

# Happy Autism Acceptance Month!

## NEURODIVERSITY

**faq**

ANSWERED BY A  
NEURODIVERGENT LIBRARIAN!

### What is neurodiversity?

"Neurodiversity" (ND for short) is the word we use to describe the differences in our brains & behavior. Neurodivergence includes a variety of different conditions such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, anxiety, PTSD, bipolar, and more.

### Isn't it Autism Month?

Yes, and World Autism Day is April 2nd! But many folks in the ND community celebrate all types of neurodivergence this month, including autism.

### What's "stimming"?

Stimming is movement, vocalizations, and behaviors that allow us to soothe ourselves when we're overstimulated. This includes actions like rocking back & forth, twirling hair, or making noises. We do this when we're uncomfortable but might also do it when we're happy and content. Stimming is perfectly natural. Even neurotypicals stim.

### What's so controversial about functioning labels?

Functioning labels can be very harmful to the autistic community. Calling someone "high functioning" might seem like a compliment, but it diminishes that autistic person's struggles and the effort involved for them to "mask" their disability from you.

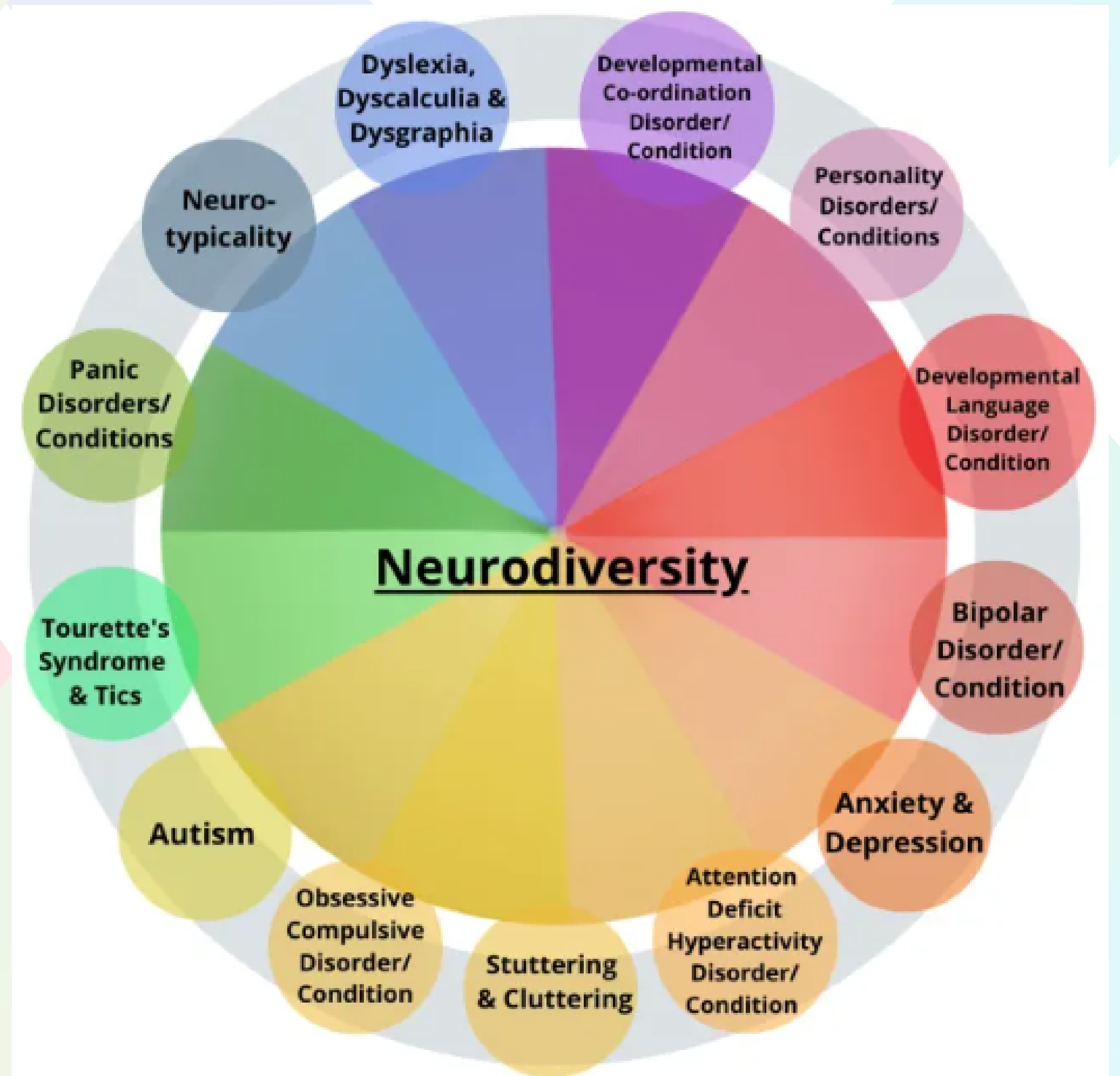
Similarly, calling someone "low functioning" implies they are not capable when in fact everyone has different strengths.

To many autistic people, functioning labels just indicate how uncomfortable non-autistics are around us.

### What's the difference between awareness & acceptance?

"Awareness" campaigns have a tendency to leave neurodivergent individuals out of the conversation, with the focus on how to "heal," "cure," or "fix" us. But NDs aren't broken; we're just wired differently.

Acceptance aims for neuroinclusion and follows the motto "nothing about us without us." It centers the ND person as an expert and honors our lived experience.



**nhfpl**

NEW HAVEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY





# Happy Autism Acceptance Month!

## NEURODIVERSITY

**faq**

ANSWERED BY A  
NEURODIVERGENT LIBRARIAN!

### Do processing delays mean you're less intelligent?

Not at all! Neurodivergent folks are tuned into many things neurotypicals don't notice or pay attention to. For example, a 2014 study showed that autistics generate 42% more information at rest than non-autistic people. With all that stimuli, it makes sense why we might take longer to process.

### What's the difference between "person first" & "identity first" language?

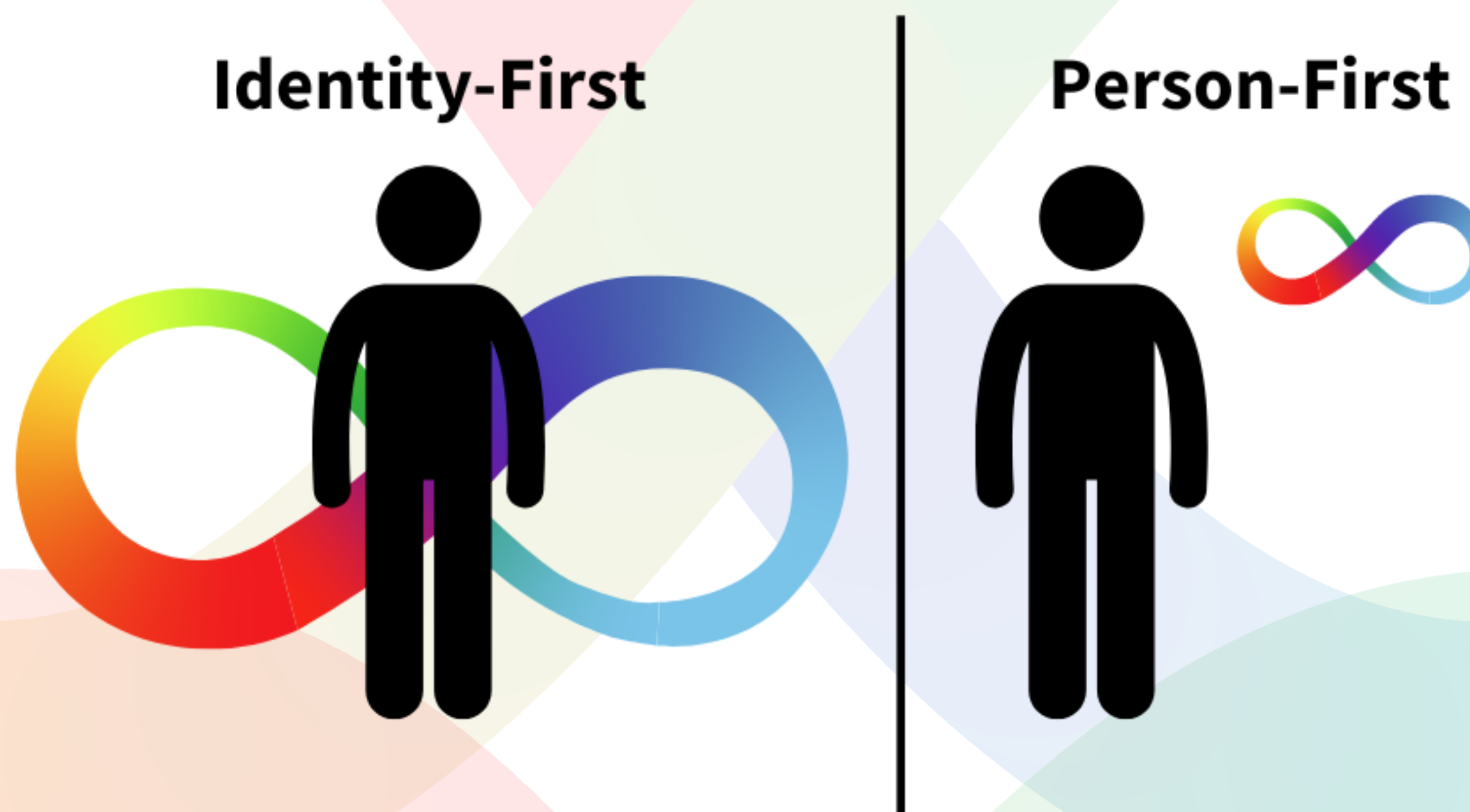
This refers to how we're addressed. Person first language puts the person first & implies that the person carries their neurodiversity but can exist without it.

("Person with autism."/"She has autism.")

Identity first language embraces neurodiversity as central to the person's identity.

("Autistic person"/"She is autistic.")

While most NDs like identity first language, some don't. The best way to find out is to ask!



### Autism is on the rise. Should we be worried?

No. The increase in autism diagnoses indicates a rise in health equity, autism education, and more thorough research. In the past, research was based on cisgender white males. The fact that other genders and ethnicities are being noticed is a good thing!

### Why do so many neurodivergent people have sensory issues?

Much like the processing delays, we are more tuned into sights, sounds, and touch. That means something you might not even notice can be incredibly annoying or even painful for a neurodivergent person.

