

A zine offering insights on the gendered differences in autism and ADHD.

GENDERING NEURODIVERSITY

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Women's Health Zine I

With thanks to the WI's
Thinking Differently
Advisory Group for their
contributions to this zine.



This zine was designed as part of the WI's Thinking Differently campaign which seeks to support autistic and ADHD women and girls. To find out more and access our resources, scan the QR code below or visit the WI website.

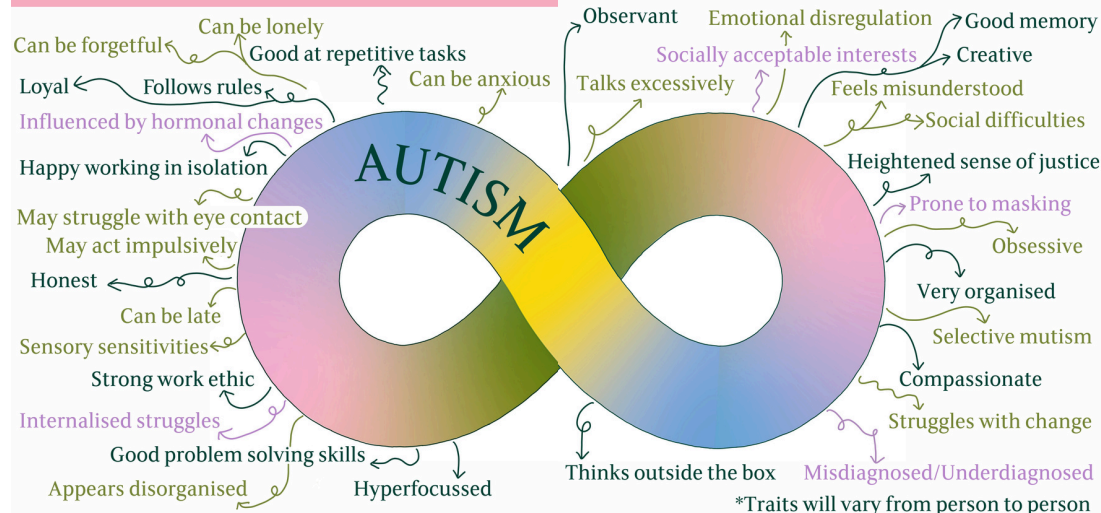
PROUD TO BE NEURODIVERGENT
theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN
PROUD TO BE SUPPORTED BY

TRAITS IN NEURODIVERGENT

Autistic and ADHD traits can manifest differently in women and men, influenced by a combination of biological, social, and cultural factors. This can lead to unique presentations that are frequently overlooked by traditional diagnostic criteria.

WOMEN AND GIRLS*

Strengths Challenges
Traits specific to women and girls



*Traits will vary from person to person

DENTISTS & ORAL HEALTH
Neurodivergent people can face challenges when it comes to dental hygiene and healthcare, such as sensory overwhelm, miscommunication, and a lack of understanding from professionals unprepared to meet their needs. To hear how our neurodivergent members navigate their oral health, visit the WI blog <https://www.thewi.org.uk/media-centre/blog>

1. Ask patients how they would like to communicate, and make adjustments for differing communication styles.
2. Consider neurodivergence as a possible diagnosis even if symptoms don't match textbook male-based presentations.
3. Be aware of sensory needs e.g. lighting, smells, waiting areas for neurodivergent patients and staff.
4. Be honest about wait times and processes in your local area and give additional information to allow women to explore all of their options.
5. Speak to neurodivergent patients and listen to their feedback on creating an inclusive service.

I WORK IN HEALTHCARE: WHAT CAN I DO?

SUPPORTING NEURODIVERGENT WOMEN & GIRLS:

EDUCATION

Autistic traits in girls are under-reported by teachers. Supporting neurodivergent girls in education is crucial, as they are often underdiagnosed, misunderstood, and overlooked in comparison to boys.



MASKING

Neurodivergent girls are more likely to "mask" than boys, which means camouflaging their difficulties by mimicking neurotypical behaviors. This masking can lead to exhaustion, anxiety, and a lack of appropriate support if left undiagnosed.

School environments can be overwhelming for neurodivergent girls due to sensory sensitivities to noise, lighting, crowded spaces, and social interactions.



MENOPAUSE
Autistic and ADHD women often experience more intense or unique menopausal symptoms due to differences in sensory processing, emotional regulation, and hormone sensitivity. This period can lead to neurodivergent women seeking a diagnosis after decades of assuming that they are neurotypical.

Neurodivergent women and girls are frequently misunderstood, misdiagnosed, or dismissed in healthcare settings due to gendered stereotypes, masking, and limited awareness among professionals. Conditions like autism and ADHD can be mistaken for mental health conditions including anxiety and depression, a tendency particularly common in women and girls. This misdiagnosis can lead to incorrect treatments and a lack of necessary support for neurodivergent women and girls.

HEALTHCARE

SUPPORTING NEURODIVERGENT WOMEN & GIRLS:

BULLYING

According to the National Autistic Society and ADDitude, autistic and ADHD children are significantly more likely to be bullied than their neurotypical peers. Bullying can be particularly hurtful for neurodivergent young people, with long-lasting impacts.

I WORK IN EDUCATION: WHAT CAN I DO?

1. Champion and support positive neurodivergent identities, removing stigmas from the classroom.
2. Cater to varied learning methods, challenging myths that all children learn in the same way.
3. Create sensory-friendly spaces on site. Consider lighting, sound, clutter, and distractions.
4. Share resources (including this zine) within the school community to improve understanding.
5. Tell us what training you have received to support neurodivergent girls. Scan the QR code or visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TLH9JH5>

SIGN HERE!!

