

A Different Kind of Magic:

Reimagining our Work with Neurodivergent Students and Advisors

Todd Spinner
Senior Academic Advisor
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign





Hello!

I am Todd Spinner

Senior Academic Advisor
School of Chemical Sciences
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
You can find me at www.toddspinner.com



Greetings

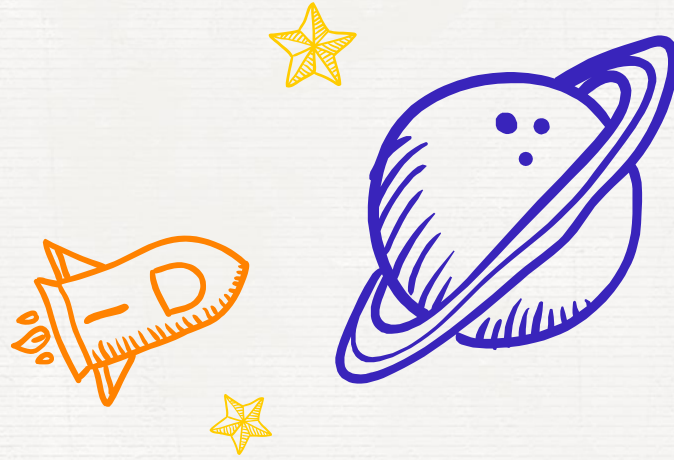
Istonko!

Chehuntamo!



Land Acknowledgement

We are currently on the lands of the Ais, Apalachee, Calusa, Timucua and Tocobago tribes. The Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee (me-co-sue-key) Tribe of Indians of Florida.



Question #1

What is more important to society? Creativity or Cooperation?

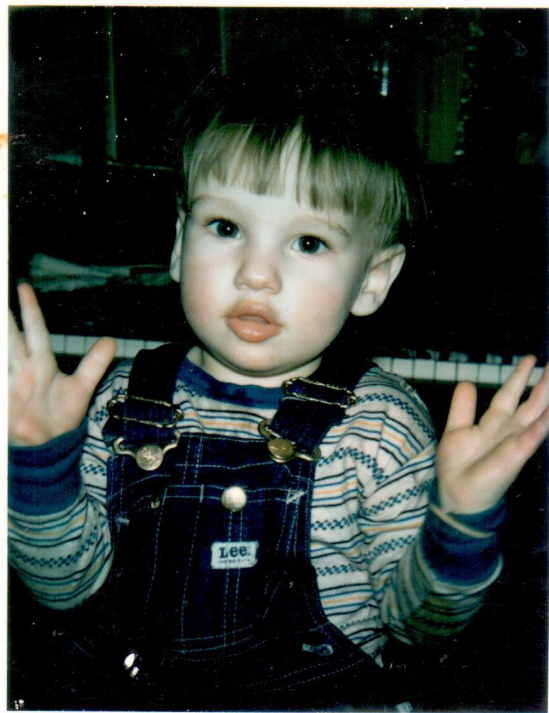




My Story.



My Story.



My Story.



David Plummer

Dave's Garage
and Dave's Attic



1. Neurodivergence

Neurodivergence is the term for when someone's brain processes, learns, and/or behaves differently from what is considered "typical."



2. Neurotypical

Neurotypical is the term for those not affected with a developmental disorder and especially autism spectrum disorder: exhibiting or characteristic of typical neurological development.



What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is a term used to describe the variation in human brain function and cognition.

- x **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**
- x **Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**
- x **Dyslexia**
- x **Tourette syndrome**





Question #2

How many of you have worked with a student with a Neurodiverse student or coworker? How many of you have worked with a student or coworker with ASD?





Count Off!



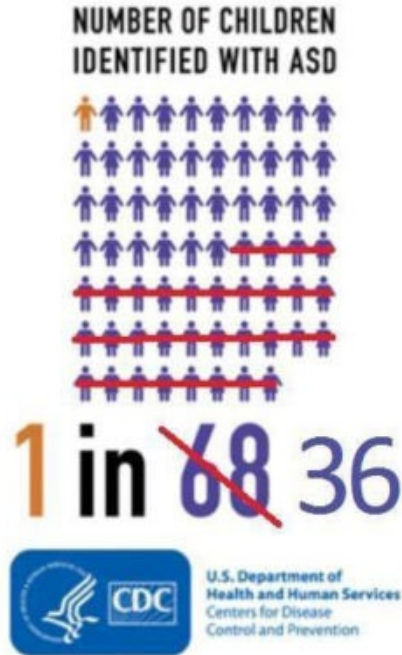
Why do I have to worry about this as an advisor?

Neurodiversity may not be immediately recognizable or visible.

- ✗ About 1 in 5 are thought to have some neurodivergence.
- ✗ About 1 in 68 are thought to be on the ASD spectrum.
 - This is likely to be a low stat as many were not diagnosed as children.



Why do I have to worry about this as an advisor?



Information from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/>

Is Everyone a little autistic?



What is ASD?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- ✗ What is high-functioning autism?
- ✗ There are three levels within ASD and what is considered “high-functioning” would fall in the level one category.
- ✗ High-functioning autism means that a person is able to read, write, speak, and handle daily tasks, such as eating and getting dressed independently.
- ✗ Despite having symptoms of autism, their behavior doesn’t interfere too much with their work, school, or, relationships.



Identifying Characteristics of ASD?

- x **Having Very Focused, Specific Interests.**
- x **Intense interest in objects or topics.**
- x **High focus on details.**
- x **Dependent on routines.**
- x **Social challenges.**



Identifying Characteristics of ASD?

- x Strong dislike of change.
- x High focus on self.
- x You consider yourself to be clumsy who has a hard time with coordination.
- x You want to do things for yourself most of the time, instead of for others.



Identifying Characteristics of ASD?

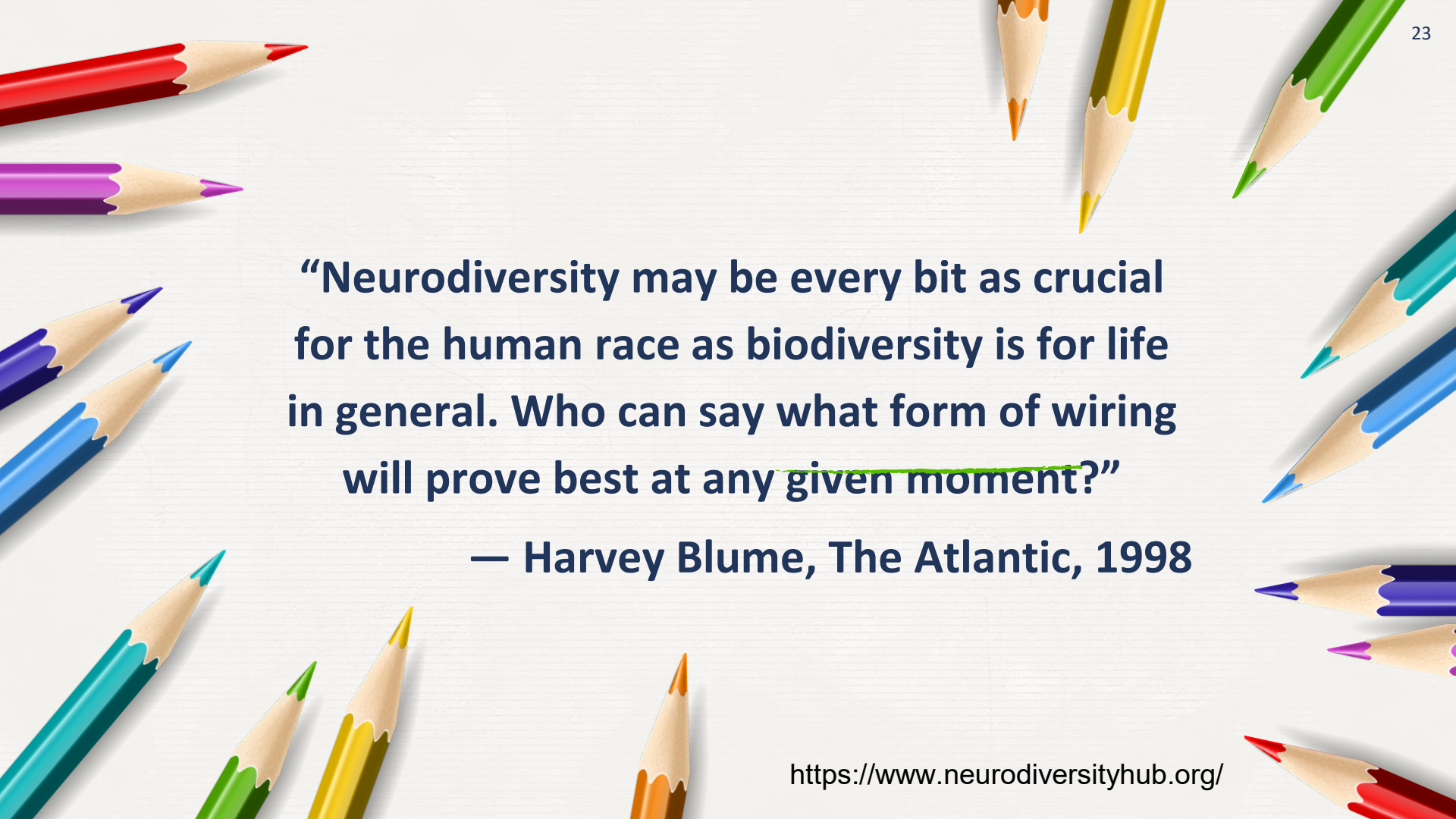
- x **Difficulty Regulating Your Emotions or Behavior**
- x **Intense Feelings About Certain Sensory Experiences (sound, light, smells, tactile sensations)**
- x **A Desire for Control**
- x **Problems Processing Physical Sensations**



Identifying Characteristics of ASD?

- x Some people with ASD struggle to make friends or interact with others.
- x Others have no trouble making friends but prefer to stay home alone rather than go out in public.
- x Other symptoms of high-functioning autism can include a restricted social circle, an unwillingness to share things, and issues with completing group work.



A decorative border of various colored pencils (red, purple, blue, teal, green, yellow, orange) is arranged around the central text, pointing towards the center.

**“Neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial
for the human race as biodiversity is for life
in general. Who can say what form of wiring
will prove best at any given moment?”**

— Harvey Blume, The Atlantic, 1998

Group Project Time!

Just Kidding



2. Working with a Colleague on the Spectrum

It also gives us insight into our students.



Working with a colleague on the spectrum:

- x Universal Design.
- x May have a flat affect.
- x May not understand unwritten social norms.
- x Embrace Structure.
- x Organize meetings.



Working with a colleague on the spectrum:

- x Eye contact can be difficult.
- x Help them navigate change. Make them part of the process.
- x Realize that Neurodivergent colleagues may have meltdowns or express anger.
- x Especially for things they know or feel are right.

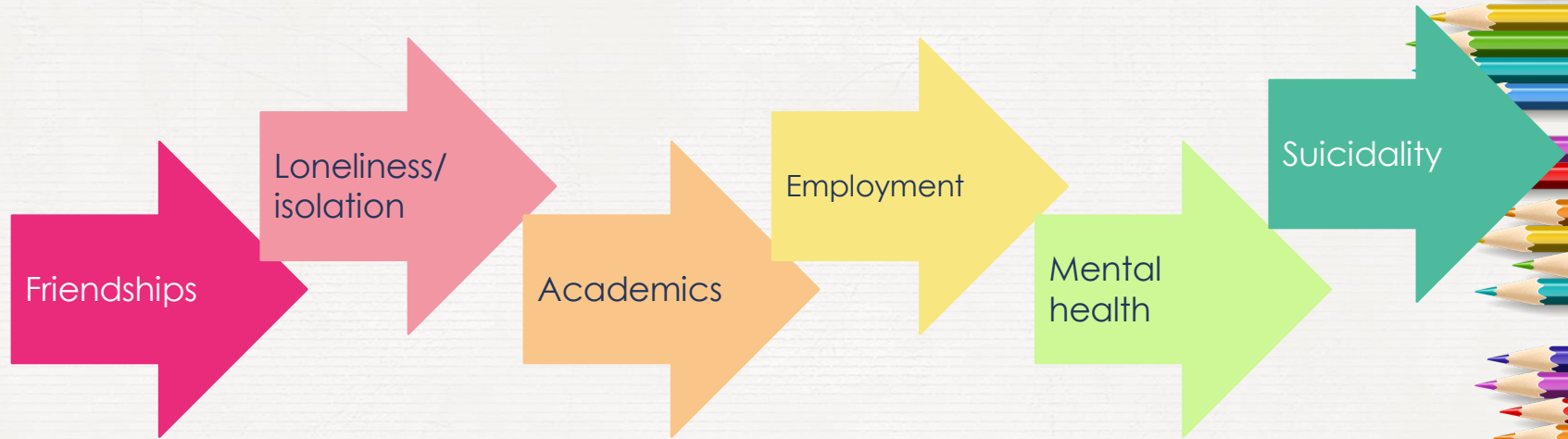


Working with a colleague on the spectrum:

- x **Include your autistic colleague.**
- x **Be sensitive to sensory sensitivities**
- x **Don't speak in riddles or innuendo**
- x **Respect your autistic colleagues' routines & rituals**
- x **Educate yourself and be an ally**



Facts:





So... what do we as
advisors do?



Communicate



3.

Advising Students on the Spectrum





Be mindful of
the sensory
environment

Lights

Sounds

Smells

Time pressure

Temperature

Working with students on the spectrum:

- x Office Setup (Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment)
- x Avoid University Alphabet Soup
- x Clear, concise, step-by-step communication
- x Do you model organization and time management?



Academic advisors can play a vital role in supporting neurodiverse students by:

- x • Being patient and understanding
- x • Offering flexible and individualized support
- x • Connecting students with appropriate resource

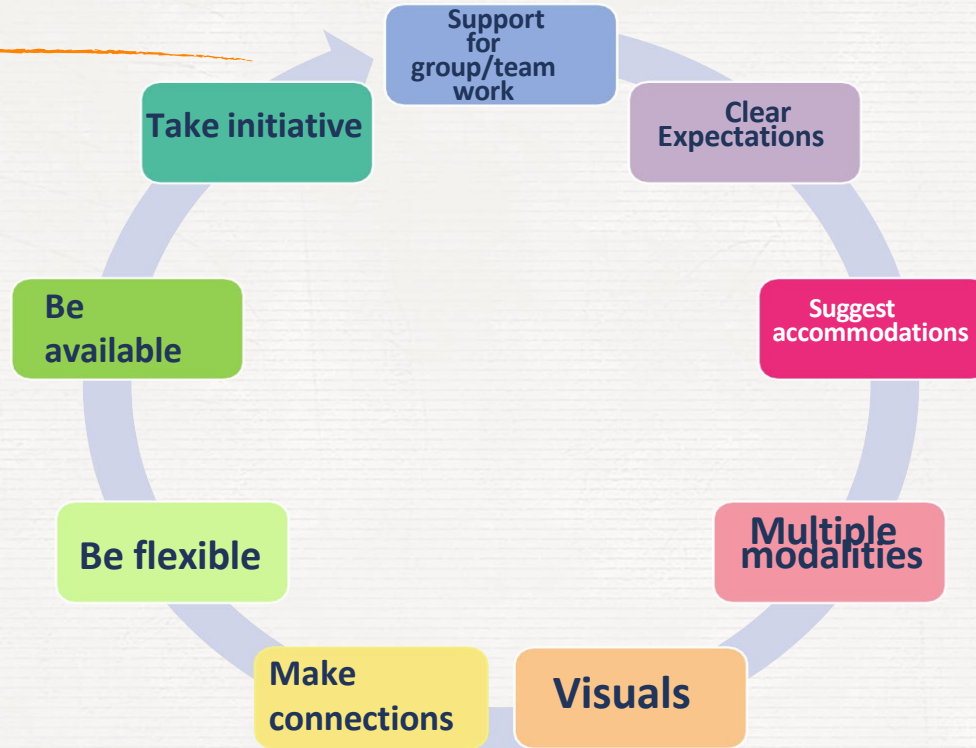


Tips for creating a welcoming and inclusive environment:

- Be aware of your own biases and assumptions about autism.
- Use inclusive language.
- Avoid making assumptions about a student's abilities or needs based on their diagnosis.
- Be respectful of a student's communication style and preferences.
- Suggest students pursue accommodations as needed, such as a quiet place to take exams or breaks during meetings.



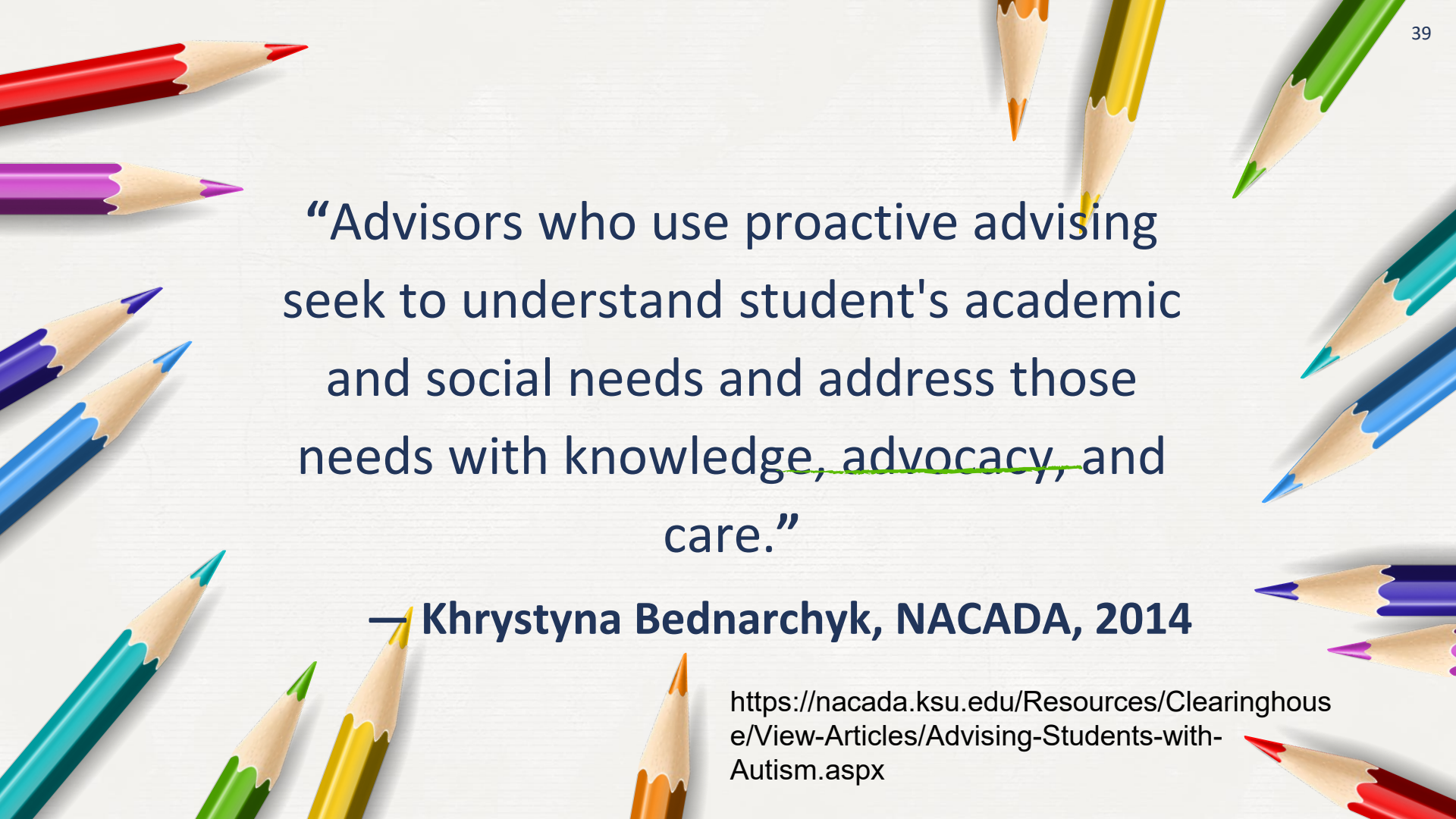
Adapt Your Advising



Tips for being patient and understanding:

- Autistic students may need more time to process information and respond to questions.
- Be understanding if a student needs to take breaks during meetings.
- Be patient if a student has difficulty communicating their needs or thoughts.
- Be patient if students keep coming back for help, support, or clarification.



The background of the slide is white and is decorated with several sharpened colored pencils in various colors including red, purple, blue, teal, green, yellow, and orange. The pencils are arranged in a circular pattern around the central text, with some pointing towards the center and others pointing outwards.

“Advisors who use proactive advising seek to understand student's academic and social needs and address those needs with knowledge, advocacy, and care.”

— **Khrystyna Bednarchyk, NACADA, 2014**

<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advising-Students-with-Autism.aspx>



4. A New Law

State of Illinois May 2023





5. University of Illinois

Neurodiversity Initiatives





TAP at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

TAP is a community-focused program of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Illinois. Our mission is to support children 0-22 and their families, the professionals who serve them, and the greater community through training, group programs, and autism-specific resources. Our Resource Room is housed in the Family Resiliency Center and provides a place where families and professionals can find information, seek referrals, and order customized materials.



ILLINOIS NEURODIVERSITY INITIATIVE

I-N-I

**SUPPORT PROGRAMMING FOR
STUDENTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM**

Supports include:

Courses each semester to promote self-awareness and advocacy as well as executive function and employment skills

Individualized weekly mental health check-ins with the Department of Psychology

Social accountability group

Parent support group

Mentorship program

Corporate engagement/internship opportunities.

Housed in the department of Human Development and Family Studies, I-N-I is run by staff from The Autism Program (TAP) at UIUC with support from the department of Psychology, the University of Illinois Autism Clinic, the College of Engineering, and Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES).



It is anticipated INI will become a fee-based service. Scholarships will be made available.

Funding is provided in whole or in part by The Autism Program of Illinois and the Illinois Dept. of Human Services



The Illinois Neurodiversity Initiative aims to impact neurodivergent students from orientation through graduation to successful employment through academic, social, mental health, and job readiness support.



For more information, please visit:

INI.ILLINOIS.EDU
QUESTIONS?

iniprogram@illinois.edu
217-344-8709



ANNOUNCING Support Programming for Students on the Autism Spectrum

I-N-I

the

Illinois Neurodiversity Initiative

The Illinois Neurodiversity Initiative is a pilot program providing supports tailored neuro divergent students.

The aim of this pilot program is to promote:

mental health | social and academic success | employment readiness

Anticipated supports will include:

- Courses each semester to promote self-awareness and advocacy as well as executive function and employment skills
- Individualized weekly mental health check-ins with the Department of Psychology
- Social accountability group
- Parent support group
- Mentorship program
- Corporate engagement/internship opportunities

Questions?

Contact Dr. Jeanne Kramer

jjkramer@illinois.edu

217.344.8709

It is anticipated that this will become a fee-based service. Scholarships will be made available.

Use QR code to access application.
Applications due July 15, 2022:



https://illinoisaces.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_80MbZFe35LewwJ0



HELLO
MY NAME IS

MY PRONOUNS ARE:

I-N-I PROGRAM *dinner*

Social Group

WHEN: Starts on September, 6 2023

WHERE: CHRISTOPHER HALL

904 W. Nevada Urbana, IL 61801

EVERY WEDNESDAY
DINNER PROVIDED

WHAT: For Neurodiverse Students

who like to.....



Connect with other UIUC students like them



Experience fun places & events across campus



Practice how to make & keep friends

RSVP iniprogram@illinois.edu
or
scan the QR code

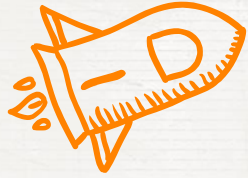




6. What kinds of programs are at your campus?

Neurodiversity Initiatives





Question #1

(10 sec. ASD Test)

What is more important to society? Creativity or Cooperation?



Resources for Advising ASD Students

✗ *Advising Students with Autism.* (2014).

<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advising-Students-with-Autism.aspx>

✗ *Proactive Approaches for Academic Advisors Supporting Students with Autism.* (2018). <https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Proactive-Approaches-for-Academic-Advisors-Supporting-Students-with-Autism.aspx>



University of Illinois Resources

X TAP Program - <https://theautismprogram.illinois.edu/>

X INI Program - <https://ini.illinois.edu/>

X HDFS 199 – Academic Strategies for Neurodivergent Students

Jeanne Kramer - jjkramer@illinois.edu

X Kramer, J. (2023). Neurodiversity Cultural Competency[PowerPoint slides]. From School of Chemical Sciences SCS Graduate Diversity and Program Climate Seminar Series, University of Illinois. (Unpublished).



Other Resources

- X Cnc, A. R. (2023). What does it mean to be neurodivergent? *Verywell Mind*. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-neurodivergence-and-what-does-it-mean-to-be-neurodivergent-5196627>
- X Hall, A. (2022). 22 Symptoms And Signs Of High-Functioning Autism In Adults. *The Minds Journal*. <https://themindsjournal.com/signs-of-high-functioning-autism-in-adults/>
- X *Understanding Asperger Syndrome: A professor's guide*: OAR. Organization for Autism Research. (2022, September 14). <https://researchautism.org/resources/understanding-asperger-syndrome-a-professors-guide/>
- X YouTube. (2021). *The 10 Second Autism Test: What's YOUR Answer?* *YouTube*. Retrieved September 11, 2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?index=26&list=LL&v=fJ9X5DSnVms>.



Other Resources

- X CDC. (2020, January 27). *Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)* | CDC. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/>
- X Cnc, A. R. (2023). What does it mean to be neurodivergent? *Verywell Mind*. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-neurodivergence-and-what-does-it-mean-to-be-neurodivergent-5196627>
- X Hall, A. (2022). 22 Symptoms And Signs Of High-Functioning Autism In Adults. *The Minds Journal*. <https://themindsjournal.com/signs-of-high-functioning-autism-in-adults/>
- X *Understanding Asperger Syndrome: A professor's guide*: OAR. Organization for Autism Research. (2022, September 14). <https://researchautism.org/resources/understanding-asperger-syndrome-a-professors-guide/>
- X YouTube. (2021). *The 10 Second Autism Test: What's YOUR Answer?* YouTube. Retrieved September 11, 2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?index=26&list=LL&v=fJ9X5DSnVms>.





Thanks!

Any questions?

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spinner@illinois.edu