Words matter. *Yours most of all.*

The words we use for our brains shape how we see ourselves. There's no single right vocabulary, only the one that feels true to you.

IDENTITY-FIRST VS. PERSON-FIRST

IDENTITY-FIRST

"autistic person"

Many autistic self-advocates prefer this. Autism is part of who they are, not something they carry around.

or

PERSON-FIRST

"person with autism"

Some people, families and professionals prefer this. It puts the person before the diagnosis.

The person gets to choose. Ask, then follow their lead.

WHO'S WHO



Neurodiverse
a group with many kinds of brains: all of us together

Neurodivergent
one person whose brain diverges from the expected norm

Neurotypical
one person whose brain fits the expected norm

A person isn't "neurodiverse"; a group is. It's an easy mix-up, and a gentle one to correct.

PRIDE & SYMBOLS



The infinity symbol is widely used for neurodiversity pride: endless variation, no one right way to be.

Many autistic advocates prefer it (often in gold) to the puzzle piece, which some feel implies something is missing. Views differ.

WORDS TO LEAVE BEHIND

~~"suffers from"~~ → "is" (she is autistic)

~~"high / low functioning"~~ → describe specific support needs

~~"special needs"~~ → "support needs", or "disabled" if they use it

Continued on back: go deeper →

Find your *words.*

Use these alone, in session, or with someone you trust. Your answers can change over time, and that's allowed.

You don't owe anyone a label. You're allowed to try words on.

1 *Which words for my brain feel like home?*

2 *Which words have hurt, and what would I like to hear instead?*

3 *How do I want people to talk about my brain: identity-first, person-first, or something else?*

4 *Is there a symbol, color or phrase that feels like mine?*

5 *Who could I tell about my words, and how might I say it?*