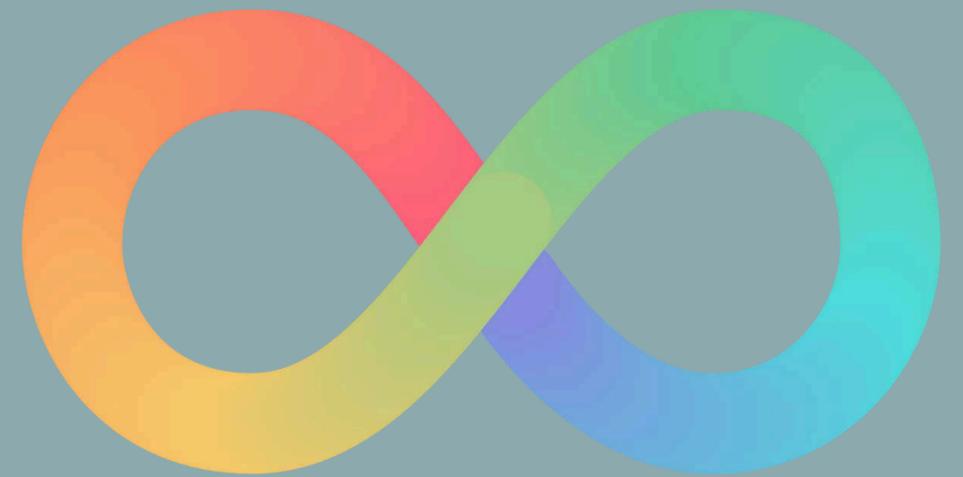




# Embracing your unique self



Everyone has their own way of thinking, learning, and interacting with the world.

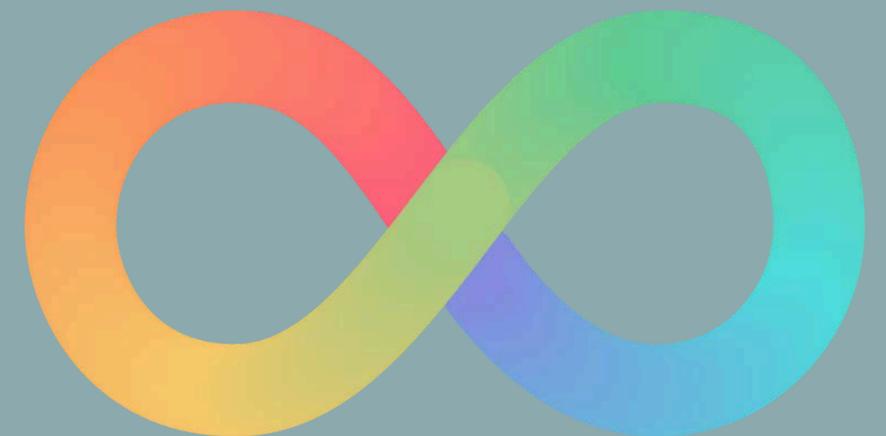




# Hello!

Welcome to embracing your unique self

Whether you identify as autistic, ADHD, dyslexic, or any other form of neurodivergence, this project is here to celebrate your unique strengths and help you navigate the world with confidence.



# Understanding Neurodiversity



Neurodiversity is a term that recognises and respects the variety of human brains and minds.

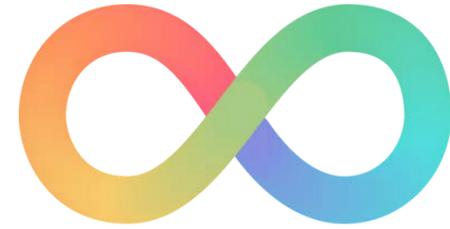
It means that being different is not only okay but also something to be proud of. Everyone has their own way of thinking, learning, and interacting with the world.



Every brain has it's own brilliance.



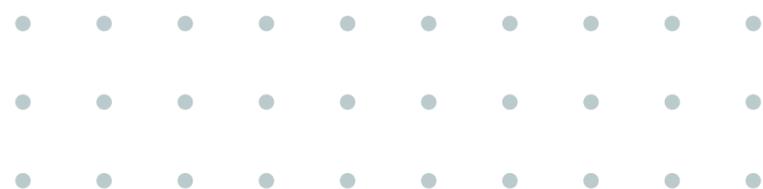
# Understanding Neurodiversity



Having neurodifferences comes with its own set of strengths.

On the right are a few that some people have recognised in themselves.

You might recognise some of these in yourself.



## **Creativity:**

You might see the world in a unique way, leading to amazing ideas and solutions.

## **Focus:**

When you're interested in something, you can dive deep and become an expert.

## **Honesty:**

You tend to be straightforward and genuine, which is a great quality.

## **Problem-Solving:**

Your different perspective can help you find solutions others might miss.

It's important to remember that we are all unique and each of us has our own set of strengths and the great thing is, we can also develop new strengths!

# Your Strengths



Strengths are tasks or actions that you can do well. These include talents, knowledge, and skills.

People use these traits and abilities in their daily lives to learn, complete work, relate with others, and to achieve goals. Everybody has their own set of strengths.



## Activity:

Look at pages 5 - 8 in your booklet. Decide which of these strengths you recognise in yourself. Write your ideas on page 9.

Next think about a goal(s) you have that you'd like to achieve - something that's important to you. Record how your strengths can help you with your goal.





Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and acting. We are all different and everyone of us has different needs when learning in school.

School can be challenging, but there are ways to make it work for you.



# Tips to help you in school

Everyone is different, so it can be helpful to work out what works for you to help you feel comfortable and supported in school.

For example, some young people find that they work well with visual tools, or technology such as apps or planners. These can help people feel organised and focused.

Some young people find that short breaks help. Whether it's a movement break or having a quiet place to go when we need it, breaks can help us feel more comfortable and relax.



Did you know? It is thought that around 1 in 7 people are neurodivergent although this number may be higher.



# Connecting with others

Connecting with others is one of the ‘five ways to wellbeing’. It’s all about communicating with the people in your life and understanding each other in a meaningful way.

**Be yourself:** this attracts genuine friends who appreciate you for who you are.

**Find common interests:** join clubs or groups that match your hobbies and passions.

**Ask for help when you need it:**  
It’s okay to ask teachers, friends, or family for support when you need it. Seeking help when we need it and practicing self-care are signs of strength.



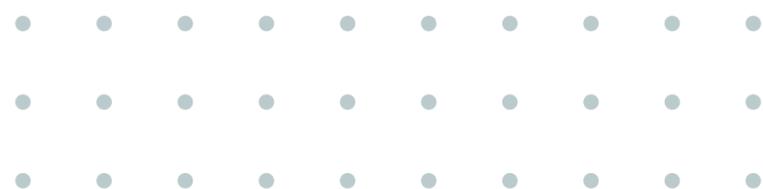
Connecting with others can help our wellbeing. It’s also okay if you need time alone sometimes to relax and recharge your batteries.



# What is a Support Network?

A support network is a group of people who we have in our lives, who provide support, advice, or sometimes just listen to us when we need someone to talk to.

Talking to people in our support network can help us to solve a problem, or just makes us feel better.



## Activity:

Look at pages 11 and 12 in your booklet and develop your own Support Network.

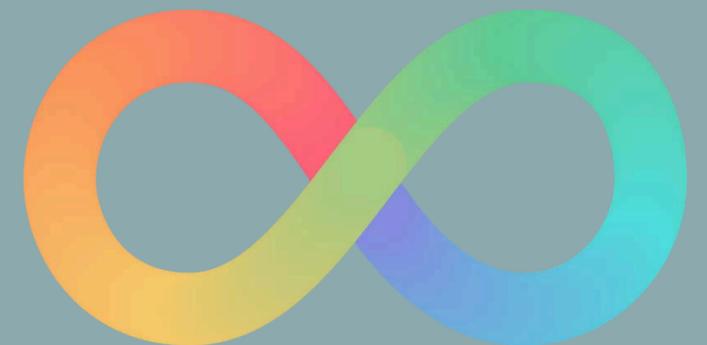


A support network is the 'team' of people you have in your life that help support you in your physical and mental growth. They are the people that you can draw on for support, motivation and overall well-being.



Being neurodivergent can shape friendships in different ways, and the experience is different for each person. Remember, neurodivergence isn't a flaw — it's just a different way of experiencing the world. The key is finding people who appreciate and respect those differences.

Making friends as a neurodivergent young person can feel like navigating an obstacle course designed for someone else. But the good news? There's no single "right" way to make friends — just the way that works for you.



# Making Friends

Many neurodivergent people have deep, passionate interests. Finding friends who appreciate those interests can make social connections more meaningful.

## **Find Your People:**

Look for friends who share your interests. Whether it's gaming, art, coding, or a niche hobby, connecting over something you love makes friendships easier.

## **Quality Over Quantity:**

You don't need a big circle—just a few people who genuinely understand and appreciate you.

## **Start Online If Needed:**

Sometimes, making friends in digital spaces feels more natural. It's a great way to meet like-minded people without the pressure of in-person interactions. *But remember always stay safe online and think before you share personal information.*

## **Social Rules Are Flexible:**

Eye contact, small talk, and other “norms” are not universal. If these things feel unnatural, it's okay to communicate in a way that works best for you.

## **Ask Yourself What Feels Good:**

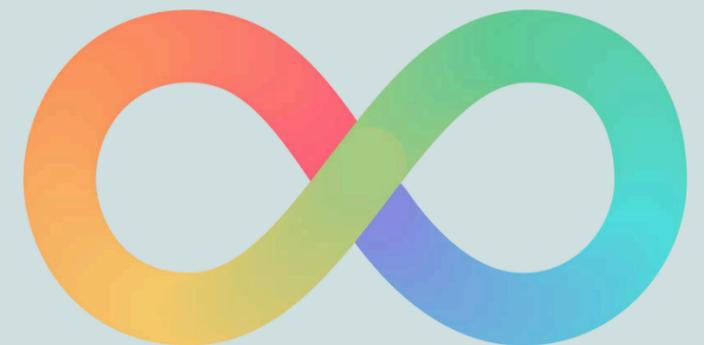
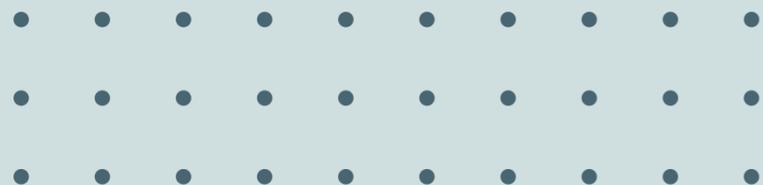
Some friendships require a lot of interaction, while others thrive on occasional deep conversations. Figure out what works for you, and communicate that with your friends.



Friendship isn't about changing who you are — the right people will see your individual uniqueness as a strength.

## What really matters in a great friendship?

- **Respect:** They value your thoughts, feelings, and boundaries. No pressure, no judgment.
- **Trust:** You can count on them to keep your secrets safe and be honest with you.
- **Support:** Whether it's cheering you on or standing by you when things get tough, they've got your back.
- **Fun and Connection:** Friends make life brighter. Whether you bond over shared interests or just enjoy hanging out, friendship should feel comfortable and uplifting.
- **Understanding:** They accept you for who you are — quirks and all — without trying to change you.



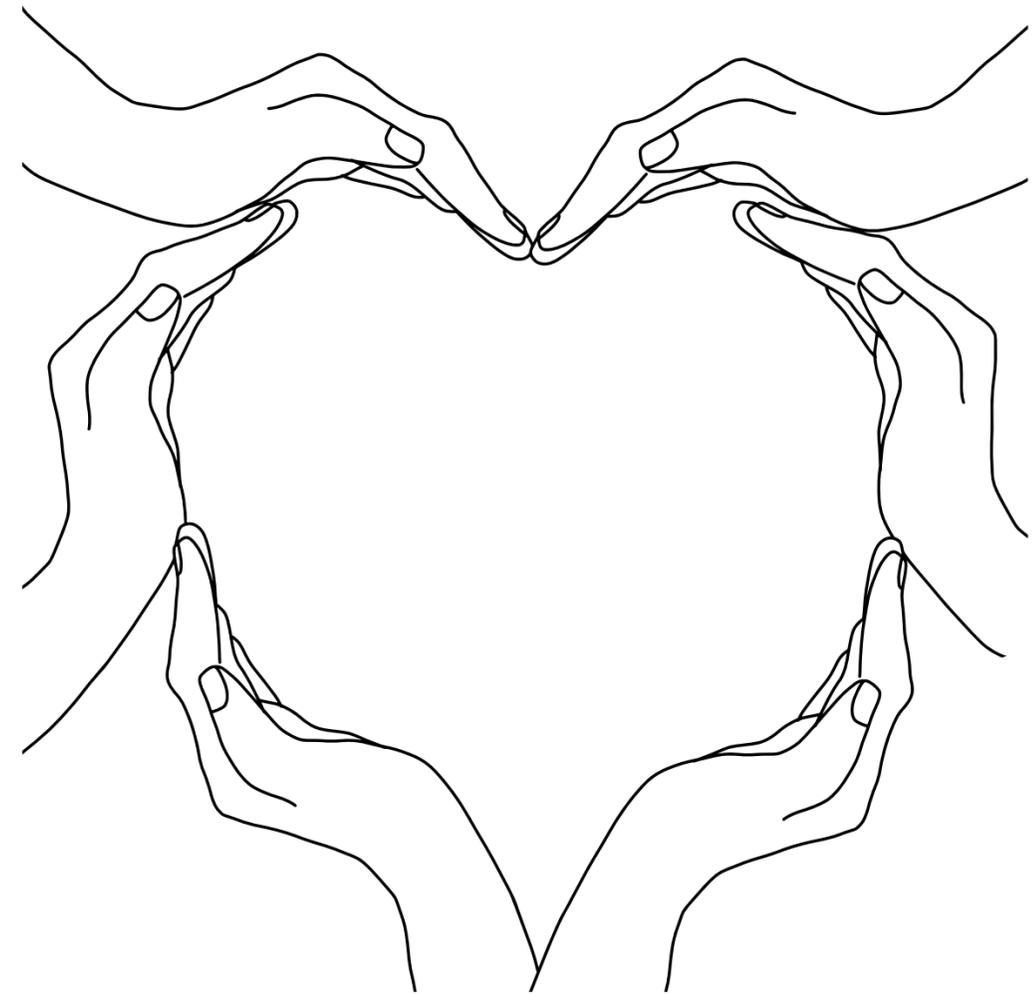
# What makes a good friend?

A good friend is someone who makes life better—whether that’s by sharing laughs, supporting you through tough times, or just being genuinely kind and understanding.

A good friend is someone who makes life better—whether that’s by sharing laughs, supporting you through tough times, or just being genuinely kind and understanding.

## Activity:

Look at page 14 in your booklet and write down the qualities you look for in a friend.



The best friends don't need to be perfect, but they do need to be kind, real, and worth your time.



# Sensory Processing

We all have different sensory needs. We can learn more about our own needs to help us to share with others what we need.

Most people know about the 5 senses, which are:



**Sight**



**Sound**



**Smell**



**Touch**



**Taste**

However, there are actually 3 more senses, which are:



**Vestibular**

Balance and awareness of where our body is in space. This helps with coordination and movement.



**Interoception**

The physical and emotional state of our body including hunger, thirst, heart rate, and the need to use the toilet.



**Proprioception**

A sense of body awareness and the strength needed to complete an action.

# Sensory Processing

## What is sensory processing?

Sensory processing is how your brain takes in information from the world around you and decides how to respond from our senses.

Sensory processing can affect how people feel, move, and interact with the world. It's common for neurodivergent people to experience sensory differences.



Proprioception



Sight



Interoception



Sound

We all have sensory differences.



Vestibular



Smell



Taste



Touch

# We all process information differently

Some people are sensitive to lights, sounds, or textures. For example, a sound that seems normal to some people might feel uncomfortably loud to other people.

Other people might be less sensitive to sensory input than others. They might not notice things that others find obvious, like the feeling of clothes on their skin.

Some people seek out sensory experiences. This could involve touching various textures, enjoying strong flavours, or seeking extra movement or touch.



## **We are all different.**

Understanding and sharing our own unique sensory differences with others can be helpful as it means people can be aware and make the environment more comfortable for you.



# What is a sensory profile?

A sensory profile is a way of mapping out your sensory needs. We all have unique sensory needs and things we prefer.

Some sensory experiences are overstimulating (when your brain gets overwhelmed by too much sensory input, like noise, light, or activity — coming at you all at once)

Other sensory experiences are enjoyable or calming.



## Understanding your sensory needs can help:

make daily life easier

help you be more self aware

improve mental health

help you understand and manage feelings

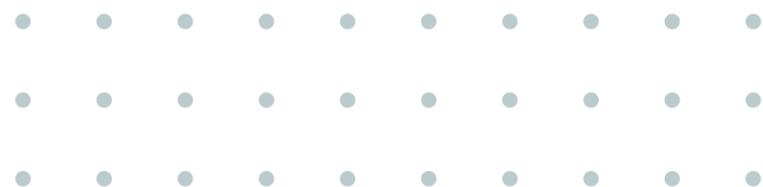
improve your mood

# My sensory profile

Starting on page 17, you'll find six categories of senses: visual, sound, touch, taste, smell, and movement.

Fill in each as best you can. If you're unsure, as you go about your day, add information as you become aware.

It can be helpful to share this with others on school or home who can offer understanding and support.

A screenshot of a 'My sensory profile' form. The form has a light blue background and a white border. At the top right is a logo consisting of two interlocking loops, one red and one blue. The title 'My sensory profile' is at the top left. The form is divided into two main sections: 'Visual Preferences' and 'Sound Preferences'. Each section has a dark blue header with a small circular icon (yellow for visual, blue for sound). Under 'Visual Preferences', there are four rows of text input fields: 'Favourite colours:', 'Preferred lighting:', 'Things I like to look at (e.g., nature, art):', and 'Things I find difficult or overstimulating to look at:'. Under 'Sound Preferences', there are four rows of text input fields: 'Favourite music:', 'Comfortable noise level:', 'Calming sounds:', and 'Sounds I don't like:'. Each row has a horizontal line for writing.

# Interoception

If you have sensory processing differences, you might have differences with the sense of interoception.

Interoception is like your body's inner messaging system—it helps you notice things like hunger, thirst, or when you need the bathroom. But for some people, this system doesn't work as well, making it harder to recognise these signals.

You can train your interoceptive sense, kind of like levelling up in a game. Some people need to "wake it up" so they can notice their body's signals better, while others need to learn how to manage it so they don't feel overwhelmed.



# Interoception

Staying aware of your body's internal signals can be helpful, but it's easy to lose touch when you're focused on gaming, social media, or schoolwork.

**Have you ever stepped away from your screen and suddenly realised you're hungry or need the toilet? Your interoceptive sense may have been signalling these needs all along!**

Setting phone timers or jotting down reminders can help you reconnect with your body, whether it's drinking water, taking a break, or checking in on your emotions.

However, tuning in to these signals can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially during moments of emotional dysregulation (when you are experiencing difficulties in managing emotions).

