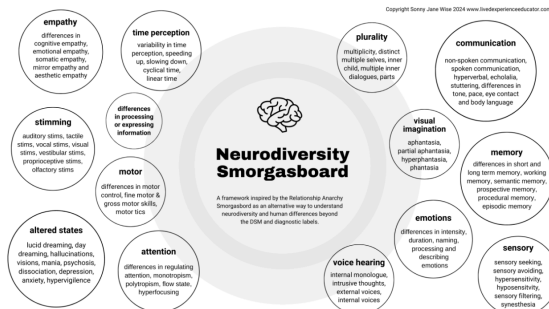


Joan McDonald, [Posautive](#), a science teacher, has a long and varied career working with individuals with diverse learning needs. She became one of the first SENOs in Ireland, providing support to students in rural schools. Her own autistic identification came after meeting a diverse group of autistic adults during her Master's studies. Currently, she focuses on using student interests to support autistic learners and works with various organisations to create and deliver courses that help autistic people understand and advocate for themselves.

Resources:

[The Adult Autism Assessment Handbook](#) - aka the Neurodiversity Bible!

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/understanding-neurodiversity-beyond-dsm-sonny-jane-wise-nmdlc/>



References from Jack Cairns' presentation:

- **Autistic Girls Network.** (n.d.). <https://autisticgirlsnetwork.org/>
- **Autistic Realms.** (2024). Top 5 neurodivergent-informed strategies <https://autisticrealms.com/top-5-neurodivergent-informed-strategies/>
- **Autistic Ltd.** (2024, July 15). What comes under the neurodivergent umbrella? <https://autisticltd.co.uk/2024/07/15/what-comes-under-the-neurodivergent-umbrella/>
- **David Hartman.** (2020). What does it mean to be neurodiversity affirmative? The Psychologist. <https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/what-does-it-mean-be-neurodiversity-affirmative>
- **Dyslexia Association of Ireland.** (n.d.). Guidelines on Inclusive Communications.
- **Dr. Megan Anna Neff,** AuDHD Psychologist. (2024). Instagram Post. https://www.instagram.com/p/C_--asqsK_w/?img_index=9&igsh=MTRpMWx6aGcyb21wNw%3D%3D
- **Embrace Autism.** (n.d.). <https://embrace-autism.com/>
- **Hartmann, T.** (1993). Attention Deficit Disorder: A Different Perception. Underwood Books.
- **Learn Play Thrive.** (n.d.). <https://learnplaythrive.com/> and The Two Sides Podcast <https://learnplaythrive.com/podcast-2/>

- **Neuroqueer.** (2014). Neurodiversity terms and definitions. <https://neuroqueer.com/neurodiversity-terms-and-definitions/>
- **Silberman, S.** (2017). NeuroTribes: The Legacy of Autism and How to Think Smarter About People Who Think Differently. Allen & Unwin.
- **Stim Punks.** (n.d.). Neurodivergent. <https://stimpunks.org/glossary/neurodivergent/#umbrella>
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.** (n.d.). <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>
- **What Jennifer Khan.** (2012). 29 surprising facts about your senses. Parade. <https://parade.com/108964/jenniferkhan/29-surprising-facts-about-your-senses/>

 **NCSE [Relate Framework](#)**

 **LEANS - Learning About Neurodiversity at School [resources](#)**

References from Joan's McDonald's presentation:

The Autism Spectrum:

<https://neuroclastic.com/its-a-spectrum-doesnt-mean-what-you-think/>

Monotropism Resource List:

<https://www.thepdaspace.com/blog/monotropism-happy-flow-state>

Original paper on monotropism by Murray, Lawson, Lesser using monotropic attention to explain autism according to the deficit based model of the diagnostic manuals:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1362361305051398>

Rebecca Wood's research on teaching autistic students:

Autism, Intense Interests and Support at School: from wasted efforts to shared understandings. (2019) Wood, R. Educational Review

DOI:10.1080/00131911.2019.1566213

Fergus Murray's description of monotropism and autistic experience:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/me-and-monotropism-unified-theory-autism>

WWW.OOLONG.CO.UK

Research into whether autistic people are monotropic which had surprising results for ADHD too!

Garau, V. et al “Development and Validation of a Novel Self-Report Measure of Monotropism in Autistic and Non-Autistic People: The Monotropism Questionnaire”
Preprint June 23

Find us at www.neurodiversityireland.com

Neurodiversity Ireland was founded by neurodivergent parents to address the stigma and exclusion faced by their neurodivergent children. Frustrated by the consistent pathologising nature of disability services in Ireland which only recognises ‘deficits’ and ‘impairments’, we instead envisaged an alternative way of delivering supports, which are neuroaffirmative and which wrap around neurodivergent children, in their community. Our work challenges neurotypical norms. Our mission is to create an equitable future for all children.



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