

“Autism at Work”

**For ACFO-ACAF
March 12, 2025**



We will cover:

1. What autism is.
2. Why autism is important to understand.
3. How to access an autism diagnosis as an adult.
4. Autism intersecting with other aspects of diversity and how these intersections impact the workplace.
5. Accommodations and adaptations to remove barriers in the workplace.



You will be able to:

1. Describe autism and the importance of autistic inclusion in the workplace.
2. Express how autism intersects with other aspects of identity to synthesize with other areas of workplace diversity.
3. Describe pathways for autistic adult diagnosis.
4. Navigate workplace accommodations to enhance autistic performance.
5. Advocate for practices that empower autistic talent.



What is Autism?



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- Autism is a form of neurodivergence
- Presents mainly in the form of differences in behaviour, communication and interests
- Can be diagnosed at anytime and often co-occurs with others forms of neurodivergence ie Autism and ADHD
- There is a vast spectrum of characteristics and traits across the autism spectrum

Why is it important to understand? (cont)



BROADER THINKING NEEDED TO SUPPORT
NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

March 14, 2024 | Emily Sinkins

- 1-2% of the population is autistic and rates are increasing
- Exists across all races, ethnicities, genders, etc...
- Right to live without discrimination of any kind, fear or stigma
- Right to be employed

“We cannot look to the same brains to provide solutions to the same problems we have always had.”

How do you access a diagnosis as an adult?



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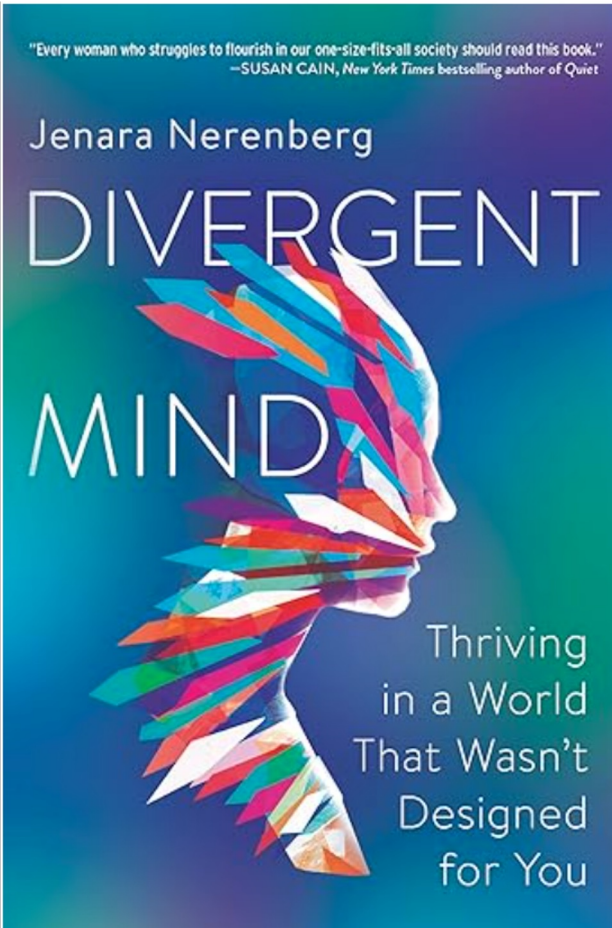


Articles and Courses ASD/ID Core Knowledge

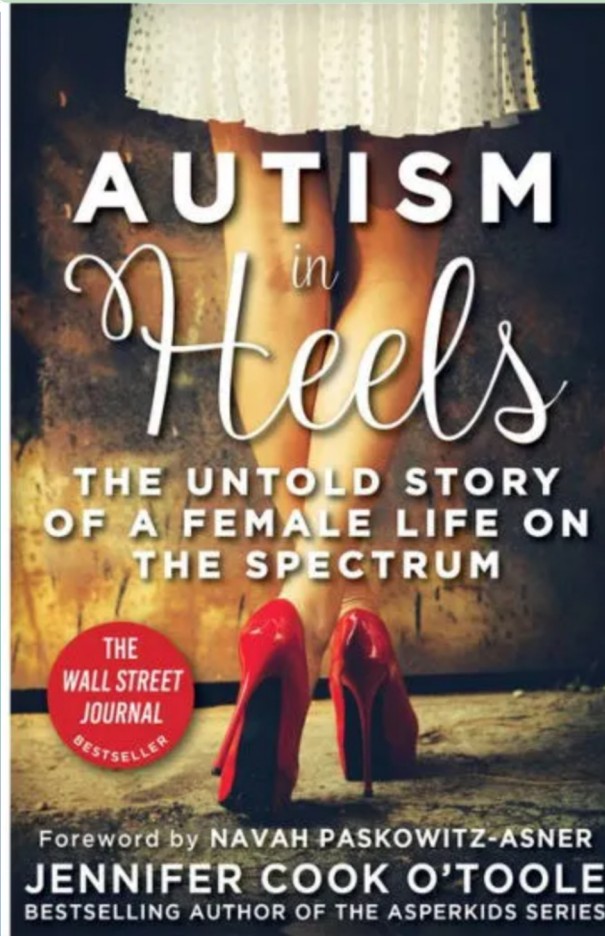
Being tested for autism as an adult: What should I do while I wait for a formal diagnosis?

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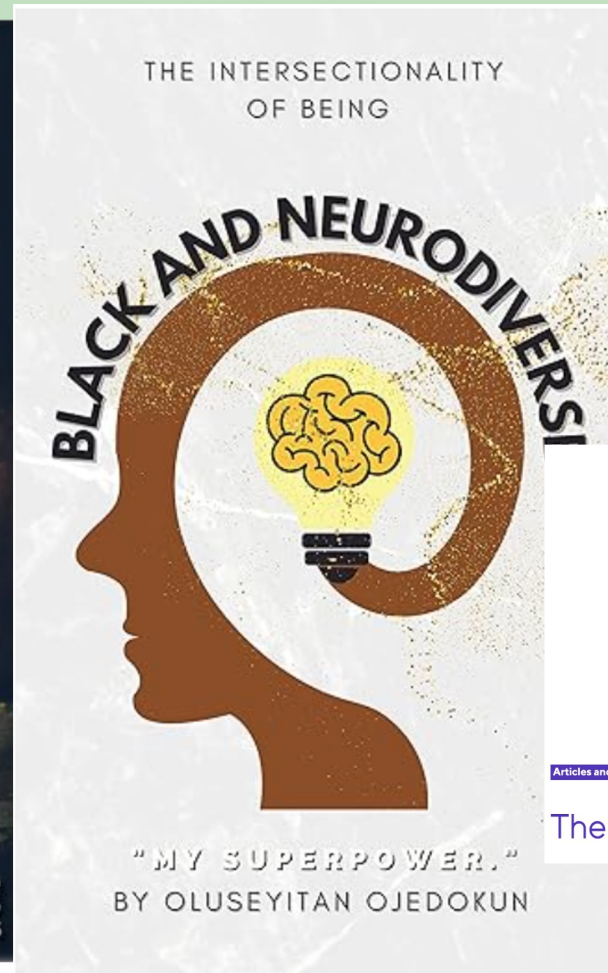
How has autism been researched and portrayed? And how is that changing?



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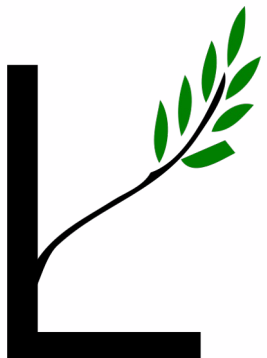
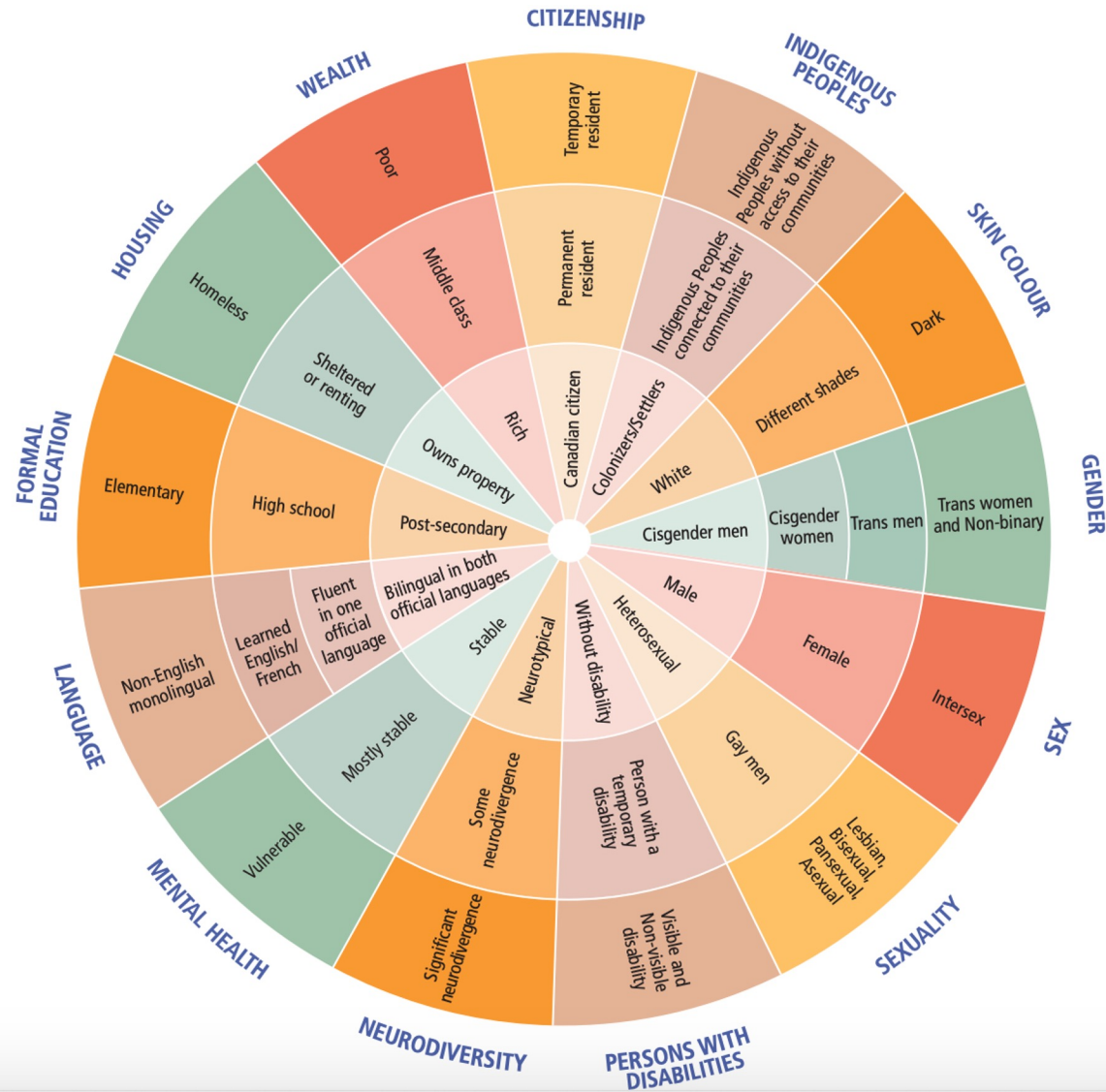
Articles and Courses | ASD/ID Core Knowledge

The Gift of Being Different

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WHEEL OF PRIVILEGE AND POWER

(the closer you are to the centre, the more privilege you have)



[Attribution](#)

How do these intersections impact the workplace?

RESPECT
at work

RESEARCH REPORT

Ableism in Canadian Workplaces

MAY 2023

Western  Centre for Research & Education on
Violence Against Women & Children

[Attribution](#)

The Conference
Board of Canada

In partnership with
 Future Skills
Centre

Breaking Down Barriers

Improving the Workplace Experience for
Neurodivergent Canadians



Impact Paper | March 16, 2023

[Attribution](#)

Problem. Solution.

We're not the problem. Autistics, neurodivergent individuals, persons with disabilities, we're not a problem. The problem is exclusion, the problem is barriers. Let's take down those barriers and I can guarantee that it's not just good for us, it's good for everyone.

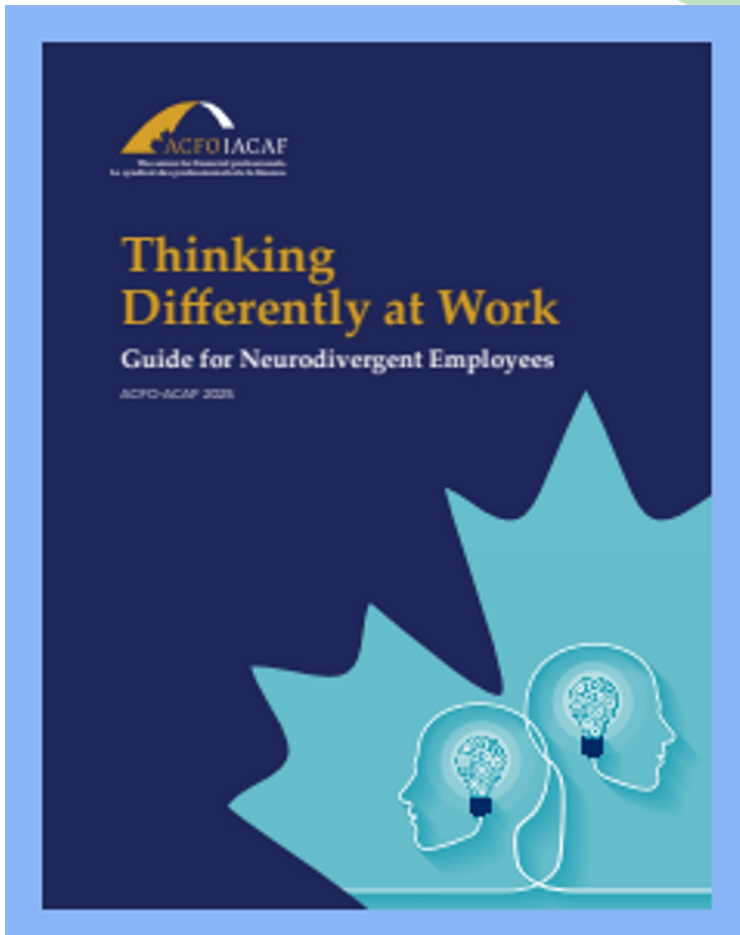
Wanda Deschamps
Founder & Principal, Liberty Co



Navigating workplace accommodations

What do you need?

Are you getting what you need?



5. Autism Accommodations and Adaptations

By Autism Canada

As workplaces evolve to become more inclusive and accessible, it is essential to implement accommodations tailored to the unique needs of neurodivergent employees, including those on the Autism Spectrum. These adaptations empower employees to succeed, contribute their strengths, and thrive in their professional roles. This summary highlights strategies and accommodations to support Autistic employees, while adhering to the principles of the Barrier-Free Canada Accessibility Act.

How can you advocate for yourself at work?



Amidst skill shortages across many industries, employers face a demographic shift with an increased number of neurodiverse candidates entering the workforce. The author explores how organizations can build a “neuro-equal” workplace to support the drive and innovation of employees with cognitive differences.

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Working Toward Neuro diversity Inclusion

by | Wanda Deschamps

An illustration of ten diverse human silhouettes, each with a unique brain icon representing different cognitive functions. The icons include gears, a lightbulb, a network of nodes, a lightbulb, a lightbulb, a lightbulb, a lightbulb, a lightbulb, a lightbulb, and a lightbulb. The silhouettes are arranged in two rows of five, with the top row in profile and the bottom row facing forward. The background is a solid blue color.

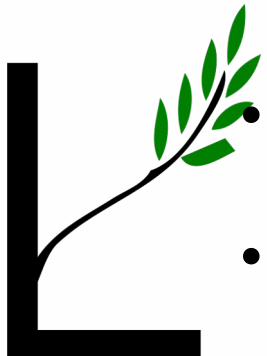
14 plans & trusts september/october 2023

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Everyone can be an ally.....

Instead of ...

- Letting awkward moments linger due to a colleague's communication style
- Seeing someone as interruptive, loud, or inconsiderate when they speak
- Seeing someone who points out errors or challenges as a problem
- Thinking of someone as overly frank, director or forthright, or vague or unclear



Try ...

- Offering multiple choice questions to help the person clarify their reasoning
- Suspending judgements to focus on strong areas of their contribution.
- Asking someone on the team to offer to connect the person's ideas to the team's goals and objectives.
- Focusing on content for decision-making and opportunity to come to consensus

How do you get to a month before your 47th birthday without knowing you are autistic?

MARCH 2024

Mid-life crisis

For Wanda Deschamps, being diagnosed with autism at 46 changed her understanding of herself and shifted her career...

MAR 21 • LEIGH FELESKY



**Now it's your turn
Questions? Comments?**



New heights for Neurodiversity