



U.S. General Services Administration

Neurodiversity/Accessibility in Design

A Case Study

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Our Panel



Ryan Doerfler
Director, Center for
Integrated Solutions
GSA PBS



Kelsey Sullivan
Senior Project
Interior Designer
RSP Architects



Kay Sargent
Senior Principal
HOK



Michael J. Foegelle
National Accessibility
Program Director
GSA PBS



Michelle Steele
Moderator, GSA PBS

[Speaker Bios](#)

Overview

- 01** What is neurodiversity?
- 02** Why does it matter?
- 03** Why does it impact federal spaces?
- 04** What do design solutions look like?

Questions and Answers





What is Neurodiversity?

Everyone's brain function differently, hence **we are all neurodiverse.**

While the functioning of neurotypical individuals falls within set norms, **neurodivergents**, or neurominorities, fall outside of those parameters.

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia
- Tourette's Syndrome



Sensory Thresholds



HYPERSENSITIVE

- Prefer less sensory stimuli
- Organic, simple patterns
- Light, neutral colors
- Clean, orderly spaces
- Little to no background noise
- Personal space boundaries

NEUROTYPICAL



HYPOSENSITIVE

- Prefer more sensory stimuli
- Layering of textures and planes
- Saturated, contrasting colors
- Plenty of visual interest
- Background chatter and/or music
- Space to move/fidget



Why is it important?
Why does it matter?

Studies show that neurodiverse teams are 30% more productive than neurotypical ones and made fewer errors

Benefits of Neurodiverse Teams

- Highly innovative, proactive, and creative problem solvers
- Ability for prolonged concentration or hyperfocus
- Pattern recognition and error detection skills
- Strong recall of information and detailed factual knowledge
- Ability to excel at work that is routine or repetitive in nature
- GSA commitment to include underserved communities



Why does it impact
federal workspaces?

Sensory Distractions

(sounds, smells, visual clutter)

Cognitive Distractions

(loss of focus, discomfort)

Loss of Engagement and Productivity

(presenteeism, poor recall, stress,
burnout, dissatisfaction)

Challenges

Design elements you find **challenging** in environments?

SOUND



66% Neurodivergent
34% Mixed Neurotype

TEMPERATURE



56% Neurodivergent
37% Mixed Neurotype

LIGHTS



56% Neurodivergent
33% Mixed Neurotype

NUMBER
OF PEOPLE



53% Neurodivergent
35% Mixed Neurotype

PROXIMITY
TO OTHERS



48% Neurodivergent
32% Mixed Neurotype

CONFINED OR IN
CLOSED SPACE



40% Neurodivergent
29% Mixed Neurotype

LACK OF
ENCLOSURE



36% Neurodivergent
17% Mixed Neurotype

PATTERNS



21% Neurodivergent
8% Mixed Neurotype

COLOR



16% Neurodivergent
6% Mixed Neurotype

TEXTURE

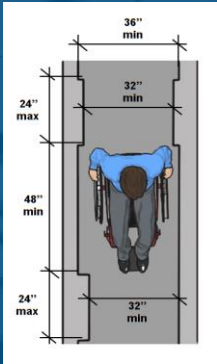


12% Neurodivergent
6% Mixed Neurotype



What do design solutions look like?

GSA/ABA Typical Accommodations



- Mobility
- Hearing
- Vision



GSA Reasonable Accommodation



- Case Specific
- Process Based
- Real Time Review/Response





WRITING SURFACE

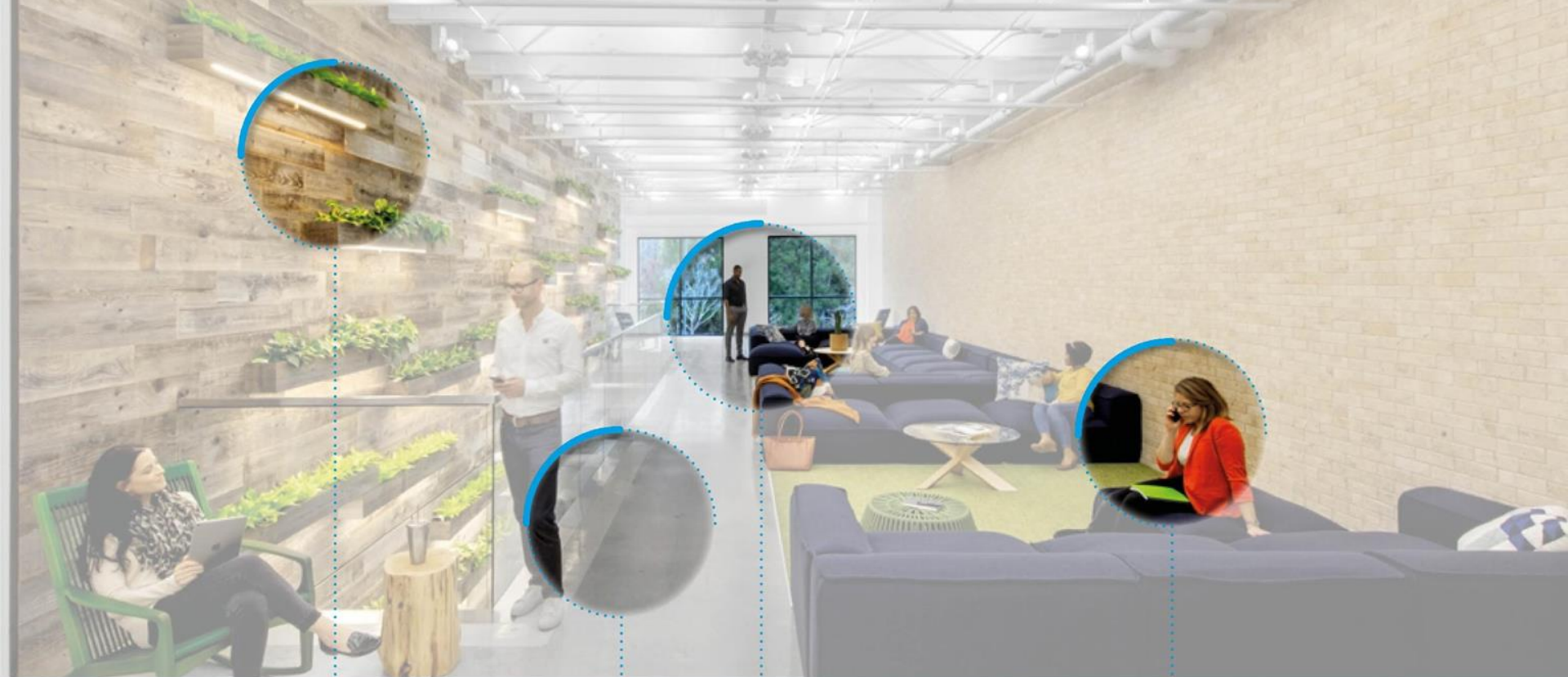
DROPPED CEILING FOR MORE INTIMATE SETTING AND DIFFUSED, INDIRECT LIGHTING

VARIOUS SETTINGS

CALMING COLOURS

VARIOUS SETTINGS

 HYPER-SENSITIVE  HYPO-SENSITIVE  HYPER AND HYPO



NATURAL MATERIALS,
PLANTS

WIDE
PASSAGEWAYS

CLEAR LINE
OF SIGHT

SOFT SEATING
ENCLAVE



HYPER-SENSITIVE



HYPO-SENSITIVE



HYPER AND HYPO





ENHANCED
GRAPHICS,
WAYFINDING

CASUAL SEATING
AREAS FOR
COMFORT

ACOUSTICAL
TREATMENTS TO
CONTROL NOISE

ACCESS TO NATURAL
DAYLIGHT +
OUTDOOR SPACE

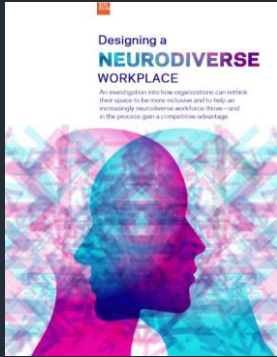
 HYPER-SENSITIVE  HYPO-SENSITIVE  HYPER AND HYPO



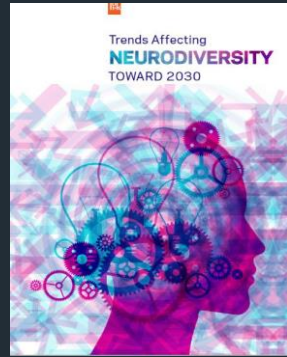
Q&A



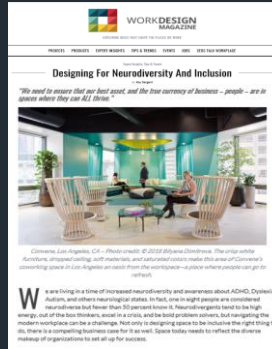
Neuro-inclusion Research



<https://www.hok.com/ideas/publications/hok-designing-a-neurodiverse-workplace/>



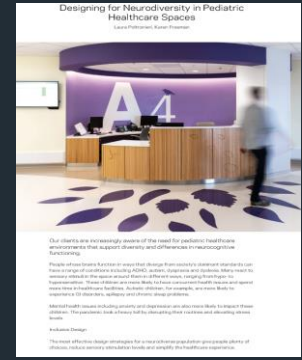
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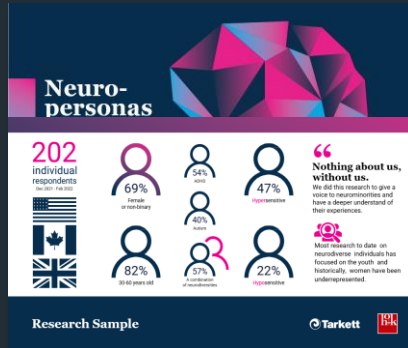
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<http://tarkett-8435814.hok.com/sites.com/neurodiversity-1>



Designing for Neurodiversity in Complex Building Types

<http://www.hokforward.com/read/inclusive-design-for-complex-buildings/>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gy9EZNGPWt0&t=6s>

Additional References



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Kelsey Sullivan, [RSP:](#)

- The Gen Z Vibe is Making Work Better for Everyone

<https://www.workdesign.com/2022/08/the-gen-z-vibe-is-making-work-better-for-everyone/>

- Neurodiversity in the Workplace is Redefining How Companies Operate

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Intelligence After Next:

Enabling Neurodiverse Talent in the Intelligence Community

<https://www.mitre.org/news-insights/publication/intelligence-after-next-enabling-neurodiverse-talent-intelligence>