Thank you for joining, we will begin shortly.

World Autism Month:
Neurodiversity and Accessibility

Note: This session is being recorded.

The recording will be sent to all attendees.
If you have any questions or comments, please use the Chat Box.
We will take questions during and at the end.

K&L GATES

World Autism Month: Neurodiversity and Accessibility

Welcoming Comments

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Opening Reflections

- **World Autism Day:**
  April 2 [United Nations]

- **World Autism Month/National Autism Acceptance Month:** April

- **First celebrated as a week in 1972 and then as a month in 1984**

- **Autism prevalence affects an estimated 2%+ of adults in U.S.**

Source: CDC

Source: Rooted in Rights

Neurodiversity

What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodivergent individuals are those whose brain functions differ from those who are neurologically typical, or neurotypical.

"Neurodiversity is defined as, 'the variation and difference in neurological structure and function that exist among human beings.'"

Source: EARN (Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion) citing Dictionary.com

"Neurodiversity refers to the variation in neurocognitive functioning. It is an umbrella that encompasses neurocognitive differences such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, Tourette's syndrome, anxiety, OCD, depression, intellectual disability, and schizophrenia, as well as 'normal' neurocognitive functioning, or neurotypicality."

Source: EARN citing Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)

"Autism refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication."

Source: AutismSpeaks

What is Neurotypicality and Neurodivergence?

Neurodiversity – 3 of 6
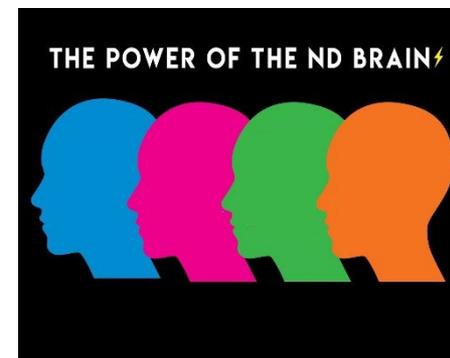
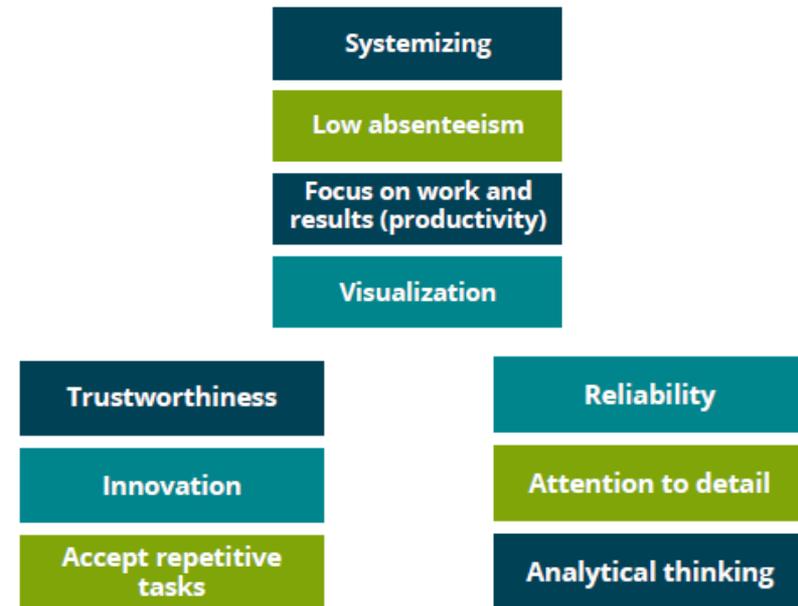## Including and Accommodating Neurodivergence

Neurodiversity – 4 of 6

Viewing Neurodivergence as a Strength in an Organization

Scholars identified characteristics that, in general, people on the autism spectrum demonstrate that make them desirable employees. *

*Autism @ Work Playbook: Finding talent and creating meaningful employment opportunities for people with autism. 2nd ed. Seattle, WA: ACCESS-IT, The Information School, University of Washington, 2021.

Systemizing

Low absenteeism

Focus on work and results (productivity)

Visualization

Trustworthiness

Reliability

Innovation

Attention to detail

Accept repetitive tasks

Analytical thinking

THE POWER OF THE ND BRAIN

Neurodiversity – 5 of 6

Neurodiversity/ Autism at Work Programs

- Embrace Neurodiversity at Work and train employees on the meaning of concepts and terms such as neurodiversity, neurodivergent, and neurotypical.

- Create voluntary Neurodiversity in the Workplace programs that encourage and facilitate employment of autistic or neurodivergent applicants by providing proactive accommodations at each stage of the employment process.

- Readily provide accommodations for autistic employees consistent with guidance from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN).

Neurodiversity/ Autism at Work Programs

- Ensure your ADA and Section 503 Compliance Programs specifically incorporates and addresses the importance of neurodiversity.

- Ensure Section 503 Self-ID programs include neurodivergence and non-apparent disabilities.

- Create a Neurodiversity ERG and encourage participation of allies.

- Speak positively about neurodiversity and recognize how this concept can enhance inclusion and productivity.

Accessibility

Adding "A" to DEI Programs

Did you know?

- Only 5% of DEI Programs include disability as a focus

- Most companies do not have Chief Accessibility Officers

Accessibility – 1 of 3

President Biden's Executive Order 14035 commits the federal government to DEIA

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Accessibility ensures all employees and customers/clients can fully be part of your organization and what it has to offer

Accessibility – 2 of 3

Accessibility

- **Chief Accessibility Officer**
- **Disability ERG**
- **Self-Identification Program**
- **Accessible Website**
- **Centralized Accommodations Systems and Budgets**
- **Remote Work and Telework**
- **Caregiver Policies**
- **Universal Design; Consideration of disability when creating policies**

The term accessibility means the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them.

Accessibility includes the provision of accommodations and modifications to ensure equal access to employment and participation in activities for people with disabilities, the reduction or elimination of physical and attitudinal barriers to equitable opportunities, a commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities can independently access every outward-facing and internal activity or electronic space, and the pursuit of best practices such as universal design.

How can an organization effectively prioritize Accessibility?

What are ways to may an organization or public place more accessible for neurodivergent individuals?

Relevant Laws:

Americans with Disabilities Act

Rehabilitation Act

Fair Housing Act

IDEA

Resources

- **Disability:IN**
- Disability:IN Roundtable
- Disability:IN DC Metro

- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**
- JAN Autism Spectrum

- **Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)**
- EARN Neurodiversity in the Workplace

- **The Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT)**

- **ADA/Section 503 Compliance Resources**
- **Office of Federal Compliance Programs (OFCCP)**

- **Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP**)

- **Research Support Services for Employment of Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum**

- **Mid-Atlantic ADA Center**

- **University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (UM-NSU CARD)**

Thank you for joining!

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