

Supporting Neurodivergent Students in Reference

Bridget Scoles

Student Success & Instruction Librarian

Whitman College, Penrose Library

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Agenda

- Introduction & Positionality
- Understanding the Neurodivergent Student
- Universal Design in Reference
- Breaking Down Barriers to the Library

A quick note on language:

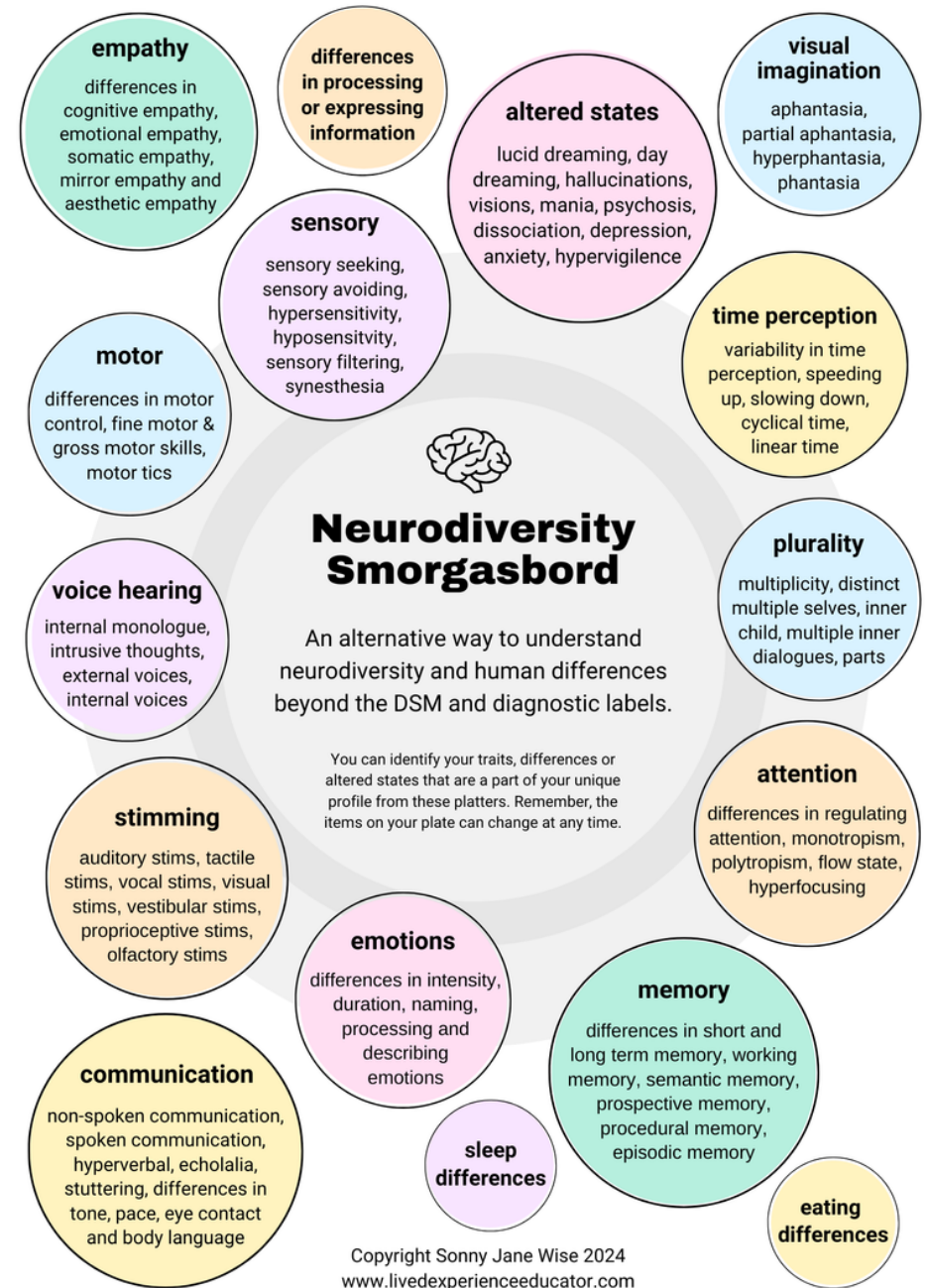
- Person-first Language (PFL)
 - PFL centers the person first (e.g. person with dyslexia)
- Identity-first Language (IFL)
 - IFL acknowledges the disability as part of the person's identity (e.g. Disabled person)
- Neither choice is wrong, but some people prefer one over the other.

Introduction

- Bridget Scoles (she/her)
- Student Success & Instruction Librarian
- Defining Student Success
 - Going beyond retention; mental and physical wellbeing in a post-COVID world
- “I wish I had asked a librarian for help sooner”

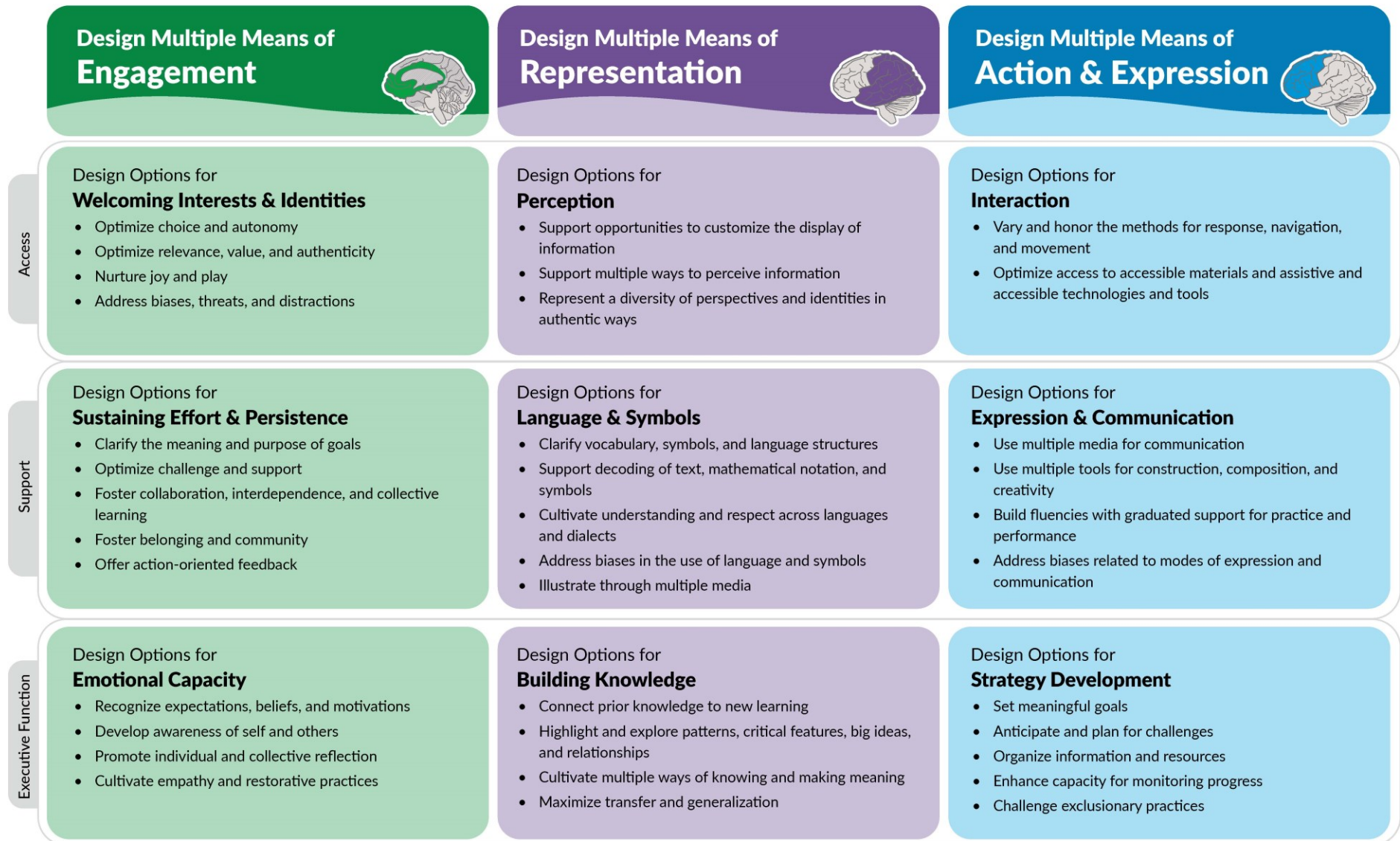
The Neurodivergent Student

- A person who is neurodivergent experiences the world differently from society's "norm," often facing barriers that may not be present for neurotypical people.
- Considering intersectionality: gender, sexuality, race, disability, lived-experiences



The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

The goal of UDL is **learner agency** that is purposeful & reflective, resourceful & authentic, strategic & action-oriented.



The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines by CAST, 2024. Retrieved from <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>.

Alleviating Library Anxiety

- Transparency surrounding reference during one-shots
 - Creating an appointment; Protocols of drop-ins
- Partnering with the Academic Resource Center/Disability Support Office
 - Academic Skills Workshops
- Neurodivergence in Libraries Task Force
 - Outreach centered around neurodivergent needs
 - Informational pamphlets; Penrose Library Social Story

Expanding Reference Hours and Locations

- Sunday night reference
 - 7-9 pm every week in the library
 - Rotates between librarians
- Expanding Location outside the library
 - Fall 2024: Reference offered at Residence Halls
 - Currently investigating reference in academic buildings during passing periods
 - Targeting areas of “familiarity” for students

Future plans

- Creating a Research Plan worksheet and other worksheets
- Hosting a Research planning workshop
 - Partnering with the ARC or the campus writing center
- Auditing the Research 101 LibGuide for multiple modalities of learning (videos, worksheets, etc.)



<https://bit.ly/ORSNeurodiversityResources>

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Questions?

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