

MODULE 1

Foundations of Neurodiversity

Knowledge Check + Answer Key

Understanding Neurodiversity · An Educational Initiative of God's Diamonds

Version v1-1.0.0

© 2026 God's Diamonds. All rights reserved. Free to share with attribution.

INSTRUCTIONS

This knowledge check is a tool for your personal learning and reflection. Its purpose is to help you solidify your understanding of the foundational concepts of neurodiversity presented in Module 1. There is no grade, and your answers are for your assessment only.

Please read each question carefully and select or write the answer that you believe is most accurate based on the module content. Attempt to answer all questions before consulting the answer key. This will provide you with the clearest insight into areas you understand well and topics you may wish to review. After completing the questions, use the accompanying key to check your work and read the rationales, which are designed to reinforce the module's key takeaways.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following statements provides the most accurate and complete definition of neurodiversity?
 - A. Neurodiversity is a medical term for a category of neurological disorders that includes autism, ADHD, and dyslexia.
 - B. Neurodiversity refers to the natural and valuable variation in human brain function, cognition, and processing.
 - C. Neurodiversity is a synonym for neurodivergence, describing any individual whose brain functions differently from the majority.
 - D. Neurodiversity is a social movement advocating for special accommodations for people with learning disabilities.
2. A company memo states, "Our workforce has a wide range of cognitive profiles and experiences, which is a source of strength. We are committed to supporting our employees who are autistic, dyslexic, or have ADHD." The first part of this statement refers to ____, while the second part describes specific employees who are ____.
 - A. neurotypicality; neurodiverse
 - B. neurodivergence; neurotypical
 - C. neurodiversity; neurodivergent
 - D. neurology; neuro-accommodated
3. The strengths-and-supports model encourages us to view an individual's cognitive profile by:
 - A. Focusing exclusively on their unique talents, or "superpowers," while ignoring any associated challenges.
 - B. Identifying their cognitive weaknesses and implementing interventions to correct or remediate them to fit a norm.
 - C. Acknowledging that areas of significant strength often coexist with areas that require support, and focusing on creating a better environment.
 - D. Prioritizing a formal diagnosis as the necessary first step before any strengths can be recognized or supports can be offered.

4. An employee with ADHD-related executive function challenges consistently struggles to start large, unstructured projects. From a neurodiversity-affirming perspective, this difficulty is best understood as:

- A. A personal failing of discipline or motivation that the employee needs to overcome on their own.
- B. A fundamental mismatch between the employee's cognitive style and a work process that lacks structure and clear starting points.
- C. A permanent and unchangeable symptom of their condition that will always inhibit their performance on large projects.
- D. A reason to assign the employee exclusively to small, simple tasks that do not require project management skills.

5. What is the primary distinction between a workplace culture of belonging and one that merely provides accommodations?

- A. Accommodation is about fulfilling legal duties required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), while belonging is not legally mandated.
- B. Belonging is a proactive, cultural commitment to designing systems and environments where all employees can thrive, whereas accommodation is often a reactive, individualized process.
- C. Accommodations are expensive and difficult to implement, while creating belonging is a simpler matter of attitude.
- D. Belonging applies only to neurodivergent employees, while accommodations are available to all employees who ask for them.

6. When referring to an autistic colleague, what is the recommended practice regarding the use of identity-first language ("autistic person") versus person-first language ("person with autism")?

- A. Always use person-first language, as it is universally considered more respectful by disability communities.
- B. Always use identity-first language, as autism is a core part of a person's identity, not an accessory.
- C. Avoid using any labels or diagnostic terms in the workplace to prevent potential stigma or discrimination.
- D. Respectfully ask the individual what language they prefer, as there is no single rule that applies to everyone.

7. Neuroinclusive practices, such as providing meeting agendas in advance, offering flexible seating options, and allowing the use of noise-canceling headphones, are most beneficial to:

- A. Only those employees who have an official diagnosis of a neurodevelopmental condition.
- B. Only managers, who can better predict the productivity of their team members.
- C. All employees, as these practices support a wide range of sensory needs, processing styles, and attentional differences present in the general population.
- D. Only the organization's legal and HR departments, by demonstrating compliance with employment law.

8. In line with principles from organizational research, a key goal of a neurodiversity initiative in

the workplace should be to:

- A. Create a separate and specialized career track exclusively for neurodivergent employees.
- B. Focus hiring efforts on neurodivergent candidates for technical roles where their "superpowers" can be best utilized.
- C. Adjust core business processes, management practices, and the physical environment to better support and leverage a wider range of human minds.
- D. Train neurodivergent employees to mask their traits more effectively to improve their integration into the existing corporate culture.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. In one clear and concise sentence, define the concept of neurodiversity.
2. A manager observes that a team member is exceptionally detail-oriented and finds critical errors in data that others miss, but they are often quiet in fast-paced brainstorming meetings and rarely contribute ideas verbally. Using the strengths-and-supports model, reframe this observation away from a deficit-focused view (e.g., "is not a team player") and propose one support that might help them contribute more fully.
3. List three specific, low-cost environmental or procedural shifts that could make a standard weekly team meeting more inclusive for a variety of cognitive and processing styles, without requiring anyone to disclose a diagnosis.
4. Explain the difference in meaning between saying, "We have a neurodiverse team," and saying, "We have a team with several neurodivergent members." Why is this distinction important?

ANSWER KEY

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. B. Neurodiversity refers to the natural and valuable variation in human brain function, cognition, and processing.
Rationale: This definition correctly frames neurodiversity as a form of human variation that is a normal and natural feature of our species, which is the central premise of the neurodiversity paradigm. The other options incorrectly define it as a medical category, a synonym for neurodivergence, or solely a social movement.
2. C. neurodiversity; neurodivergent
Rationale: Neurodiversity describes the variation within a group (the entire workforce). Neurodivergent is an adjective that describes an individual whose neurology differs from the statistical norm (the autistic, dyslexic, and ADHD employees).
3. C. Acknowledging that areas of significant strength often coexist with areas that require support, and focusing on creating a better environment.
Rationale: The strengths-and-supports model is a balanced approach. It avoids both toxic

positivity (ignoring challenges) and deficit framing (ignoring strengths), instead focusing on the whole person and the critical role the environment plays in their success.

4. B. A fundamental mismatch between the employee's cognitive style and a work process that lacks structure and clear starting points.

Rationale: This answer correctly identifies the issue as an interaction between the person and their environment or process. This perspective opens the door to supportive solutions like providing checklists or breaking down the project, rather than blaming the individual.

5. B. Belonging is a proactive, cultural commitment to designing systems and environments where all employees can thrive, whereas accommodation is often a reactive, individualized process.

Rationale: Belonging is about culture and proactive design for all, aiming for psychological safety and participation. Accommodation, while crucial, is often a reactive legal or procedural step for an individual, representing the floor, not the ceiling, of inclusion.

6. D. Respectfully ask the individual what language they prefer, as there is no single rule that applies to everyone.

Rationale: While many autistic self-advocates prefer identity-first language, the most respectful, trauma-informed, and person-centered approach is always to defer to individual preference rather than imposing a universal rule.

7. C. All employees, as these practices support a wide range of sensory needs, processing styles, and attentional differences present in the general population.

Rationale: This reflects the principle of Universal Design. Practices that support neurodivergent individuals often benefit everyone by making the environment more predictable, less overwhelming, and more flexible, which aids focus and reduces cognitive load for all brains.

8. C. Adjust core business processes, management practices, and the physical environment to better support and leverage a wider range of human minds.

Rationale: Effective neuroinclusion, as supported by research published by sources like Harvard Business Review, involves fundamentally rethinking how work gets done to create an environment where diverse talents can flourish. Segregation or masking are antithetical to this goal.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Model Answer: Neurodiversity is the concept that all human brains vary in their function and that this neurological variation across the human population is both natural and valuable.

Rationale: A strong answer must capture two key ideas: that brain variation is a normal part of human diversity and that this diversity is not inherently pathological or deficient.

2. Model Answer:

Reframing: Instead of seeing a deficit in team participation, this situation highlights a strength in focused, analytical work and a need for support in contexts requiring rapid, verbal processing. The employee's value is in their precision and accuracy, and their quietness in meetings is likely

due to a processing style mismatch, not a lack of ideas or collaborative spirit.

Support: The manager could provide brainstorming topics ahead of the meeting or create a channel (like a shared document or chat) where the employee can contribute their well-thought-out ideas in writing before, during, or after the verbal discussion.

Rationale: A successful answer reframes the challenge as an environmental mismatch, explicitly names the employee's strengths, and proposes a concrete support that alters the environment or process rather than demanding the person change their cognitive style.

3. Model Answer:

1. Distribute a clear agenda with key topics and questions at least 24 hours in advance to allow for pre-processing.

2. Establish a norm of using a "speaker's queue" (e.g., raising a hand or using a virtual feature) to prevent interruptions and ensure everyone who wants to speak gets a turn.

3. Provide a written summary of key decisions and action items after the meeting for those who benefit from written reinforcement or were focused on listening rather than note-taking.

Rationale: Strong answers will propose specific, practical, and low-cost changes to meeting structure or procedure. These examples address common challenges related to executive function (preparation), processing speed (speaker's queue), and working memory (written summary) that benefit many people.

4. Model Answer: "A neurodiverse team" means the team is composed of people with a variety of neurological profiles, including neurotypical and neurodivergent members. This term describes the diversity of the group as a whole. "A team with several neurodivergent members" specifically points out the presence of individuals whose brains differ from the statistical majority.

Importance: This distinction, clarified by scholars like Nick Walker, is crucial for precision and respect. All teams of more than one person are technically neurodiverse because no two brains are identical. Using "neurodivergent" correctly describes individuals, whereas "neurodiverse" describes the make-up of a group. Misusing "neurodiverse" as a synonym for "neurodivergent" can be confusing and obscure the fact that neurotypicality is also part of neurodiversity.

REFERENCES

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed., text rev.). American Psychiatric Association Publishing.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). Autism spectrum disorder data and statistics. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Doyle, N. (2020). Neurodiversity at work: A biopsychosocial model and the impact on working adults. *British Medical Bulletin*, 135(1), 108-125.

Singer, J. (1999). Why can't you be normal for once in your life? In M. Corker & S. French (Eds.), *Disability discourse*. Open University Press.

Walker, N. (2021). *Neuroqueer heresies: Notes on the neurodiversity paradigm, autistic empowerment, and postnormal possibilities*. Autonomous Press.