Applying a neuroinclusive lens to standards development

Create more inclusive and accessible standards

Being neurodivergent means having a mind that works differently from societal norms. Approximately 20 percent of Canadians are neurodivergent, which typically includes such neurotypes as autism, ADHD and dyslexia.

These people can face many barriers in education, employment and daily life. Yet neurodivergent disabilities and identities are mostly invisible, meaning barriers may be overlooked in the standards development process.

GREAT MINDS THINK DIFFERENTLY

This tipsheet is designed to help standards developers make neuroinclusivity a routine consideration in their work on all types of standards.

Download these three factsheets for helpful background on neuroinclusivity, related terms and their value in standards development.

Understand neuroinclusivity

Learn important information about neuroinclusivity

Review our practices

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU:

• Identify current accessibility and inclusivity gaps in your standards development process.

• Leverage existing networks and communities to find neurodivergent individuals willing to participate in your standards development process.

• Provide training to your team to increase awareness and understanding of neurodivergence.

5 STEPS TO A MORE MINDFUL STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

By taking a neuroinclusive approach to your standards development process, you enable as many people as possible to contribute their voices, ideas, work and value to our society. You're helping to dismantle barriers that have excluded many people from full and equal participation.

1. PLAN AND SCOPE

Task: Ensure neurodivergent perspectives are considered from the start of the planning process.

Action: Include neurodivergent individuals in your planning team and consult them on scoping decisions.

2. RESEARCH AND DRAFT

Task: Select research methods that help gather insights from neurodivergent individuals.

Action: Conduct surveys, interviews and focus groups specifically targeting neurodivergent populations.

3. CONSULT AND REVIEW

Task: Make your consultation process accessible to neurodivergent individuals.

Action: Provide multiple ways for people to give feedback (e.g., written, verbal, visual) and ensure the environment is sensory friendly.

4. FINALIZE AND PUBLISH

Task: Incorporate accessibility features into the final standards document.

Action: Ensure the document is available in multiple formats (e.g., plain text, audio, video) and that it adheres to web accessibility standards.

5. IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE

Task: Measure the impact of your standards on neurodivergent individuals.

Action: Establish metrics for evaluating the inclusivity of your standards and regularly collect feedback from neurodivergent users.

PERSONAL INSIGHTS AND ROLE-SPECIFIC APPLICATION

As you learn more about neuroinclusivity, make note of your key insights and observations. Reflect on how these insights can inform your standards development process.

Educational insights

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Role-specific reflections

Think about your specific role in the standards development process. How can you consider neuroinclusivity within the context of your role? What are some specific actions you can take?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WE ALL THINK DIFFERENTLY

Our goal is to help you create standards that reflect the diverse needs and experiences of all people, shaping environments in which everyone can thrive. By using this tipsheet and actively reflecting on your learning, you are making the standards development process more inclusive and accessible for neurodivergent individuals. You're crafting more targeted and relevant standards by calling on the experience of neurodivergent individuals in the development process.

KEEP LEARNING

1. Continue to review and apply the insights and reflections you have documented.

2. Encourage your team to share learnings and experiences to build a strong collective understanding of neuroinclusivity.

3. Keep updating this tipsheet as your understanding of neurodivergence deepens.

4. Factor neuroinclusivity into the continuous process-improvement loop to review the way you develop standards, identify areas for change and revise as necessary.

5. Continue to educate yourself and your team about neurodiversity and inclusivity.

6. Share these resources—and your growing knowledge on neuroinclusivity—with the broader standards development community.

Thank you for your efforts to learn more and applying your knowledge to support a more inclusive and accessible world for everyone.