

# Understanding Neuroinclusion 19 March 2024

## Transcript and Slide Descriptions

**Slide 1 description:** Slide is titled "Understanding Neuroinclusion". Underneath the title are the event speaker details. A black and white circular headshot sits next to the text "Dr Martin Bloomfield. Director, Dyslexia Bytes". Underneath is a black and white circular headshot next to the text "Charlotte Clewes-Boyne. Co-founder, neurodiversikey®. Senior Legal Counsel, TPT." To the left of the title and speaker details is a diagonal multi-coloured people paperchain. The background is split diagonally - the left side is the lilac/purple neurodiversikey® brand pattern (repeating keys, keyholes, letters 'n' and 'k') and the right side is purple.

### **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

Good evening and welcome everyone, and thanks for joining us tonight, for the second of our Understanding Unlocked events for Neurodiversity Celebration Week. My name's Charlotte Clewes-Boyne, and I'm one of the co-founders of neurodiversikey®. I'd also like to introduce my co-speaker, Dr. Martin Bloomfield, who's a trainer, teacher and consultant in various different areas, including communication skills, dyslexia awareness, autism awareness, ethics and language. And he regularly speaks on issues affecting neurodivergent people. And especially, he talks a lot about dyslexic people, and we're thrilled to have him here with us today.

**Slide 2 description:** Slide is titled "What will we cover?". Underneath the title are the bullet points: "Introduction to neuroinclusion; Neuroinclusion in the legal sector; trauma-informed neuroinclusion". The following images are used instead of bullet points, in this order: "A group of hands holding each other in a circle; a pair of hands embracing a pair of scales; a heart being hugged by two arms". The background is lilac with the translucent white neurodiversikey® logomark (an 'n' with a keyhole inside it, and a 'k').

### **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

So today we're going to talk about neuroinclusion. And I'm going to start by giving you an introduction into the meaning and background to the in

terms of the concept of neuroinclusion and how it manifests in the world at large and in the legal world as well. Then following that, Martin will be taking us on a deep dive into trauma and the ethics of dysregulation, because being trauma informed hugely impacts how we achieve neuroinclusion. And so, the second half of the session is aimed to focus on being more trauma informed. Okay. So let's start where as we mean to go on what's neuro inclusion.

**Slide 3 description:** *Slide is titled "What is neuroinclusion?". Text says "There is no agreed definition, but..." followed by a flowchart with 6 steps: acknowledgement; attitude; acceptance; affirmation; action/advocacy; adjustments/accommodations. The background is lilac with the translucent white neurodiversikey® logomark (an 'n' with a keyhole inside it, and a 'k').*

### **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

And so as it stands, there's no agreed definition for neuroinclusion. And neurodiversikey® in our surveys has used the definition welcoming, supportive, accommodating and understanding of all neurotypes. And to expand on this, I've kind of given a diagram there of the, what I would call the six As, but there's technically eight As in there for those of you who want to be specific, but I would call them the six As and it's sort of included in this like quite neat little diagram here, which I sort of sat down and thought about.

And as you can see, there it's a pathway that sort of takes you through various steps of how neuroinclusion might come to pass. So to start with, we'll start at the beginning. So we'll start with acknowledgement. So, before we can even go into the idea of being inclusive, people need to acknowledge their existence, and that's that's sort of the first step really to neuro inclusion.

And then we need to look at our attitudes. So we need to look at adjusting and reframing our perspective on neurodivergence,

educating and being willing to learn about different neurotypes and how they interact with the world and working to understand the difficulties that neurodivergent people face in day to day life. And that includes in the workplace, but also in the justice system and education and more widely as well.

We can then move through to acceptance. So once we've acknowledged these people and we've got an attitude that's reframed in relation to neurodivergent people, we can then move forward and into accepting their existence and their differences more crucially. And it's important to label those differences because there are strengths and challenges and differences is a neutral word which allows us to accommodate for all of that.

We also need to accept that neurodivergent people might require additional supports and changes as well, and that's a vital part of accepting neurodivergent people as a whole, which again then forms a crucial part of being neuroinclusive. We also then should look to affirm the existence of neurodivergent people, and that's kind of a more externally facing issue.

Once the internal work's happened, we can be more external about our support. It means being validating and supportive of neurodivergent people, both to them personally and when we're talking about neurodiversity in the wider world. We can again talk openly about both the strengths and challenges that neurodivergent people both exhibit and face without being tokenistic and without being inspirationalist.

And we can again affirm the fact that additional requirements are required and affirm the supports they might need. And overall affirmation will make neurodivergent people feel seen and safe within their communities. We can then look more broadly to the last two concepts, which might seem like they kind of overlap a little bit. But for me, action and advocacy and accommodation are kind of two sides of a similar coin in the sense that we have action and advocacy, which for me is external facing.

So we're looking at things like adopting broad inclusive practices, fighting for more inclusive practices, even where they might not benefit you personally. Talking generally and advocating about the way that society as a whole can be more supportive. We then can look at accommodations which can be more subjective, so individual to the person, or individual to the area, or individual to the workplace, or individual to the industry. So for example, law.

They can encourage a bespoke approach to ND accommodations as well. And that includes things like if you've met one autistic person, you've met one autistic person, and that their needs might be very different to someone else's.

**Slide 4 description:** *Slide is titled "Why be neuroinclusive?". Underneath text says "Broad risk and challenges in day-to-day life e.g." followed by the bullet points: institutionalisation; criminalisation; detrimental impact on mental and physical health; reduced dignity and autonomy; barriers to participation e.g. social, health, work, education. The following images are used instead of bullet points, in this order: A closed door; handcuffs; two plasters overlapping to form an X; a woman sat on the floor, knees to chest and head down; a barrier. The background is lilac with the translucent white neurodiversikey® logomark (an 'n' with a keyhole inside it, and a 'k').*

### **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

So why should we be inclusive? Well, yeah, if you were on the call yesterday, you will have noticed that we talked about a number of challenges, but by way of reminder, that can include things like exclusion, discrimination, stigma, ableism and forced masking, all of which are reasons why we should be more inclusive, because these are all things that make day to day life difficult for neurodivergent people. But more specifically, the barriers can include things like having difficulties at school, having difficulties in terms of career choice. You know, we've got certain and so certain your division people can be seen as for example, what is often labelled as a gifted and talented or was when I was younger. And that can mean that they're pushed down a particular route.

Alternatively, those of us with interest based nervous systems may not find the typical careers, that are seen as worthwhile, as fulfilling and may struggle to access those in a way that's meaningful for us doesn't necessarily mean that we wouldn't be able to do them, but we need to be able to access them in a way that's bespoke and tailored to to our particular needs.

It's also things to do with interviews and job applications that can be multiple stages. And these can require a high level of masking over a long period of time or can be inaccessible in other ways, such as the phrasing of questions and once in the workplace certain societal expectations, promotion systems being personality focused or indeed based on certain targets can be inaccessible for neurodivergent people. And then we can go into the more serious issues.

So things like greater risks of criminalisation, which can be a barrier to a lot of different things, including working and but generally just participating in society as well. And also there's more conceptual issues, like the participation in society more generally. So, some neurodivergent people can end up being societally isolated because they don't necessarily feel able to access certain skills, which neurotypical people tend to find relatively easy. So things like executive function and this is just a handful of a myriad of examples that we could draw on.

As we've already touched on. And neurodivergent people do face greater risks of criminalisation, but also greater risks of institutionalisation, and this risks a detrimental impact on their mental and physical health. Although, it should be noted that just those two things alone aren't the only things that can detrimentally impact the mental and physical health neurodivergent people. In fact, simply showing up in neurotypical society can have that impact as well. And all of this can also impact on dignity and purpose neurodivergent people may not feel fully able to participate or access the same things as neurotypical people do, and this may leave them feeling demotivated and isolated and also like they don't have a place in society.

**Slide 5 description:** Slide is titled “Why be neuroinclusive?”. Underneath text says “Neuroinclusion can:” followed by the bullet points: mitigate risks; reduce distress and maltreatment; give purpose and dignity. The following images are used instead of bullet points, in this order: an exclamation mark in a triangle; a head with a heart inside it; an outstretched palm with another hand placed on top. The background is lilac with the translucent white neurodiversikey® logomark (an ‘n’ with a keyhole inside it, and a ‘k’).

### **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

So continuing along that theme of why we need to be neuroinclusive, neuroinclusion has a lot of benefits. And you can see on the slide, that I've covered three broad headings, but ultimately these are very broad and they can be broken down and tailored in a lot of ways to the specific experiences of specific neurodivergent people, but taking them as overall examples so far.

So the first one there is mitigating the risks identified. What this will do will. So greater understanding reduces the risk of inappropriate or for example, heavy handed actions which can result in traumatic experiences for neurodivergent people and can harm their future prospects as well. So in that I'm thinking of, for example, in the workplace performance evaluations - neurodivergent people are more likely to be able to live in peace and safety and to take part and access society, if we take steps to mitigate those risks through neuroinclusion.

We can also reduce the distress and maltreatment of neurodivergent people through neuroinclusion. It means that others are less likely to effectively react badly to certain behaviours. Or, for example, in the workplace, as I've already mentioned, to performance. And this can mean that neurodivergent people are less traumatised by the experiences they have day to day, and it can also mean that they are more fulfilled in their day to day lives as well.

And that links in to the final part here, which is allowing neurodivergent people to to live with purpose and dignity. Not every

neurodivergent person is able to work. And it's important to not conflate purpose with working life when we're talking, especially about neurodivergence. But for those who want to, neuroinclusive practices can allow them to obtain and stay in work and also enable them to do that in a way that's safe for them through appropriate adjustments, both interview and once they have a job.

**Slide 6 description:** *Slide is titled "How can we be neuroinclusive?" followed by the bullet points: use neuroinclusive language; respect choices and preferences; challenge everyday ableism\*; acknowledge traumatic experiences; extend empathy and understanding; action re needs and boundaries; include neurodivergent people in all decisions which affect them; make neuroinclusion the baseline rather than an afterthought. Below the list is the asterisked where it is safe to do so. The background is lilac with the translucent white neurodiversikey® logomark (an 'n' with a keyhole inside it, and a 'k').*

### **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

So how can we be inclusive in the real world? We've talked a lot sort of broadly about the concept of neuroinclusion and why conceptually we should be neuroinclusive, but how can we be more inclusive practically as well? On the slide there, we've listed a few examples and this is by no means an exhaustive list, but taking those examples now in turn we can use neuroinclusive language so we can avoid outdated or exclusive terms. This can be difficult sometimes, as there are some people who do still insist on using certain terms or indeed where the education is such that others might be unaware currently of the problems with certain terms that are used on an ongoing basis.

If people use language that's inappropriate, it can be used as an educational opportunity to discuss why the language shouldn't be used anymore. And examples might include things like the acronym ADD or the term Asperger's. We should respect the choices and preferences of neurodivergent people. And again, this leads to the terminological preferences. But this is within reason. It's important to note that neurodivergent people are not exempt from being held

to account for using terminology that could invoke trauma and distress and they're just as responsible for respecting terminological preferences of their peers as people in the narrow majority. And this is also including things like person-first language as well.

So the next thing to consider is challenging everyday ableism. And you can see that comes with an asterisk and we'll get on to that in a second. So challenging everyday ableism can include challenging things like comments about someone's sensory aids. So for example, I wear headphones when I'm out and about because I struggle with loud noise. And it's important that we don't make a person feel uncomfortable when they're wearing sensory aids like that. It can also be doing things like we've mentioned already challenging inappropriate language, but things, everyday person can also be less obvious. So for example, it can be leaving a person out because they don't engage with social events in the same way. So there can be steps taken to try and bring them into the fold without being too, and without pressuring them too much to engage as well.

However, like with any form of prejudice, challenge can always be a risk for both the challenger, and the person to whom the prejudice was targeted and obviously potentially to the person saying it as well. While it's important to identify and challenge ableism where it occurs, calling in rather than calling out is always preferable. And equally judgement should always be exercised to make sure conditions are such as to ensure that engaging with the person expressing the prejudice doesn't put anyone at risk of harm. Moving further down the list, we can acknowledge that interactions with neurodivergent people may be being informed by their previous traumatic experience. And this is where Martin's presentation is going to come in really handy to do that deeper dive in a little while.

It's everyone's role to listen to and decentre ourselves in conversations and we should always work to create space for those with experiences that don't match ours. So for example, and I've already mentioned this earlier in the presentation, if you've met



autistic person, you've met one autistic person. So all autistic persons' experiences should be treated equally. And we shouldn't just make assumptions that because one autistic person has a particular need, that other autistic people have the same. We also have a duty to elevate the voices of those with less privilege. And I said in a little while, I'm going to talk about intersectionality, which is a really relevant concept when we're considering that as well.

We need to extend empathy and understanding and follow that up by action. When neurodivergent people are communicating their needs and boundaries, often neurodivergent people can potentially be seen as quite demanding when they're requesting support. And it's important to recognise that they're already in the oppressed minority. They are asking for supports to bring them up to a level that allows them to engage with society in the same way as the neuromajority. Neuroinclusive policies allow them to do that, and part of being inclusive is being empathetic and understanding to those needs.

We should also be always including neurodivergent people in decisions which affect them, and it should be done in advance, not just when it's pointed out that they haven't been included and finally, we need to make neuroinclusion the baseline rather than making it an afterthought. We should start from a place of inclusion and this should be active and not passive and again, not something that's just done once it's been pointed out that there's a problem. The aim is for the underlying systems that we have in place to be more inclusive. But at this time, that's not the case. So what we need to do is make sure that we take active steps now so that in the future that system can be in place.

**Slide 7 description:** Slide is titled "Neuroinclusion in the legal sector" followed by the bullet points: legal sector has much to do; complicated by its structure: the profession (Bar, solicitors, in-house, judiciary), the services (civil and criminal, law enforcement, interaction with public sector (eg family law); tokenism; buy-in at senior level needed, including from governing organisations and regulatory bodies; consultation with neurodivergent people. The

*background is lilac with the translucent white neurodiversikey® logomark (an 'n' with a keyhole inside it, and a 'k').*

### **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

So how does this apply specifically in the legal sector? So like many industries, the legal sector has some way to go to achieve true near inclusion. It's complicated by the fact that there are so many parts to the legal industry as a whole. So we have the profession so the bar, solicitors in private practice and in house, and the judiciary, and various other roles as well. And we then have the services. So the courts, both civil and criminal, law enforcement and also the interactions that they have with the public sector for example, in family law,

We also have an issue, as many industries do with tokenism, and tokenism is prevalent across all sectors, and that includes law. And whilst we know that tokenism affects minorities, we don't know the extent of its impacts in relation to neurodivergent since we don't have any real data and this is one of the reasons that neurodiversikey® has launched its survey.

But just to take a step back for a minute, those of you who don't know. Tokenism is a concept that was identified as far back as during the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1950s and sixties. And then in 1977, an academic called Rose Beth Kanter said specifically in a workplace context that a token employee is usually part of a socially skewed group of employees who belong to a minority group that constitutes less than 15% of the total employee population in the workplace.

Obviously, now in the modern day, tokenism also extends to more than just being a token employee, but can include steps that, while optically beneficial, are not backed up by actual action. So, for example, writing a Happy New Neurodiversity Celebration Week post while enforcing neuroexclusive policies in the background. Tokenism is problematic because it gives the impression of action without meaningful change. This actually works against neuroinclusion as it makes something seem inclusive when it isn't,

and it can be exploitative as well.

So in order to address that, in address neuroinclusion in the legal sector, there needs to be buy-in a senior level to promote change throughout the industry. Change, especially cultural change, has to come from the top down. And this includes action and enforcement from governing organisations such as regulatory bodies. And there also needs to be consultation with neurodivergent people at all levels. As we've emphasised so far throughout these slides.

**Slide 8 description:** *Slide is titled "Achieving neuroinclusion in the legal sector: Services" followed by the bullet points: differences between neurodivergent children and adults; interaction with justice and law enforcement systems; staff training and awareness; resources; making adjustments to ensure effective participation; liaison and diversion. Images are used instead of bullet points, in the following order: an adult and child stood holding hands; a pair of scales; a light bulb; a circle with a letter 'i' in the centre; three people above half a cog; two hands embracing a person. The background is lilac with the translucent white neurodiversikey® logomark (an 'n' with a keyhole inside it, and a 'k').*

### **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

And in terms of more practical steps that we can take to achieve neuroinclusion in the legal sector. We've now got a couple of slides covering both the professional and the services slide. So starting with professionals, first of all, we need to look at business practices. We need to look at things like flexible working and alternative working patterns, hybrid and homeworking These have been massively improved since the pandemic, but I know from speaking to people within my own part of the industry that some people feel there's a push back into office working, which may not necessarily be appropriate for all neurodivergent people.

A lot of truly flexible working will be neuroinclusive because it will allow people to make the choices about where, when and how they work in terms of in the way that's best for them. We also need

to adjust social and networking expectations. We need improved education and awareness raising at all levels to foster a safe and inclusive working environment at an individual level, and this is crucial because it will promote transparency and openness, and it may allow staff to be open about their neurodivergence, and ask for accommodations or at the very least, feel safe to disclose the fact that they're neurodivergent.

And it also means things like performance assessments can be considered in context, with more understanding and empathy. We also need to look at the possibility of there being formalised policies and procedures specific to neuroinclusion to promote inclusion at a business level and taken as a whole, those business practices we've already discussed could be part of a more neuroinclusive working policy.

We also need to consider sensory accommodations and we've already talked about noise cancelling headphones, but that's not the only one. We could look at things that allow people to minimise distraction, considerations of things around food and drink. So many events in the legal industry are centred particularly around meals out, or going to bars, or other drinking events. And maybe we need to consider whether or not that's the most accessible way of allowing people to access. Particularly when you're considering the fact that such a big part of certainly the legal profession is networking and business development.

We also need to look at the advent and the inclusion of assistive technology. So things like the availability of screen tint, screen readers and accessibility toolbars on software to allow neurodivergent people to use the software in the way that's the most efficient and also the most useful for them. It's very difficult sometimes for someone to go into, for example, a performance review and say, "well, I'm struggling, I'm maybe performing a bit more slowly on this particular thing." but be able to articulate why that is. And if we have software, may minimise the amount of difficulties people have in terms of the initial barrier getting past the fact that the software is difficult for them may enable them to

work better from it from the start.

So we then need to look at performance review and progression. And we've already talked, touched a little bit about this on earlier in the list. But we need to look at potentially alternative routes to progression. Many parts of the profession have very stringent sort of lines speaking in my own part of the profession, we're talking about associate, senior associate, to partner.

Are there other ways that we could allow people to progress? Could we have bespoke and tailor performance assessments allowing people to work to their strengths more than working as a jack of all trades? Should we consider whether certain performance issues could be assisted by better accommodations? Would they be assisted by assistive technology as we've already discussed? Would they be assisted by sensory accommodations?

And this is how all of these matters intermingle. Because if you look at neuroinclusion in the legal sector, it requires a holistic approach and most importantly, consultation with neurodivergent lawyers at every stage. Because every neurodivergent lawyer has their own experience of neurodivergence and they will need accommodations and solutions that are bespoke to them.

**Slide 9 description:** Slide is titled "Achieving neuroinclusion in the legal sector: Services" followed by the bullet points: differences between neurodivergent children and adults; interaction with justice and law enforcement systems; staff training and awareness; resources; making adjustments to ensure effective participation; liaison and diversion. Images are used instead of bullet points, in the following order: an adult and child stood holding hands; a pair of scales; a light bulb; a circle with a letter 'i' in the centre; three people above half a cog; two hands embracing a person. The background is lilac with the translucent white neurodiversikey® logomark (an 'n' with a keyhole inside it, and a 'k').

### **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

So moving to neuroinclusion in the legal sector and services. So we

need to acknowledge, first of all, the differences between neurodivergent children and adults. This is particularly relevant when we consider that a lot of the research that's happened into many neurodivergent conditions up to this point, has been in relation to children and not in relation to adults and how this impacts the way neurodivergent adults interact with things like the court system.

We need to understand the vulnerabilities that come with certain neurodivergences and how these inform interactions with justice and law enforcement. We need mandatory staff training and awareness on neurodiversity for all legal professionals working with neurodivergent children and adults who come into contact with the system. In terms of resources - having toolkits with hints and tips and guidance readily available, which will allow, and if those are supported by legal professionals working within the profession as well, that will add credibility and allow it to be a holistic approach.

We need to make adjustments to accommodate and ensure effective participation of the neurodivergent individual in client conferences, court hearings and trials. We need to potentially give more time, allow more breaks, consider sensory and environment modifications and the use of intermediaries and appropriate adults as well. And finally, we need to look at liaison and diversion and how those can provide support and advice to legal professionals and neurodivergent service users.

**Slide 10 description:** *Slide is titled "Intersectional neuroinclusion" followed by the bullet points: intersectionality should always be taken into account; impact of multiple-marginalisation; compounded experiences; should also be aware of multiply-neurodivergent people e.g. AuDHD, ADHD/dyslexic etc, under-represented people within neurotypes e.g. non-speaking autistics. To the right is a graphic of an ice-cream sundae containing 6 ice cream scoops each representing the following social identities: LGBTQIA+, disability, class, sex, race, culture. The background is lilac with the translucent white neurodiversikey® logomark (an 'n' with a keyhole inside it, and a 'k').*

## **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

So, we've talked a bit about this this week already, and I've also mentioned it earlier on in my slides, but now we're talking about intersectional inclusion. It's important to recognize the impact that multiple marginalisation can have under inclusion. People who are neurodivergent and are also part of other marginalised communities will have compounded experiences which will be very specific to the intersections they sit in.

And this means that while some of them will, some of our understanding about their experiences might be relevant, there will be nuances that are very specific to their lived experiences. The only way to fully account for these is to allow intersectional and neurodivergent people to create a safe space to communicate how their intersections impact on their lives and listen to and take on board their experiences. We have to make that space.

In particular, trauma can be compounded for intersectional neurodivergent people and this can inevitably then impact on their interactions in the workplace and the legal system as well. It's also vital that intersectionality is always considered as part of any near inclusion initiative, and while not intersectional, it's also worth mentioning the impact of multiply neurodivergence.

So for example AuDHD (autistic-ADHD), and someone who's ADHD and dyslexic, and also those who are underrepresented within the neurominority. So for example, non-speaking autistics.

**Slide 11 description:** *Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". On the right is an outline of a head between two cogs, next to an arrow, and below 3 happy, sad and neutral faces. The following text appears as Dr Bloomfield talks: What is trauma?; the relationship between dyslexia and trauma; the effects of trauma on the dyslexic brain. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and "Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com" bottom centre.*

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

I'm talking about what I call traumatic injustice. There's a lot of work in philosophical fields about epistemic and different kinds of injustice. This is traumatic injustice, the ethics of dysregulation. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to talk about, first of all, what is trauma. I'm going to look at the relationship between dyslexia and trauma. I'm going to look at the effects of trauma on the dyslexic brain. I'm going to then finish by talking very briefly about the ethics of dyslexic trauma.

**Slide 12 description:** Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". On the left is a red rectangle with the text "what did you see first?". On the right is image which looks like a painting and contains optical illusions. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and "Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com" bottom centre.

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

So first question, can I just ask people you can speak out if you'd like or maybe type something. And what do you see in this picture? The image here. What can you see? A lot of people will be able to see a face like this looking at this image. So you can see a nose towards the left and ears towards the right. And this is partly what I want you to do. I want to explore what we can see, because we can see a number of things if we look. So let's have a quick look.

**Slide 13 description:** Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". In the centre is a silver triangle with five grey rectangles lined up vertically to one side of it. As Dr Bloomfield talks, text fills the rectangular boxes. Box 1 - Data: colours, shapes, angles etc.; box 2 - recognition: people, animals, scenery etc.; box 3 - interpretation: hidden faces, expressions, emotions, 'illusions' etc.; box 4 - norms: patriarchal notions of beauty, neuronormativity, heterosexism, ableism etc.; box 5 - reflection: 'ourselves'. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and "Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com" bottom centre.



## Dr Martin Bloomfield:

Here's a small pyramid of what we can see at the top of the pyramid. **[First box's text appears]** We've got data, got colours, shapes, angles, etc. So you could have said, I see red. I see green, I see that kind of thing. So you could have just said something simple like that. **[Second box's text appears]** But of course, what you did, is you said more, you recognised that, you said I see people, I see animals, I see scenery. So I see a person, I see a swan, I see a person on a boat, that sort of thing.

**[Third box's text appears]** One person went a little deeper than that and said, I can see hidden faces or emotions or illusions as it were. So we interpret, so we can see something else underneath the obvious. But actually, if you think back to the picture, and I'm just going to show you back this picture again **[briefly goes back to slide 12 then comes back to 13]**. If you look at this picture again, here's something else you can see, or here's something I can see. **[Fourth box's text appears]** I can see patriarchal notions of beauty. I can see heteronormativity, I can see heterosexism. I can see ableism, etc. Everybody in that picture conforms to a heteronormative, patriarchal ableist notion of beauty.

And once we realise that, once we realise that actually we can see something such as that, we can start to reflect and have a look at ourselves. **[Fifth box's text appears]** Because these norms that we don't always uncover, they come from ourselves. **[Goes back to slide 12 briefly then back to 13]** So when we look at this image and we just see the people and the swan or we see the face and we don't then see the patriarchal notions of beauty, or the ableism embedded within it, it tells us something about ourselves. So this is one of the reasons that I'd like to talk about this, because it is, it leads on from what Charlotte was talking about. It leads on from this notion of essentially unearthing our own prejudices that we have against those who might be different from ourselves. **[Triangle and text boxes move to the right. A large bubble titled "right and wrong" appears surrounded by small bubbles titled: character, outcome, normativity, fairness]** And these are all indicators of ethics. The idea of what is right and wrong, of

normativity, of outcomes, of fairness and of character, it becomes ethical. So when we look at something, when we interpret something, something as simple as a picture, it becomes an ethical action.

And therefore, when we interact with human beings, maybe human beings who are different from us, it's obviously and clearly an ethical action. And this is what I want us to bear in mind, this idea of ethics being located in the space of right and wrong, located in this space of outcomes of normativity, of what we should or should not do, of fairness and of character.

Okay. I'm going to show you a very quick video.

**Slide 14 description:** *A video clip from the Simpsons plays showing: Marge Simpson: "Ooh there's the bus. Goodbye sweetheart!"*

*[Marge kisses Bart Simpson]*

*Bart: "School will be fun!"*

*[Bart runs to the school bus]*

...

*[Bart walks to his front door looking despondent whilst sad music plays. He walks into the house with his head slumped]*

*Marge: "Hi honey, how was your first day at school? ... Honey?"*

*[Bart silently goes upstairs, head slumped]*

*[Homer plays a keyboard between Lisa and Marge]*

*Homer sings: "Bart was feeling mighty blue"*

*Marge sings: "It's a shame what school can do"*

**Slide 15 description:** *Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". In the centre is a icon of a person in a dress to symbolise a woman. As Dr Bloomfield talks, text fills speech bubbles. Bubble 1 - a harmful response to any situation that is or was physically, psychologically or emotionally threatening; bubble 2 - a response to events that cause feelings of helplessness diminished their sense of self and their ability to feel the full range of emotions; bubble 3 - an event resulting in emotional harm with lasting adverse effects on a person's mental, emotional and social well-being. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in*

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

It tells the story of Bart Simpson, a happy young boy who went to school full of joy and full of fun and came home on his first day, at the end of his first day, miserable and perhaps potentially, the beginning stages of the trauma that most neurodivergent people go through when they go to school. And by the way, there is strong evidence that Bart Simpson is neurodivergent, probably dyslexic and probably ADHD. If you look at some of the other episodes with Bart Simpson in.

So, I mentioned that it's potentially the early stages of trauma. And the question is, what do I mean when I say that lots of people throw this word trauma around as I'm going to explain it, I'm going to give a couple of definitions - one from the American Psychological Association and one from an academic paper and one from the British Psychological Society.

**[Bubble 1 appears]** First of all, a harmful response to any situation that is or was physically, psychologically or emotionally threatening. And you can kind of see where school fits into this. **[Bubble 2 appears]** Second, a response to events that cause feelings of helplessness diminished their sense of self and their ability to feel the full range of emotions. **[Bubble 3 appears]** And finally, an event resulting in emotional harm with lasting adverse effects on a person's mental, emotional and social well-being.

And for most neurodivergent people who go through school, this is all too clear in the memory. So to highlight a few of these words harmful, helpless, emotional harm, mental, emotional and social well-being. **[All the words in the speech bubbles disappear except those Dr Bloomfield listed]** And this is often what we mean when we talk about trauma.

These are the effects that it has on people and it has this on people as they grow up and as they go into adulthood and they carry this into adulthood with them. But why is this important?

**Slide 16 description:** The top box contains the text: “at least once in the past couple of months”, “at least a few times a month”, “at least twice at school in the past couple of months”. The bottom box contains the text: “when someone tries to make you feel less about who you are as a person, and you aren’t able to make it stop”; and “a public health issue with far-reaching effects on adult health, wealth, criminality and social relationships”. The slide background has an image of the word bullying stretched across it. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and “Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com” bottom centre.

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

One of the reasons people go through trauma is bullying. The instances of bullying in school. And we talk about significant long term bullying. And I’ve defined significant long term bullying from a number of sources. The first is: long term means at least once in the past couple of months, at least a few times a month, and at least twice at school in the past couple of months. So when we talk about long term, we don't mean anything too long term. We just mean a few times over a period of months. This is all it takes. It's all it takes for bullying to be seen as long term and to have these effects on people.

‘Significant’ is defined as when someone tries to make you feel less about who you are as a person and you aren't able to make it stop. And a public health issue with far reaching effects on adult health, wealth, criminality and social relationships. So these are two definitions of significant. One of them is about the personal, and one of them is about the public.

Now, the question becomes, is this likely? So we know that bullying has these effects, and these effects are the same as trauma. A public health issue, make you feel less about who you are as a person, you aren't able to make it stop. If you remember the definitions of bullying. Does it actually happen at school?

**Slide 17 description:** A world map showing the percentage of

students who reported being bullied at school at least a few times a month. The background is white with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner.

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

Well, this is fascinating. This is a bullying map. And you can find these on the Internet very easily. If you go to some of the bullying sites, not sites to bully people, but sites about bullying, you'll find these bullying maps and it shows frequency and longevity of bullying over large periods of time.

On the left, it shows you that bullying can go from 5 to 10%, in the dark green countries. Like I think that's Lithuania. No, it's not Belgium in the way up to 35%. And maybe that's Lithuania or Latvia up there about I don't know, my European geography is terrible, so please forgive me. So we've got bullying that goes from quite low to bullying that goes to quite high.

Now, what we know is that there was a report in the United States that if you are neurodivergent, you are four times as likely to be bullied four times as likely. So we'll take it from, you know, 15 to 20% to 60 to 80% of the chance of being bullied if you are neurodivergent. We also know that in general, children with disabilities or learning differences such as dyslexia, or autism or ADHD, are up to three times more likely to be bullied than other children.

Which means you live in Russia, you're up to 90% likelihood, dyslexic or autistic. And if you live in Britain, it's up to 75% likelihood of being bullied. Now, this is huge. This is huge. This isn't just once. This is, as they say, significant and long term. This is the same as that which brings about trauma, the same as that which brings about trauma. And anybody who is ever bullied at school will recognize this.

**Slide 18 description:** Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". A diagram is shown in the middle. An arrow leads from a yellow dot to a red dot, from which an arrow leads to a

green dot, from which an arrow leads to a purple dot. Later, this diagram moves to the left and another diagram appears to the right which shows a yellow dot which instead leads to two red dots, which each lead to two green dots, which each lead to two purple dots. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and "Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com" bottom centre.

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

There's another thing that being neurodivergent means, by the way, specifically dyslexic, and it's called the Matthew Effect. Now, for those of you who don't know the Matthew Effect, it essentially says that the rich get richer while the poor get poorer. So if some members of society have €1,000,000 and some members of society have €100 and society as a whole gets 10% richer than the bottom part of society ends up with €110 and the top end of society ends up with €1.10 million, the gap widens in other words

Now we know, and we know very clearly that the more language you have, the more you can learn. So imagine you're dyslexic. Imagine you're at school and imagine you get perhaps one unit of knowledge per lesson. And at the end of a day, you've ended up with four units of knowledge. Now, imagine you're not. Imagine you are this horrible word that I hate - neurotypical, whatever that means. **[The first diagram disappears and the second diagram appears]** And you'll find that your amount of knowledge increases exponentially over that same period of time. And you can see the comparison here. **[The first diagram reappears next to the second]** So one of the things that we find about specifically dyslexia in school, is that you cannot help falling further and further behind your peers. And this is one of those aspects that brings about a sense of shame, a sense of feeling lesser than other people, etc. all those things that are carried within the definitions of trauma.

**Slide 19 description:** Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". In the centre is a diagram showing a large group of people to the left side, with a double ended arrow between it

*and a small group of people to the right side. At the left end of the arrow is 80%, at the right end, 20%. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and "Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com" bottom centre.*

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

Furthermore, there is the Rosenthal-Jacobson experiment, which is fascinating, and I'm sure many of you already know about it. There were some questions about the validity of the methodology, but actually those questions have pretty much been answered and the methodology has been accepted as valid.

So the Rosenthal Jacobsen experiment very quickly. Psychologists went into some schools, primary schools, and randomly selected 20% of the children, randomly selected them. There was no criterion for selecting these children other than randomness. And they said to the teachers, these 20% of the children showed signs of being gifted. And again, this horrible word, gifted imagine, gifted children, I hate that.

But these 20% of children showed signs of being gifted. We just thought we'd let you know. And lo and behold, by the end of the academic period, these 20% of the children had learned more and got higher grades than the rest of the children. Now, the question is why? And the answer is very simple. The answer is that if you're a teacher, for instance, or a boss and you think you have somebody who's gifted, somebody who's a genius, somebody who's really clever, and that person gives you an ambiguous answer or one that you don't fully understand, you're more likely to say "Oh, that's creative, that's intelligent".

If there's somebody who's not so gifted, somebody who doesn't look like they're terribly clever and they give an ambiguous answer, you're more likely to say they're wrong. If, let's say, you're back at school and you've got two kids struggling with Shakespeare and one of them you believe is gifted, you're going to encourage them and give them support. The other one you think is perhaps lacking or somehow a little bit backwards, let's use that horrible word.

You're going to basically say, "don't worry about it, I'm not going to push you". And so what happens is that the kids that the teacher thought were gifted were unconsciously given the help that the other kids were not given. And the gap grew again.

And then these non gifted kids or the ones who are setting up not to be gifted, saw these other kids flying and will have recognised that. Children are not stupid. They see when other people get higher grades than they did. Children are not blind to this.

**Slide 20 description:** *Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation" and sub-titled "Pop-Quiz". The following questions come up as Dr Bloomfield talks: Dyslexic people are less attractive than non-dyslexics; inability to read shares the same level of shame as [blank]; dyslexics are twice as likely to become [blank]; what percentage of unemployed people are dyslexic?; dyslexics make up 50% of those in both [blank] and [blank]; 85% of dyslexics had [blank]; dyslexics have a 46% higher rate of [blank]. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and "Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com" bottom centre.*

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

So I'm going to give you a quiz and see. This is really interesting, little pop quiz, because what we've seen is that, we've seen that trauma responses begin in school. Feelings of shame, feelings of being less than other people, feelings of inadequacy, feelings of helplessness. These responses begin in school. These are the definitions of trauma. And this is the definition of essentially what happens when you're bullied and when you fall behind other kids. So what are the outcomes and the consequences? First of all, I'm just going to ask you a couple of questions. Say yes or no, depending on what you think.

**[First question appears]** Dyslexics are less attractive than non-dyslexics. True or false?

Next. **[second question appears]** Inability to read has the same



level of shame. As what? Any guesses? Difficult one.

**[Third question appears]** Dyslexics are twice as likely to become what?

Next one. **[Fourth question appears]** What percent percentage of unemployed people are dyslexic? Any idea?

Next. **[Fifth question appears]** Dyslexics make up 50% of those in both what and what? See, if you can answer either of these you're doing quite well.

**[Sixth question appears]** Penultimately 85% of dyslexics had what? According to one long term study.

**[Seventh question appears]** And finally, dyslexics have a 40% higher rate of what?

So I'm going to give you the answers and it'll be interesting to see how surprised you are. Here are the answers. Dyslexics are less attractive, than non-dyslexics. It's true believe it or not. And I say this almost as a joke, but it's actually true.

In 2016, the dating website eHarmony conducted a survey. In 2018, the dating website OkCupid conducted a similar survey, and in 2019, there was an academic a piece of academic research in Scandinavia that each said that if you are on a dating app and you make spelling mistakes, you are between 35% and 75% less likely to have people swipe right. In other words, let's say split the difference 50%, you are 50% less attractive to other people if they see that you've got spelling mistakes. Isn't that shocking? Isn't that shocking?

Okay. The next one, inability to read has the same level of shame as, and I can show you the source for this later on if you'd like. Inability to reach the same levels of shame as incest. This is absolutely horrifying, this is absolutely horrifying. Inability to read has the same level of shame as incest according to one study.

Dyslexics are twice as likely to become homeless.

The percentage of the unemployed who are dyslexic is 40% in Britain. Maybe higher in other countries.

Dyslexics make up 50% of those in both - so you were correct - prison and drug and alcohol rehab.

85% of dyslexics had attempted self-harm. And according to the same long term longitudinal study, dyslexics have a 46% higher rate of suicide.

**Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:** Before you continue, there is a question in the chat, which I think we probably need to answer before we move on. It came up in relation to the first one of those, whether those people were asked if they were dyslexic or not.

**Dr Martin Bloomfield:** No they weren't. No one was asked whether anybody was dyslexic. It was simply people were asked to rate whether they would swipe left or swipe right. And with spelling mistakes. The same profile, but one without spelling mistakes and one with spelling mistakes. And people are far more likely to swipe right that is to want to date somebody if there are no spelling mistakes and far more likely to swipe left if there are spelling mistakes. So it wasn't specifically asked whether it was about dyslexia. However, according to the US National Statistics Bureau, I'm going to actually have to retract that. It's not, that's not the exact words, but it's very similar, like the British Office of National Statistics, 80% of those with poor literacy are dyslexic.

**Slide 21 description:** *Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". There are two graphics in the shape of brains. One is made up of triangles, the other squares. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and "Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com" bottom centre.*

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

I want you to imagine two brains. And this is quite an interesting thing because we often talk about neuro-differences, but if you can imagine one brain that's made up of triangles and one brain that's made up of squares. This is a bit of a piece of a cod neurology, but it tells a nice and interesting story. [Lines appear across each brain, joining the corners of different triangles/squares respectively] And then what you do is you join the corners of some triangles to the corners of other triangles and the corners of some squares to the corners of other squares. You will notice the more you do it, that it is actually impossible for these lines to go in the same direction. It's impossible because triangles and squares end up in slightly different formations. And so it's impossible to join up the corners of the triangles and the corners of the squares in exactly the same way.

What this does is it imitates in a simplistic but actually fairly accurate way, the fact that those with neurological differences, those whose brains are literally built differently, literally built differently. So for instance, there's some evidence to suggest that the right hemisphere of the dyslexic brain is slightly larger than the right hemisphere of a non-dyslexic brain, the corpus callosum in an autistic brain is a slightly different shape and slightly different size.

So the brains are literally built differently. When we talk about neural networks or neural pathways we're not being metaphorical, we're being literal. Neural pathways are actually physical things. For instance, the ventral pathway, which you can see me on the screen is about here, in your brain. [Dr Bloomfield gestures in an arch shape above his ear] If your brain is built differently, these pathways are in slightly different positions. Then they point in slightly different positions, in slightly different directions.

In other words, you're processing information slightly differently. In other words, you're thinking slightly differently.

**Slide 22 description:** *Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". An image of a cauliflower is on the left side. On*

*the right is an outline of a head between two cogs, next to an arrow, and below 3 happy, sad and neutral faces. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and "Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com" bottom centre.*

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

And here's another little analogy. Imagine a cauliflower. I was going to do this, and then I realised the cauliflower, was going to go all over the place and I was going to get cauliflower all over the carpet. So I won't do it.

But imagine a cauliflower sticking up out of the cauliflower loads a little cocktail sticks really closely together, and in some other parts there are lots of larger barbecue sticks spaced a little bit further apart. Now, this is a really nice analogy because the brain has something called mini columns, and the mini columns in the brain are actually stacks of neurons.

And you can imagine these stacks of neurons almost like telegraph poles, where information runs up and down them and then jumps between them. Now what's really interesting, there's a lot of research into mini columns based on a lot of research, and let's imagine three cauliflowers, three brains. The autistic brain, the mini columns are quite short and they're stacked really close together in really tight bunches.

The dyslexic brain, the mini columns are a little bit taller, a little bit longer, and they're a little bit further apart. And the bunches of mini columns are a little bit looser as well, a little bit further apart. And the neurotypical brain, again, I hate that word, the neurotypical brain, somewhere in the middle, so many columns of the autistic brain, there are lots of them, lots of bunches of mini columns of the autistic brain all over the brain. And they're really tightly packed together in the mini columns are short.

The dyslexic brain: there are not quite, quite so many, many columns. The bunches are slightly looser, they're slightly further

apart, and the mini columns themselves are slightly taller. Now, what this actually means is that on the one hand, information runs up and down these many columns at the same speed, regardless of how tall the mini clubs are, how far away they are. So information runs up and down the same speed. In an autistic brain, therefore, the information is running up and down like wildfire, up and down really quickly, jumping between the mini columns really quickly. One of the reasons scientists believe that the autistic people can get so overwhelmed by cognitive and sensory stimuli is the mini columns that close together. They're really short and there's lots of information rushing really quickly around them. One of the reasons scientists believe that dyslexics have slightly slower processing speed is that the information still goes at the same speed, but take longer to get to the top of the mini columns and longer to jump between mini columns. In other words, it's a slower process.

But on the other hand, this explains perfectly why autistic people find that they can see detail really, really well. And dyslexic people have got what they call global holistic reason. It's to do with the brain and the way the brain is set up. Somebody once described it really beautifully to me. I was at a seminar and somebody once described it as: imagine you're walking through a field. A neurotypical person is the same as a human being, is walking through the field at a particular speed, at a particular distance from the grass. Autistic people are like ants going between the blades of grass, seeing all the details of the grass, all the details of what's down there at base level. And dyslexic people are like drones, seeing it from above and getting a bigger picture of the whole thing. And this is basically the differences between the autistic brain, the neurotypical brain and the dyslexic.

One of the differences between these three brains, the mini columns go to explain an awful lot. They explain, for autistic people, cognitive and sensory overload but incredible vision of detail. For dyslexic people slightly slower processing speed but global holistic reasoning where you can see different things and bring them together and see connections between things.

**Slide 23 description:** Slide is titled “Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation”. Text on the left says: pre-frontal cortex - fear; amygdala - paying attention; hippocampus - learning. To the right, a diagram of a brain shows the pre-frontal cortex, hippocampus, and amygdala. The pre-frontal cortex is labelled: rational thinking - regulates emotions such as fear responses from the amygdala - with PTSD this has a reduced volume. The hippocampus is labelled: responsible for memory and differentiating between past and present - works to remember and make sense of the trauma. With consistent exposure to trauma, it shrinks. The amygdala is labelled: wired for survival, when active it is hard to think rationally. The more hyperactive the amygdala is, the more signs of PTSD are present. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and “Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com” bottom centre.

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

The problem is with trauma. We know that there are certain outcomes of trauma and there are certain outcomes that affect the brain. In other words, the brain, parts of the brain more or less shut down under trauma responses. So highlighting three areas of the brain, the prefrontal frontal cortex, the amygdala and the hippocampus, or the parahippocampus as well. But in this case, just the hippocampus. The prefrontal cortex, controls fear. The amygdala really has a large role to play in paying attention, and the hippocampus has a great role in learning. Now, what we know is that when there is a trauma reaction, there is a weakened connection between the prefrontal cortex and the amygdala. **[Text appears between pre-frontal cortex and amygdala - weakened by trauma]**

In other words, the ability to learn, sorry, the ability to pay attention is damaged because the brain isn't functioning properly. The brain does not function properly under conditions of trauma. And the ability to pay attention is damaged and it's overtaken by a heightened sense of globalised fear. We also know that the amygdala then becomes absolutely focused on danger, so it's not paying attention to anything but potential danger. **[Text appears**

***next to amygdala - hyper-focused on danger]*** And we know that the hippocampus ends up with impaired learning and memory. ***[Text appears next to hippocampus - impaired learning and memory]***

In other words, under trauma responses, these three parts of the brain, they more or less they don't exactly shut down, but they stop functioning properly. Physically, they stop functioning properly. You can see it on the MRI scans not MRI scans. You can see it and I've forgotten the word for the scans. This is fascinating.

**Slide 24 description:** *Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". Text says: Dyslexic people are less attractive than non-dyslexics; inability to read shares the same level of shame as incest; dyslexics are twice as likely to become homeless; 40% of unemployed people are dyslexic; dyslexics make up 50% of those in both prison and rehab; 85% of dyslexics had attempted self-harm; dyslexics have a 46% higher rate of suicide. The "brain damage" that dyslexics suffer is greater. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and "Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com" bottom centre.*

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

To me it's fascinating because what we find now is, first of all, dyslexics are less attractive than non-dyslexics; the inability to read shares the same level of shame as incest; dyslexics are twice as likely to become homeless; 40% of unemployed people are dyslexic; dyslexic make up 50% of those in both prison and rehab; 85% of dyslexics have attempted self-harm; dyslexics have a 46% higher rate of suicide; and the brain damage that dyslexics suffer from trauma is greater because they have, as it were, fewer of these mini columns, and so they have fewer mini columns to rely on in terms of passing information when those three parts of the brain essentially shut down. So the brain damage that gets involved is greater for dyslexics, proportionately greater.

**Slide 25 description:** *Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". There are two graphics in the shape of brains. One is made up of triangles, the other squares. Below the brains is*

*the text “the very rationality of thought”. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and “Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com” bottom centre.*

**Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

And then we go back to the shape of the brain and we look at societal notions of what we call the rationality of thought, the rationality of thought. When we talk about rationality, we talk about right thinking, straight thinking. This is based on particular ways that the brain works. But for those people whose brains naturally and biologically work differently, you cannot think in the same way. You cannot be straight thinking. You can not be right thinking. There's a number of thinkers. A guy called Bernstein, for instance, and a guy called Peter Winch who talk about different forms of rationality around the world. We are very stuck in one particular form of rationality in the Western World, and that is not helpful for people whose brains are built differently, dyslexic, autistic, ADHD or indeed anyone.

And so the assumption is that those of us who are neurodivergent are not rational, and we grow up with this assumption through school and often into the world of work, that we're not as rational as other people. All people should be saying is we process information differently.

**Slide 26 description:** *Slide is titled “Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation”. There are two graphics on either side. The left: a group of people wearing dresses representing women. On the right: one person with a raised hand wearing a dress to represent a woman. Between the two is the text “Epistemic Injustice”. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and “Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com” bottom centre.*

**Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

And then we get to the idea of epistemic injustice, and this comes from all of that. So the outcome of this is epistemic injustice. Now,



I'm going to ask a question. I don't need you to say yes or no, but I want to ask a question to all the women who are here and all the women who are watching. It's a very simple question I'd like you to ask yourself. Have you ever felt that men have not listened to you, men have not taken you seriously, men have not given you the respect you deserve because you're a woman?

Now, I'm guessing that at least 60%, maybe 80% of you are going to think, yes. Yeah, that's happened to me. This is what we call epistemic injustice. The idea that your rationality is not taken as seriously as other people's rationality. And it is an injustice because it excludes people. It takes away almost their participation in normal human society. They are not to be taken seriously. And when women are not taken seriously, it dehumanises. The same goes for those of us who are neurodivergent when we are not taken seriously. Dehumanisation. This is an injustice, it is an ethical crime against all those who are not taken seriously because they think differently, because their brains are built differently. And all those who are not, who are not taken seriously because of their trauma responses to the way they're treated at school and in work.

**Slide 27 description:** *Slide is titled "Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation". There is a graphic of an imbalanced see-saw with boxes on, the left side is labelled "the physical", the right is labelled "the social". The see-saw is lighter on the physical side which has 3 boxes labelled: trauma; dysregulation; brain damage. The see-saw is heavier on the social side which has 4 boxes labelled: bullying; academic inequality; neuronormative bias; epistemic injustice. One is made up of triangles, the other squares. The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and "Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com" bottom centre.*

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

And so what we have is we've got two aspects to this. We've got the physical, we've got the social. The physical is about trauma. It is a physical thing. It physically affects you. The trauma, the dysregulation and the brain damage. You can map all of these.

And then the social aspect is the bullying, the academic inequality, the neuronormative bias, and then the epistemic injustice that comes along with all of this. **[The see-saw moves to the right of the slide and a large bubble labelled “right and wrong” appears surrounded by smaller bubbles labelled: normativity; character; outcomes; fairness]** And this, as we've noticed, is an ethical issue. It's not simply an issue of phonological processing, or your brain being built differently. It's an ethical issue because it's about right and wrong outcomes, fairness, character, normativity, just like we said earlier on.

**Slide 28 description:** Slide is titled “Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation”. A grey textbox contains: *The unethical and unequal treatment of persons of the same value seems to have one unavoidable conclusion: that in being unethical and in being unequal, it is unjust. >> Justice is defined as giving each person what he or she deserves. << “Whenever individuals are treated unequally on the basis of characteristics that are arbitrary, their fundamental human dignity is violated. Justice, then, is a central part of ethics and should be given due consideration in our moral lives”.* The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and “Guest speaker: Dr Martin Bloomfield martin.bloomfield@gmail.com” bottom centre.

### **Dr Martin Bloomfield:**

And what we know is that the unethical and unequal treatment of persons of the same value seems to have one unavoidable conclusion that in being unethical and in being unequal, it is unjust. Justice is defined as giving each person what he or she deserves. Whenever individuals are treated unequally on the basis of characteristics that are arbitrary, their fundamental human dignity is violated.

Justice then, is a central part of ethics and should be given due consideration in our moral lives. And this is the point of what I'm saying to you, that the way that people treat those of us who are neurodivergent. It brings about trauma, it brings about dysregulation, and it brings about ethical injustice. And if you want to see some of the sources there we have them.

**Slide 29 description:** Slide is titled “Traumatic Injustice: The Ethics of Dysregulation”. Selected sources:

<https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma>;

<https://integratedlistening.com/blog/what-is-trauma/>;

<https://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence>;

<https://www.scu.edu/mcae/publications/iie/v3n2/homepage.html>.

The background is lilac with the neurodiversikey® logo in the top right corner and “martin.bloomfield@gmail.com” bottom centre.

### **Charlotte Clewes-Boyne:**

Thank you Martin, that was brilliant. And well, I speak for I'm sure speaking for myself, but I'm sure I'm speaking for everyone there, I found that really, really fascinating. And the way that you talked about that I think really is is really relevant to our industry in particular and our and and sort of both the legal industry in terms of the profession and the legal industry in terms of the services that it offers, particularly when you sort of rounded it out with those comments about what justice is and what it should be and how it informs, particularly how lawyers and people interacting with the legal system, if they are neurodivergent so much of how they interact both in the workplace, whether they you know, if they are lawyers or indeed if they're coming into the justice system, how their trauma and their traumatic experiences will impact how the systems that are currently in place and they are sadly probably neuro exclusive systems that are in place will potentially exacerbate that trauma and certainly trigger that trauma and will just be informed by that trauma. So I think that was really, really fascinating. Thank you so much.

**Slide 30 description:** The background is the lilac/purple neurodiversikey® brand pattern (repeating keys, keyholes, letters ‘n’ and ‘k’). The lilac neurodiversikey® badge logo is in the centre.