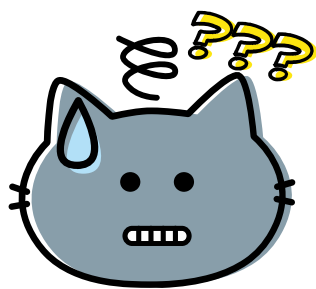


# Therapist Neurodiversity Collective International

• Therapy • Advocacy • Education •  
Established January 2018

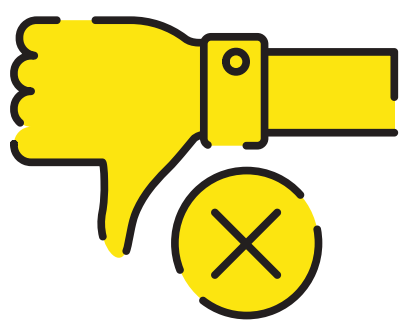
## What is ableism?

Ableism is the overt and covert discrimination and social prejudice against humans with physical, intellectual, communicative or psychiatric disabilities, people with neurological differences and neurodivergent populations. Ableists believe harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations about people with disabilities. Ableism is entrenched in the presumption that neurodivergent and/or disabled people are "broken" and need to be "fixed." Ableism presumes that the non-disabled and/or neuromajority are superior or elite forms of human beings, and because of that neurodivergent populations and others with disabilities should aspire to be like them, and receive therapy to imitate them.



## What does ableism look like?

- Curing neurodivergence/eugenics
- Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)
- Therapy goals for "normalization" or "cure" of neurodivergence
- Assuming that all disabled people want to be cured
- "Light it up Blue" campaign, "Autism Awareness"
- Failure to consider, and provide for equitable access and inclusion in all settings
- Demeaning disabled people with labels (e.g. "spaz," "retard," "psycho." or making insults such as "Take your meds.")
- Functioning labels: "high functioning/low functioning"
- People first - "person with Autism" vs identity first "Autistic" (ask the neurodivergent person their preference)
- Failure to Presume Competence
- Requiring prerequisites or gate-keeping access to AAC
- Failure to respect self-determination and body-autonomy
- Feeling entitled to knowing how people are disabled, or how they became disabled, or how they feel about being disabled
- Stereotypes: "The only disability is a bad attitude." "Just try and you can do it." "Ignore it, it's not that bad."
- Assuming all disabilities are visible
- Infantilizing disabled people
- Promoting "inspirational porn"
- Ridiculing or mocking disabled people, those with communication differences, or neurodivergent differences



## Why is ableism bad?

It devalues, dehumanizes, and disrespects human beings. It causes trauma, invites shame, leads to poor self-esteem, anxiety and depression. It keeps disabled people in perpetual childhood, eliminating equitable access and self-determination. It violates body autonomy.

## What can we do about Ableism?

- Be a good ally - speak up and advocate against ableism
- Shift therapeutic focus from a pathology framework to one of neurodiversity
- Stop posting inspiration porn. Stories and videos like these are ableist "feel good" neuromajority entertainment, at the expense of infantilizing disabled people
- Support the Neurodiversity Movement; educate peers, parents and the public
- Include people with disabilities at the table as equal partners, including research teams
- Treat people with respect and dignity - talk with them, not at them, and if they are non-speaking, don't talk about them as if they are not present
- Always ask someone before helping them. Don't tell disabled people that you "will pray for them" unless they invite you to do so
- Do not touch disabled people without their permission - Ever
- Stop using disability labels as insults
- Don't infantilize the disabled (this includes using the sing-song, chirpy voices many therapists use with disabled people and the elderly)
- Be aware of accessibility challenges and advocate for change
- Respect space, and honor self-determination and body autonomy at all times
- Ensure equitable access, inclusion and opportunity
- Accept all communicative attempts as valid communication. Respect "NO" "Stop"
- Presume competence. Uphold human dignity

**TAKE ACTION**

