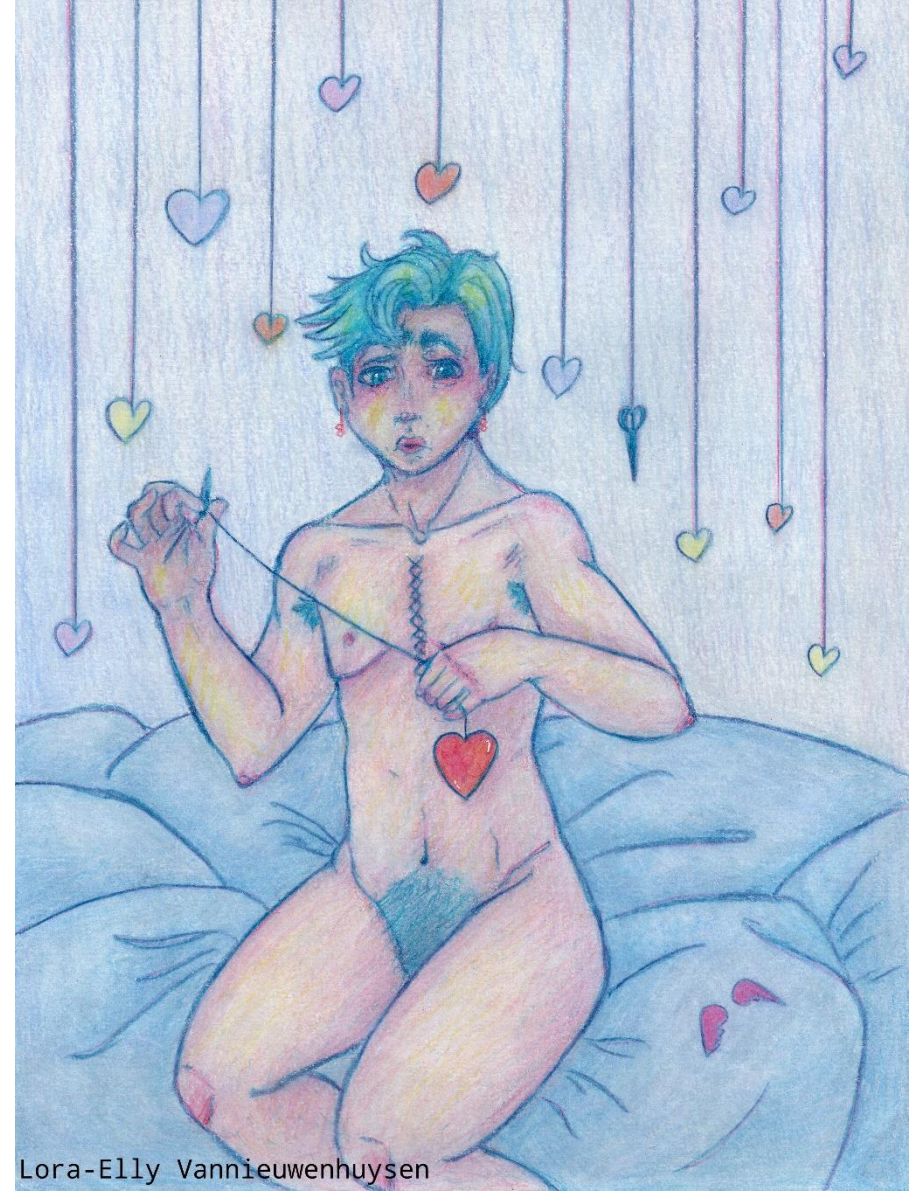


# Neurodiversity and queer identity

Lora-Elly Vannieuwenhuysen

# Structure

- Who am I?
- Neurodiversity in general
- Autism
- Autism and gender identity
- Contact



# Who am I

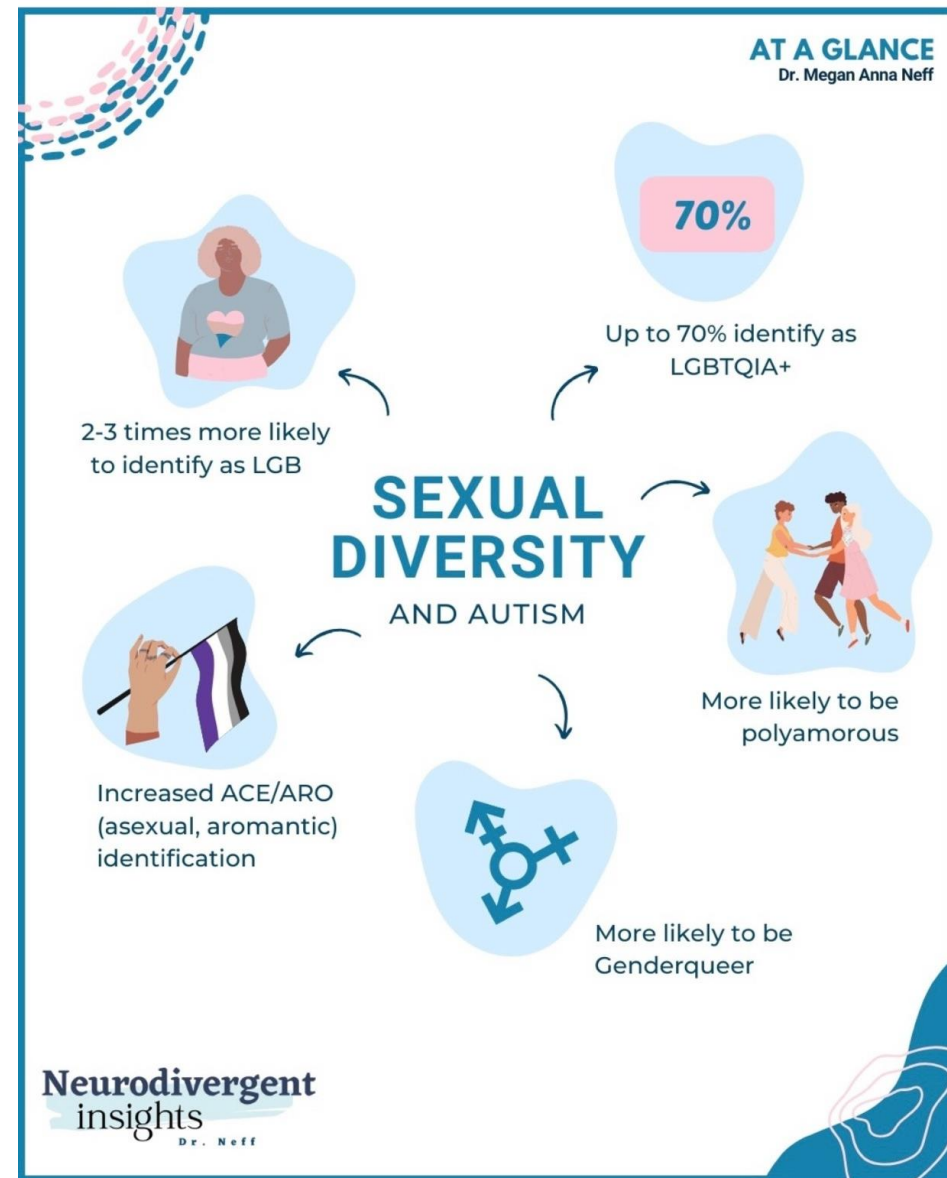
- Belgian artist and activist
- Volunteer at KU Leuven
- Neurodivergent
- Queer



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# Why focus on neurodiversity?

- Overlap queer identity and neurodivergence
- Shared experiences
- Shared communities
- Neuroqueer





# Neurodiversity

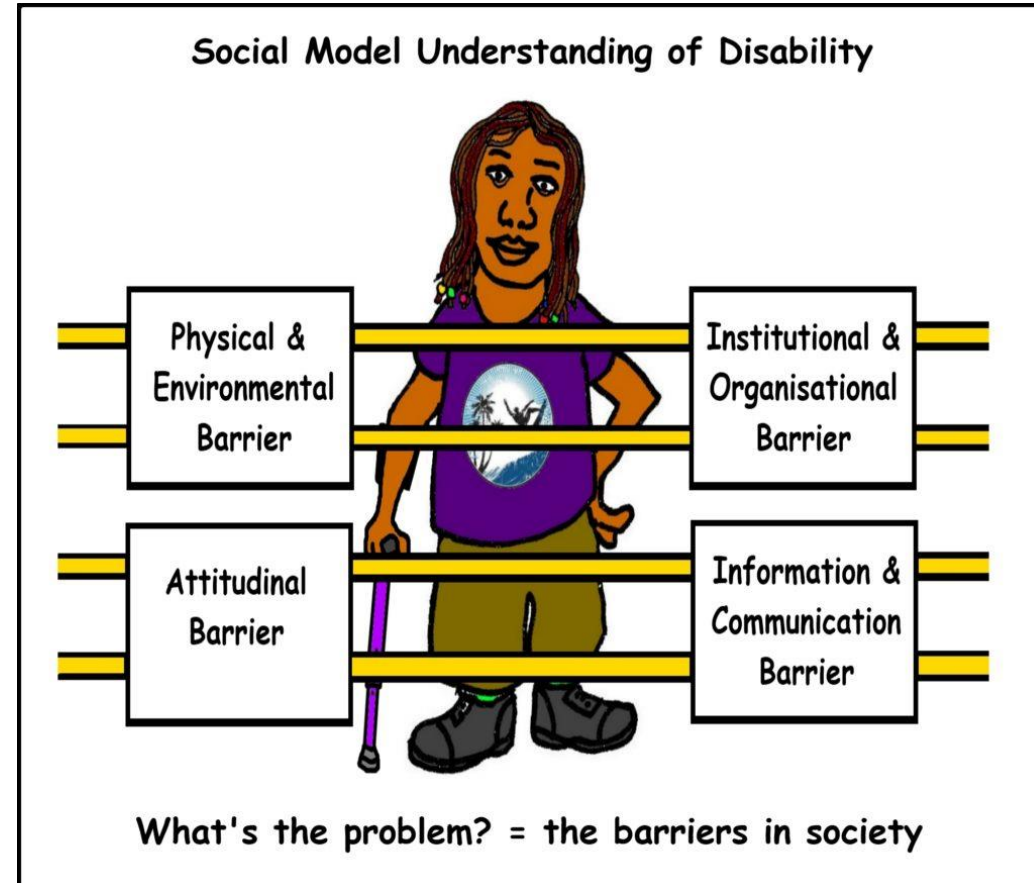
## What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity reflects the idea of the variation in human brains as being biologically normal and adaptive, with no one brain being prized as ideal.



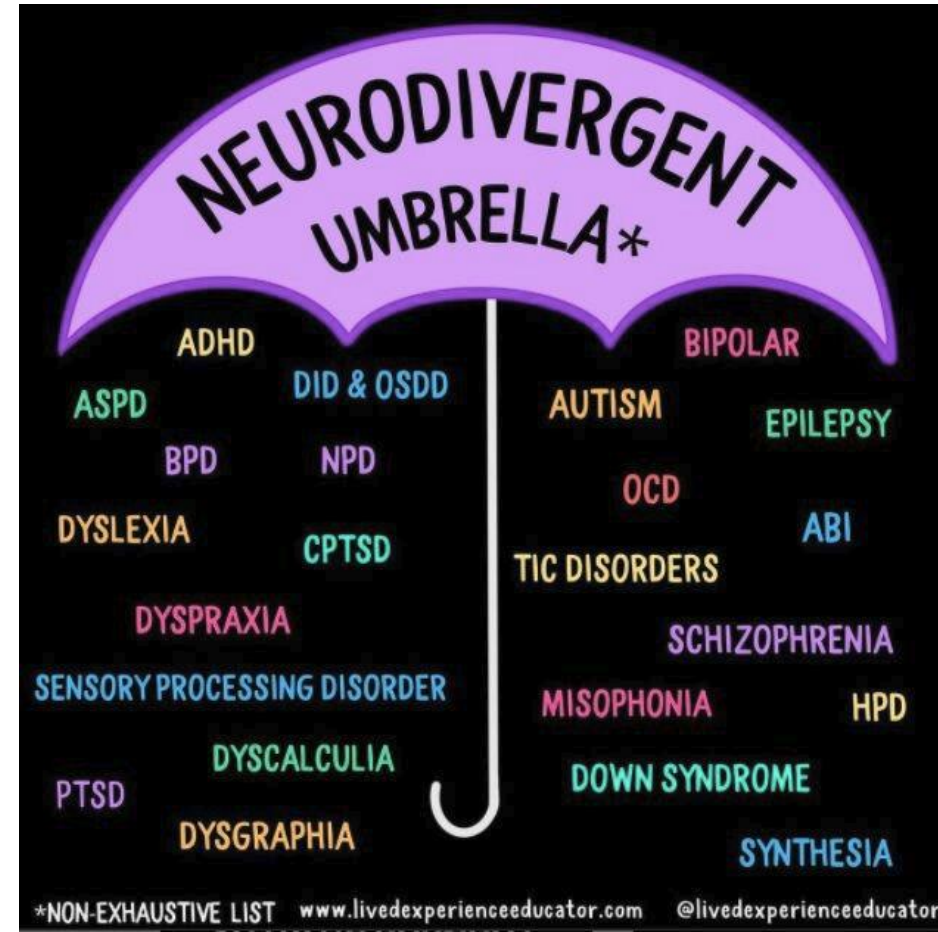
# Neurodiversity

- Social model of disability
- Neurominorities
- Identity



# Neurodiversity

- Autism rights movement → Neurodiversity movement
- ND: more than just ASC/ADHD!





# Vocabulary

- Framework: neurodiversity
- Group: neurodiverse
- Person: neurodivergent/neurotypical
- Condition: neurodivergency





# Why focus on autism today?

- Personal expertise
- ND trans clients: statistically more likely to be autistic than average (+ comorbidities)
- Link between autistic experiences and queer identity



# What is autism

- Different “operating system”:
  - Social preferences (double empathy problem)
  - Communication habits (autistic language)
  - Sensory processing (over/understimulation + stimming)
  - Deep interests (“special” interests)
  - Routines and patterns (bottom-up thinking + comorbid trauma)
  - Life-long



# What is autism

- Late diagnosis common in minorities and others not fitting typical ASC stereotypes
  - “Why am I different?”
- Early diagnosis: therapy often focused on “fitting in”
  - “Who am I?”
- → alienation → masking → trauma

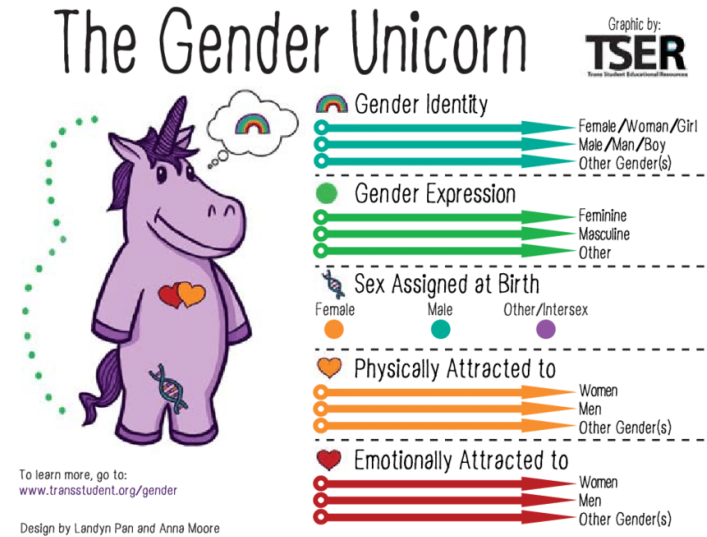


# Autism and gender identity

- Autistic experiences ≠ allistic experiences
- Neurominority: acutely aware of differences
  - “Who am I?” + “Why am I different?”
- Forced to question every little aspect of your existence from a young age on
- → Exploration of “otherness” in different identities
- → If queer: chances of discovering this are higher than average

# Autism and gender identity

- Gender is much more than just social norms, but:
  - Forced to question every little aspect of your existence
  - → including social norms, e.g. gender norms
  - Autistic social norms ≠ allistic social norms
  - Unspoken social rules regarding gender make no sense
- Neuroqueering gender







# Autism and gender identity

- Neuroqueer community labels:
  - Neurogender
  - Neurosexuality
  - Micro-identities based on neurotype, e.g. autigender,...

Not very commonly used, but can be useful framework to explore identity with.

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