UNDERSTANDING

NEURODIVERSITY IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

Different Ways of Learning and Thinking

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WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

A framework that encompasses and understands the neurological differences among groups of people that affect brain development, information processing, and social interaction as natural variances rather than deficits to be corrected.

WHY UNDERSTANDING MATTERS

- Bridge to Adulthood
- Promotes Empathy and Acceptance
- Encourages Inclusivity
- Complex and Critical Demands
- Protects Mental Health
- Fosters Self-Advocacy
- Closes the Gap



Students You Might See in Class

- The Impulsive Student
- The Distracted Student
- The Hyperactive Student
- The Inattentive Student
- The Anti-Social Student
- The Overly Social Student





Impulsive Students Strategies that Help

Create structure- outline expectations and procedures.

Teach calming techniques and strategies

Explain the real-life consequences of impulsive behaviors

Discuss differences between impulsive and non-impulsive behaviors or decisions

Let Them MOVE!

Ask them what helps them.

Strategies for the Distracted or Inattentive Student

- Frequent feedback and attention to positive behavior
- Make assignments & expectations clear
- Visual reminders & cues
- Use organizational tools
- Provide choices to show mastery
- Minimize Distractions





Helping the Hyperactive Student

- Create a low-distraction work area
- Provide structure
- Frequent Breaks and Jobs
- Break down tasks

Helping Anti-Social and Overly Social Students

Use non-verbal communication tools

Offer multiple pathways to participate

Respect quiet boundaries

Challenges with routines

Designated Partner Talk

Assign Verbal Jobs

Subtle Redirection

Pause and Reset



Other Strategies



Body Doubling

Habit stacking

Anchoring

Partner

Low frequency sounds

BARRIERS

Rigid Curricula and Assessment Models
Limited Teacher Training and Resources
Sensory Overload in the Physical Environment
Executive-Function Demands
Writing and Output Bottlenecks
Social Stigma and Unclear Expectations

What Schools Can Do

High schools can support general education teachers with neurodiverse students by changing school-wide systems so teachers do not have to carry the load alone.





What Administration Can Do

High school administration can support general education teachers working with neurodiverse students through systemic structure, professional resources, environmental adjustments, and collaborative staffing models.

THOUGHTS OR QUESTIONS?



Thank you for coming!!