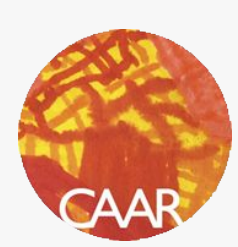




The Inclusive University:

Lessons for General Application

Mark Brosnan & Emma Collis



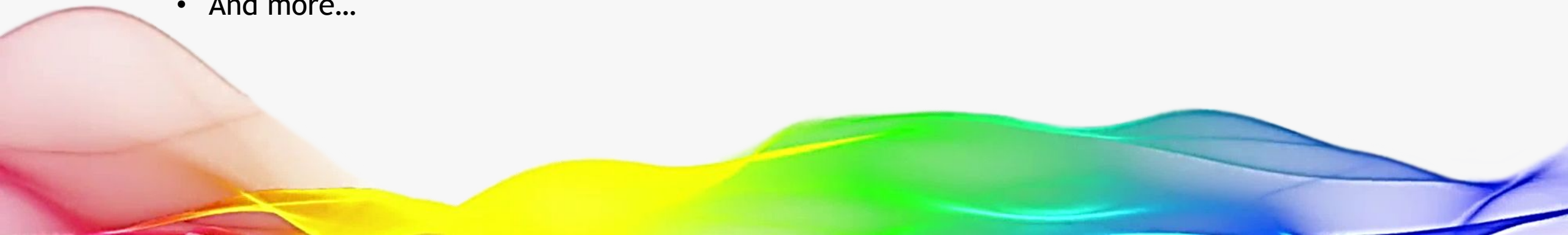
Neurodiversity: Definitions and Diagnoses

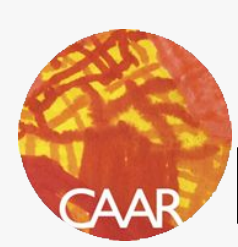
‘**Neurodiversity** is the diversity of human brains and minds - the infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning within our species.’ (Walker, 2014)

Neurotypical - those whose neurological functioning falls within the ‘norm’.

Neurodivergent- those whose neurological function falls outside the ‘norm’:

- Autism/Aspergers
- ADHD
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia/DCD
- And more...



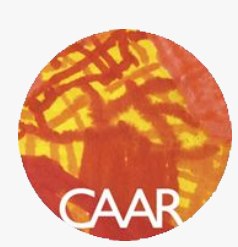


Neurodiversity: Reasonable Adjustments

Society is generally built around assumptions and presumptions of neurotypicality.

Reasonable adjustments - the requirement of changes to any provisions, criterion, practices, and physical features, and provision of auxiliary aids, in order to avoid disadvantage (Equality Act, 2010).

Staff	Students
Flexible Working (e.g work hours, leave)	Flexible Attendance (e.g lecture capture)
Responsive Management Style	Clear Communication
Individual Support	Access to Materials
Specialist Equipment	Changes to Assessment
Physical Work Environment	Awareness Training

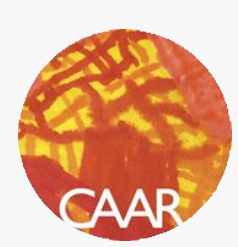


Neurodiversity: Barriers to Diagnosis

- Gender bias
- Ethnicity/cultural bias
- Age - generation gap
- Socioeconomic factors
- Understanding/awareness
- Access/availability of services
- Masking/camouflaging
- Fear of stigma
- Multiply/singularly neurodivergent



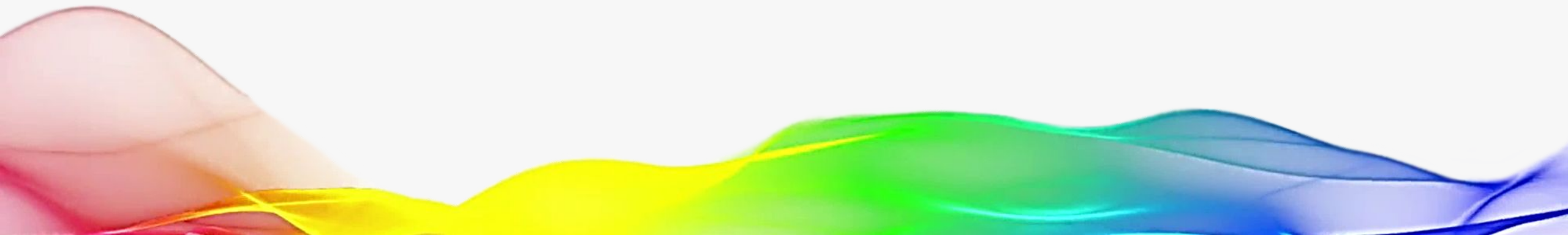
(National Institutes of Health Consensus Development Conference Report, 2000 ; Russell, Steer, and Golding, 2011 ; Elder, Brasher, and Alexander, 2016 ; Viersen, Kroesbergen, Slot, and de Bree, 2016 ; Lai, and Baron-Cohen, 2015 ; Gillberg, 2010)

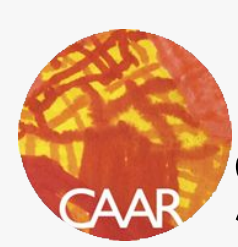


Inclusive Universities Project

Move away from reasonable adjustments which, whilst important, require diagnoses and disclosure - towards creating Neurodiverse Inclusive Environments for both staff and students.

1. Audit of current inclusive practice and environment.
2. Survey our neurodiverse community to identify issues and recommendations.
3. Focus groups to discuss survey results and create an action plan reflecting best practice.





STEPS: Creating Neurodiverse Inclusive Spaces

Based upon and adapted from the work of the Centre for Applied Autism Research, and Natalie Jenkins + Sue Fletcher-Watson.

STEPS to Adapt the Environment:

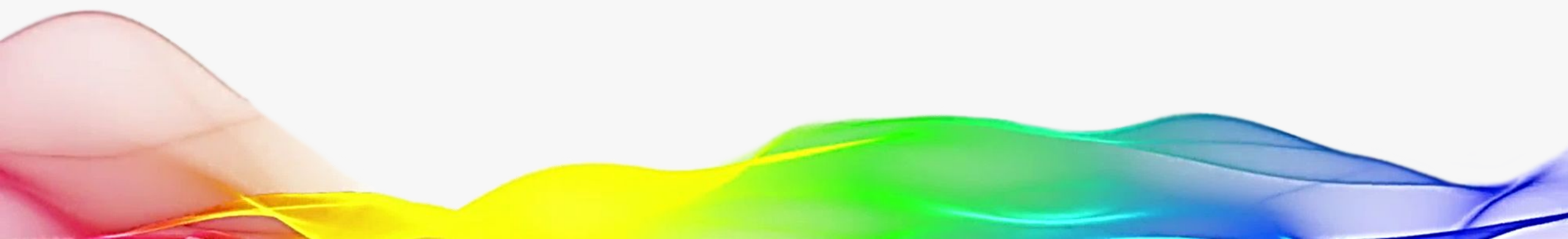
Sensory Environment - lighting, sounds, smells, visuals, and layout considerations.

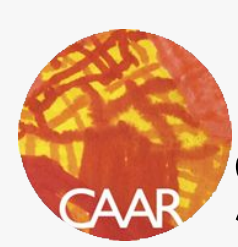
Timely Environment - realistic time scales, deadlines and expectations of response times.

Explicit Environment - setting clear instructions, expectations, and prioritization of tasks.

Predictable Environment - avoiding uncertainty and sudden unexpected change.

Social Environment - how and how much social interaction is required/desired.





STEPS: Creating Neurodiverse Inclusive Spaces

Based upon and adapted from the work of the Centre for Applied Autism Research, and Natalie Jenkins + Sue Fletcher-Watson.

Supporting Individuals:

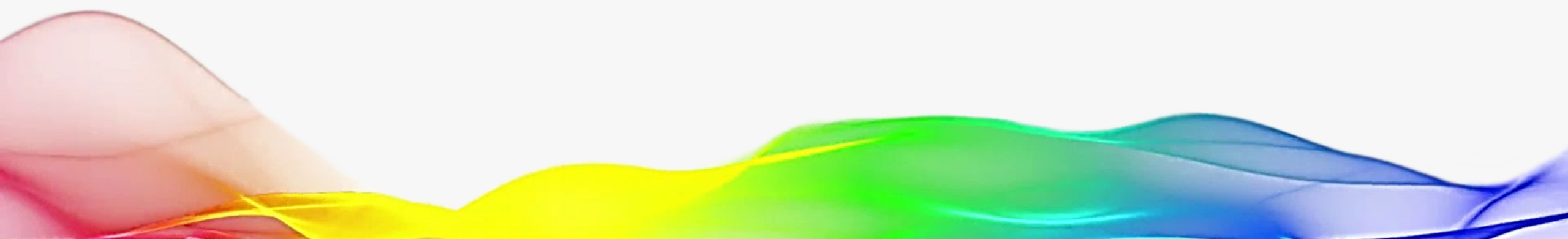
Disclosing Diagnosis- handling disclosure, language of disclosure, and understanding.

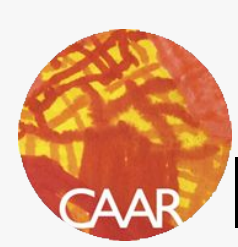
Project Management - understanding work style and how best to support the individual.

Communication Styles - preferences for communication and language use.

Well-being and Work-life Balance - the impact both inside and outside of work.

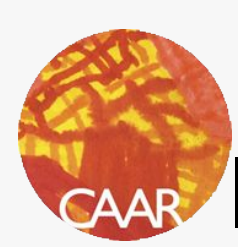
Trouble-shooting - reviewing what is working and what isn't to provide better support.





Inclusive Universities Survey: Preliminary Results

- 101 participants (27m, 74f)
 - Age 22-63 ($M = 41.97$, $SD = 11.26$)
 - 81 Neurotypical, 20 Neurodivergent
 - 7 (35%) disclosed, 13 (65%) had not disclosed.
- Staff
- Students
- 64 participants (22m, 42f)
 - Age 17-55 ($M = 22.63$, $SD = 5.55$)
 - 49 Neurotypical, 15 Neurodivergent



Inclusive Universities Survey: Preliminary Results

Reasons for not disclosing:

‘Felt no need to.’

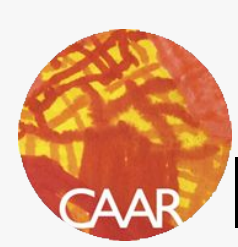
‘No formal diagnosis, so would not act.’

‘I think it would be greeted with skepticism since I mask so well. Either way, most people do not understand what the term means so it is more useful to identify my individual difficulties as they arise.’

‘Prejudiced, it would drastically effect work opportunities or promotion.’

‘I believe the institution should be inclusive to the full range of neurodiversity and hence that individual declarations should not be required.’





Inclusive Universities Survey: Preliminary Results

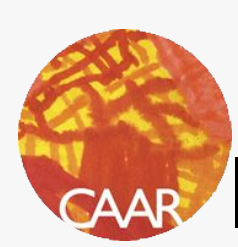
STEPS:

Neurodivergent participants were asked to rate Sensory, Timely, Explicit, Predictable, Social, Disclosure, Project Management, Communication Style, Well-being and work-life balance, and Troubleshooting in terms of importance from 1 (not at all) to 10 (completely).

One way repeated ANOVA with Greenhouse-Geisser correction revealed that neurodivergent participants reported no significant difference in importance between items in STEPS. $F(6.38, 217.02) = 0.62, p = .724, \eta^2 = .02$

Mean importance for each item ranged between 7-7.7 ($SD = 2.66-3.06$)

Therefore all aspects of STEPS were deemed to be very important by neurodivergent people for creating neurodiverse inclusive spaces.



Inclusive Universities Survey: Preliminary Results

Neurodiverse friendly space:

73% wanted a Quiet Space.

57% wanted an Escape Room (for meltdowns, shutdowns, and sensory overload).

33% wanted a Social space.

27% wanted a Sensory room.

Usefulness:

No significant difference ($\chi^2(4) = 0.54, p = .97$) in ranking of usefulness (1-5 most-least useful) of a neurodiverse social group, neurodiversity trained peer mentors, neurodiversity mentors, neurodiverse friendly space on campus, and staff neurodiversity awareness training.

‘All deserve to be ranked... good’`



Conclusion: Lessons for General Application

Wherever possible, inclusion should not rely upon diagnosis and disclosure.

Areas for consideration:

STEPS - Sensory, Timely, Explicit, Predictable, & Social environment.

- Disclosing diagnosis, Project management, Communication styles, Well-being and work-life balance, & Troubleshooting.

Providing a quiet space and/or escape room.

Whether neurodivergent or neurotypical, we are all a part of neurodiversity and deserve an inclusive environment that benefits everyone.

