

# Neurodiverse community - progressing

# Starting notices

Who we are, ground rules and practicalities

## This was our advert...



Is study a joy or a chore? Do you feel you are always doing or feeling something different from fellow students in your module?

Neurodiversity is all about difference. In this workshop we will look at some of those differences and consider how they can help (and hinder) effective progress. As with all of our neurodiverse community sessions, we will have a guest who will share some of their thoughts and experience. We will also discuss how to 'keep going' and stay focused and motivated as we move into 2025.

# What are Studenthublive workshops?



- Studenthublive (SHL) is non modular and focuses on study skills relevant to higher education.
- This means sessions are skills based and are not subject based.
- SHL workshops do not take the place of subject and skill related tutorials provided by your modules.
- All events are always advertised on our website along with studenthome news, social media channels and careers sources.
- All events are bookable; workshops do fill up as they are popular.

# Online workshop basics



- Polls are anonymous to other participants but the chat box will have your logged in name associated with your comments during the live session.
- All online sessions are recorded and available to view on catch up from the studenthublive online room.
- Slides are available to download during the live session and from the event page on <https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/neurodiverse-community-progressing-effectively-your-module-29-jan-2025>

# SHL is lively!



- These sessions are large scale
- They are often busy with lots of interaction
- They are not the same as other module-based tutorials
- You can maximise slides on your own screen by clicking the icon
- You can return to the recording from <https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/neurodiverse-community-progressing-effectively-your-module-29-jan-2025> after the event to revisit if needed



# Please



- Do not share any personal information in the chat pod during the session.
- On the recording names will be anonymised to user number.
- However if you type anyone's full name or any other personal information in the chat pod it can be seen by everybody and it would also show up on the recording so we may not be able to make the recording available.

# Today's workshop



- This is going to be a structured community workshop to help you consider study issues relating to potentially being different, and keeping going to progress on your module.
- Helen will be sharing her experiences and together you can consider your own
- We will not tell you what to do, nor what will definitely happen. We will discuss experiences and you can decide what may work for you.



# Comfort break scheduled



- The workshop is scheduled to run 11-12:15 with a comfort break.
- I (Isabella) will make it clear when that comfort break will happen for those who are unclear.
- The slides do mention the presence of the break for those who like to be aware ahead of time.

# Initial poll

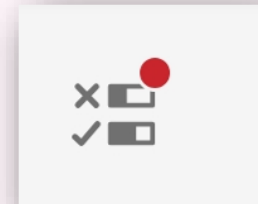
The same one starts each workshop 😊

# What do you want to learn?

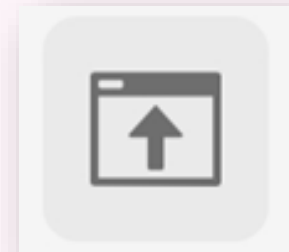


Using the short answer poll provided please say what you are hoping to learn from today's session

(If you are on a mobile app remember you need to tap into the polling option)



To come back to these slides after completing a poll click on the share pod slides icon



# Neurodiverse community- progressing

# Neurodiverse community events

Practicalities and who is involved today

# ND community events



- This workshop is the second in the 2024-25 year suite of events to support the Open University neurodiverse community
- Each event will focus on a specific aspect of study and has been developed with the support and input of current OU students and OU staff who are autistic, have ADHD, dyslexia or dyspraxia; identify as neurodivergent or who have an interest in these areas
- If you would like to be involved with future events then please contact us at [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk)

## Session format



- Each of these sessions will talk to a student guest about their experiences of studying.
- This will include relevant questions about how neurodivergence impacts them and their study.
- There will be opportunities for all attendees to consider their own situation and peer sharing of possible strategies.
- Today's session is about considering feelings of being different and progressing with study

# Isabella Henman – me!



- I am the presenter of the workshop and events for the SHL ND community.
- I have been an OU tutor since 2005 and have led the SHL workshops since they began in 2018.
- I have an active interest in supporting students with various challenges and have undertaken specific training relating to neurodiversity.
- I am not an expert but I am interested and continually update my knowledge.



# Today's student guest



- Helen is our student guest today
  - She was diagnosed with Combined type ADHD 2 years ago at the age of 65
- She began studying with the OU in 1994
- She has and BSc (Hons) in Psychology
  - and a Masters in Psychology
  - She is currently studying SK298
  - This is her first course in ten years, and she has never studied biology before.



# Terminology - 1



- Terminology today has been taken from the University's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Inclusive Language & Image Guide.
- This states that "Neurodiversity relates to the fact that no two brains are exactly alike" and "Neurodivergent/neurodivergence: this term is used for people whose brains function differently from what is considered standard or typical, and this can be in one or more ways."

## Terminology - 2

- It is important to note that everyone is an individual and how one person describes their experiences may / not be how another does. Please be respectful of each individual's choice



# Getting in to today's workshop

Sharing experiences from student guest and you

# Helen Q1



- When did you first notice you might be different from other people and how did this develop in time?

# Geographically



# Poll question 1



- As a question to everyone – **do you feel different to other people?** Please select the choice that most fits your own opinion
  - Yes
  - No
  - Depends on the situation
- (This is not about saying someone **is** different but whether people feel that way)

## Poll question 2



- **What is the main way you feel different from other people?**
- Please use the short answer poll pod provided to write your answer and we will see whether there are any themes that we can draw out
- Don't worry if you don't feel different or able to answer but do have a look at what others say as this may give you some ideas



## Helen Q2



- Moving forward now, why did you decide to seek a diagnosis?

# Private diagnosis



- Needs must...

# Medication



## Note



- Seeking or indeed being able to have a diagnosis is dependent on various factors – we are unable to change those unfortunately.
- There is no judgement on anyone who does / not seek a formal diagnosis.
- Within these sessions we welcome anyone who has a diagnosis or identifies or experiences neurodiversity.

# Disabled students allowance 1

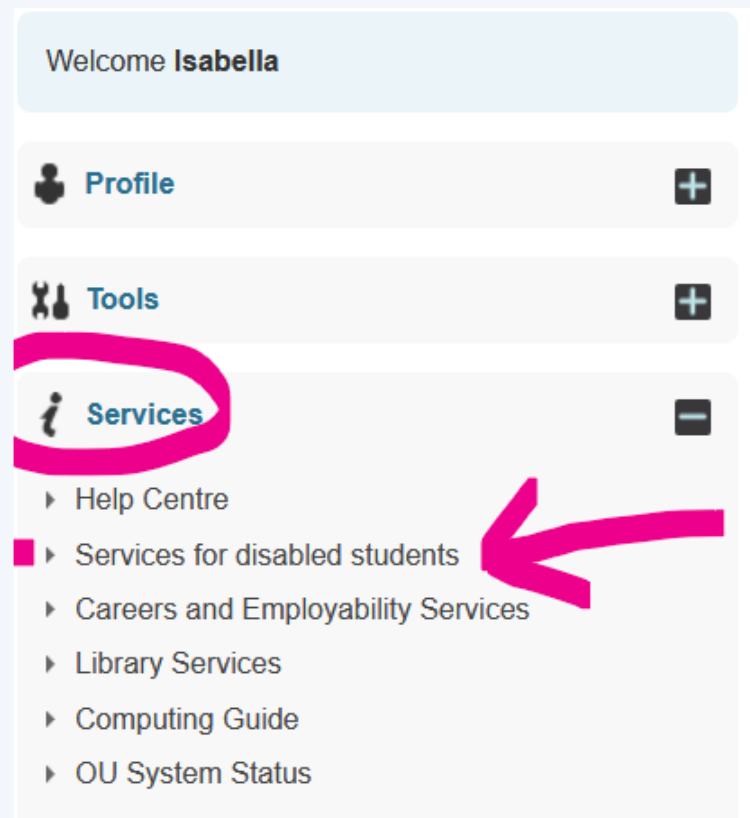


- DSA
- <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>
- <https://help.open.ac.uk/dsa-overview>
- Please note that the OU can not apply on your behalf but all students who declare a disability are encouraged to apply for the DSA as it is there to support them.
- The OU also does not govern what is provided and cannot guarantee what would be provided.

# Disabled students allowance 2



- We can not guarantee anything but do encourage you to engage with your disability support team. Contact them through the option from studenthome in the services option
- <https://help.open.ac.uk/browse/disability>



# Study related costs



- <https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/study-related-costs-funding>
- Examples may be support with broadband, provision of a large white board, special overlays to support reading on screen.
- Note we cannot guarantee anything but it is worth exploring and asking – you never know 😊

# OU community and support



- <https://community.open.ac.uk/> showcases community within the OU (including studenthublive!)
- [OUSA disabled students group](#) have regular meet ups as well as other support
- OUSA have various [events](#)
- [National support network](#)



# ND diagnosis word cloud



- Using the option to type in where it says enter word here '**what is your diagnosis?**'
- Note that answers need to be a single word rather than a phrase / multiple words, if you press the space or enter button your word will go through (so it won't make sense if that one word is not the whole answer).
- A word cloud is built up with common answers being larger so we can see if there are commonalities.

Enter word here

## Helen Q3

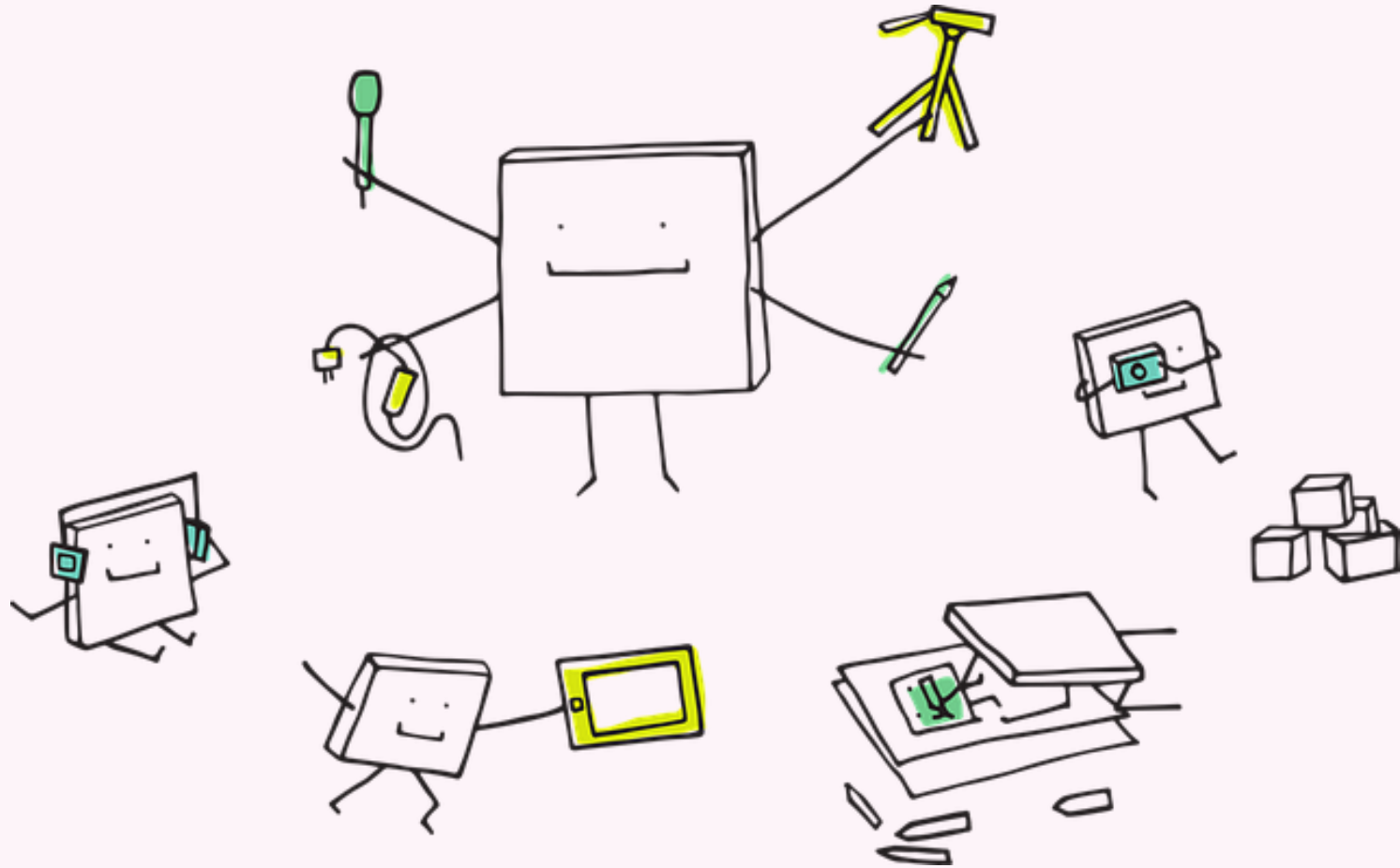


- How do your differences impact your ability to study (both from a positive and a negative)?

# Hyperfocus



# Time management



## Poll question 3



- **How do your differences help you study?**
- Please use the short answer poll pod provided and we will see what suggestions there are that we can share together and build upon
- Note that we are focusing on the positive here (there will be an opportunity to discuss some of the downsides later)

# Comfort break

We will now have a 5 minute comfort break during which the recording will be paused. Please feel free to go and stretch your legs, visit the loo, grab a snack, make a drink or anything else you need to. The timer will count down until we come back

# Welcome back

We will continue with the 2<sup>nd</sup> half now 😊

## Helen Q4



- When dealing with feedback you feel strongly that rejection sensitivity dysphoria (RSD) is relevant. Could you explain about what this is and how being neurodiverse particularly impacts how you deal with feedback.



# RSD



- RSD is a feeling of extreme sensitivity and pain, this is triggered when a person with ADHD perceives that they are being rejected or criticised by people who are important to them. This could be a close family member or your tutor. These feelings may be felt more strongly by some than others.

# Imposter syndrome



- Some students feel that imposter syndrome is a specific issue when preparing for TMAs in particular.
- Is what you have to add worthwhile? If you aren't perfect is it even worth doing?
- **The answer to both is yes! Learning is about progressing and no one can ever be perfect**

# Consider



**“Don't let perfect  
be the enemy of good”**

## Poll question 4



- Following on from Helen's description of RSD and how it impacts her - **How do your differences impact your ability to study the way you would like to?**
- Please share your ideas in the poll pod if you feel able.
- We can't provide solutions but some people may have ideas to share based on one experience

## Helen Q5



- What do you do to keep going and stay motivated?

# Believe in self



- Have done it before so can do it again

**Just keep going**





# Get comfortable





# What works?



**Does this?**



# Find your motivation



## Poll question 5



- **What tips do you have about how to keep going and stay motivated**
- Please use the short answer poll pod provided and we will see what had been provided.
- Hopefully this will encourage those who may not have considered applying to see what could be provided.

# Motivation session



- We held a workshop about [keeping motivation](#) in December where Will shared some of his tips. There may be ideas there.

# Take home message



- Many people who are neurodiverse find the diversity something which can be both good and not so good.
- Identifying your own strategies to help your situation is key.
- Honesty with yourself and others will help the learning process.
- Be kind to yourself!

# Would you like to be involved?



- If you would like to share your experiences and take part in future studenthublive sessions then please get in touch
- I (Isabella) will host a variety of sessions in 2025 which will involve student guests for disabilities as well as the neurodiverse community series and other study skills including reflection. If you or any other OU student you know might like to be involved please contact us
- [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk)

# ND / D events this year (24-25)



- 09 Apr 11am Planning to complete your module with success
- 10 Jun 11am Reflecting and consolidating learning
- 03 Apr 11am Disabled community session 3 (Planning to complete)
- **Note all ND and disabled workshops are now 11-12:15 due to popular demand for longer sessions 😊**

For more information on all past and upcoming events, go to <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>



# Selected Upcoming events



- 4 Feb 11am Managing high intensity study
- 11 Feb 7pm Understanding graphical data
- 13 Feb 11am Tackling procrastination successfully
- 18 Feb 7pm Fundamental maths skills
- 25 Feb 7pm Logical problem solving

For more information on all past and upcoming events, go to <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>

# Feedback



Please complete the feedback form that is available at

<https://forms.office.com/e/PqjkxhqNwC>

This is immensely valuable to provide information on how studenthublive is beneficial to students as well as to help us plan our future programme