

Welcome!

Dear **ND&D Readers**,

As summer draws to a close, a new Academic Year begins for many; this term we typically welcome our biggest intake of new Apprentices. So, for those of you who are new to QA – **a very warm welcome!**

This is our third edition of the bi-monthly **Neurodiversity & Disability Nexus**, which brings you news, events, resources, information, and inspiration about all things ND&D... and to match our biggest intake, we're publishing our biggest newsletter yet!

Although Apprenticeships run all year long, September does often feel like a new year, don't you think? With 'back to school' anticipation hanging in the air, the transition from summer to autumn is a great opportunity for a **new challenge**, a **change of routine**, and always an excuse for **new stationery!**

International Week of Deaf People is 22nd – 28th September. **World Mental Health Day** is October 10th, the 6th – 12th October is **Dyslexia Awareness Week**, and the whole of October is **ADHD and Menopause Awareness Month!** We have a packed series of events which you can find on the [Wellbeing Calendar](#) – it would be great to see you! Many will be recorded, so if you can't make a live session make sure you grab a cuppa and watch them back!

from the Learning Support Team



In this edition you can look forward to:

- Part two of **Neurocrafted**, where Kirstin explores [Cognition](#)
- **Two focused articles on AI** looking at the negative impact on cognition, and then Stacey explores how you can use it to enhance your studies (without cheating!)
- Learn about [The Power of Pause](#), by Micha
- **QA Apprenticeships Neurodiversity Network [Review](#)** from July and August by guest contributor Heather
- Kayleigh [reviews](#) the Team's visit to **The National Neurodiversity Show**
- Articles on [Sign Language](#), [Anxiety](#), and [Autumn Burnout](#)
- Upcoming events and opportunities to connect can be found on the [here](#)

Please submit any contribution ideas or things you'd like to see [here](#). Your feedback truly is invaluable; so please do share it [here](#)!



Team News

The **Learner Services Team** headed out to the National Neurodiversity Shows across the country, with many of us meeting in Liverpool. It's rare to get together as we work remotely across country, and it's always so lovely to see one another! Kayleigh provides a full review on [pg. 9](#).

Other than that, we've all been busy over summer supporting our Apprentices, crossing online paths as people dip in and out of annual leave!



This is our sensible group photo – we did do some silly ones too!



Some of the **Learning Support Team** completed the Wirral Coastal Walk in July to raise a whopping **£580** for **Young Minds**! Kayleigh, Vix, Mark, Ray, Ashlea, two partners, and a dog braved the wind and rain to raise money for this charity with a long 12km walk along the coast. Two of them even completed the full 20km – **well done guys!**



Mark Soady
Apprenticeships
Head of Learner
Services

QAA Learning Support Team (Levels 3-6)

Email – Specialist.LearningTeam@qa.com



Ray



Lisa



Vix



Kayleigh



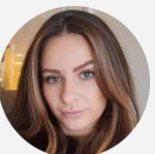
Kolsuma



Micha



Ruth



Ashlea

DA Learning Support Team (Levels 4-7)

Email – DASpecialist.LearningTeam@qa.com



Tracie



Kirstin



Sarah



Mitzi



Jacob



Stacey

Hands That Speak - A Focus on Sign Language

Do you know any **sign language**, or any basic greetings in British Sign Language (BSL)? BSL is a **beautiful language**, with a **rich history** and **significant cultural value**. It is mainly used by people who are Deaf or with hearing impairments.

There are **variants of sign language** used in the UK, including BSL, Sign Supported English (SSE), and Makaton which uses signs and symbols based on BSL to support spoken English.

BSL has its own grammatical structure and syntax, with regional variations, just like in English. Advances in technology is standardising BSL, but if you travel just a short distance between places there sign variants.

The **etymology** of some of the signs are fascinating! "School", for example, can be signed using either of the signs pictured below. Whilst the two fingers moving downwards represent eyes skimming a blackboard, the hand 'waving' in front of the mouth came from blowing on your hand after the cane!

The [RNID](#) is promoting their campaign "[It Does Matter](#)" encouraging more people To learn BSL, to **include everyone in the conversation**.



British Sign Language (BSL) was only recognised as an **official UK language** in **2003**.

The **first GCSE** in BSL has just launched, with students studying from this September.







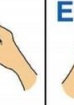




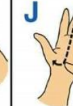
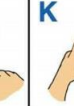















INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF SIGN LANGUAGES



INTERNATIONAL WEEK
OF DEAF PEOPLE

22nd – 28th September is
International Week of Deaf People

23rd September celebrates
International Day of Sign Languages

A 	B 	C 	D 	E 	F 	G 
H 	I 	J 	K 	L 	M 	N 
O 	P 	Q 	R 	S 	T 	U 
V 	W 	X 	Y 	Z 		

Useful Links:

[Learn the BSL alphabet - Deaf Action](#)

[Exploring the Top 15 Deaf Organisations in the UK](#)

[Getting started - Commanding Hands](#)

[30+ Essential BSL Greetings You Should Know. - Access BSL](#)

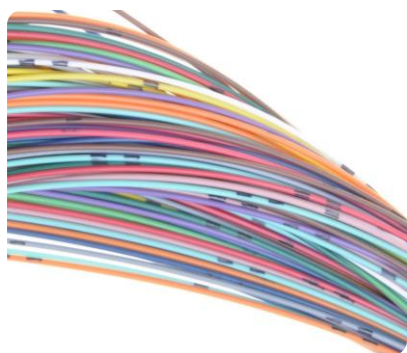
[BSL phrases and communication tips - RNID](#)

Neurocrafted: Built to Think Differently

by Kirstin



In the [previous issue](#), we looked briefly at the different parts of the brain affected by neurodiversity. This leads us to our next topic: **Cognition**.



The word cognition comes from the Latin word "cognoscere" (*cog-no-shuh-ray*) meaning "to get to know" and refers to the overall ability of our brains to think, learn and process information.

Neurodevelopmental conditions are **characterised by challenges in all these areas** such as sensory overload (perception), filtering distractions (attention), or recalling information (memory).

How does cognition work?

Thinking: The higher-level cognitive processes involved in reasoning, problem-solving, decision making and creative thought – e.g. *seeing a work project through from conception to completion*

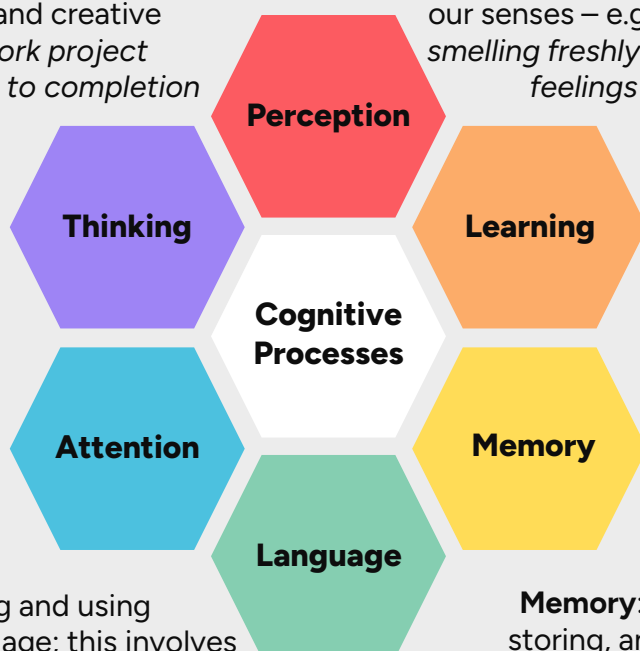
Attention: The ability to focus on specific stimuli and filter out others – e.g. *writing up a report whilst still being aware of, but not overwhelmed by, the sound of traffic on a busy road outside*

Language: Understanding and using spoken and written language; this involves both receptive language (understanding) and expressive language (producing) – e.g. *writing emails, using Teams chat, creating a report*

Perception: How we receive and interpret information from the environment through our senses – e.g. *walking into a shop and smelling freshly baked bread may trigger feelings of hunger, or thoughts of breakfast*

Learning: Acquiring new knowledge, skills and behaviours. This process is closely linked to memory – e.g. *starting a degree apprenticeship, practicing a new skill*

Memory: The process of encoding, storing, and retrieving information – e.g. *learning lines for a play, and being able to retrieve the information without notes*



Next time, we'll be breaking cognition down into the individual building blocks that make up the whole system - **the Cognitive Domains**.



The Cost of Convenience: AI's Impact on Thinking



In today's world, **AI is everywhere**. Whether it's ChatGPT drafting emails or apps checking grammar, chances are you've interacted with it. While AI holds incredible potential, its misuse can lead to writing that feels impersonal, out of context and lacking balance. **So how can it be used to support your studies rather than diminish your critical thinking and cognitive skills?**

If used as a **tool for innovation**, AI can be of huge benefit. We have all felt a little "stuck" on a task before, perhaps hit a wall which leads to "I'll do it later."

AI programmes can help with:

- reference creation
- prompts for writing
- resource recommendations

The key is to avoid having it **write** anything for you, **especially in your studies**, where you are at risk of academic misconduct even by accepting grammar or rephrasing suggestions. As a **planning aid** AI can be of great help, but leave it out of your final assignment, even for proofreading, to avoid having your writing flagged as being AI-generated.

Try using commands like:

- "What questions should I ask myself when discussing..."
- "Create a table with space for me to take notes on topics regarding..."

When using **AI as a support** you rely on your own knowledge, experience, and importantly, your own words, **keeping you in control**.

As fantastic as AI can be, there is a **darker side**, and it's not just about plagiarism. Easy answers are not just impacting your scores when the similarity percentage flags up, but also impacting your individuality, creativity, and even neurocognition.

Think of your brain like the gym: tools help, but if you're not using your muscles, they will get weaker.

When thinking for ourselves, our brain engages with the task using cognitive resources creating stronger neural connectivity. When removing this cognitive thinking in place of AI, neural connections reduce (one study indicated up to 47%). Here lies the potential risk of diminishing critical thinking skills; not just in study, but everyday work and life too.



It is up to us to use AI in the right way, **as a tool and not the answer**. This isn't just about assignments - it's about **long-term cognitive health** which we are only just beginning to understand. By being able to harness the capabilities of this technology responsibly, we will over time find a balance.

#2 Using AI to Enhance Your Learning (without cheating!) *by Stacey*



As we've just looked at on the [previous page](#) how AI when used as an **innovation tool** can really help. Stacey has written a fantastic resource on using AI in your studies, which you can download [here](#). This article shows a sample assignment task, and three ways you could utilise AI to support you.



Sample task

"Write a 3,000-word analytical report that explores the ecological significance of elephants and evaluates current conservation strategies aimed at protecting them. Your report should demonstrate critical engagement with academic sources, apply relevant theoretical frameworks, and reflect on the socio-political challenges involved in elephant conservation."



Method 1 - Exploring Topics

Choose an element of the task to broaden your knowledge on.

Ask AI: "What questions should I ask myself when discussing conservation strategies of elephants?"

Asking for guidance - not direct answers - supports planning, idea mapping, and core skills for interpreting questions.

Method 2 - SMART Targets

Identify key dates, think about the final submission date and any draft submissions.

Ask AI: "Create weekly simple SMART targets which include (insert key dates) for the following task..."

Creating a plan helps you visualise how much time you'll need and adjust your goals

Method 3 - Planning and structuring

Paragraph models help us stay focused and organised. Choose one topic to focus on.

Ask AI: "Create a table using the TEEEL model which is blank, allowing me to discuss (insert topic). Highlight the focus of each paragraph."

Outlining your steps helps you estimate time, set flexible goals, and add useful details.

AI can guide your thinking, but it shouldn't replace it. By asking reflective questions rather than seeking direct answers builds on your own understanding and strengthen your ability to interpret and analyse ideas.



AI can help you plan, but only you know your real schedule and priorities. Use AI to support your time management, **but make sure your targets reflect your personal pace and commitments.**



AI can offer structure, but your voice and reasoning bring the content to life. Tools like TEEEL shape your ideas and support your learning, **but let your own thinking lead the way.**

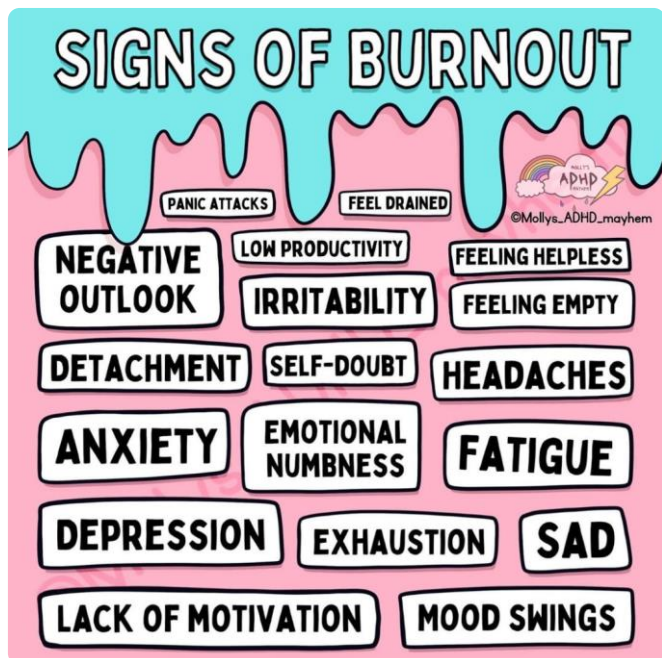


Autumn Burnout

In our August Neurodiversity Network we discussed watching for the signs of burnout; Heather reviews the session [here](#). This image from [@mollys_adhd_mayhem](#) highlights a lot of the signs of ADHD Burnout.

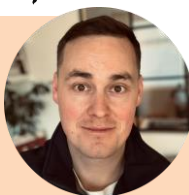
[Autumn burnout](#) is a real phenomenon. As summer falls into autumn and the long sunlit days transition to cooler and shorter ones, this can impact a lot of us. This seasonal shift can affect those sensitive to change, leading to low energy and reduced motivation.

- Try and keep a good **work life balance** – take regular breaks, turn the laptop off
- Be **health** focused – get enough sleep, keep hydrated, eat well
- **Plan** ahead – schedule in tasks, shopping time appointments, nice activities
- Keep **connected** – don't stay in isolation. Make an active effort to keep linked in with others



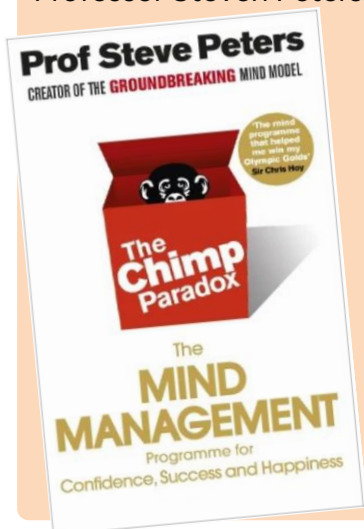
A Good Read *by Mark*

Those who attended Mark's session on **Metacognition** in July (watch [here](#)) were recommended **The Chimp Paradox**, by Professor Steven Peters. Mark says:

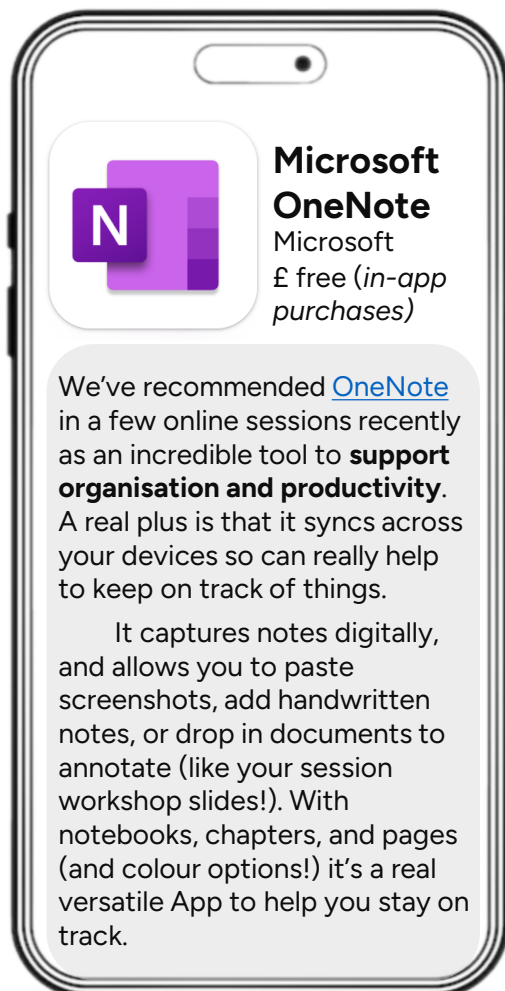


"It may sound a little over the top to say this, but this book literally changed my life. Professor Peters gives the reader a genuine opportunity to reflect and understand how and why we interact with the world the way we do."

It's a book that stays with you, and one you're likely to reread! Check it out [here](#).



App Recommendation



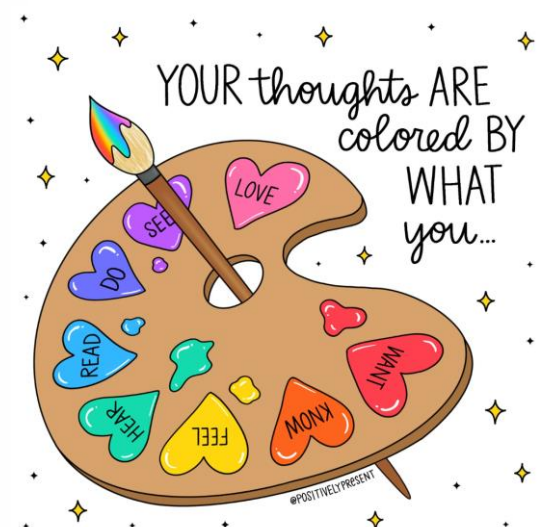
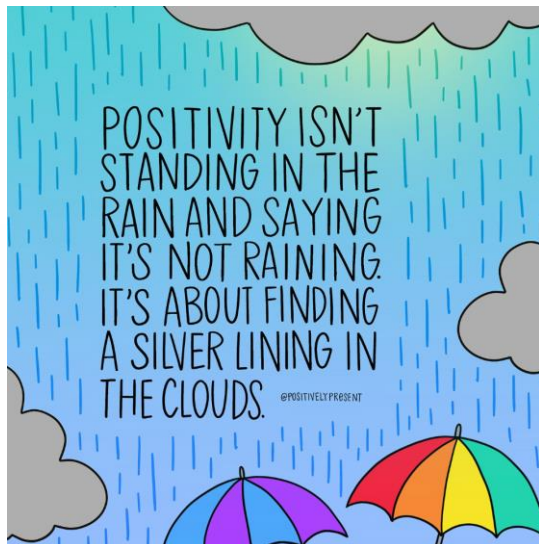
Creativity Corner

A selected piece of inspiration!

This issue we have a selection of autumnal and mental health inspiration from [@positivelypresent](https://www.instagram.com/positivelypresent).

LESSONS from Autumn

@POSITIVELYPRESENT



National Neurodiversity Show: Liverpool Edition *by Kayleigh*



Well, the Learner Services Team packed their bags and attended the **National Neurodiversity Show** in Liverpool. It was lovely to all see each other in person which we don't get to do often enough.

We said hello and then I was swiftly distracted by all the stores galore! The **free fidget toys** (we may have returned to the same stalls multiple times for more freebies) were great!

On the left side of the hall there was 2 seminar "rooms" separated by a screen partition. They had headphones tuned to the speaker's microphone, which was fairly clever, and meant no one could be overstimulated by large booming voices. However, if I'd known, I would have brought some anti-bacterial wipes, as a kind stranger would just give you their set when they left. The other issue was that there weren't always enough headphones which meant we didn't get to hear all the talks we wanted to.



There was lots of **variety in the different Talks**, for example; ADHD & nutrition, neurodivergence & mental health, dyslexia inclusivity, understanding dyspraxia, and autistic culture podcast. The talks were only short but gave insight into the speaker's business, their lived experience, and you could have a more intimate conversation with them at their stand.

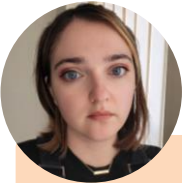
On the right side of the hall there were about **30 stands** and each one had **something unique to offer**. Some were more child orientated but I was pleasantly surprised at the resources for adults, neurodivergence in adulthood, and neurodivergence in education.

Overall, a mixed review from us but I do believe it would be helpful for some, and they did provide resources for both children and adults. **It is always useful to know you're not alone**, that there are others who experience similar challenges, and if nothing else, who doesn't love a free fidget toy?

[National Neurodiversity Show Exhibition Centre Liverpool June 16th Gallery](#)
[National Neurodiversity Shows UK](#)

Review - QA Apprenticeship Neurodiversity Network

by Heather



Heather is one of our amazing ND Champions and has reviewed our last two sessions - book [here](#) to join us!



Over the past two sessions, our Neurodiversity Network opened up about what it's like to be neurodivergent, tackling everything from **daily struggles** to what helps us **feel included** at work.

In July, we got real about **burnout and executive dysfunction**, and how hard it is to tell when we're truly exhausted versus just dealing with internalised ableism. Lots of us shared honestly about feeling guilty and finding it tough to recognise when we need to rest. Everyday tasks like chores and just getting through the day came up a lot.

People shared their favourite tips, like using **apps** ([Tody](#), [Finch](#)), reframing chores as kindness for future-you, inviting friends over for motivation, and letting go of perfectionism.

Fatigue was a biggie, with many nodding along to [Spoon Theory](#) and talking openly about the impact of chronic tiredness and burnout.

For **self-care**, we swapped advice about making time for **rest**, setting **boundaries**, **sensory tools**, and taking it seriously when friends notice we're burning out. There were some creative suggestions too, like making "Ta-Da" or "To Not Do" lists to ease pressure. [The Pomodoro Technique](#) got mixed reviews... some of us love it, some just can't make it stick!

Above all, **it felt like a space where we could be ourselves without judgement.**

In August, we switched gears to focus on what it's like **navigating the workplace**.

Reasonable adjustments took centre stage as we shared ideas for keeping support going even if you switch teams or jobs. We talked about whether to **disclose being neurodivergent**, and how scary that can be. Communication challenges were a hot topic, including asking for clarity and dealing with conflict. **Practical tweaks** like ear plugs, desk signs, and adjustment passports were discussed. We also chatted about peer support and "body doubling" (co-working with a buddy).

We swapped links and resources for **understanding neurodiversity** and ways to get workplace assessments or help. Many of us reflected on how colleagues can support us when we share our experiences.

Both sessions reminded us how powerful it is to have **empathy, flexible support**, and **ongoing conversations** to make our workplaces better for everyone.



Autumn is a gentle reminder
that **changes** can be beautiful

"It's just dishes" – until it's not

by Sarah



So I wasn't planning a personal narrative this issue ... but inspiration hit! And yes – this is an actual photo of my sink! →

In July's [ND Network](#) we had a session on burnout, and how to look for the signs, strategies, tips, etc. Alongside the verbal discussion ran in the chat box a dialogue about **struggling to do the dishes** – who knew for so many of us it was such an obstacle!?

It's always really edifying to hear the experiences of other NDers; makes you feel like you're not alone! (if you've not joined an ND Network session yet, please do come along!) Dishes aren't just a chore for some of us; it's a genuine challenge to try and overcome.



Challenges

Sensory sensitivities – a big one for Autism. Dishes. Are. Gross. I cannot put my hands in dishwater, I cannot deal with the touch, the noise, the wet, and the smell... URGH!

Executive Dysfunction – a big ND challenge area. I struggle a lot with 'out of sight out of mind'. NDers struggle initiating tasks, we don't plan well, and we need to factor in the time and energy to complete tasks, especially when it comes to a task like doing the dishes

Routine – ADHD wins every time for me with this one! I have a routine for washing them... but not like a daily routine; I really struggle to manage

Further Reading:

[Reddit: Any tips to help with that?](#)

[YouTube: How to Wash Dishes Without Hating Every Moment of It](#)
[AutismBC: Cleaning tips](#)

Management

Sensory management – a big one for me is using a [washing up stick](#)! Others suggested things like a small tabletop dishwasher or wearing good quality gloves

Environmental – I can't do the dishes without a TV show, film, audiobook, or good musical soundtrack to engage in

Routine – try and avoid "out of sight, out of mind"; try and do them straight after you've eaten, or at least bin any rubbish, rinse, and stack. Wash what you can as you are cooking, soak anything needed. Try an app like [Finch](#)

Practicalities – in my parent's house everything goes into a plastic storage box; it creates a LOT more dishes so in my house we put food into covered bowls ready to reheat

Productivity – If I am really struggling, I go for "wash the glasses and the cutlery". And then do the plates and bowls another time. When I do wash dishes, I leave them to dry and then put away the next day – I can't do both!

Rewards – some people can find rewards helpful, or turning it into a 'game' to engage with

Self-Kindness – struggling with a task that others might find simple isn't a failure, we are not a disaster because we run out of forks before we wash the dishes. This is just a task that requires more energy for some NDers, and we need to adapt to manage it. **And that's okay**

The Power of

Pause *by Micha*



Ever done or said something you later regret? This can be a common occurrence for ADHDers.

Challenges with emotional regulation, consequential thinking and impulsivity can be a recipe for regret. Whilst our tendency to 'jump the gun' can be an asset at times, it can also cause a fair bit of trouble when left unchecked.

One of the most effective strategies I've learnt in managing my ADHD is the **power of the pause**.

- Pause before sending that message
- Pause before responding to that invite or work offer
- Pause before clicking 'buy now'

Learning to **PAUSE**, to expand the **window of tolerance** to uncomfortable emotions and then **choose the best action** - gives our quick-thinking brain more power and overall effectiveness.

You can implement this technique by:

- Imagining a big **pause button**
- Asking yourself "can I hold off for 10 minutes, 1 hour, 1 day, 1 week?"
TIP: *Start where you are and build up your resilience with practice*
- Observe the rise and fall of your emotions and perspectives. Write them down if that helps or share it with a trusted friend or support worker.
- Make your decision over a longer time period

Let us know via Feedback [here](#) if you've tried this and found it helpful!



ADHD is **tidal in nature**, meaning we can experience vast highs and lows of emotion, energy and focus.

If it's a good idea today, it will more than likely still be a good idea tomorrow, or next week. You don't have to rush out and say or act on every thought straight away.

In pausing and allowing the waves to rise and fall, you can observe a more balanced perspective and make a better decision 99% of the time. *Obviously, some things need quick action, if a car is coming toward you, please don't pause, react!*

In general, **taking the time to reflect**, to see the perspective through different emotional waves, enables you to make a more considered, balanced and effective decision; one that often aligns to your long-term goals and values, instead of your short-term emotional reactions.



ND&D in Focus: Anxiety

With World Mental Health in October this issue we're delving into anxiety disorders

Anxiety is a normal human emotion that we all will experience from time to time. We might be **worried** about something, it could occur before something like a job interview, or it may be a **response to stress** or a threat. It is common to experience some anxiety with stressful events or life changes.

Anxiety can even be **positive**; it can help us be alert, help us assess risk, spur us on, and work as a motivator – the issue with anxiety is when it becomes overwhelming, and starts to have a detrimental impact on someone's life.

Anxiety can present itself both **physically and mentally**, in the form of feelings of dread, feeling on edge, irritability, nausea, heart palpitations, stomach issues, restlessness, sleep problems, or even panic attacks.

Anxiety may be formally diagnosed as generalised anxiety disorder, a panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), or as a phobia. It can take many forms; **people experience anxiety differently**.

If you need to talk now:

- call [Samaritans](#) on 116 123 (UK-wide)
- text [SHOUT](#) to 85258 (UK-wide)

They are free, anonymous, and are always open.



Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health problem. Up to 1 in 20 in the UK have a generalised anxiety disorder.

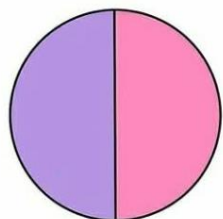
Things to help:

- **Recognising** unhelpful thought patterns
- **Challenging** unhelpful thoughts
- Setting "**worry time**" to allow space for those thoughts
- Get **active** – walking, swimming, craft, cinema, read a book, see a friend – to occupy your mind positively
- Try a [grounding](#) technique

You may need additional help, and that's okay. It's important to reach out if you're struggling. Seek help, see your GP, try talking therapy, link in with our [Safeguarding Team](#) for support.

What people think anxiety is

@what.is.mental.illness

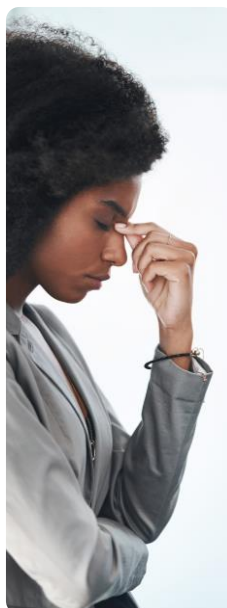


- Feeling of nervousness
- Worrying

What anxiety actually is



- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble sleeping
- Intrusive thoughts
- Uncontrollable feeling of worry
- Increased irritability
- Restlessness & a feeling of being "on-edge"
- Avoidance of feared situations
- Loss of appetite
- Feelings of guilt & shame
- A ton of physical symptoms



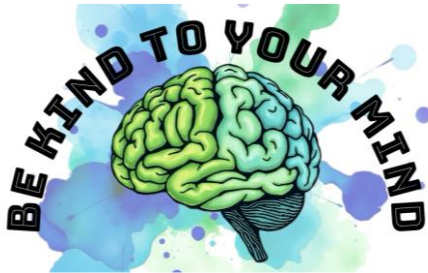
Further Support:

- [Anxiety UK](#)
- [NHS Anxiety self-help guide](#)
- [NHS Get help with anxiety](#)
- [Mind - Anxiety & Panic Attacks](#)
- [MH Foundation - Anxiety](#)

World Mental Health Day 2025: 10th October

World Mental Health Day is a global event focused on increasing awareness of mental health challenges, breaking down stigma, and promoting access to quality mental health support for all. Whether we have a diagnosed mental health condition or not, **we all need to look after our mental health as much as our physical health.**

The aim of this annual day is to promote more open conversations about mental health difficulties, and to break down stigmas of struggling by challenging stereotypes and misconceptions. It aims to foster empathy, raise awareness, and call for more initiatives and funding to support mental health worldwide. Book onto our WMH Day session [here](#).



Further Reading:

- [Public Health 360](#)
- [Mental Health UK](#)
- [Rethink](#)
- [Mental Health Foundation](#)

Stoptober & Go Sober for October



With a focus on **mental health** in October, this month sees another two annual national campaigns. [Stoptober](#) is a public health campaign to give smokers the support and encouragement to quit. Smoking is still the single biggest cause of preventable illnesses and death in England. **If you can make it 28 days without smoking – the aim of Stoptober – you are 5 times more likely to be able to quit the habit for good.**



[Go Sober for October](#) was launched in 2014 by Macmillan Cancer Support as an initiative to encourage people to go **alcohol-free for a month** and raise funds to support cancer patients and their families.

We're hosting a session on **September 24th at 12:30pm** 'Sick of the Sesh? Go Sober for October' ([book here](#)), where we'll discuss drinking culture and the benefits of going sober. The recording will be available on the [Wellbeing Calendar](#).

Upcoming Events:

Book onto all of our upcoming [Wellbeing Calendar](#) events [here](#).

- On **September 10th** we'll be discussing **Winning in the Workplace: Reasonable Adjustments and You**, exploring how reasonable adjustments could accelerate your performance and wellbeing in the workplace
- Join us on **September 24th** for **Sick of the Sesh? Go Sober for October**
- **October 1st** is **ADHD: A Journey To Late Diagnosis** which will see a number of our QA ND VIPs sharing their journey to diagnosis in adulthood
- On **October 8th** for Dyslexia Awareness Week we have **Raising the Volume**, when we will be discussing the new definition of Dyslexia
- For **World Mental Health Day** we are running a wellbeing session on **October 10th**
- Each month we continue to hold an **Introduction to Neurodiversity** session for those new to neurodiversity, so come along to learn more – **September 24th** and **October 22nd**
- We would love to see you at our **QA Apprenticeship Neurodiversity Network** sessions!
 - **17th September** - Nurturing Wellbeing in a Neurodiverse World
 - **15th October** - Hormones in Motion: The Neurodivergent Experience

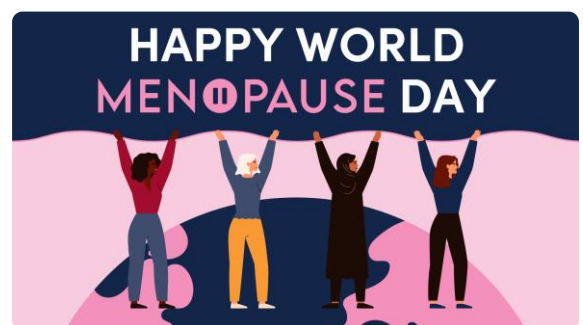
World Menopause Day: October 18th

World Menopause Day is held annually on October 18th to raise awareness of the menopause, to demystify, and destigmatise the experience.

The menopause will differ from person to person; for those with a disability or neurodiversity it can bring additional challenges. Our Neurodiversity Network session in October will focus on the effect additional hormones can have on the ND experience (book [here](#)) and is our wellbeing session for World Menopause Day 2025.

This year's theme is **Lifestyle Medication**, a clinical approach to support individuals to make positive changes to daily habits to improve their overall health.

[World Menopause Day 2025 - International Menopause Society](#)



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 receive support with us but are not required to have a formal diagnostic report for us to put reasonable adjustments in place. 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 3-5)

[Self Referral Form](#)

Email – Specialist.LearningTeam@qa.com

DA Learning Support (Levels 4-7)

[Self Referral Form](#)

Email – 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](#)