



Applying a neuroinclusive lens to standards development

Interview with a standards developer



Meet Tracy White

Tracy is an autistic artist, researcher, writer and public servant. Her experience includes working in regulatory and policy development and analysis. She also sat on technical committees, including Accessibility Standards Canada's Transportation Standards Committee. More recently, Tracy has been a principal investigator in a project that pilots intermediate care for homeless and vulnerably housed populations after inpatient psychiatric treatment.

To improve the quality of life for people like herself, she applies a lived-experience lens to standards development. Tracy believes that creating greater understanding of mental-health needs is crucial in a system that doesn't traditionally accommodate different ways of thinking. For her, education about neurodivergence, neurodiversity and neuroinclusivity is a first step to achieve systemic change.

Read Tracy's perspectives on how neuroinclusivity can be considered more actively in standards development to benefit the widest range of people, learning styles and experiences.

Q&A

1 What do neurodiversity, neurodivergence and neuroinclusivity mean for standards development?

Neurodiversity, neurodivergence and neuroinclusivity are fairly new terms in standards development, but their meaning is incredibly relevant to the creation of inclusive standards. I believe it is key for standards developers to explicitly define these terms to eliminate ambiguity around their meaning as they relate to the product, service or environment in which the standards apply.

2 What role do standards developers play in our effort to create neuroinclusive products, services and spaces?

Developers play a critical role in efforts to create neuroinclusive products, services and spaces because they set the criteria by which organizations must subsequently include those considerations in the design of products, services and spaces. In addition, should standards developers be themselves neurodivergent, or include neurodivergent voices in the development of standards, it enables a lived-experience lens to inform their development as well.

3

Why is it important to prioritize neuroinclusivity when developing standards, and what are the benefits of doing so?

Prioritizing neuroinclusivity when developing standards benefits not only neurodivergent people; it benefits everyone at large because it makes products, services and spaces around us accessible to the widest range of people. It's also important to prioritize neuroinclusivity in standards development as neurodivergent voices have not historically been included in the design of products, services and spaces—and keeping it top of mind in standards development ensures that lens is more consistently applied going forward.

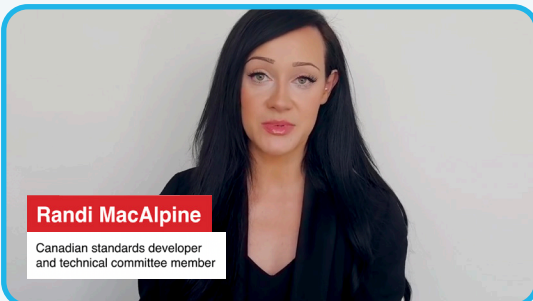
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What is a neuroinclusive approach to standards development, and how can standards developers make neuroinclusivity a regular consideration?

A neuroinclusive approach to standards development is one that involves neurodivergent individuals within development teams, and also provides accessible means in which public users can provide feedback on general principles or even draft standards. In addition, providing opportunities to engage in open, transparent dialogue both during the development of standards, and following their implementation fosters positive relationships between standards developers and those affected by those standards in their daily life.

LOOKING AHEAD

Everyone has a different way of communicating and experiencing the world. Standards must meet important inclusivity criteria, and account for different disabilities and ways of thinking, to serve people properly. We strongly encourage you to make neurodivergent people active participants in the conversation.



If you haven't already, please watch our video interviews with another standards professional to get a different perspective on neuroinclusivity in standards development.



[Watch the video interview with Randi MacAlpine](#)

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