

To celebrate Diversity Week 2022, our assembly this year is focusing on:

# Neurodiversity

By Nirmani, Chaitanya and Zahra

**Chaitanya and Zahra in 10M run a lunchtime club focusing on different aspects of neuro diversity and also teach BSL (British Sign Language) so they'd like to take this opportunity to tell you more about neurodiversity**

**We have so much we'd like to share with you about neurodiversity that our recorded assembly was far too long to share with you! But we'd really like everyone to be more aware of neurodiversity, so we'd really like you to take this opportunity to work through these slides on your own. Please do let us know if you have any questions.**

# What is neurodiversity?

- Describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways, and their different traits
- The word neurodiversity refers to the diversity of all people
- Often used in the context of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as other neurological or developmental conditions

# Terminology

## *Neurodivergent:*

*A person whose Neurotype is divergent of the majority of society (ADHD, tourettes, OCD..)*

## *Neurotypical:*

*A person whose neurotype is typical of the majority of society*

*Allistic:*

*A person that is not Autistic*

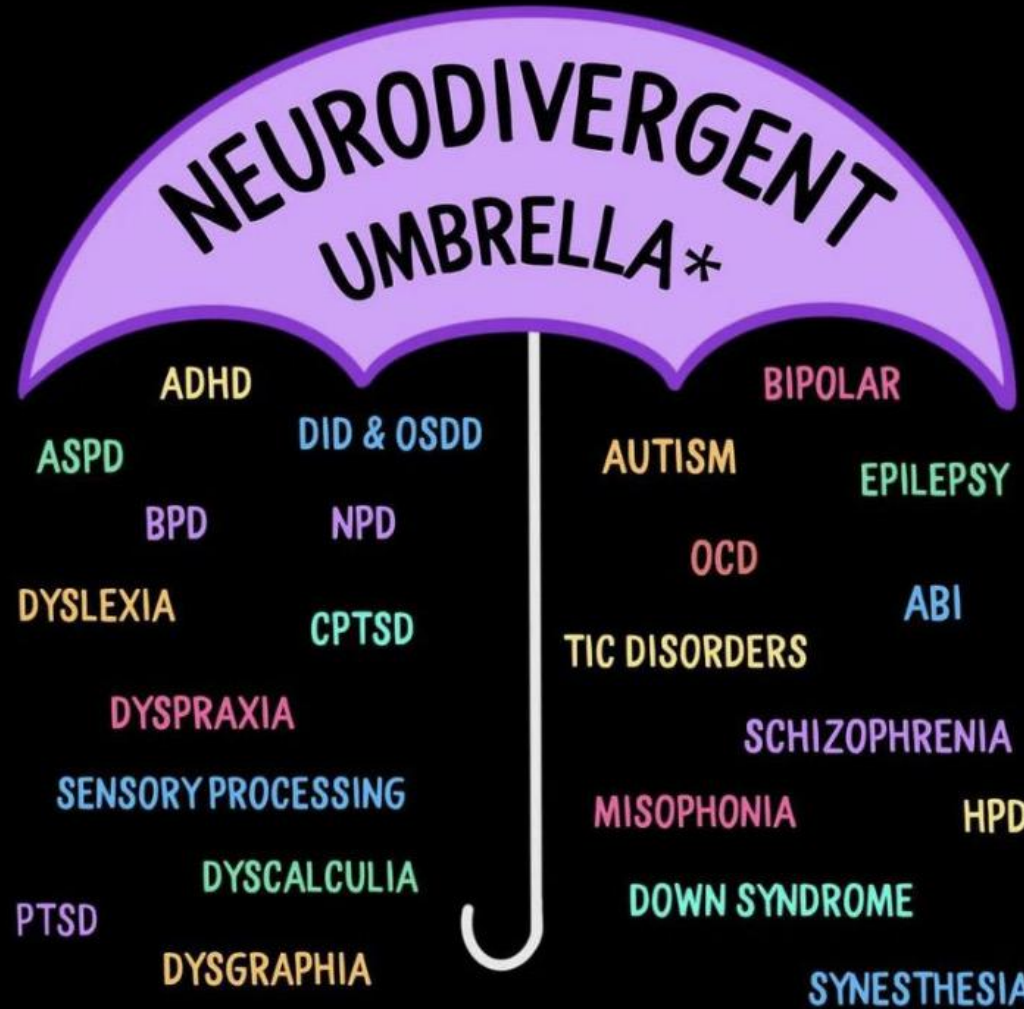
*Ableism:*

*Ableism is the discrimination and social prejudice against disabled people. Ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require 'fixing' and seen as 'inferior'.*

# Here are some types of neurodiversity

# The neurodiversity paradigm

slidesmania.com



\*NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST

[www.livedexperienceeducator.com](http://www.livedexperienceeducator.com)

@livedexperienceeducator



# Autism

## Autism is ...

- **A lifelong developmental condition** which affects the way people experience the world around them.
- Often associated with sensory issues or mental health conditions, like anxiety.
- **A spectrum condition**, which affects roughly 1 in 100 people.

## Autism is not ...

- **What you see in the film Rain Man**—roughly 1/10 of all autistic people have savant abilities.
- A disease or illness, or something that needs to be cured.
- **The same for everyone.** Every person with autism will experience it differently.

# ADHD

## ADHD is ...

- An abbreviation for **attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder**.
- A common disorder that can impact focus, impulse control and emotional responses.
- Often diagnosed in childhood but sometimes not until the teen years or later.

## ADHD is not ...

- **All about hyperactivity.** People with the inattentive type of ADHD may appear “daydreamy” or in their own world.
- **A problem of laziness.** ADHD is caused by differences in brain anatomy and wiring.

# Dyslexia

## Dyslexia is ...

- **A brain-based issue** that makes it hard to learn to read accurately and fluently.
- **A lifelong condition.** Adults don't outgrow dyslexia, but with the right support, key skills can improve.
- **A common learning issue.** Many successful people have it .

## Dyslexia is not ...

- **A problem of intelligence.** Adults with dyslexia are just as smart as their peers.
- **A problem of laziness.** Adults with dyslexia are already trying hard. They may need support to achieve their potential.

# Dyspraxia

## Dyspraxia is....

- Also known as **Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)**.
- **A motor skills issue** that makes it hard to learn new skills and affects body movements. It can also affect speech and social skills.
- Often diagnosed in childhood but issues can continue in adulthood.

## Dyspraxia is not...

- **The same for everyone.** Some people struggle with fine motor skills (writing) whilst some struggle with gross motor skills (riding a bike).
- Associated with intelligence.

# Experiences with OCD

"It's not about being tidy, it's about having no control over your negative thoughts. It's about being afraid not doing things a certain way will cause harm."

"Getting ready involves so much hand washing and so many mental rituals. Sometimes, I feel like staying in bed and avoiding the day."

"The constant fear of me not being able to do anything 'right' "

"It impacts my mood, and my ability to do certain things, like pray because I'm trying so hard to fight the thoughts."

"It can be hard to talk to people about it, because it makes you feel bad about the person you are to be getting distressing thoughts."

# Experiences with Dyslexia

“The worst thing about being a kid with Dyslexia, is people questioning your effort levels”

“Despite having so much support, I felt so alone, so unsure and stupid”

“It’s the way my brain works, I won’t grow out of it”

“I’m constantly told that I can’t do certain things but I can, I can achieve my goals”

# Accessing help

- You can always talk to your Head of Year, the SEND team or any trusted members of staff
- Even if you are undiagnosed you can still ask for help or let any of the trusted members of staff know that you would like to learn more about it
- Doing a suitable assessment with a certified assessor can get you on the path to diagnosis. Though it can take a long time, it's worth it in the long run
- More people are getting diagnosed nowadays but anyone who does not fit the stereotypical patterns of autism (male, white, young, straight, cisgender etc.) find it a lot harder as the diagnostic criteria is mainly based off of this, reach out and fight for an answer
- Seeking an official diagnosis would allow you to access wider help
- We understand waiting times are frustrating and time-consuming and that a diagnosis isn't always possible but please don't give up because it is the best way for you to manage your strengths and weaknesses, and you can access support until then!

# Masking

Neurodivergent people may feel they need to perform certain neurotypical social behaviors or hide their neurodivergent behaviors to be accepted in society.

- Copying a person's tone of voice or body language
- Providing an “expected” answer to a question instead of what you actually feel
- Engaging in small talk and forcing or faking eye contact
- Suppressing meltdowns/shutdowns
- Forcing speech when struggling to talk and
- Mimicking gestures



# Unmasking

- Unmasking allows an individual to learn more about themselves, recognise their struggles and accommodate their needs
- Masking can convince someone that they are ok with certain things when in reality they really struggle every day

Some ways that can help you in the process of unmasking:

- ➔ **Acknowledging your needs**
- ➔ **Asking for accommodations that could help you**
- ➔ **Starting with small steps**
- ➔ **Not force things that make you uncomfortable eg. eye contact**
- ➔ **Continuing to do things you enjoy doing**

# Meltdowns

slidesmania.com

## Autistic meltdowns happen when...

- we are over or understimulated
- there is a disruption in routine or normalcy
- demands are put on us unexpectedly
- there is stress
- our emotions become overwhelming
- there is any level of confrontation

\*\* the trigger is not always identifiable

@myautisticsoul

## Autistic meltdowns can look like...



- pacing
- crying
- bolting
- self-injurious stimming
- yelling
- lashing out (anger/irritation)
- stomping
- hyperventilating
- withdrawal (internal meltdown)
- going nonverbal
- a plea to stop or leave
- zoning out
- inability to respond, move, or understand
- eyes shut
- confusion

@myautisticsoul

## Autistic meltdowns can feel like...



- panic
- fear
- too much
- not enough
- time has frozen
- the only thing you can focus on
- the worst possible thing in that moment
- losing control
- they're going to last forever
- fast heartrate, shallow breathing
- uneasy stillness
- and sometimes a completely internal experience

@muautisticsoul

## Things that DO help during a meltdown...

- leaving the offending environment
- finding a quiet place
- noise canceling headphones/earbuds
- music
- stim toys
- healthy stimming (with any of the senses)
- grounding skills
- distraction
- weighted blanket/vest/toy
- firm hug (or the opposite, no touching)
- fresh air
- words of reassurance from others
- sunglasses
- service dog tasking



@myautisticsoul

# Shutdowns

If meltdowns are equivalent to the fight response, then shutdowns are similar to the freeze response.

- **can last a long amount of time**
- **may not seem themselves during a shutdown**
- **their focus is directed to the basic functions**
- **it can be a lot harder to process what is going on therefore, they may struggle to communicate as they usually do or do other tasks**

# How to help in preventing them

- If a situation like a shutdown arises, **ASK** the person who is going through it in advance what you can do to help, if they are unsure how to help do research and offer them some suggestions
- The best remedy for a shutdown is giving the person the space to rest, recuperate and recover without placing additional demands on them. A shutdown can be like a reset for an autistic person.
- It may seem like a dismissible issue to you but to the person it can feel like there is no way out
- An open mind and patience can really help in the situation
- Use our trusted sources linked to find out more information

A question from BSL & awareness club:

## How can you help someone with undiagnosed autism?

Whether or not someone is diagnosed, you should treat them with the same respect. Reassuring them, asking how you can help and simply being there for them and helping them feel validated while they wait for a diagnosis can make a massive difference. This is the same for any hidden or visible disability, not just autism.

Being aware of some of the difficulties faced by Autistic people is key to understanding them.

Sometimes maintaining eye contact can be really hard but the autistic person is still taking interest in what you are saying.

“It may seem like I’m not listening if I don’t make eye contact but it actually allows me to focus more on what you are saying if I look away”

# How to help someone with undiagnosed autism

Familiarity is often really important to some people with autism. Change means a lot, and maintaining a routine can really help them.

“Sometimes I have meltdown or shutdowns over things that may seem small to you. It’s not in my control and it’s not something I want to happen. Maybe a change in plan isn’t your biggest fear but to me it is. It can mean my whole day goes from good to bad.”

“You may not understand but you can still be there to support people. Don’t say we are overreacting don’t tell us to get over it, just be there. If it’s difficult for you, imagine how hard it must be for the person going through it. Just being there can make a difference.”



# How to help someone with undiagnosed autism

‘Autism definitely comes with struggles. Every single day, it’s in everything I do and it does make things difficult sometimes, but there are positive aspects too. My autism means I care extra about everything and everyone around me, when I’m excited I’m EXCITED, when I’m passionate about something everyone’s going to know. It’s part of who I am and it’s not something anyone should feel they need to hide’

‘Realising you’ve masked your whole life makes you question everything, all you want to do is be yourself but you don’t even know who that is. So if someone’s acting ‘more autistic’ let them be. They are simply existing as they are. Words do hurt and masking is harmful. We should not need to wear a mask and hide who we are.’

# Things autistic people want allistic people to know

‘You are born autistic you cannot develop it later on in life’

‘Autism is not a mental illness’

‘Diagnosis are not easy to receive and can take years, you can support someone even if they are not professionally diagnosed, a well informed self diagnosis is likely to be correct’

‘Some people don’t think I look or act autistic because they don’t see everything, I have been mirroring people my whole life to fit in so they only see a masked version of me’

“I might hit developmental and societal milestones in a different order than my peers, but I am able to accomplish these small victories on my own time”

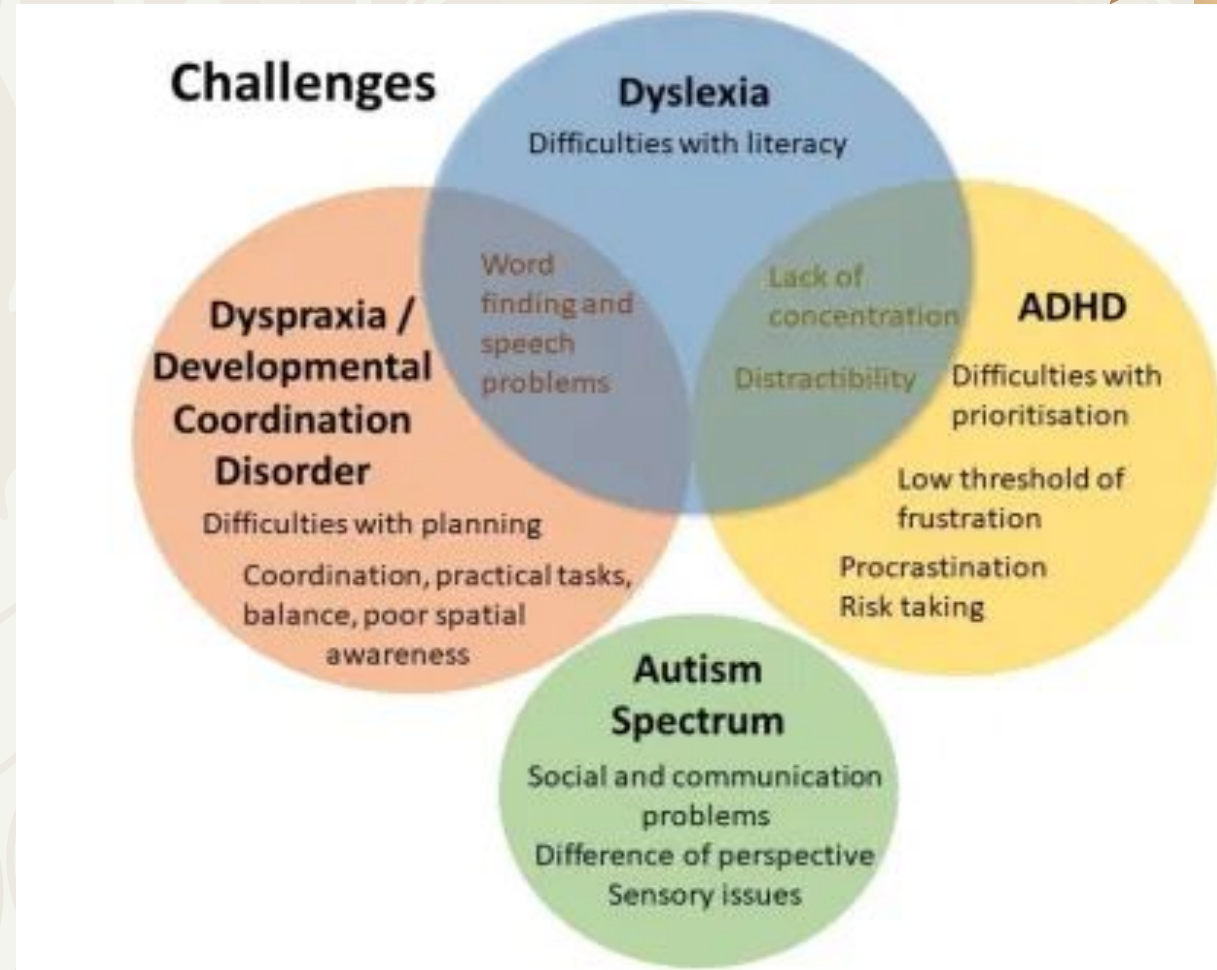
# Difficulties

-Neurodivergent people may struggle with things that neurotypical people find simple every single day

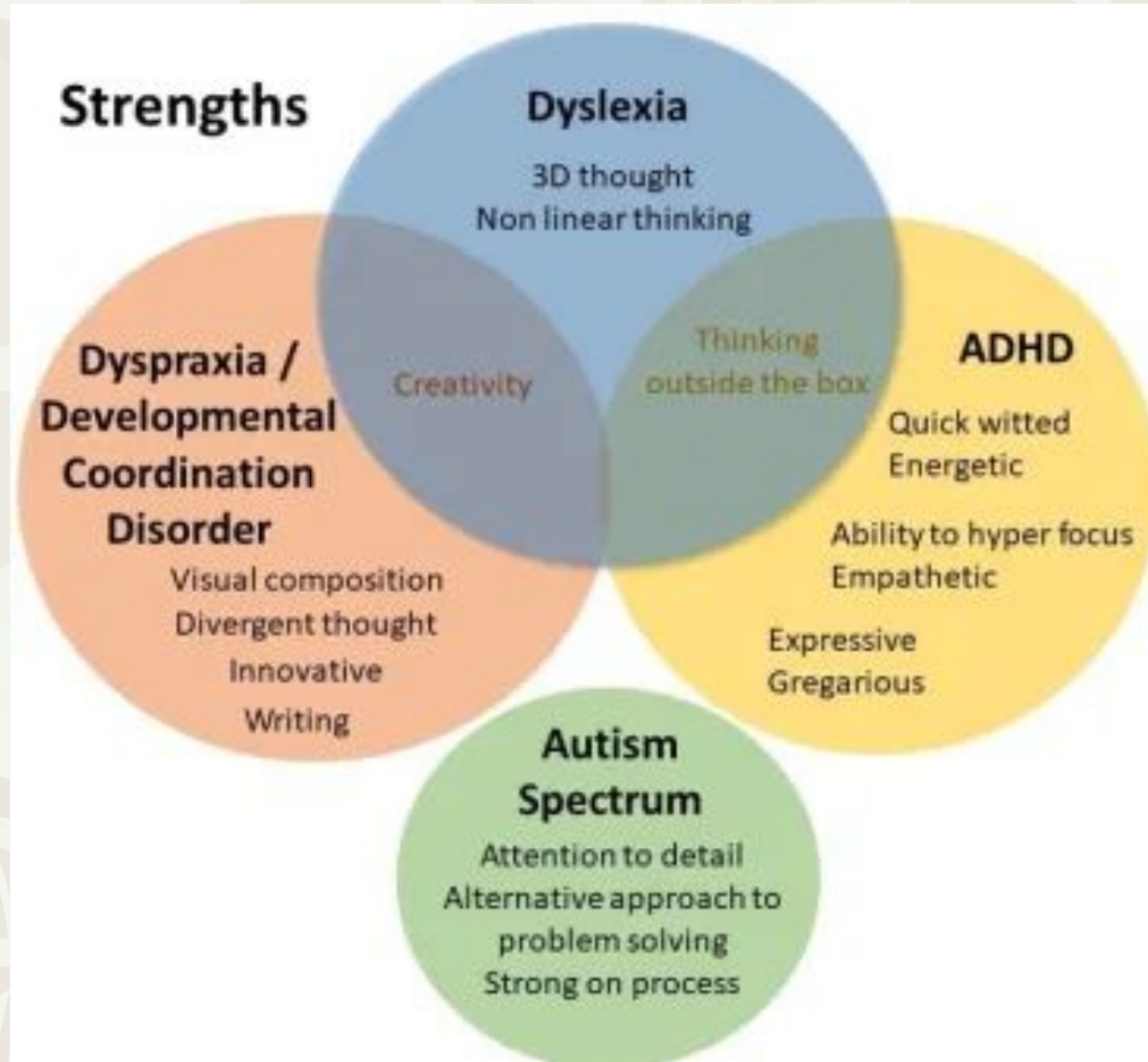
-These are only a few examples and difficulties can definitely vary from person to person

-Learn more from trusted sources or respectfully asking questions

-If there is anything you would like to cover in more detail please do suggest it for BSL and awareness club!

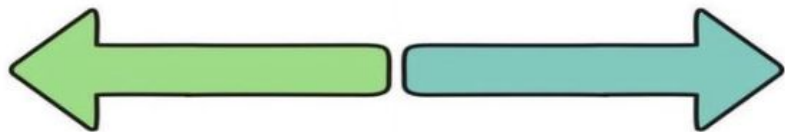


# Positive aspects



# Destroying Misconceptions

What people think the autism spectrum is



Low functioning  
More autistic

High functioning  
Less autistic

What the autism spectrum actually is



- Emotional regulation
- Routines
- Executive functioning
- Social differences
- Fixations
- Sensory sensitivities
- Stimming
- Eye contact
- Intense interests
- Anxiety
- Posture
- Masking

lizzy @ autieselfcare

stereotypes and lack of education about autism

in the uk, most people are referred for an autism assessment through their gp.

this requires the gp to conclude that the person may be autistic and possibly receive a diagnosis to be able to refer them.

yet their decision is often based off of inaccurate stereotypes that do not accurately represent autistic people and how different they can be.

if the gp doesn't agree the the person could be autistic, then often, the only thing left to do is to go private for an assessment which is, again, something many can't afford.

# The autism spectrum

- The autism spectrum is not linear it does not go from less autistic to more autistic
- It looks more like a colour wheel something like what is shown in the photo (previous slide)
- The autistic person is in the centre of the wheel and all the autistic traits are the different colours
- Some of the traits may show up a lot more and some may show up less but most autistic people will have pretty much all these traits at different levels
- Every autistic person displays different traits in different circumstances at varying degrees

# More on misconceptions

- We also just want to make sure it clear that everyone is NOT a little bit autistic, you either are autistic or you aren't
- An allistic person may experience some traits of autism but that does not mean they are autistic
- If you had a mixture of these traits persistent throughout life and they were having an impact on your ability to carry out tasks in everyday life then you may want to do more research
- Many conditions are misunderstood, if you hear misconceptions being spread, try to challenge them and speak up, educate others respectfully and help more people understand.

# How you can help

- Engage with neurodiverse communities
- Celebrate diversity through social activities
- Adapt the way you speak
- Lead with empathy
- Be open minded
- Understand who you are helping, ask them what could help
- Research using trusted sources

Spread awareness but also **ACCEPTANCE** :)



# Sources for more information

BSL and Awareness club google classroom code and slides: **v5cr6hr**

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1w3RJGVQv0Q1WXW\\_i0wat\\_UbrVj8GAnA5rrj0hdCPazE/edit#slide=id.g11864f87b1a\\_0\\_151](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1w3RJGVQv0Q1WXW_i0wat_UbrVj8GAnA5rrj0hdCPazE/edit#slide=id.g11864f87b1a_0_151)

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1vyyOuQh6il0OxD\\_k-4PNn6GPqKYcQbL6Ef7exXoJNW8/edit#slide=id.g125acbe7d88\\_0\\_0](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1vyyOuQh6il0OxD_k-4PNn6GPqKYcQbL6Ef7exXoJNW8/edit#slide=id.g125acbe7d88_0_0)

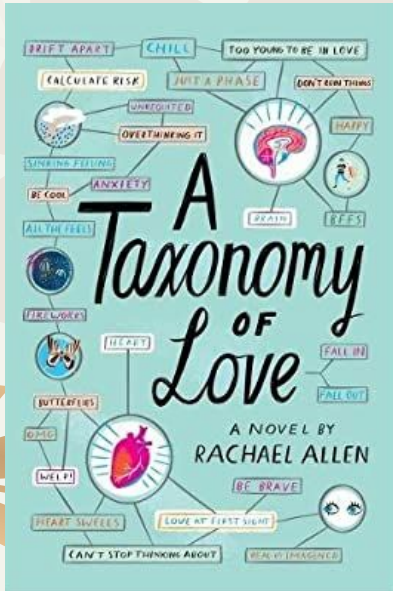
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/19GJr7ocMPrhZHeBBmtG3L8pIqQd0Ks36CioSyTnLVQ/edit#slide=id.g12216687656\\_0\\_5](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/19GJr7ocMPrhZHeBBmtG3L8pIqQd0Ks36CioSyTnLVQ/edit#slide=id.g12216687656_0_5)

There are more sources linked within each slide and we can always provide you with more if you would like them!

# Misconceptions in the media

- The media rarely does a great job at showing realistic representation
- A lot of misconceptions are spread, these can shape people's views and be harmful!
- OCD is commonly portrayed in the media as a love for cleaning and organising, it is much more than that! (sources for more info includes a session on OCD we created)
- Autistic characters on screen are nearly always white, straight and male, autism can affect anyone of any gender, sexuality or background
- **Only 8% of girls are diagnosed as autistic before the age of 6**, even doctors sometimes judge based on stereotypes!
- Be open minded, ask questions respectfully and learn from trusted sources!

## Book recommendations with good representation

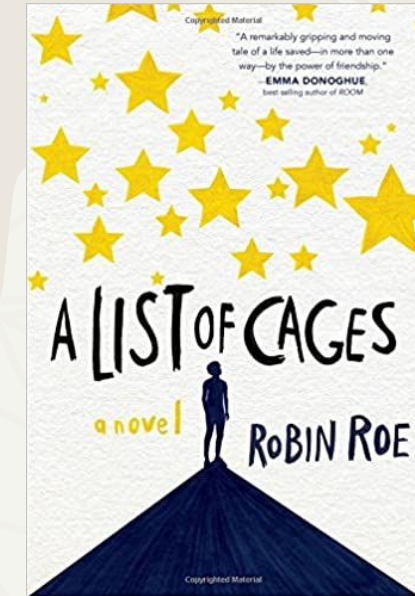
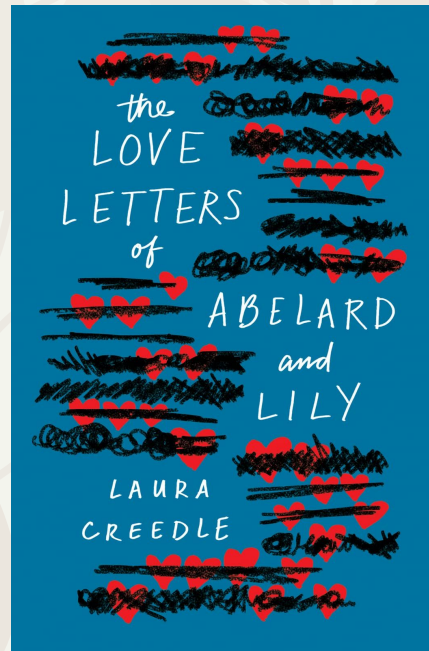


### A taxonomy of love

- Tourette Syndrome
- friendship
- living with a condition throughout life
- description of what life is like and how things can fluctuate
- eye opening

### The love letters of Aberlard and Lily

- ADHD protagonist
- Autistic protagonist
- neurodivergent teens
- romance
- raw and real

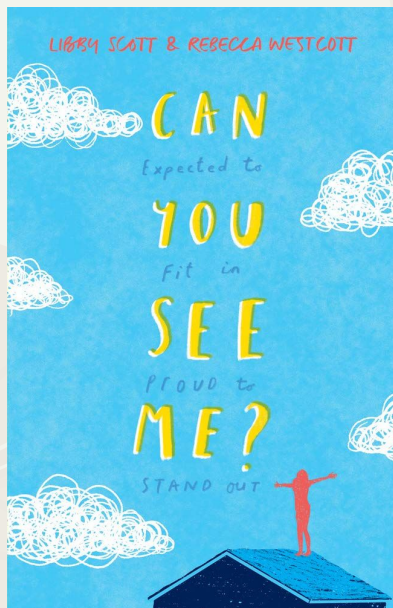


### A list of cages

- Dyslexia, ADHD
- foster brothers
- grief
- very emotional
- the power of kindness

### Can you see me

- autistic author/protagonist
- gives an insight to what autism is really like
- real life extracts
- destroys misconceptions
- beautifully written
- educational
- a must read if you want to understand more!

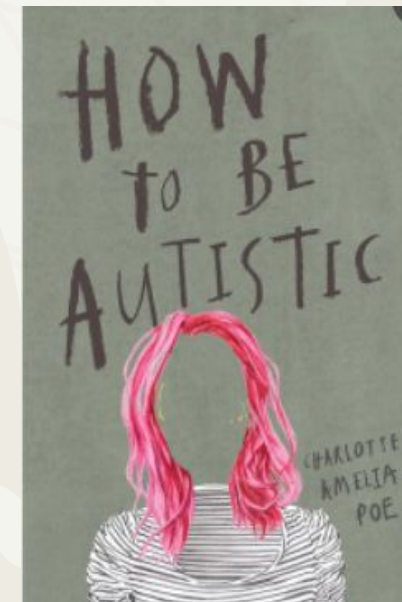


### Eleanor Oliphant is completely fine

- shows autistic traits
- complex PTSD
- social anxiety
- depression
- overcoming struggles

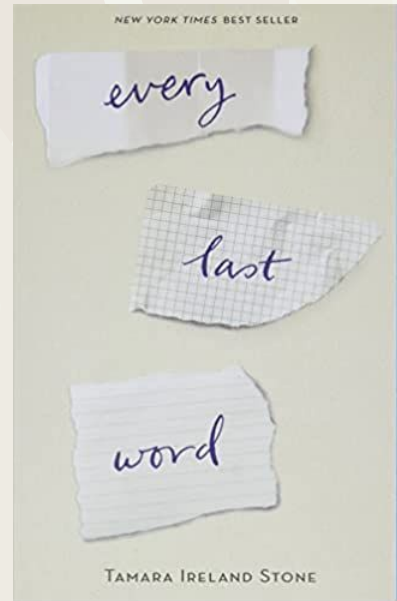
### How to be autistic

- autistic author/protagonist
- real life extracts
- covers topics such as: getting a diagnosis, overcoming bullying, discovering gender and sexuality, anxiety, depression, autistic traits, all as an autistic person
- a good insight to what life is like for many autistic people



### **The match**

- Protagonist with Epilepsy
- romantic comedy
- educational
- service dogs
- lovable characters

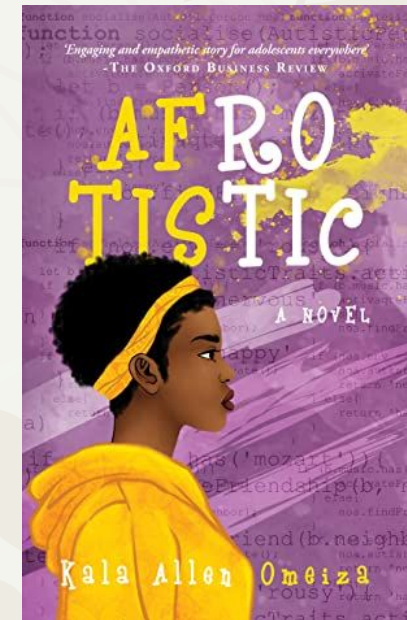


### **Every Last Word**

- OCD
- shows a realistic side to living with OCD
- friendships
- finding a voice
- plot twist
- inspiring and heartwarming ending

### **Afrotistic**

- Autistic, teenage protagonist
- striving for success and feeling enough
- the power of community
- race, gender, disability
- easy to follow
- a moving novel

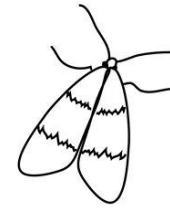
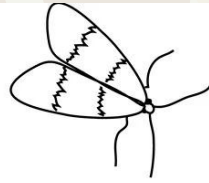
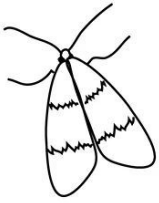


# BSL & AWARENESS club

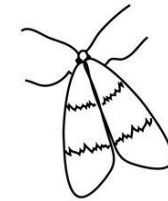
- Spreading more awareness and acceptance
- BSL can help many people, not just those with hearing conditions!  
Neurodiverse people can benefit from using sign language too
- We are here to spread further information on any conditions you would like to know more about!
- Club includes discussions on topics such as media and self diagnosis, information, quizzes, myth busting games and more!
- Upcoming sessions will cover ADHD & Tourettes in more detail
- We are happy to cover any suggestions and questions!
- Thank you for all of your support so far :)

# There are lots of things happening this week and next to celebrate Diversity Week so please join in!

- Diversity [Quiz](#) that can be done during form time this week
- **Wednesday 22nd June:** lunchtime scavenger hunt from Spectrum - start in H12
- **Friday 24th June:** Spectrum (in H12) will be finalising our Pride Parade plans
- **Tuesday 28th June:** Pride Parade at lunchtime - EVERYONE WELCOME
- **Wednesday 29th June:** CULTURE DAY
  - Non-uniform day - proceeds going to The Rosie May Foundation
  - Lunchtime Culture dance performances and fashion show in the Main Hall
  - Stalls in the Science Quad - everything from learning another language, to understanding ASD to LGBTQ+ crafts!



representation  
is vital  
otherwise the butterfly  
surrounded by a group of moths  
unable to see itself  
will keep trying to become the moth



*representation* - rupi kaur





# Thank you!

From us and the ID group :)

If you'd like to find out more about neurodiversity,  
come along to BSL club on Wednesdays in P3.