



# Inspiring Interdisciplinary Change: Occupational Therapists as Stewards of Neurodiversity- Affirming Care

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**Neurodiversity** - “A biological truism that refers to the limitless variability of human nervous systems on the planet, in which no two can ever be exactly alike due to the influence of environmental factors”  
(Singer, 2017)



### **Neurodiversity movement**

expanded from the Autistic Self-Advocacy movement, with the following aims:

1. shift the perspective held by mainstream neuromajority on marginalized neurominorities
1. introduce a more balanced valuation of the gifts & needs of neurominorities (countering negative, deficit-based stereotypes)
2. improve the status of neurominorities by demonstrating that society benefits from the valued contributions they can make

(Singer, 2017)

### **Neurodiversity-affirming OT**

to *encourage* neurodivergent occupations, OT must be:

- trauma-informed
- strengths-based
- attuned to principles of disability justice & tenets of justice, equity, diversity, & inclusion
- anti-racist

(Carlson-Giving, 2023)

## Strategies

- Speaking up
- Training other disciplines
- Reflective questioning
- Ownership of expertise with neurodivergence in children and families
  - Facilitating patient advocacy
  - Remembering our core professional values



## Stewardship-Holding/Protecting/Maintenance



(OpenAI, 2026)

*“We can and will be leaders in this shift. But a warning. This will be hard work. We truly have to listen. Be curious. Be wrong. Be better. The work will be counterintuitive to what you have learned to get to this moment” (Patton, 2022, p. 14).*

## References

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