



Applying a neuroinclusive lens to standards development

Review our practices

Neurodivergent people in Canada and around the world face many different barriers in education, employment and everyday life. Policies, practices and built environments have been created historically with the needs of only neurotypical people in mind—excluding many people who have different ways of learning and perceiving the world.

Our research and resulting work are intended to help spread awareness and understanding of the benefits of considering neuroinclusivity when developing standards. In this document, we present the five practices we recommend anyone involved in standards development consider when doing their work.

HOW WE CREATED THESE RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

We derived these practices from our research, literature reviews, environmental scans, consultations and interviews with standards development professionals and members of the neurodivergent community. We held:

59



Consultations with neurodivergent Canadians about the barriers and facilitators they face in everyday life.

14



Consultations with individuals who work in standards development to seek their input on our development of these recommended practices and curation of resources.

By incorporating our five recommended practices into your standards-development process, you can contribute to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to access, learning and participation that many experience every day.

REVIEW OUR RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

1

Use education to improve awareness, reduce stigma, address attitudinal barriers and adjust neurotypical expectations related to neurodivergence to increase neuroinclusivity.

To build a more inclusive and understanding environment for neurodivergent individuals within standards development processes, we recommend:

1. Implementing educational and training programs on neurodivergence among individuals involved in standards development.
2. Engaging with neurodivergent individuals.
3. Fostering empathy and understanding.
4. Disseminating key educational resources.
5. Using mindful language.

2

Ensure that diverse and neurodivergent voices are involved in research and standards development.

To engage in a more inclusive and representative process that better addresses the needs and experiences of neurodivergent individuals, we recommend:

1. Recruiting neurodivergent individuals for technical committees.
2. Seeking input from neurodivergent individuals during public review.
3. Promoting diversity among standards creators.

3

Reduce ambiguity in communication, processes and procedures.

To develop more inclusive and accessible processes and outcomes that effectively reduce barriers for neurodivergent individuals and others, we recommend:

1. Creating simple, flexible, transparent and easy-to-understand standards.
2. Adopting universal and inclusive design principles.
3. Accounting for different communication styles.
4. Simplifying materials for public and standards-development committees.
5. Providing clear directions and instructions with accessible visual design and plain language.
6. Distributing work materials in advance, and sharing written agendas before and after meetings.
7. Designating support personnel to assist throughout the standards development process.

4

Recognize and accommodate the sensory needs of neurodivergent people.

To create more inclusive and supportive environments that enhance the well-being and participation of all users, we recommend:

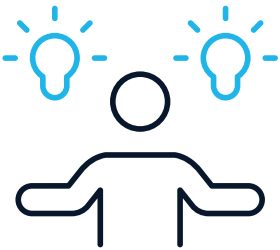
1. Redesigning built environments with sensory needs in mind.
2. Designing quiet, sensory-free spaces that provide minimal stimulation.

5

Design proactively and be responsive to the needs of neurodivergent people.

To consider the diverse needs of neurodivergent individuals in the content and process of standards development, we recommend:

1. Empowering neurodivergent participation and allowing flexibility.
2. Offering accommodations without barriers.
3. Accepting and encouraging personalized resources that people may need to navigate society.
4. Designing with the experiences, needs and strengths of neurodivergence in mind from the outset.



KEEP LEARNING ABOUT NEUROINCLUSIVITY

We recommend you become familiar with neuroinclusivity, neurodivergence and neurodiversity before you begin your standards development process. Ongoing education is key to help you grow your understanding of the space and the importance of considering neuroinclusivity in your work. We encourage you to keep learning about neuroinclusivity by actively listening to other people's perspectives.