Neurodivergence in one page

What it is

What is neurodivergence?

Neurodivergence is an everyday, non-medical word for a brain that works differently from most, as in ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia or Tourette syndrome. It is not a diagnosis. Each condition under it is assessed and diagnosed on its own.

- Neurodivergent is a word, not a diagnosis
- It covers ADHD, autism, dyslexia and more
- Each condition is assessed on its own

The signs

What are the signs of neurodivergence?

There is no single sign, because neurodivergence is an umbrella word. The signs belong to each condition under it: trouble with focus in ADHD, social and sensory differences in autism, reading in dyslexia, coordination in dyspraxia, and tics in Tourette syndrome.

- Each condition has its own signs
- Signs usually show up in childhood
- Signs that last and get in the way count most

How a diagnosis happens

What happens in a first assessment appointment?

A first assessment appointment is mostly conversation: the clinician asks about your history, from childhood to now, and how things affect daily life. There is rarely a single test. You may be asked to bring old school reports or fill in questionnaires beforehand. Expect it to run longer than a normal appointment, and to be the start of a process, not the end of it.

- Mostly conversation, not one test
- Bring old reports if you have them
- Others' views are often asked for

Treatment

Why is "the environment" the treatment for so much of this?

The environment counts as treatment because many of the difficulties in this hub come from a mismatch between a person and their surroundings, not only from the person. Reducing noise, giving extra time, offering written instructions or a quiet space can lower the daily impact of dyspraxia, developmental language disorder or tics as much as, or more than, therapy alone.

- The environment can be the biggest factor

Medication

Is there medication for dyslexia?

No. There is no medicine that treats dyslexia itself, because dyslexia is a difference in how the brain processes written language, not a chemical imbalance a drug can correct. Support comes from structured literacy teaching and allied health input, such as speech pathology, matched to how you or your child learns to read and spell.

- No medicine treats dyslexia directly

Who can prescribe, and on what conditions, differs by state and territory. See the pages on your state at haihealth.au/blog/neurodivergence.

What it costs

What does a learning assessment cost?

A learning assessment for conditions like dyslexia or dyspraxia in Australia has no standard price and no Medicare rebate, so cost varies a lot between providers. It usually depends on who does it, psychologist, speech pathologist or occupational therapist, and whether the fee includes the written report and a feedback appointment. Ask for a full quote before you commit.

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Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467. Free counselling by phone or video, any hour.

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From haihealth.au/blog/neurodivergence, 28 October 2026