

Apolitical "How to create a neurodiverse-friendly work environment"

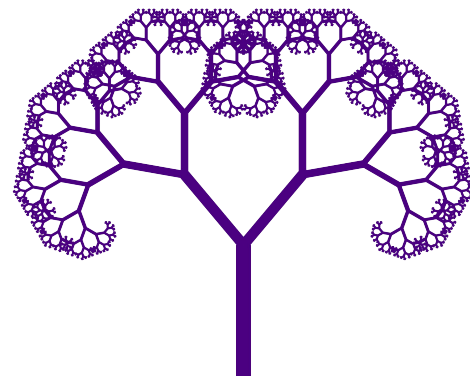
Allyship in the public sector



People-centred approach

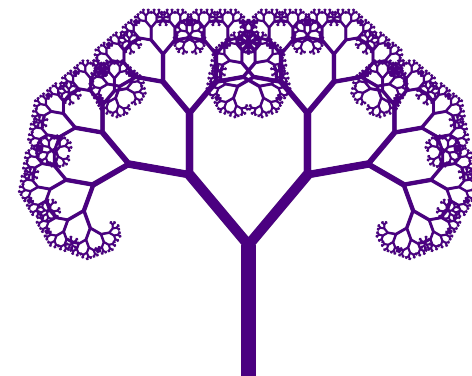
- "If you've met one neurodivergent person, you've met one neurodivergent person."
- Ask to understand their experience.
- Use the language your colleagues prefer.
- Build trust and safety.
- Identify and empower specific skillsets.
- Keep an open mind.

*Ki te kotahi te kākaho, ka whati; ki te kāpuia, e kore e whati -
When we stand alone we are vulnerable, but together we are
unbreakable. - Māori whakataukī*



In practice this could look like...

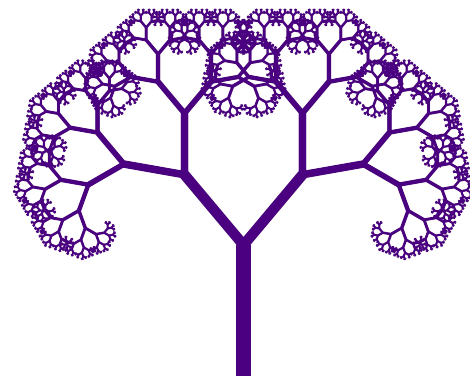
- Asking a colleague what their preferred way of working is.
- Considering the language you're using when talking about neurodiversity.
- Reducing noise around people who may be sensitive to this.
- Building templates for ease of use and simplicity.
- Seeking out information on what your organisation already has in place to support neurodiversity.
- Educating yourself on neurodiversity.
- Advocating for your neurodivergent colleagues.



Communication is key

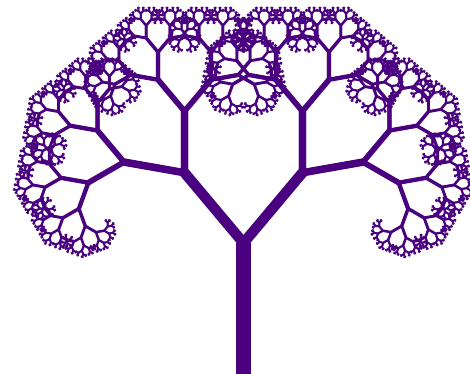
- Everyone communicates differently.
- Identify what works well for those around you.
- Consider verbal, written and physical communication.
- Know your own style of communication.
- Build a culture of asking questions to clarify.

"Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing." - Rollo Reece May



In practice this could look like...

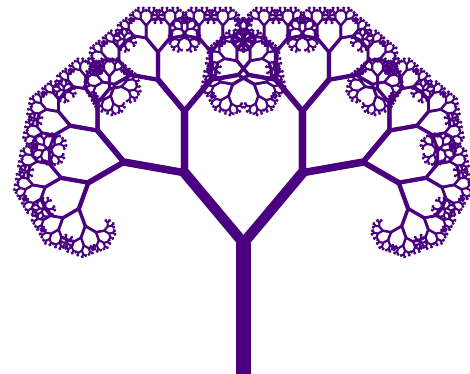
- Using active listening.
- Providing longer silences to accommodate processing time.
- Not relying on physical cues only.
- Breaking written text down into more digestible chunks.
- Identifying communication techniques for a range of mediums.
E.g. face-to-face vs online, individual meetings vs group meetings.
- Following up conversations with email notes to confirm.
- Using transcription software for meetings or writing tasks.



Reasonable accommodations

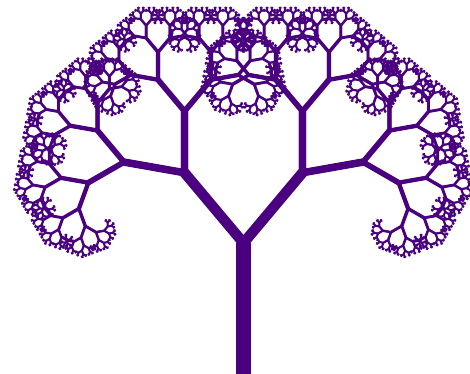
- Ask what this looks like for the individual.
- It's a "we" conversation.
- Consider how this could have positive impact wider.
- Consider your work environment.
- Small adjustments can make a massive difference.
- Build in accommodating environments naturally.
- One size doesn't fit all.

"Be curious, not judgemental." - Ted Lasso quoting Walt Whitman

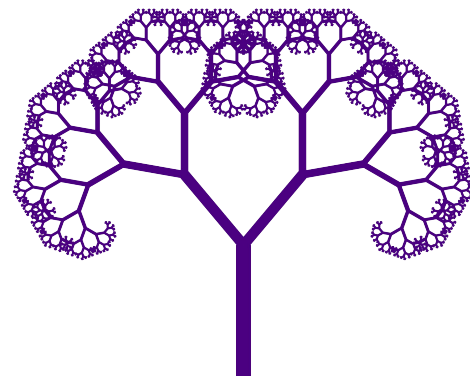


In practice this could look like...

- Having low-sensory zones.
- Providing a meeting agenda in advance, then following it.
- Sending key questions to candidates before an interview.
- Allowing fidget toys in longer meetings/workshops.
- Considering where someone is sitting/their work context, is it a busy area, are there distracting smells, is it noisy, is it bright, is it hotdesking or not.



Talking about neurodiversity helps



Resources

- *Neurodiversity at work | Drive innovation, performance and productivity with a neurodiverse workforce* by Theo Smith and Amanda Kirby
- Neurodiversity Hub – a website filled with lots of resources and information for employers and employees
- *Neurodiversity as a Competitive Advantage* article by Robert D. Austin and Gary P. Pisano

