

The logo for ASNL features the letters 'A', 'S', 'N', and 'L' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'A' is red, the 'S' is blue, the 'N' is yellow, and the 'L' is light green. To the right of the text, there are four thick, curved lines in the same color sequence (green, red, blue, yellow) that curve downwards and to the right, set against a dark purple background.

ASNL

AUTISM SOCIETY

Newfoundland & Labrador

Towards Neuro-inclusive Workplace Culture

Presented by: Rachel Hogan

TODAYS Agenda

Introduction

- What is Neurodiversity?
- What is Autism?

A Deeper Understanding

- Culture
- Communication

Actions for a Neuro-Inclusive Workplace

- Neuro-Inclusive Practices
- Executive Functioning Support
- Understanding the role of Self-Determination

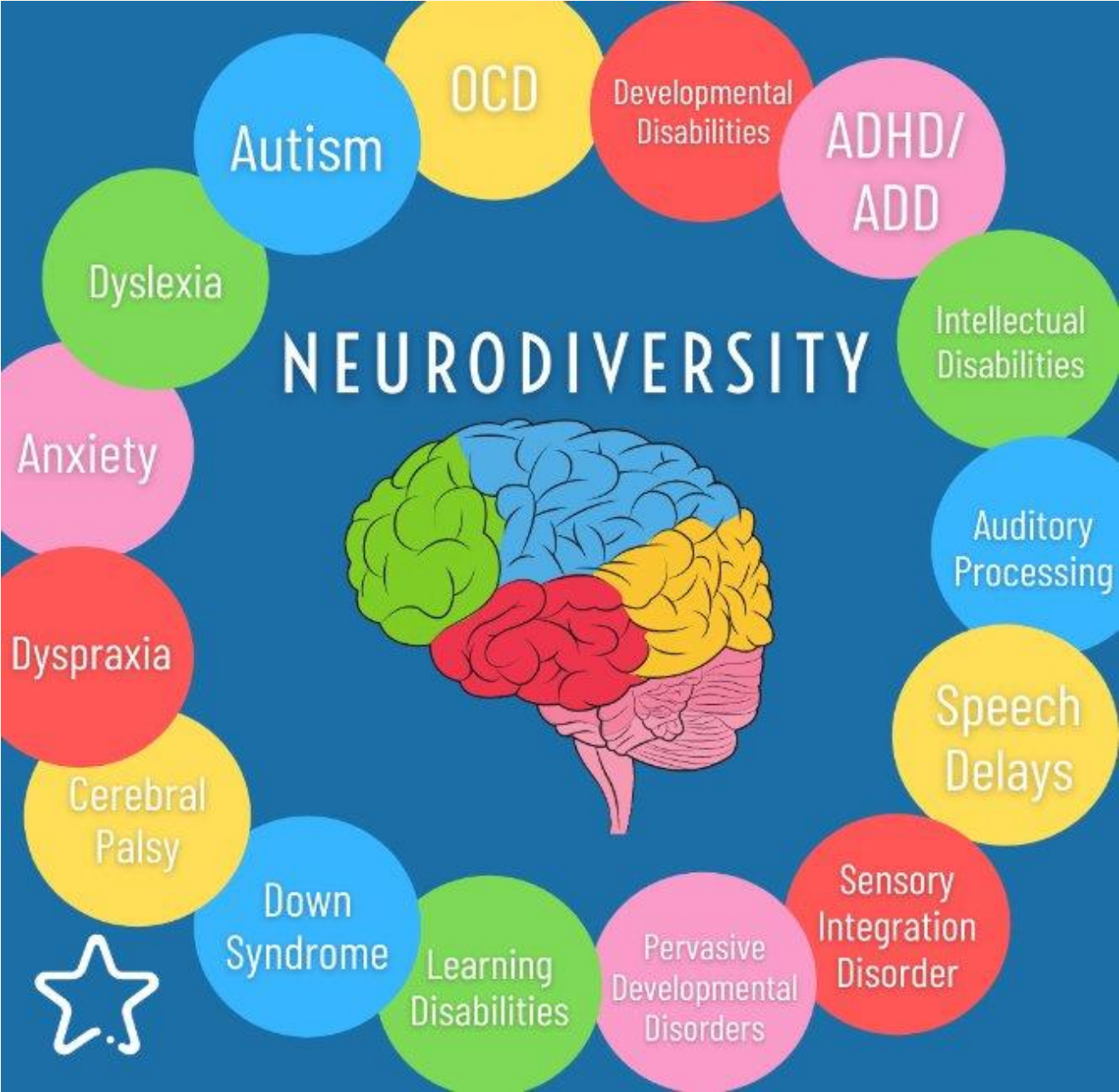
Q & A

ANS

What is Neurodiversity?



- Neurodiversity is the natural variation of brain function, cognitive ability and information processing within human beings.
- Being neurodivergent simply means that your brain diverges from the "standard" brain described by a medical model.
- Neurodivergent folks make up approximately 1/5 of the population



Autism by Autistics'

Many people have awareness of what Autism is, but have you ever heard the communal definition written by Autistic people?

"Autistic brains are different, structurally and chemically, from non-autistic people and from each other."

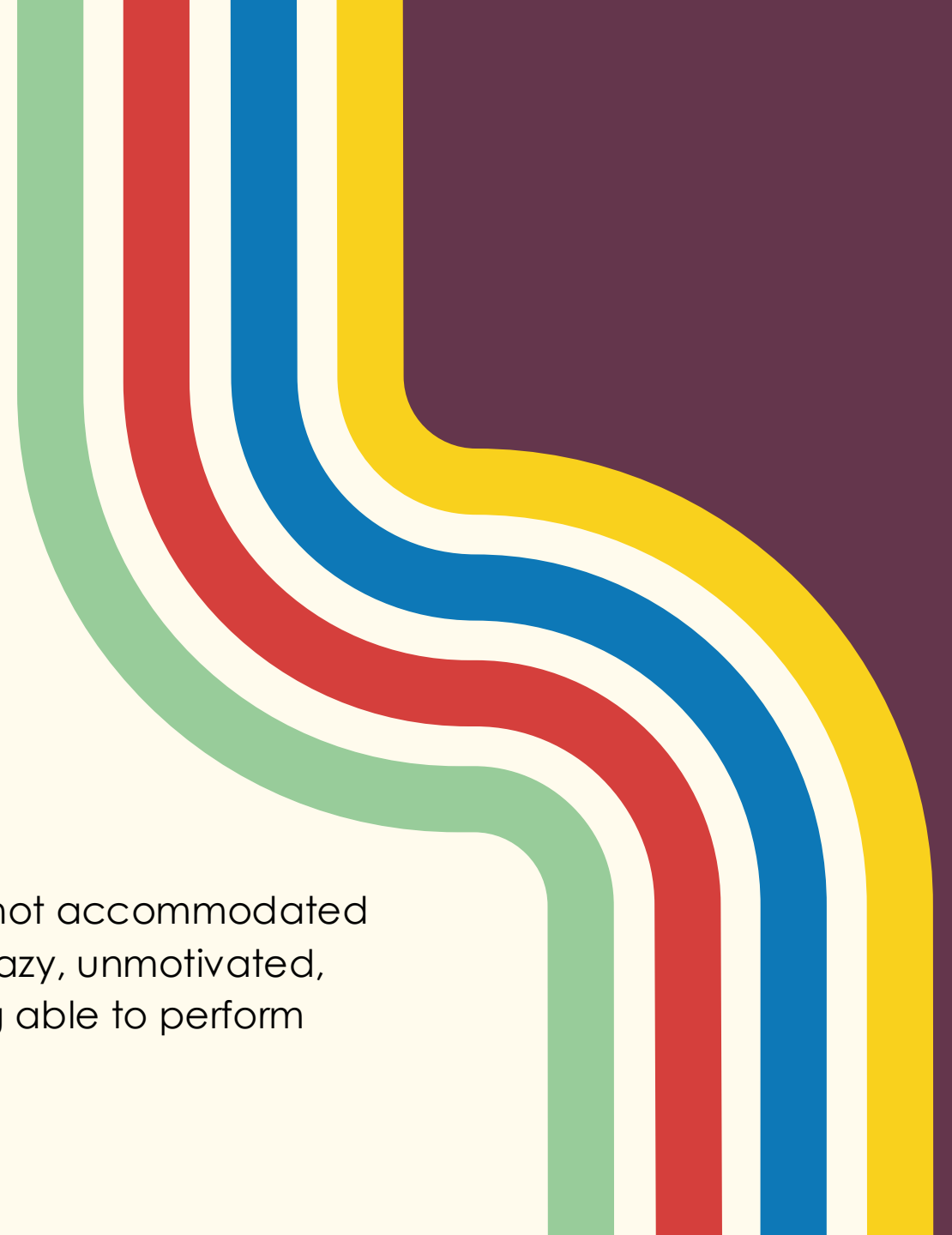
"What the spectrum really means is that each Autistic person has areas of strength or weakness due to "wiring" differences. While all people have areas of strength or weakness, these tend to be much more pronounced in autistic people. Beyond that, we may even process information in totally different– or multiple areas of the brain."



"While autistic people can't be separated into "high" and "low functioning," nor any binary, most autistic people have had one of two experiences: they have been believed to be unilaterally intellectually disabled or unilaterally gifted or talented.

Those who were believed to be unilaterally intellectually disabled, often due to motor planning disability that prevents them from being able to speak reliably or engage in purposeful movement, have been underestimated, treated like toddlers, and given an education way below their capacity."

"Those who were believed to be unilaterally gifted were not accommodated for their areas of disability, often being characterized as lazy, unmotivated, entitled, and "not applying themselves" due to not being able to perform according to their perceived ability levels."



The "Spectrum"

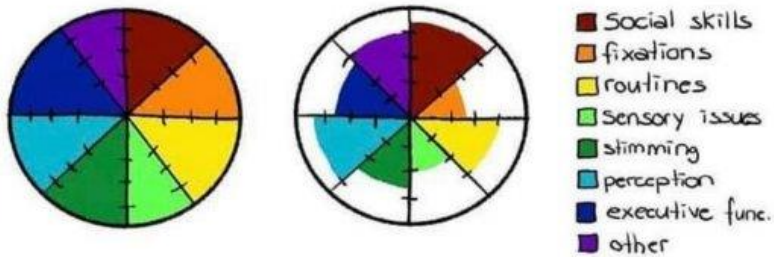
"It is a collection of related neurological conditions that are so intertwined and so impossible to pick apart that professionals have stopped trying."

Autism Spectrum

The Autism spectrum is not linear

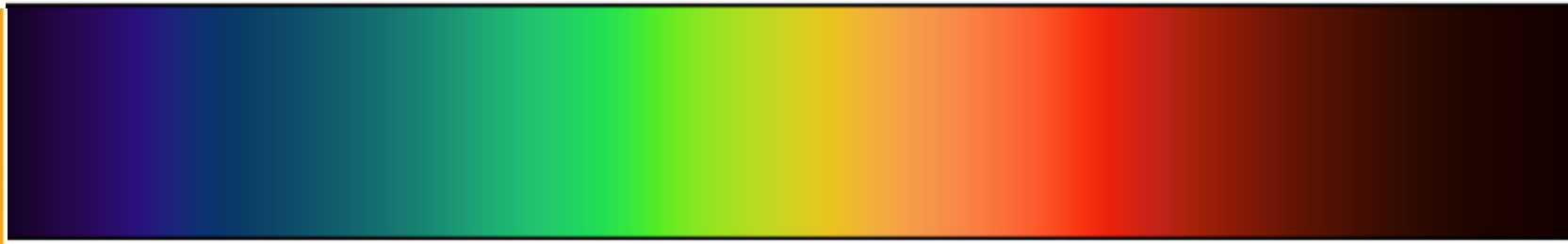


The Autism Spectrum looks more like:



→ Terms like "high functioning" and "low functioning" are harmful and are not used anymore

Autism - sketches



Pragmatic Language	Social Awareness	Monotropic Mindset	Information Processing	Sensory Processing	Repetitive Behaviors	Neuro-Motor Differences
Social communication including body language, eye contact, small talk, and turn-taking in conversation.	Ability to pick up on etiquette, social norms, taboos. Ability to form and maintain relationships.	Narrow but intense ability to focus, resulting in "obsessive" interests and difficulty task-switching.	Ability to assimilate and apply new information quickly or to adapt to new environments or situations.	Challenges interpreting sensory information, hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity to stimuli.	Tendency to "stim" in response to varying emotions. Can be beneficial or harmful in nature.	Ability to control body movements. Ranges from clumsiness to complete loss of ability to move with intention.

A Deeper Understanding



The Social Model of Disability



The Theory of Double Empathy

The Autistic
Advocate

Camouflaging Subtypes

By: Embrace Autism

Based on research from **2018** by [Laura Hull](#) et al., the following **3** subcategories of camouflaging were defined:

Assimilation

- Strategies used to try to fit in with others in social situations. (ex: Putting on an act, avoiding or forcing interactions with others).

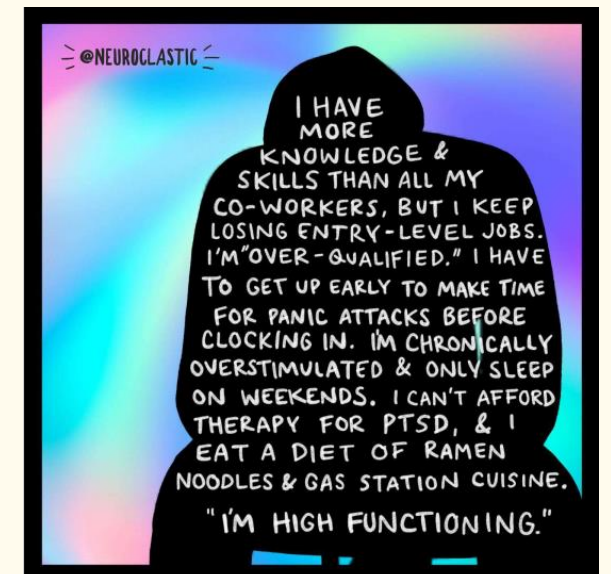
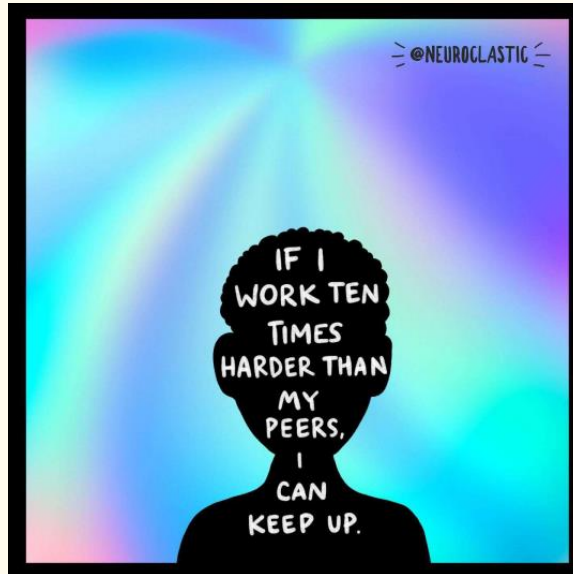
Compensation

- Strategies used to actively compensate for difficulties in social situations (ex: copying body language & facial expressions, learning social cues from movies & book).

Masking

- Strategies used to hide Autistic characteristics or portray a non-autistic persona. (ex: adjusting face & body to appear confident &/or relaxed, forcing eye contact)

Understanding Autistic Life Stages



INTERSECTIONALITY

a fun guide



this is Bob.



Bob is a stripey blue triangle. AND SHOULD BE PROUD.



SADLY SOME PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE Bob. Bob FACES OPPRESSION FOR BEING A TRIANGLE, & FOR HAVING STRIPES.



LUCKILY, THERE ARE LIBERATION GROUPS! BUT THEY AREN'T INTERSECTIONAL.

SO THEY LOOK LIKE THIS



THEY DON'T TALK TO EACH OTHER. IN FACT, THEY COMPETE

BOB CAN'T WORK OUT WHERE TO GO.



AM I MORE STRIPE OR TRIANGLE?

I'M MORE OPPRESSED!



NO, I AM! I DESERVE MORE!

BOB WISHES THAT THE TRIANGLES AND STRIPES COULD WORK TOGETHER

OPPRESSION OF ONE AFFECTS US ALL!



NO LIBERATION WITHOUT EQUAL REPRESENTATION!

INTERSECTIONALITY IS THE BELIEF THAT OPPRESSIONS ARE INTERLINKED AND CANNOT BE SOLVED ALONE.

OPPRESSIONS ARE NOT ISOLATED. INTERSECTIONALITY NOW!

Autistic Communication



Communication

Some Autistic folx are non-speaking. Some are partial speakers, and some verbally speak. However, all Autistic people have differences in their form/style of communication.

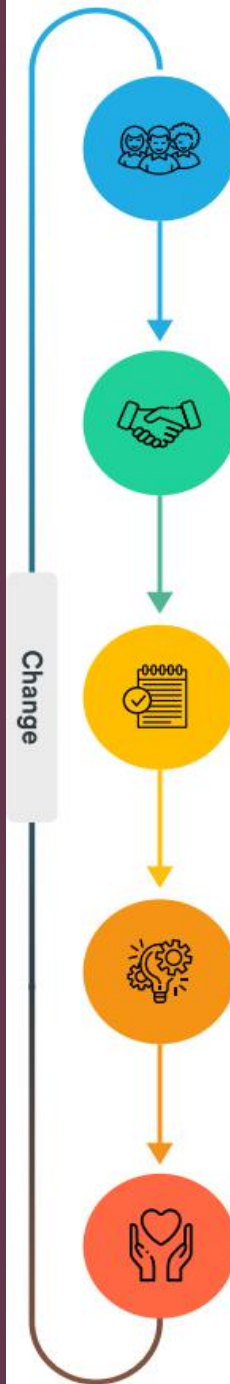
- ◆ Clear, concise, direct
- ◆ Write it down!
- ◆ Visual aids
- ◆ AAC-Learn about alternative forms of communication & support/encourage their use

Actions for a Neuro-Inclusive Workplace



Neuro-Inclusive Practices

[Neurodiversity-Guide.pdf](#)
([everymindatwork.com](#))



Recruitment

- Make job adverts and JD's simple and accurate
- Ask applicants what they need
- Adjust your interview/assessment process

Onboarding

- Provide information on the work environment prior to the first day
- Create a jargon handbook
- Take time to ask and understand individual challenges and strengths

Performance Management

- Identify skills gaps and implement initiatives to close these
- Closely monitor changes in performance
- Provide regular check-ins and mentorship opportunities

Development

- Set stretching goals and projects with adequate support
- Involve neurodiverse employees in key project teams
- Train for growth by asking employees what they want/need

Retention

- Keep the work environment optimal and stable
- Understand what engages and motivates neurodiverse employees
- Ensure that your workplace culture is open, supportive and inclusive

Neuro-Inclusive Practices

[Neurodiversity-Guide.pdf](#)
([everymindatwork.com](#))

Change

"Approaching change in a neuro-inclusive way should underpin all elements of the employee lifecycle"

- Include neurodiverse employees in change programs
- Give notice of changes and be clear on future expectations
- Utilize different communication channels to ensure accessibility for all

Executive Functioning Support

MetaCognition

HOW TO BE AN EF SPOTTER



1

✓ Think out loud! Use metacognition!

If you model executive functioning by narrating how you think out loud, it helps the other person to get an “inside” look into how to structure thoughts and work through anxiety.



2

✓ Narrate the steps

Talk with them about each step they will need to go through, reassuring them that as they climb that wall, you will help them know where to put their feet and will have the rope if they slip.



3

✓ Think like a partner, not a coach

A person with asthma needs an inhaler, not a pep talk about persevering through gym class. It will be demoralizing if you try to motivate someone to do something that needs accommodating. Let them know it is not a burden. Gift them your brain.

Executive Functioning Support

4 Tips for Emotional Safety

@NeuroClastic

- 1** See the individual
Executive dysfunction impacts everyone differently. There is no magic formula that always works. These tips are ideas to help you see multiple strategies, not universal rules.
- 2** Don't take control
Your role is to help them have safety and autonomy, not to be a savior or drill sergeant. Their fear is rooted in not having enough control, so give them access to more in the form of available supports.
- 3** You are not enabling
People often worry their supports are "enabling bad behavior." Is an asthma inhaler "entitlement"? They cannot do better and thrive without adequate support. You're not their doctor, just the tall friend who can reach the top shelf.
- 4** Executive functioning can be improved (some)
The longer someone has experienced trauma, rejection, and abuse for invisible disability, the worse EF becomes. Knowing that there is a safety net and system of support in place reduces anxiety, which helps to improve EF and reduce debilitating OCD and demand avoidance/decision paralysis.

Self-Determination



INTRINSIC VS. EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION: WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Because of the interest and enjoyment in the task itself

- Enjoyment
- Purpose
- Growth
- Curiosity
- Passion
- Self-expression
- Fun



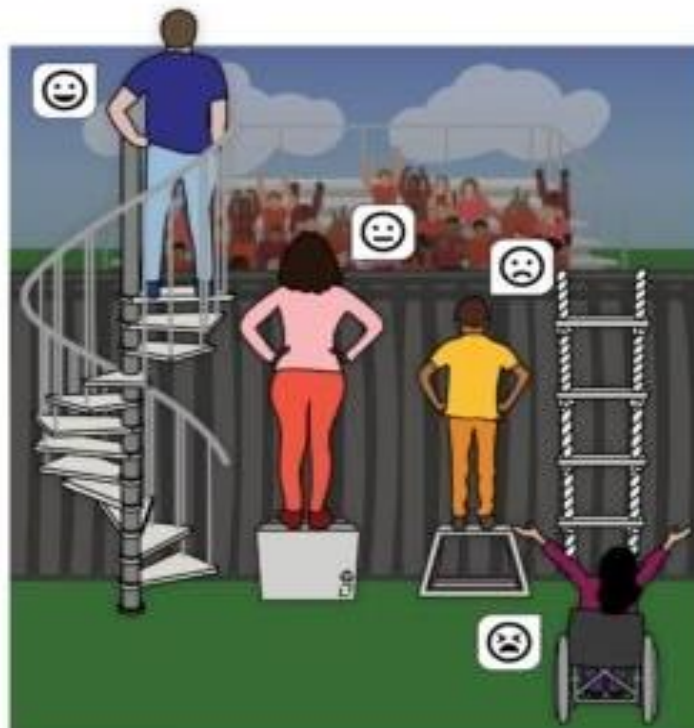
Intrinsic



Extrinsic

Because of the outcome that will result by doing the task

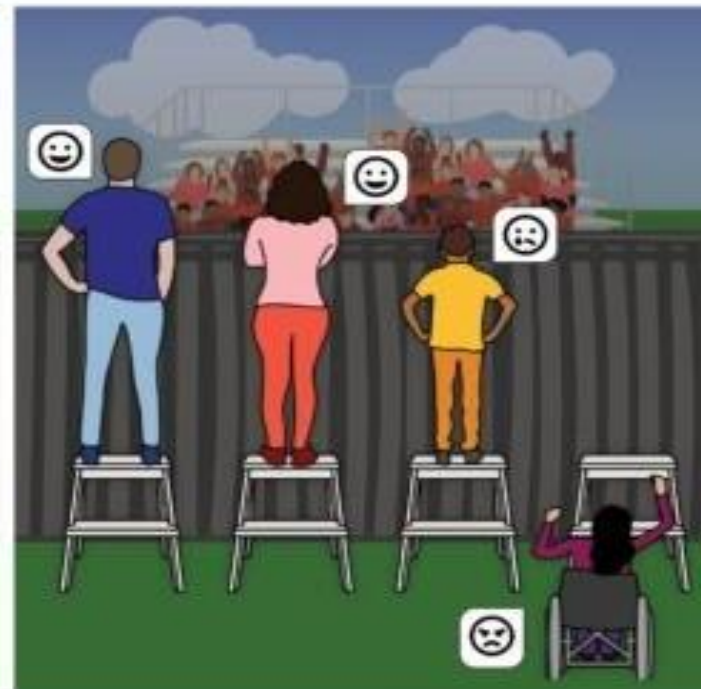
- Promotions
- Pay raises
- Bonuses
- Benefits
- Prizes
- Winning
- Perks



REALITY

Some get **more than** is needed, some get **less than** is needed and some get what is **inappropriate** for their needs.

This creates a huge disparity.



EQUALITY

The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**.

This is considered to be equal treatment.



EQUITY

Everyone gets the individual support they need to thrive, which produces equity.



JUSTICE

All people can participate without supports or accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed.

The systemic barrier has been removed.

Questions & **DISCUSSION**

