



Module 2 - Inclusive Communication and Interaction

Neüiro Dem

Verein zur sozialen und beruflichen **INTEGRATION**
VSBI e.V.



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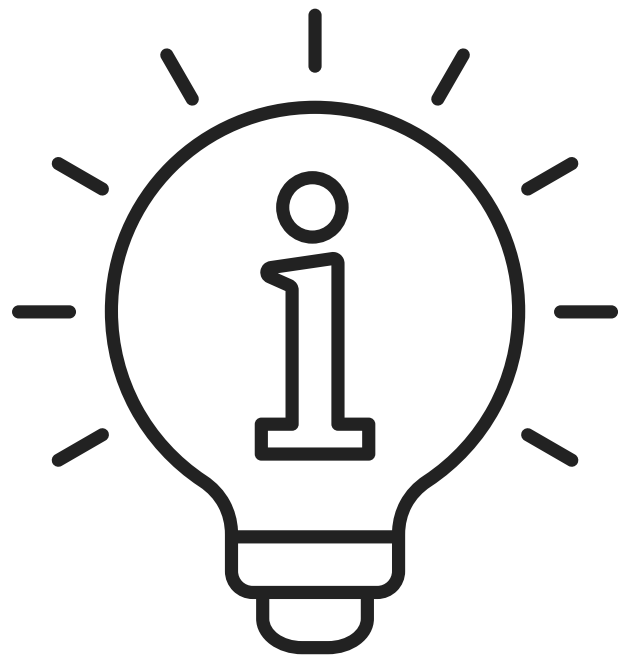
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Overview

Introduction	15 Minutes
Communication styles and barriers	60 Minutes
Break	15 Minutes
Inclusive and discrimination-sensitive language	60 Minutes
Break	15 Minutes
Creation of an accessible work environment	60 Minutes
Reflexion	15 Minutes



Introduction: My communication style



People communicate differently and therefore experience different communication barriers; these barriers are found in all people, not just neurodivergent individuals.

The aim of this exercise is to introduce the topic and raise initial awareness.

Introduction: My communication style

Answer these questions for yourself

- Which communication methods work well for me?
- Which communication situations or styles irritate me?
- What are my needs or preferences?

Note down 2 to 4 characteristics of your own communication style.

Duration: 5 Minutes

Introduction: My communication style

Now find people who have similar communication preferences or use different communication styles.

Form pairs or small groups in which you discuss:

- How are our communication styles similar?
- How do they differ?
- Which situations work well for some but poorly for others?
- What can we learn from these differences for our communication with each other?

Duration: 10 Minutes



Communication

STYLES AND BARRIERS

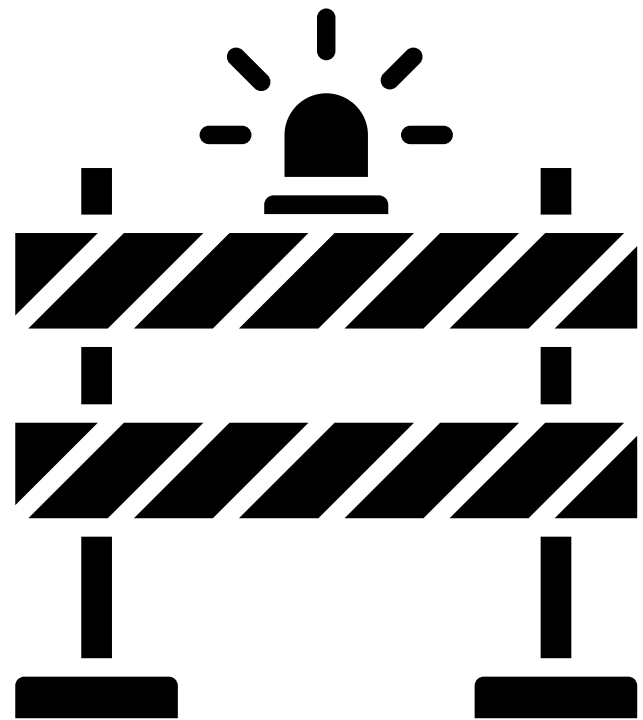
What is inclusive communication?

- Everyone must be able to access, understand, and process information
- Many current communication practices exclude neurodivergent people
- Inclusive communication prevents misunderstandings and reduces stereotypes
- Needs must be respected individually — no generalising to a whole group
- Avoidance of prejudiced, stereotypical or discriminatory language

How do communication barriers occur?

- **Neurodivergent** communication tends to be direct, literal, and focused on content
- **Neurotypical** communication is often indirect, implied, and relationship-focused
- Sources of misunderstandings
 - Frequent use of metaphors, idioms, and proverbs
 - Literal interpretation may cause confusion or processing challenges
 - Lack of explicit information can make tasks unclear

Consequences of communication barriers



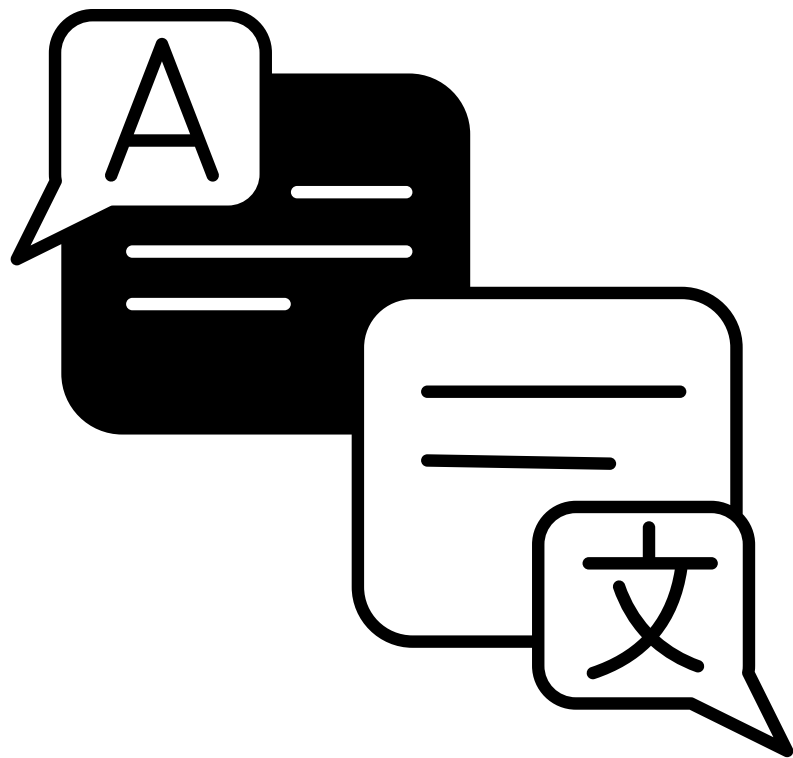
These differences can lead to:

- misunderstandings
- frustration
- overwhelm
- incorrect assumptions about rudeness or intention

The Double Empathy Problem

- Neurodivergent people are often mistakenly assumed to lack empathy
- But: they often show empathy differently (e.g., sharing personal experiences)
- This may be misinterpreted by neurotypical people as self-centred
- Double empathy problem: Both groups struggle to understand the other's style of empathy → Misunderstandings occur on both sides

Inclusive language



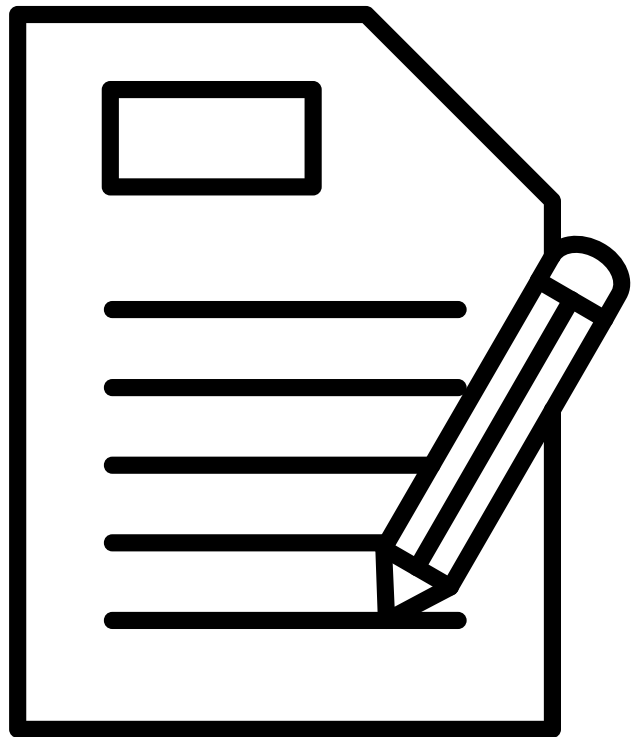
Clear Language

- Use clear, concise, structured wording
- Avoid metaphors, idioms, unnecessary details
- Direct language → clarity and predictability

Supportive Tools

- Symbols/pictograms
- Digital/visual communication options

Inclusive working materials



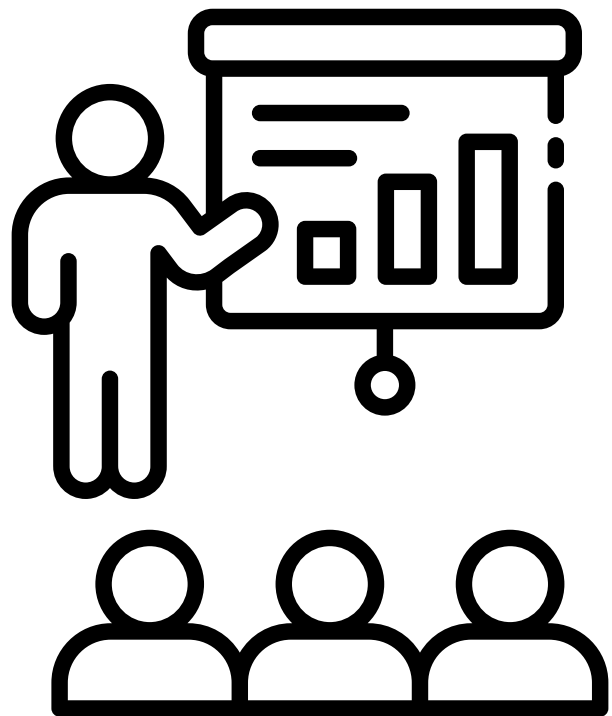
Accessible Design

- Simple structure: headings, short paragraphs, bullet points
- Add overview and summary

Layout

- Sans serif fonts (Arial, Calibri, Verdana)
- Calm single-colour background
- Avoid long texts, bright colours, busy shapes

Inclusive presentations



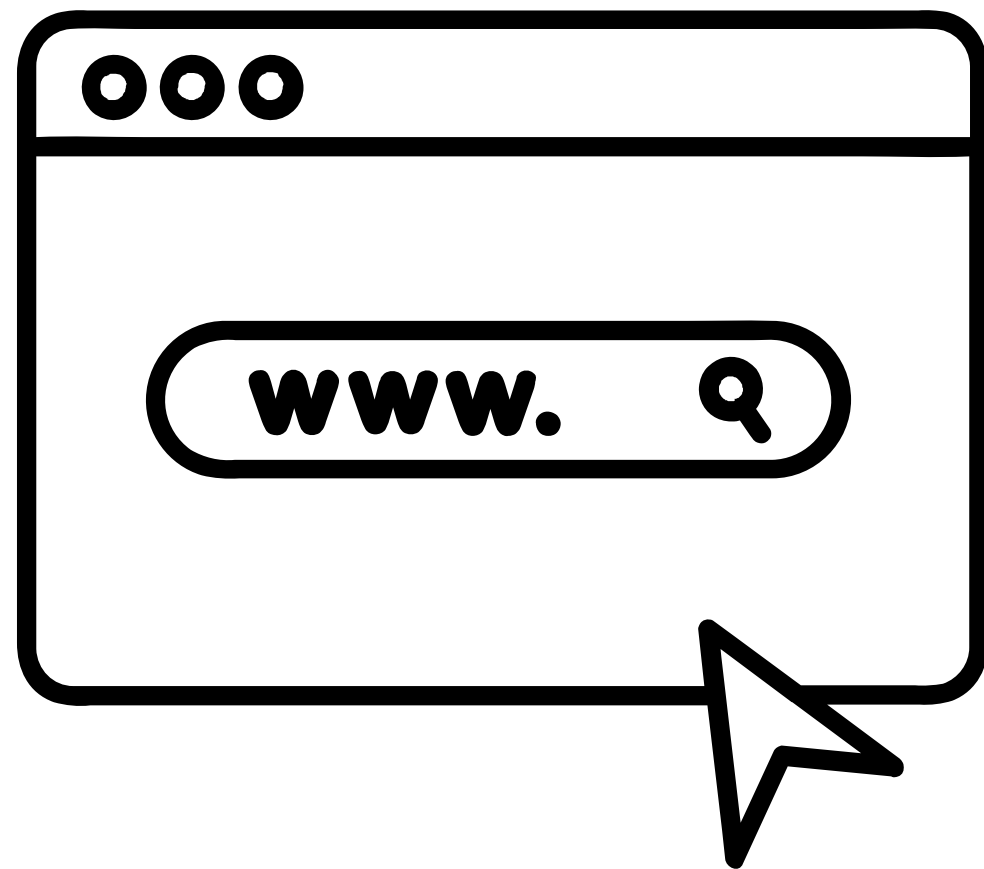
Key Principles

- Combine text, speech, and visuals (two-sense principle)
- Share materials via several channels

Extras

- Offer additional resources afterwards

Inclusive websites and digital content



Design

- Simple navigation
- High contrast, sans serif fonts
- Avoid bright colours and auto-playing media

User Options

- Adjustable text size, spacing, colours
- Supports keyboard/voice input
- Allow disabling animations
- Provide visual or audio alternatives

Inclusive group work



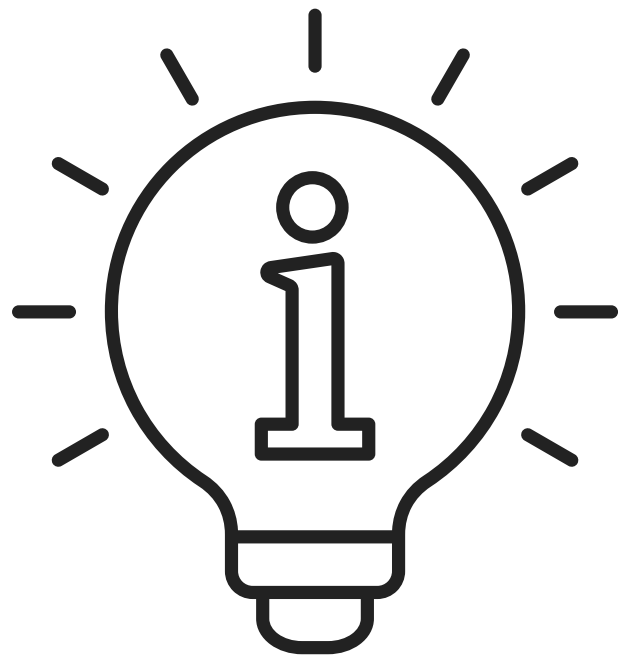
Inclusive Group Work

- Clear time and task structure
- Flexibility: group choice, option to work alone

Facilitation

- Support conflict resolution
- Allow enough time and breaks

Exercise: Communication Map



Every person has different communication needs and preferences. Even though the communication needs of neurodivergent people are similar, they cannot be generalized.

This exercise aims to show you a way to ask a group about their communication needs.

Exercise: Communication Map

There are four posters around the room:

- Language
- Materials
- Environment and Sensory Aspects
- Activities and Methods

Exercise: Communication Map

Walk between the posters in small groups or alone and add sticky notes with:

- What supports understanding?
- What makes communication easier?
- What practices prevent confusion?
- What helps them follow group processes?

Duration: 25 Minutes

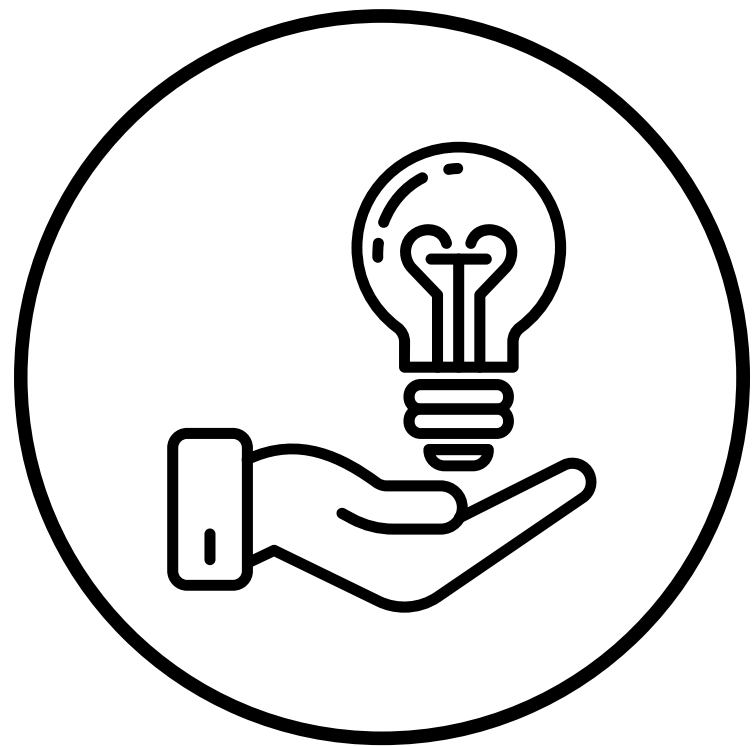
Exercise: Communication Map

Now, similar answers are grouped together and the group's needs are summarised.

This becomes the co-created list of inclusive communication needs for the workshop or future work.

Duration: 15 Minutes

Conclusion: Inclusive Communication



- Think beyond language: include multiple modes of communication
- Use clear structure, visual support, and explicit instructions
- Adapt communication methods to support different processing needs

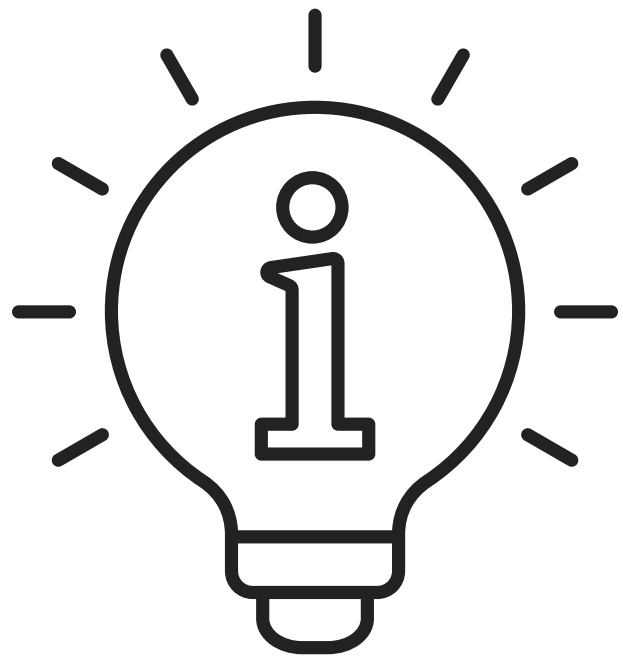


Break (15 Minutes)



INCLUSIVE AND DISCRIMINATION-SENSITIVE Language

Introduction: Inclusive Language



Language shapes reality, or as Mark Twain once said: 'The difference between the almost right word and the right word is really a large matter. 'tis the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning

After this session, you will have a better understanding of the power of language and its influence on reality. You will also have the opportunity to reflect on your own use of language.

Introduction: The power of language

Scan the Code and answer the following question:

How does language affect us?

What meaning does it hold for me?

Duration (5 Minutes)



<https://www.menti.com/al1yqdgiqtzz>

Introduction: The power of language

Look at the results of the word cloud together.

You have the opportunity to explain certain terms or share your thoughts with the others.

Duration: 5 Minutes

Exercise: Words that shape reality

Think of one word or phrase you have heard about neurodivergent people that shapes how society sees them.

Write 1–2 examples anonymously, collect them in a bowl or a hat and place them on the wall/board under: “Words that shape reality”

Now group the examples together.

Duration: 10 Minutes

Exercise: Words that shape reality

Think of one word or phrase you have heard about neurodivergent people that shapes how society sees them.

Write 1–2 examples anonymously and place them on the wall/board under: “Words that shape reality”

→ **Language reflects power structures and can reinforce or challenge ableism.**

Exercise: Words that shape reality

You can work alone or in a group

Each group chooses 3–4 terms from the warm-up board and discusses:

- What message does this term send about neurodivergent people?
- Which disability model does it come from? (medical vs social)
- How might it impact self-image, mental health, or societal attitudes?

Summarise findings on a poster titled: “Impact on reality”

Duration: 10 Minutes

Exercise: Words that shape reality

In the same groups, you now transform analysed terms into neuroaffirming language:

- a) Replace: Exchange deficit-based terms for affirming ones: e.g. "Stereotypy" → "stimming"
- b) Reframe: Move from the idea of normal vs abnormal to: e. g. part of human variation
- c) Personal preference: Individuals write how they identify (optional)

Duration: 10 Minutes

Exercise: Words that shape reality

Collective Reflection

Briefly reflect on these questions:

- Which terms felt empowering or relieving?
- Which ones were hard to transform — and why?
- What did you learn about how language creates or limits possibilities?

Duration: 5 Minutes



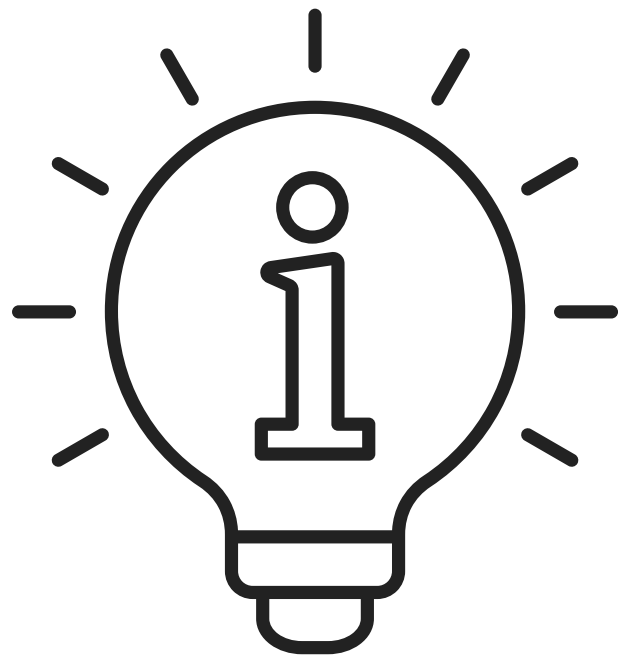
Break (15 Minutes)



ACCESSIBLE

Working Environments

Introduction: Which aspects relate to accessibility?



When it comes to accessibility, the physical level is typically considered. However, there are many other barriers that are often overlooked and that can make participation difficult or impossible for some people.

The aim of this exercise is to broaden your perspective on accessibility and sharpen your awareness of accessibility with regard to neurodivergent people.

Exercise: Which aspects relate to accessibility?

Everyone receives cards depicting different aspects of accessibility. Sort these cards into different categories, either individually, in pairs or in groups.

The categories are the following:

- Physical accessibility
- Sensory accessibility
- Organisational/social accessibility
- Communicative accessibility

Duration: 10 Minutes

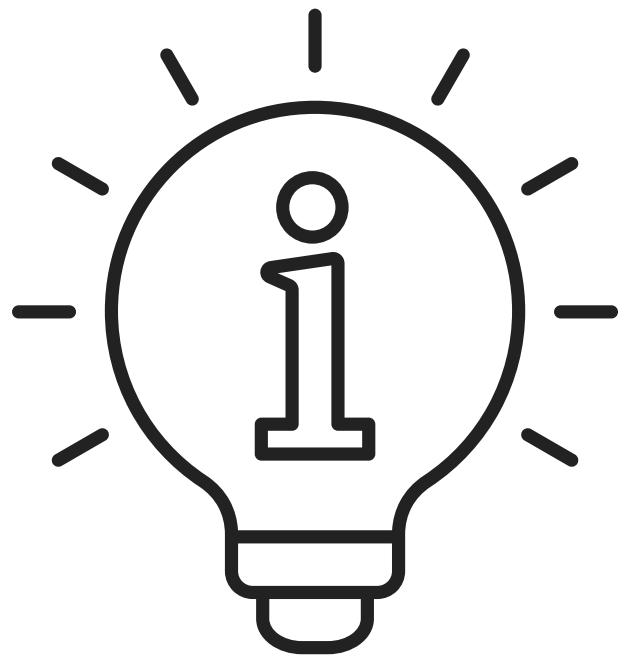
Exercise: Which aspects relate to accessibility?

Once the various aspects of accessibility have been assigned to the different categories, please reflect on the following questions individually, in pairs or in groups:

- Which aspects did we find difficult to classify? What could be the reason for this?
- Which aspects are often overlooked in workshops/seminars, etc.?
- What does accessibility mean for neurodivergent people?

Duration: 10 Minutes

Introduction: Creation of an accessibility checklist



Now that you have learned about different aspects of accessibility, the next step is to apply what you have learned to your work with neurodivergent young people.

The aim of this task is to create a checklist that takes into account the various aspects of accessibility and serves as a basis for preparing the NeuroDem Labs.

Exercise: Creation of an accessibility checklist

The respective categories of accessibility from the previous exercise are noted on four flipcharts. You can work individually, in pairs or in groups and each choose a category. Your task is now to note down important aspects of accessibility for the upcoming labs in the form of a checklist. The aspects from the previous exercise are supplemented by experiences from your own practice and, if necessary, from the internet.

Duration: 20 Minutes

Exercise: Creation of an accessibility checklist

Now present the group's results. If anyone does not wish to present themselves, the facilitator will do so. The other participants can add to the individual categories. A volunteer notes down all the results in a shared document (digital or analogue), which can be used by everyone at the end for the NeuroDem Labs.

Duration: 15 Minutes

Reflection



Reflect the following questions for yourself:

- What are the key insights I gained from this module, and how have they changed or expanded my previous understanding of the topic?
- In which specific situations can I apply what I have learned, and where do I still feel uncertain or need further clarification?
- What questions have emerged for me, and what would be the next steps to deepen my understanding further?

Duration: 15 Minutes



THANK
YOU!