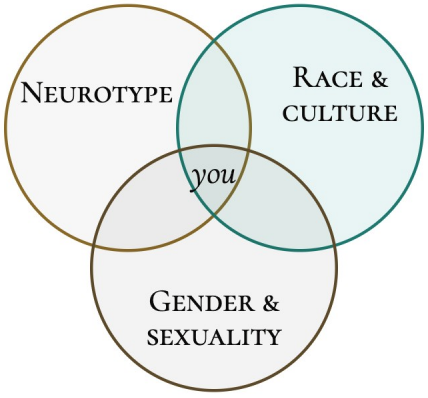
Many Layers, One Nervous System

Intersectionality and the neurodivergent experience

What intersectionality means

Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw named *intersectionality* in 1989 to describe how Black women's experiences of discrimination disappeared when race and sex were looked at separately.

For neurodivergent people, your neurotype never shows up alone. Race, gender, class, culture and language all shape whether your brain is noticed, what it gets called, and what support you're offered.



What the research shows

69% MISSED

Black children had 69% lower odds of an ADHD diagnosis than otherwise similar white children. Hispanic children had 50% lower odds.

Morgan et al., 2013

53% vs 33% FOUND LATE

Autistic Black children were more likely than white children to also have intellectual disability recorded, suggesting many are found only when needs are highest.

CDC, 2025

3–6× OVERLAPPING

Transgender and gender-diverse adults were three to six times more likely than cisgender adults to report an autism diagnosis.

Warrier et al., 2020

3× DISCIPLINED

Black students with disabilities are about three times as likely as white students with disabilities to be suspended.

US Dept. of Education, IDEA data

Being missed, misread or found late is not proof that something was wrong with you. The research points to systems, not individuals.

Sources on page 2

Why the load adds up

In a study of 111 autistic adults, everyday discrimination, internalised stigma and hiding one's autism predicted poorer mental health, beyond general life stress (Botha & Frost, 2020). This is called *minority stress*. Each marginalised identity can bring its own version, so people at several intersections may carry several at once.

Sitting with it

Which parts of who you are do people notice first? Which do they tend to miss?

Were any of your neurodivergent traits once called something else, like attitude, laziness, being "too much" or being shy? Who did the naming?

Which of your communities feels safest to be fully yourself in? What makes it feel that way?

What would you want a professional to understand about all of you, not only your diagnosis?

Learn from people living it

Autistic Self Advocacy Network · Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network · Autistic People of Color Fund · National Black Disability Coalition

SOURCES

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This handout summarises research. It does not speak for any community.