

# GUIDANCE

Diverse Minds, Inclusive Learning:  
Towards more Inclusion in Non-Formal Education.



## General Guidance for Educational Trainers

Disclaimer: The following tips are based on an online workshop with Ada Andrea Zsigmond, MA Psychology, and the resulting discussions and experiences of partners within the YAI (Youth All Inclusive) project. Given the diverse target audience, these guidelines should be considered general support. They should be individually adapted to the specific audience's needs, the topic, and the workshop format.

## Neurodivergent vs. Neurotypical

All individuals, including those identified as 'neurotypical' or 'neurodivergent', share both commonalities and unique characteristics within their brains. A combination of genetic and environmental influences shapes every person. The term 'neurotypical' describes individuals whose brain functions align with what is commonly perceived as typical. On the other hand, 'neurodivergent' refers to individuals whose brain functions diverge from this typical pattern. Neurodivergent individuals may engage in distinctive socialisation and perceive social norms uniquely.

## Wording

Developmental differences, neurotypical, neurodivergent

### + Hint

The terms Neurological Disability, Neurologically Disabled, Disorder, and Special Education Needs are stigmatising and marginalising individuals with neurodiverse conditions and can be offensive and perpetuate negative biases.

## Organise an all-inclusive event

Let's embrace and internalise this key idea: Every participant contributes uniquely to the event. By sharing and learning from each other's strengths, we can collectively enrich our experience. How can we achieve this together?

- Allow participants to choose activities that align with their strengths or interests, promoting a sense of ownership;
- Encourage activities that tap into the creative thinking strengths of participants.

### In preparation for the event

- Asking the participants: 'Are there specific needs we should be aware of, or are there any triggers or topics you'd prefer to avoid as we plan this event?';
- Allocate extra time to manage potential disruptions;
- Present content in multiple formats: visualise information and involve technology (audio) for those who benefit from visual or audial aids. Include interaction and collaboration where participants can benefit from each other's strengths;
- Diverse Activities: Plan various activities that cater to different interests and preferences. Include options for both social and individual activities. Be mindful of sensory sensitivities and offer quiet spaces for those who may need a break;
- Establish an organised learning environment and clearly outline schedules and expectations.

### During the event, create an environment prepared for neurodiversity

- Offer participants the option to opt out when needed, providing support for relaxation;

- Avow sensory overload and long inputs;
- As a trainer, stay calm, patient and non-judgmental, and ask what you can do to decrease the stress of participants;
- Empathically mirroring the behaviour (For example, if someone communicates best through visual aids, this behaviour might involve incorporating visual elements into communication. If a participant needs a quiet space to decompress, providing such a space would be an empathic response);
- Be adaptable and responsive to the needs of participants, and prepare Plan A, Plan B and maybe Plan C;
- Facilitate clear communication through verbal instructions and written materials, including visuals, diagrams, and charts;
- Explore the idea of skill-share sessions, allowing participants to showcase and teach others about their unique strengths;
- Collaborative activities and interactive breaks: During joint free time, organise collaborative activities that encourage peer support (puzzles, visual mapping exercises).

### After the event

- Engage in team reflection or supervision to evaluate the event's successes and areas for improvement;
- Seek participant feedback to gather valuable insights into their experiences and suggestions for future events.

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