Neurodiversity in Archives

Society of American Archivists, Education Session #610
Monday, August 5, 2019, 10:30am - 11:45am

Chair/Co-Facilitator: Eric Hung
Co-Facilitator: Lydia Tang
Note-Taker: Chris Tanguay

Introduction to Neurodiversity

Concepts from Disability Studies, definition of neurodiversity and additional terminology in remote call from Zachary Tumlinson.

Questions and Brainstorming

Professional Challenges

- Bullies in the Workplace
- Normalization of language
- Socialization at work, social isolation, trouble relating to people that are neurotypical
- Coping with lack of understanding of social cues
- Lack of accommodations for older generations
- Disability is invisible
- Fluorescent lighting can be difficult for some, difficult to get accommodations

How we can help

- Our job is to be welcoming to staff
- Realize that interacting with disability is not about being PC
- Accomodations aren’t only on the person seeking them
- Don’t diagnose mental disorders

Breakout Groups

Employment

- Be less judgemental
- Don’t have to disclose
• Approach it from a task based angle
• Ask if they need help with a thing, or their struggle
• Need to push for change as a collective.
• Everyone should make accessibility their issue
• Change your perspective
• Operate with empathy
• Check your own empathy
• Foster a culture for more productive spaces
• Supervisors want more upfront disclosure, but how can you make that more welcoming
• Remind each other about accessibility and neurodivergence needs
• Takes time to change culture
• Individuals may not be aware of diagnosis
• Be thoughtful about issues regardless of diagnosis
• Diagnosis can be challenging: money, time, lack of support for testing
• Address behavior, not the person/diagnosis

Environment

• Show neurodivergence infinity symbol
• Don’t take advantage of employees
• Normalize accommodations for lighting
• No puzzle piece symbols

Collection Development/Description

• Find/create list of suggested terms and hierarchies for LCSH
• Find ways to incorporate voice of neurodivergence into collection development
• Interested in aggregate of different collections regarding neurodivergence
• Oral histories as a starting point