



National  
**Suicide Prevention**  
Alliance

# Neurodiversity in Suicide Prevention

**A lived experience introduction**

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- Freelance writer and copywriter.
- Neurodivergent (Dyspraxia & ADHD).
- Twice bereaved by suicide.
- Co-author: 'Finding the Words.' Online & Print

<https://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/resource/finding-the-words/>



# Neurodiversity

The idea that people are different from each other in how they think, learn and process information.

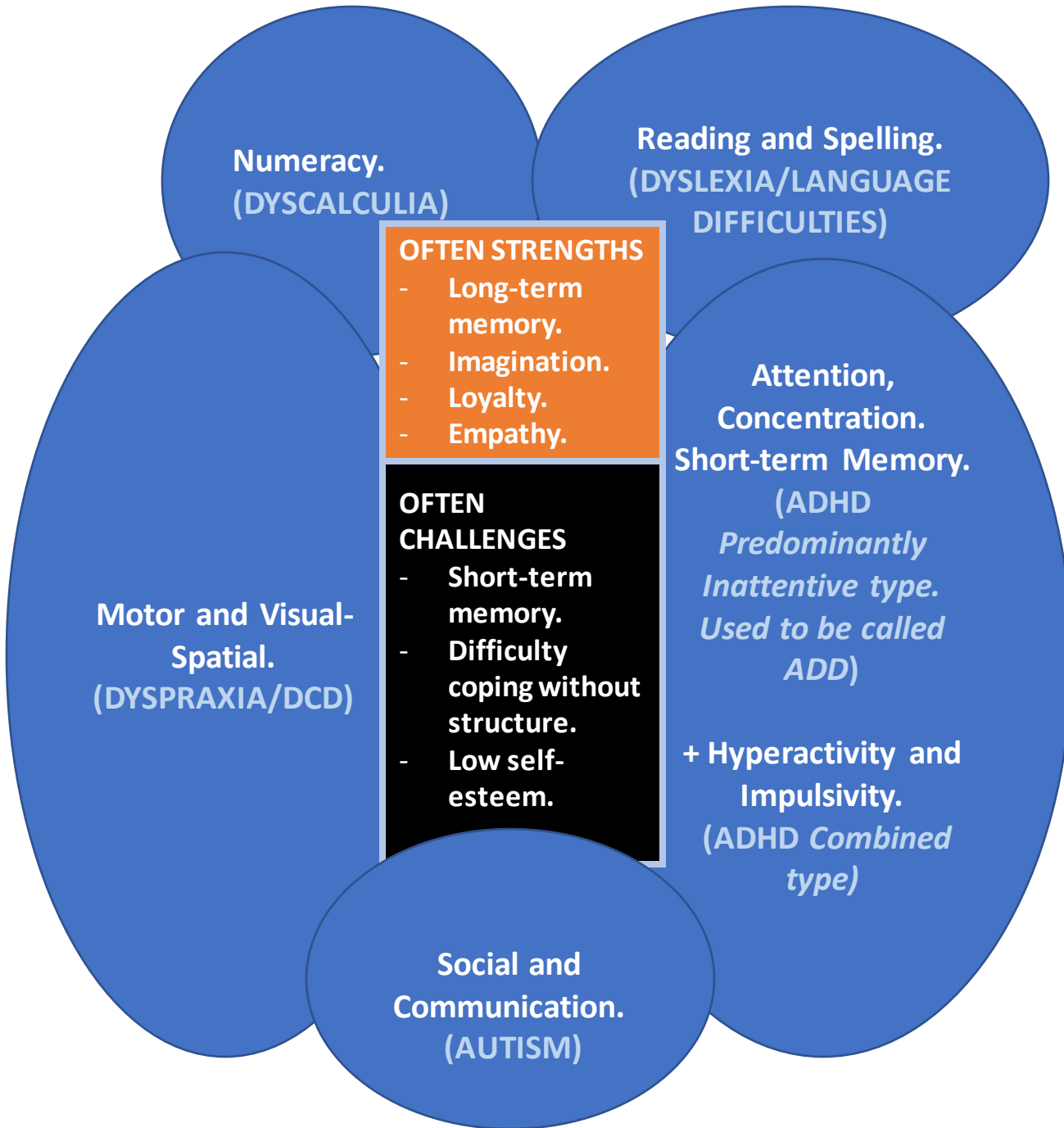
**Judy Singer.**

**Australian Sociologist.**

# Neurodivergent

Someone who thinks, learns and processes information differently to most people, leading to a pattern of both profound strengths and profound challenges.

# Types of Neurodivergence



- Older adults (25+) are less likely to have been recognised in childhood. Adult diagnosis is often hard to obtain & not matched by support.
- Neurodivergence is under-recognised in women and minority groups.
- Most neurodivergent people have more than one type, but only one diagnosis. More needs = less support!

# Unsupported Neurodivergence Can Lead To:

- **Difficulty in work or education** Uneven ability = unfulfilled potential.
- **Anxiety and depression.** Often clinically moderate, but chronic.
- **Increased risk of addiction or being around addicts,** especially ADHD.



- Increased likelihood of suicidal feelings or being around others with suicidal feelings.
- Intensified grief. Due to negative life experience & intensified feelings.

# What we need from suicide prevention

**Visibility** Understanding of how neurodivergence can impact both mental health and grief.

## Challenges to myths, stigma and stereotypes

- Neurodivergence is seen as a trauma response & not a reason.
- Self-diagnosis or private diagnosis are often the only option, but often dismissed.

## More data & more joined-up thinking

- The diagnosis or support you get depends too much on who you see, rather than the needs you have.
- Data is sparse & mostly for single conditions, leading to support gaps, especially for multiply neurodivergent people.

# Supporting Neurodivergent people with Lived Experience

- **Actively recruit us** and ask and listen to what we need.
- **Support hybrid and flexible working for all.**
- **Be sensitive in group work.** Avoid putting people on the spot, emphasise only sharing what & when feels comfortable.
- **Support people with short-term memory difficulties,** by minimising paperwork and re-enforcing important information.
- **Remember Neurodivergence isn't just autism.** It's also ADHD, dyspraxia and dyslexia.