

## Welcome!

Dear ND&D Readers,

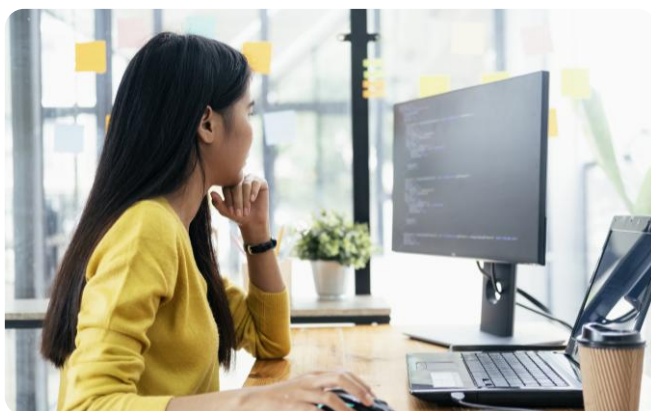
We warmly welcome you to another jam-packed issue of the ND&D Nexus! This Issue 7 officially brings us round a **whole year since we launched!** WOW!

Our Team has grown so much even within this last year, and next issue we're going to have to completely redesign the [Team News](#) page as there will be too many of us to fit in the current layout!! Our **growth is exciting!** And it means we're able to see and support more of you, widen our offering, and speak the neurodiversity and disability message far and wide!

Once again collating articles, there's a real sense of **reflection** in this issue. We discuss significant topics, shine a spotlight on our four-legged friends, emphasise mental health, and focus in on some key neurodivergences and disabilities.

So enjoy taking some time out to read this issue! Please **link in with us if you need any support** on your apprenticeship, and we'd love to welcome you to one of our upcoming live events!

*the Learning Support Team*



In this edition you can look forward to:

- The **Spaced Revision** technique from Kolsuma on [pg.5](#)
- **Mental Health Awareness Week:** from a guest author, Joanna, on [pg.7](#)
- **Neurodiversity in Gaming** with Stacey on [pg.3](#)
- **ND&D in Focus:** this edition we look at Coeliac Disease on [pg.11](#)
- There's an animal theme with **Paws for Thought** on [pg.6](#) and in **Creativity Corner** on [pg.9](#)
- **Could it be Dyscalculia?** on [pg.13](#)
- Micha explores **ADHD & Hormones** on [pg.12](#)
- **Event Calendar:** upcoming dates on [pg.14](#)
- **Helpful Links:** Further resources and support available to help you on [pg.15](#)



Brought to you by the Learning Support Team


## Team News


Well in all honesty, it's been a very mixed couple of months! We've had some celebrations, but also some very sad situations including significant family bereavements, and illnesses in the Team. But what has really shone through is just **how great our Teams are!** We've grown exponentially over the past 18 months, and supporting one another and covering work between us has been amazing!




Work pals at the wedding photo booth!

We'd like to give a huge **congratulations to Meadhbh** who has been offered a permanent position following her fixed-term contract. The DA Team were absolutely elated to hear she was becoming a permanent fixture! The QAA Team will also be welcoming someone new soon – so watch this space!

 **Stacey got married!** She had a spectacular wedding in the woods on a beautifully DRY day in May! Some of the Team lived close enough to attend the evening-do, and it was great to celebrate with her and her new husband!

Mitzi's daughter has officially become a Doctor after 6 years of study and starts her new position as a Junior Doctor in the NHS imminently – **HUGE congratulations!** 

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June **Kayleigh** will be completing **the Wirral Coastal walk of 20 miles** to raise money for Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome. You may remember the article Kayleigh wrote in [Issue 05](#) about EDS for background on her lived-experience and information on the condition. We wish her all the best with the challenge! 



**Alan Skelton**  
Apprenticeships  
Senior Learner  
Services Manager

## QAA Learning Support Team (Levels 3-6)

Email – [Specialist.LearningTeam@qa.com](mailto:Specialist.LearningTeam@qa.com)



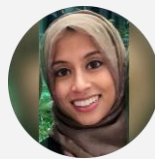
Ray



Lisa



Kayleigh



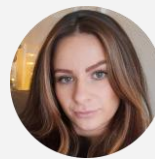
Kolsuma



Micha



Ruth



Ashlea



Karla

## DA Learning Support Team (Levels 4-7)

Email – [DASpecialist.LearningTeam@qa.com](mailto:DASpecialist.LearningTeam@qa.com)



Tracie



Kirstin



Sarah



Mitzi



Jacob



Stacey

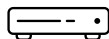


Meadhbh

## Game On: Neurodiversity in Gaming



by Stacey



In a recent [Neurodiversity Network session](#), the topic of choice was 'Neurodiversity in the Media'. This had me thinking of the ways neurodiversity is represented in various media outlets, and one specific topic came to mind: **gaming**.

Over **18% of UK game developers** self-identify as **neurodivergent**, and so it is expected that we will see some growing visibility of **representation**. Games are increasingly featuring neurodivergent characters or themes. Direct labelled representation is still growing, however characters like '**Symmetra**' in **Overwatch** and '**Wattson**' in **Apex Legends** have been confirmed by directors as being on the autistic spectrum.

Symmetra's character portrayal emphasises that her autism is not a limitation, but rather a different, **valuable way of thinking** that allows her to be a brilliant architect of 'hard light' (an ability to create physical objects from a light source). Wattson's character **resonates with neurodiverse individuals** through her dialogue, mannerisms and high intelligence.

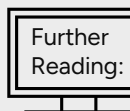


The **game guides** players through chronological slices of life from toddlerhood to open-plan offices. You as the player are put into **experiences from a neurodivergent perspective**, enforced through control hijacking, audio overload or environmental agitation. The camera will forcefully jerk away from a school task to look out a window to **mirror executive dysfunction**, or items may reappear after moving them to **emulate cognitive fatigue**.



Games are also being recognised for their ability to **promote understanding of neurodiverse experiences through tailored gameplay and storytelling**. Although not a commercial blockbuster, indie research-backed educational projects such as [Life \(Re\)Sounding](#) aim to challenge medicalised diagnostic criteria and simulate neurodivergent life, increasing awareness and understanding.

Gaming often creates a **social and therapeutic outlet** for neurodivergent individuals. **While authentic representation** which avoids reducing characters to clichés is still the goal, the steps being made for more intentional inclusion of **neurodiverse protagonists**, rather than subtle nods, is helping to **foster inclusion and reduce stigmas**.



- [Unlocking the Power of ND in Game Development](#)
- [Representation of neurodiversity in video games](#)
- [Gaming in the intervention and support process](#)
- [Autism in Gaming](#)

## Pride Month

Pride Month, celebrated every June, is a time to **recognise and honour LGBTQ+ communities**, their **identities**, and ongoing **fight for equality**. It began as a commemoration of the [Stonewall Riots](#) and has grown into a global moment of **visibility, reflection, and celebration**.

For many, Pride is about **embracing who you are** and feeling **seen, safe, and valued**.

Beyond the celebrations, Pride Month also **highlights the challenges that still exist**, including discrimination, stigma, and barriers to inclusion. It's an opportunity to **learn, listen, and stand in solidarity** with others, especially in workplaces, education, and communities.

Many cities hold **Pride marches and events** in July, close to the anniversary of Stonewall, with others running across the summer months.



For apprentices and young people, Pride can be a reminder that **diversity strengthens us all**. Creating **inclusive spaces** means making sure **everyone feels respected and able to thrive**. Whether you are part of the LGBTQ+ community or an ally, **Pride Month is a chance to support, celebrate, and champion equality**.

- [What employers need to know about Pride Month](#)
- [Rainbow Laces: A new era | Stonewall UK](#)

## The two sides of High Functioning ADHD

What people see



- Creative
- Proactive
- Confident
- Quick-thinking
- Organised
- High achiever
- Proactive
- Social
- Hardworking
- Full of energy
- Meet all deadlines
- Appearing calm
- Enthusiastic

What people don't see



- Excessive worrying
- Rejection sensitivity
- Perfectionist
- Sensory Sensitivity
- Often exhausted
- Hyperfocus
- Fear of failure
- Procrastinate
- Inattention
- Restlessness
- Daydreaming
- Self doubt

Image Credit



## App Recommendation



### Goblin Tools

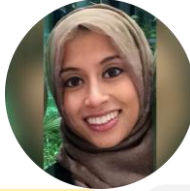
Skyhook  
£2.99 (or free via browser)

[Goblin Tools](#) is brilliant if you **find tasks overwhelming** or struggle to get started. It **uses simple AI tools** to break tasks down into smaller, more manageable steps

You can adjust how detailed it is making it flexible depending on your needs. If you struggle with **interpreting tone**, it can clarify and appraise. There are also features to help you **estimate how long things might take**. It's especially helpful for neurodivergent learners who benefit from **structure, clarity, and reducing cognitive overload**.

## Exams: Don't Cram. Space It Out.

by *Kolsuma*



Exam season is upon us, and you may well know someone who is in the middle of revision and preparing for their exams. There are some well known revision strategies but, one method has been found to be particularly effective – spaced repetition.



Spaced repetition is the process of **spacing out the revision of the same topic** over increasing intervals. Instead of trying to cram everything in during one big revision session, you spread shorter study periods out over time.

This technique is based on **Ebbinghaus's "forgetting curve,"** which shows that our memory of new knowledge is halved in just a matter of hours or days if we don't review them. However, every time we **actively review** or retrieve the information the memory becomes stronger and slows down the speed of future forgetting. It is a much more effective way to make information stick. A common time for spaced repetition is revisiting the same topic on days 2-3-5-7.



Here is an example of revising the topic of **Data Lifecycle** using spaced repetition:

- Day 1: **Write** down everything you know about the data lifecycle on a mind map, in bullet points or flashcards.
- Day 2: **Revisit** the information and add anything else you may have missed onto your chosen method.
- Day 5: **Summarise** the key points, test yourself and see how much you can recall.
- Day 7: **Test** yourself again and identify the areas that need to be revisited.



As you begin to **recall** more information, you can **increase the intervals** that you revisit the topic, for example: week 1, week 3, week 5, and so on. Keep the sessions short, around 20 minutes at a time per topic, and try to **incorporate different techniques** of revision such as using flashcards, highlighting, and using mind maps.

Finally, revision and exam preparation require a lot of mental effort and so it's also important to ensure that you **sleep well**, take **regular breaks** and **manage your stress levels** so that your brain's capacity to hold, store and retrieve information and knowledge is optimised. So why not give spaced repetition a try?

Brought to you by the Learning Support Team

## Paws For Thought

by Sarah



This issue we're all about reflecting on key parts of every-day life. Many of us have fur-babies who are a huge part of our lives! So this article is a **dedication to them**, and all animals! On the right is a gallery of some of the Learning Support Team's four-legged pals, both past and present.

Spending time with animals can be more **powerful** than it might seem, especially if you're feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or struggling to focus. For those of us who love times of solitude, it's still great to share that solitude with a pet! For many neurodivergent people, **animals offer a sense of calm and comfort** that's hard to find elsewhere.

Animals don't expect explanations, and they don't judge; you can just be yourself! That **kind of connection** can make a real difference on difficult days.

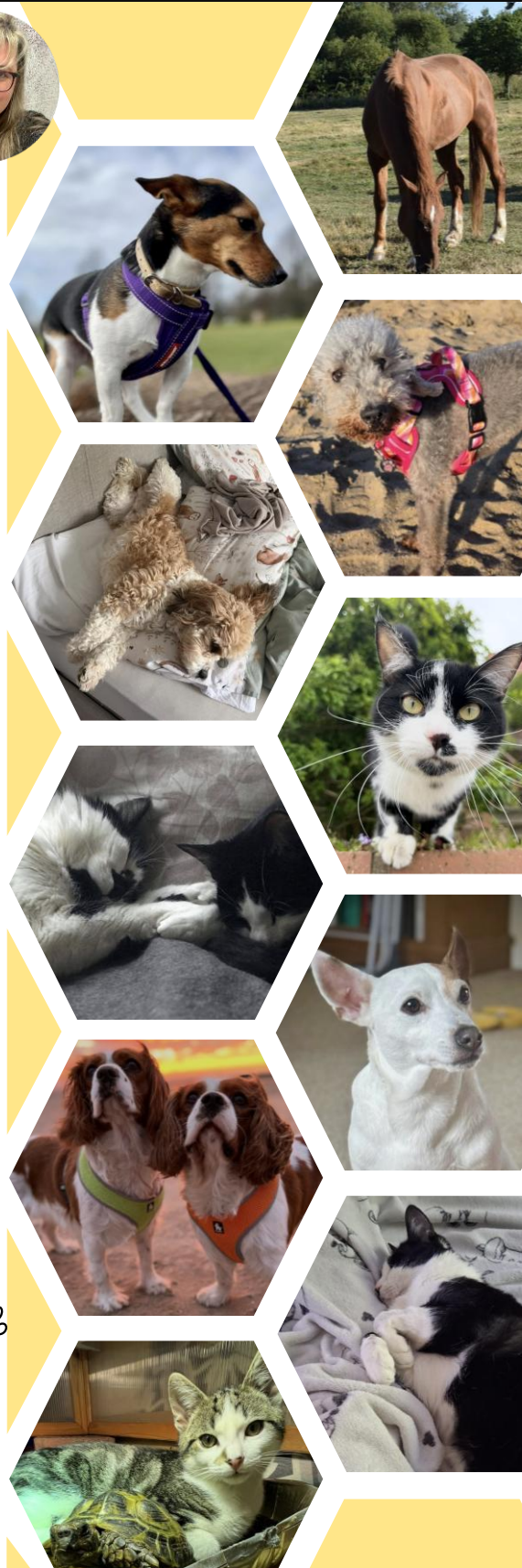
There is a TON of research (see links below) showing the positive effect animals can have on **mental health**. Many schools and care facilities make use of therapy animal visits (or residents!), with some universities even enlisting therapy animals to support with exam anxieties.

If you have a pet, you might already notice how **they help you** take breaks, get outside, or reset when things feel too much. If you don't, even spending short periods of time with animals such as visiting a friend's pet, watching animal videos (who doesn't love a funny cat reel!?) or getting out into nature, can have a similar **calming or uplifting effect**.

You may not be a natural animal-lover, and that's okay! So whether they're by your side every day or just passing through your feed, **here's a moment to appreciate** the comfort, calm, and quiet support that animals can bring into our lives.

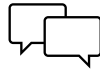
### Further Reading:

- [Do Animals Help With Mental Health?](#)
- [Pets help mental health problems](#)
- [How Pets Impact Our Mental Health](#)
- [Healing Companions](#)
- [Canine-assisted therapy in reducing stress](#)



Brought to you by the Learning Support Team

## Mental Health Awareness Week



*by Joanna from the Safeguarding Team*

Mental Health Awareness Week is an opportunity to **pause, reflect and start meaningful conversations** about mental wellbeing. It encourages individuals and organisations to recognise the importance of mental health, **challenge stigma**, and remind people that support is available.

Small actions can make a big difference; whether that's **checking in on a colleague**, taking time for **self-care** or **seeking help** when things feel overwhelming.



[Image Credit](#)



We encourage learners and staff to use this week to **prioritise their wellbeing**. Helpful steps might include setting healthy boundaries, practicing relaxation or mindfulness techniques, taking regular breaks and reaching out to trusted people for support.

Sharing resources, hosting awareness sessions or highlighting external support services can also help create a more **open and supportive culture**. Above all, Mental Health Awareness Week is a reminder that **mental health matters every day**, not just a week.



**"Self-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others." – Christopher Germer**

## Support at QA



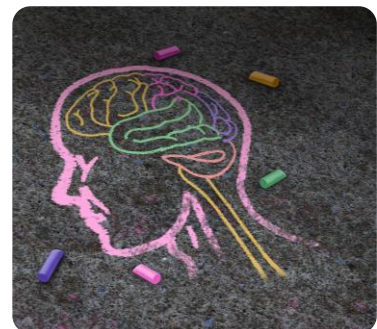
At QA, **mental health and wellbeing are a key priority** within our Safeguarding Team. We provide a structured, inclusive service that recognises diverse needs, including neurodiversity, with clear signposting and multiple referral routes such as self and peer referral.

Our trained **Mental Health First Aiders** respond promptly to referrals and offer tailored support, practical resources and signposting to external services where appropriate. Enhanced safeguarding procedures are in place for under-18s, with confidentiality and GDPR carefully maintained to ensure learners feel safe, supported and understood. **Why not attend** one of our [monthly Safeguarding introductions](#) to find out more?

**Links:**

[Mental Health Awareness Week](#)

[QA - Our Safeguarding Team](#)



## Moments of Reflection

Over the past year, our teams have experienced **profound loss**; several colleagues have lost their mums, and others are currently supporting loved ones through palliative care. These are **moments that stay with us**, shaping both our personal and professional lives in ways that aren't always visible.

In recognising this, we take a moment to "light a candle" **in memory** of those we've lost, and **in support** of those continuing to navigate grief. It's also a quiet acknowledgement of our **apprentices and staff** who may be carrying similar experiences alongside their studies and work, often more silently than we realise.

What **shines through**, even in difficult times, is the **care within our community**. Colleagues supporting one another, learners being held with empathy, and kindness shown without needing to be asked.

In remembering those we've lost, we are reminded of **what matters most**, and of the **strength we find in each other**.



*Thank you to all supported learners who've met with an alternative member of staff or had appointments rescheduled recently whilst staff have taken compassionate leave* ❤️

Losing someone close to you can make everything else **feel harder**, including your apprenticeship. You might find it **difficult to concentrate, stay motivated, or keep up with tasks** that once felt manageable. If this is something you're experiencing, you're not alone. It's okay if things feel different for a while, and it's okay to need support.

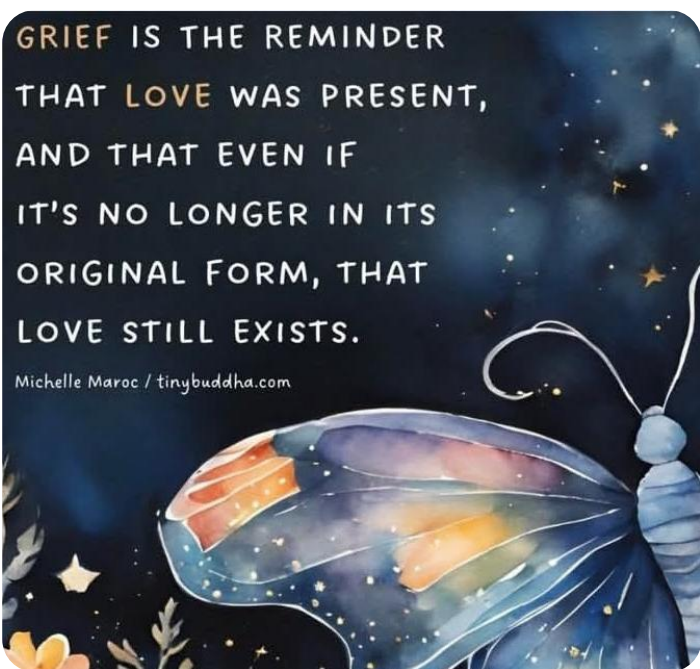
Let your tutor or the support team know if you can, or link in with our [Safeguarding Team](#) for support following a bereavement. **Even small adjustments**, extra time, or a bit of flexibility can make things feel more manageable. You don't have to explain everything in detail to be understood. With the right support, it is possible to keep moving forward at a pace that works for you.

### Support Resources:

- [Support and self-care for grief](#)
- [Get help with grief after bereavement or loss](#)

GRIEF IS THE REMINDER  
THAT LOVE WAS PRESENT,  
AND THAT EVEN IF  
IT'S NO LONGER IN ITS  
ORIGINAL FORM, THAT  
LOVE STILL EXISTS.

Michelle Maroc / tinybuddha.com



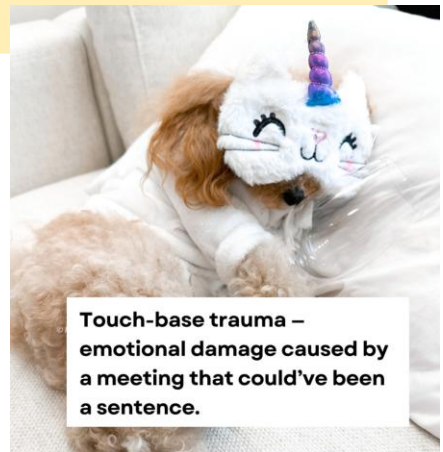
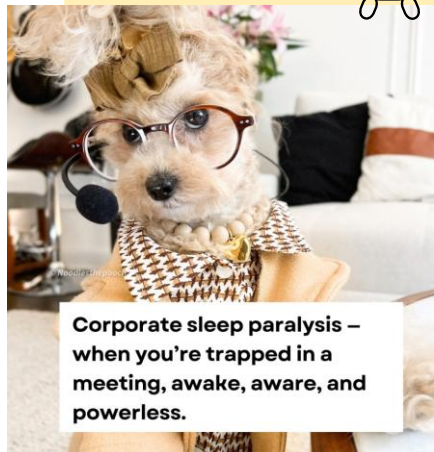
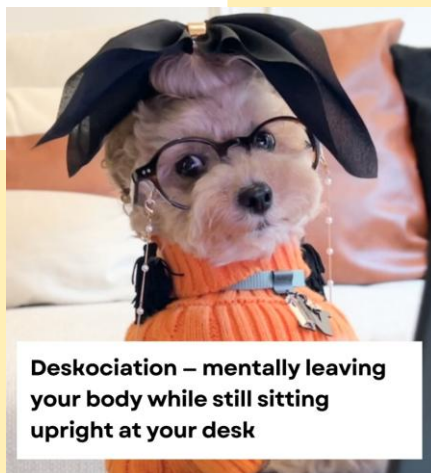
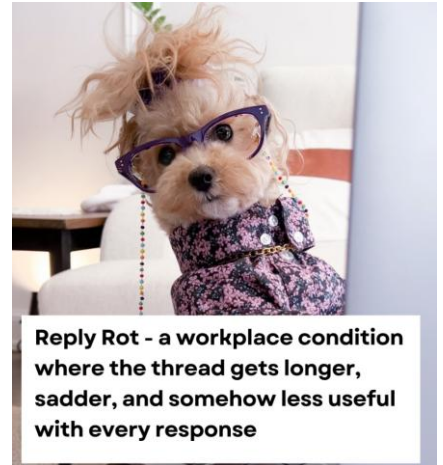
## Creativity Corner

A selected piece of inspiration from the internet!

Something a little different this issue! We've fallen in love with Noodles! She has some great content on 'made up corporate buzzwords' – just something to make you smile!

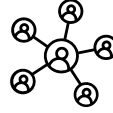


@noodlesthepooch



Brought to you by the Learning Support Team

## Review – Neurodiversity Network



The April ND Network session explored **Neurodiversity and the Media**, bringing together honest reflections on how neurodivergence is portrayed on screen and in popular culture – book [here](#) and get the next dates in your diary!

We broke as usual into our three main rooms – ADHD & Autism, the 3 Ds, and Parent’s Corner. A key theme was the **misconception** that characters in shows like ‘Rain Man’ (who actually had Savant Syndrome) or ‘The Good Doctor’ represent what autism “looks like.” Participants highlighted that these portrayals are often taken as the standard, when in reality, **neurodivergence** presents in many **different** and **less visible** ways. This led to discussion about the impact of media on public understanding, including experiences of being misunderstood, not believed, or feeling **pressure to fit a narrow definition**.

The session created space for **sharing lived experiences**, from social challenges to sensory differences, which helped foster connection and validation across the group. There was also recognition of positive shifts in media, where authentic voices and lived experience shape more balanced portrayals. Overall, the session combined **reflection, humour, and shared insight**, reinforcing the importance of broadening understanding and representation of neurodivergent experiences in the media. Join us in [June](#) for a session on ND creativity and innovation!

*she didn't fix her neurodivergence. she fixed her environment, her relationships, her standards and her self-talk. the neurodivergence stayed. but her life transformed.*

@healthshoppadid

[Image Credit](#)



## A Good Read

Rox and Rich Pink’s ([@ADHD\\_love](#)) **The Cherry Blossom Theory** is a warm, accessible look at living with ADHD, blending personal insight with gentle encouragement.

Using the **cherry blossom as a metaphor**, it captures both the beauty and challenges that come with neurodivergence, highlighting common experiences like overwhelm and emotional intensity, while also **celebrating creativity** and individuality. Its supportive, easy-to-read tone makes it engaging for those new to understanding ADHD.

Overall, it’s an **uplifting read** that encourages self-acceptance and a more compassionate view of neurodiversity. Plus, they’ve just released it on [audiobook](#)!



## ND&D In Focus: Coeliac Disease



by Sarah

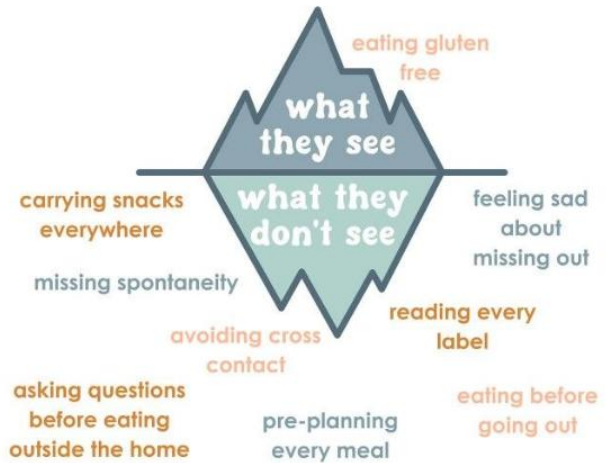
11/11/11. The day I received my diagnosis.

I'd gone to the GP to "get my calcium levels checked" following a broken wrist. The doctor was astounded at my blood test results! Silent **Coeliac disease**. There was no warning, no symptoms, and no reaction to eating gluten, just unknown brittle bones and anaemia.

And I suddenly went from being a "healthy" person to having a **disease**, a **life-long autoimmune condition**. It was a lot. The only management of Coeliac disease is a 100% gluten free (gf) diet.

Gluten is a **protein** found in **barley, rye, oats, wheat, spelt** (BROWS).

### life with coeliac disease



Coeliac disease (CD) is an autoimmune condition, so when I eat any gluten, **my body treats it as poison** and attacks itself to eliminate the gluten. This causes a LOT of intestinal damage (*hence why my original "silent" condition still caused health conditions*) but often severe physical symptoms. I am now so easily cross-contaminated and 'glutened', experiencing the most horrific symptoms. It's not even just the immediate aftermath, as your body does everything it can to remove the "poison" from your system, it's then the next 6-8 weeks...

The hardest part for me in all honesty, is the **mental health impact**. Living in my bubble is fine, I literally don't notice being GF at home (except the cost – a good loaf of gf bread is like £3.80!) but anything involving eating out, visiting friends, events etc, and it's usually not great... and I cry. A lot. I think it's linked to my AuDHD, but I just don't deal with being so different and I find it so stressful; I am such an inconvenience, and I can't advocate for myself in stress!

**May is Coeliac Awareness Week** – at least all the gf food is 25% off in Tesco's for the month!

If I am 'glutened' I can literally trace where the rest of the gluten is across the weeks as it works its way out through my digestive system... the aches, the pains, the discomfort, the gross-ness, the fatigue, and the brain-fog is unbearable.



I'm known as the "sparkles and rainbows" girl – and I realise this piece reads negatively! But I must be honest, because this is a really misunderstood condition – "but you can eat a bit of gluten?" – **no!** "It's not hard to be gf" – **have you tried it!?** "A crumb won't hurt" – **would you eat a crumb of arsenic!?**

My advice for anyone with CD is link in with [Coeliac UK](#), find online communities, follow [@beckyexcell](#), and sometimes you do just have to laugh and share the horror story! Find people who understand, keep educating yourself, indulge in great products! You're allowed to feel sad... yes it could be a much more serious, but it also could be a lot easier... so it's okay to feel what you need to feel. We get it.



## ADHD and Hormones

by *Micha*



Managing ADHD as a female comes with the added **complexity of hormonal fluctuations**. Having been diagnosed with both ADHD and [PMDD](#) (like 40% of women), I know firsthand the impact on my symptoms. However, it wasn't until I dug deep into the research, it all made sense.

**Executive function** is the brain's air traffic controller impacting our thoughts, feelings, and emotions. It performs **seven key functions**: planning, organisation, time management, working memory, inhibition, metacognition, and emotional control - areas all known to be impacted by ADHD.

**Neurotransmitters** fuel executive function. They provide the **chemical messages** to switch those parts of the brain on and impact how we feel, including:

- **Dopamine** - our motivation to act
- **Norepinephrine** - attention and alertness
- **Serotonin** - mood stability

Then you have something called the Glutamine and GABA Balance. Glutamine is **excitatory**, prompting us to act. GABA on the other hand, the brains "braking" system, allowing us to **calm down** and **avoid overstimulation**. Can you see where I might be going here?



The final layer and piece to the puzzle is where it gets interesting - the female hormonal cycle **directly impacts neurotransmitters**.

Oestrogen helps regulate dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin, while progesterone supports GABA. So when both drop during the luteal phase, or when progesterone collapses in menopause and oestrogen behaves like a funfair ride, it's hardly surprising that everything can feel so unsteady!



Is it any wonder we may **struggle more during those times**? Challenges with memory, focus, emotional control, and organisation difficulties surface. ADHD symptoms may appear worse, and medication may feel less effective. Many neurotypical women experience these challenges too; some **liken the menopause to feeling like they have ADHD**. It makes total sense why women with ADHD often report greater instances of PMS, PMDD, pre-natal depression and challenges at menopause. Those already stretched systems become unstable under the hormonal influence.

### What can you do about it?

1. **Speak with your GP or specialist**. Hormone replacement, SSRI anti-depressants and other treatment options may be offered.
2. **Track your cycle** and symptoms.
3. **Plan** where you can, especially if you have the gift of a regular cycle (think fewer social plans, less challenging work, less stimulation, more nature, gentle movement, and alone time).
4. Build your **self-care plan** around cyclical changes. Low and high battery versions.
5. Write yourself a **hormonal survival plan** to remind yourself of what you need in difficult times.
6. **Be kind to yourself**, remember it will pass, adjust where you can and seek support from those around you.

## Could it be Dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a “**specific and persistent difficulty in understanding numbers** which can lead to a diverse range of difficulties with mathematics” (Ferrie, 2022), but differs from a specific learning difficulty in maths (BDA, 2025). Research into Dyscalculia is an estimated 30 years behind the research for Dyslexia.

Dyscalculia has been referred to as the “dyslexia of numbers” and was once seen as an umbrella term for all maths difficulties. However since 2019 Dyscalculia now has its own definition, and sits at the more **extreme end of a spectrum** of maths difficulties linked to other conditions or issues.

Maths struggles may be **linked to Dyslexia** (affecting memory, processing and sequencing) or **Dyspraxia** (impacting spatial awareness and organisation). These challenges can be further influenced by **maths anxiety**, causing learners to feel overwhelmed or “freeze,” further hindering progress, as well as environmental factors, showing that difficulties in maths are often multifaceted rather than a single, isolated issue. **An estimated 60% of people with dyslexia have an additional maths learning difficulty.**



Whilst Dyscalculia does fall under the same protective characteristic in the Equality Act 2010 as other neurodivergences there isn't nearly as much awareness or training for it. Remember: it does not affect someone's intelligence; it's just a **differently wired brain**.

Dyscalculia can often be **co-occurring** with other neurodivergent conditions and whether someone is aware of their Dyscalculia or not they can often have **difficulties with:**

- Basic calculations such as adding and subtracting
- Choosing the correct operation for the problem
- Telling time on analogue clocks
- Solving word problems
- Switching between tasks
- Dealing with money
- Slower processing speed
- Working memory
- Maths anxiety

### Tips to help

- As difficult as it is, try to **practice** little and often.
- Make it part of your **everyday life** with budgeting and shopping.
- Take a **deep breath** and take your time.
- **Break it down** equations, and **talk** about it with others.



If you think identify with some of these traits you can get a private assessment, which is unfortunately the only option for an adult diagnosis.

You can read some personal stories here:

- [My Dyscalculia Story - Catherine Starkey](#)
- [Alia - My Dyscalculia Story](#)
- [Stella's dyscalculia story](#)

Brought to you by the Learning Support Team

## Upcoming Events:

Check out all our upcoming events on the Wellbeing Calendar, and book onto all sessions [here](#).

- Join us for our **Introduction to Neurodiversity** sessions, aimed at those new to neurodiversity – **May 21<sup>st</sup>**
- Our Safeguarding Team are running monthly **Introduction to Safeguarding** sessions: a short live session to learn more about how we support you and how to make a referral – **May 26<sup>th</sup> and June 26<sup>th</sup>**



Image Credit



AUTISTIC  
**PRIDE DAY**  
— JUNE 18 —

We would love to see you at our next **QA Apprenticeship Neurodiversity Network** session on **17<sup>th</sup> June** – **Creativity and Innovation in Neurodivergent Minds**

In this session, we will discuss the unique **problem-solving, pattern recognition, and creative thinking strengths** that ND people bring to teams and communities.



## AoA Masterclass



**Masterclass**  
EXCLUSIVELY FOR Association of Apprentices

**Resilience in Action**  
Friday 15th May 2026  
12:00 - 1:30pm BST | Online

**WITH CLARE STUART,**  
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD AND SAFEGUARDING TEAM LEADER AT QA

**QA**  
Learn. To Change.

As part of your free **Association of Apprentices** membership, you can book onto amazing events, including one hosted by our very own **Clare Stuart** from the Safeguarding Team. During this interactive 90-minute workshop, you will:

- Learn practical ways to improve your wellbeing and manage stress, including simple techniques you can use every day.
- Discover how to build confidence and self-belief by focusing on your strengths and setting realistic goals.
- Get tips for balancing work and life so you can stay healthy and avoid burnout during your apprenticeship.

Book onto all AoA events [here](#).

## Feel you need ND&D Support?

- If you are currently a QA Apprentice **without** learning support in place and you have a formal diagnosis, disability, or think you may be neurodivergent, please complete a **self-referral form**
- You need to have a disability or learning difficulty in line with **The Equality Act 2010** to access support, but are not required to have a formal diagnostic report for us to put reasonable adjustments in place. For further information, watch our **Learning Support Team Video** [here](#)
- You may have a formal diagnosis, disability, long-term medical condition, long-term mental health difficulties, have adjustments in the workplace, have received support in the past, or just be exploring a potential neurodiversity – **please link in with us!**
- If you would like to discuss receiving learning support please complete the correct **self-referral form** for your Apprenticeship and we will be in touch

### QAA Learning Support (Levels 3-6)

[Self Referral Form](#)

Email – [Specialist.LearningTeam@qa.com](mailto:Specialist.LearningTeam@qa.com)

### DA Learning Support (Levels 4-7)

[Self Referral Form](#)

Email – [DASpecialist.LearningTeam@qa.com](mailto:DASpecialist.LearningTeam@qa.com)

## Helpful Links:

Check out the [Apprentice learner's portal](#) for information and support around your Apprenticeship. Access information on **your wellbeing, your success, your experience, your future,** and **your programme** and engage with everything QA can offer you on your journey!

If you feel that you'd benefit from **pastoral** or **welfare** support, then check out our incredible **Safeguarding Team**; they provide all kinds of support from crisis intervention, regular check-ins, mental health support, and short or long-term mentoring support. Please complete a [Self-Referral Form](#), or if you have a concern about a peer use this [Referral Form](#).

QA has partnered with the **Association of Apprentices (AoA)**: a membership organisation that connects apprentices across the UK. In working with AoA, QA provide **access to social and professional networks**, learning, guidance, and support to enhance the apprenticeship journey. All QA apprentices are eligible for **free AoA membership**. Find out more [here](#).



## DA Only:

**The Academic Community of Excellence (ACE)** team provide guidance for **Degree Apprentices** alongside regular classes on topics such as academic style, critical analysis, relating theory to practice, research skills, reflective writing, referencing, and much more - [ACE DA Learner Portal](#)