



From Compliance to Culture: A Modern Framework for Supporting Neurodiversity and Well-being

Ronald Boudreau Jr., Heidi Izunagbara,
and Dan Jolivet



Presenters



**Ronald Boudreau Jr. MS
and CRC**
Workplace Possibilities
Program Coordinator, The
Standard



**Heidi Izunagbara
MS**
Senior Accommodation
Specialist, The Standard



**Daniel Jolivet
PhD**
Workplace Possibilities Practice
Consultant, The Standard



Agenda

- Understanding Neurodiversity
- Neurodiversity and Burnout
- Supporting Neurodivergent Employees
- Questions and Answers



Disclaimer

The following slides are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal or medical advice. They should not be relied upon or treated as legal or medical advice. This information is intended, but not promised or guaranteed, to be current, complete or up-to-date, as statutes, regulations, clinical guidelines and best practices are subject to change. You should not act or rely on any information contained in this document without first seeking the advice of an attorney or an appropriate treatment provider.



Polling Question #1

Question: How do you define neurodiversity?

Answer Choices:

- Another term for autism
- A personal identity based on unique thoughts, emotions and behaviors
- A new diagnostic category for different thoughts, emotions and behaviors
- A new paradigm for atypical neurological development and functioning
- None of the above





Understanding Neurodiversity

Key Concepts for Understanding Neurodiversity



Diversity

Genetically-determined variability of traits



Neurodiverse

Neurological variations seen as differences, not disorders



Neurotypical

Reflecting “average” neurological functioning



Additional Concepts Related to Neurodiversity



Neurochameleon

Adopting behaviors to fit in with neurotypical people



Executive Functioning

Cognitive processes, including working memory, cognitive flexibility and inhibitory control



Universal Design

Creating processes that minimize barriers for all people, creating a culture of inclusion





Neurodiversity and Burnout

External Causes of Burnout

Working without needed accommodations or unmet support needs

Workplace expectations

Sitting or being quiet for long periods without fidgeting

Social demands

Sensory Overload

Being on camera



Source: What You Need to Know About Neurodivergent Burnout. Transitions USA, October 15, 2025.

Internal Causes of Burnout

Masking: code switching to pass as neurotypical

Difficulty standing up in the face of invalidation

Feeling like you can't say "No"

Internalized stigma and ableism

Problems with executive functioning

Sleep disturbance



Source: What You Need to Know About Neurodivergent Burnout. Transitions USA, October 15, 2025.



Supporting Neurodivergent Employees

Polling Question #2

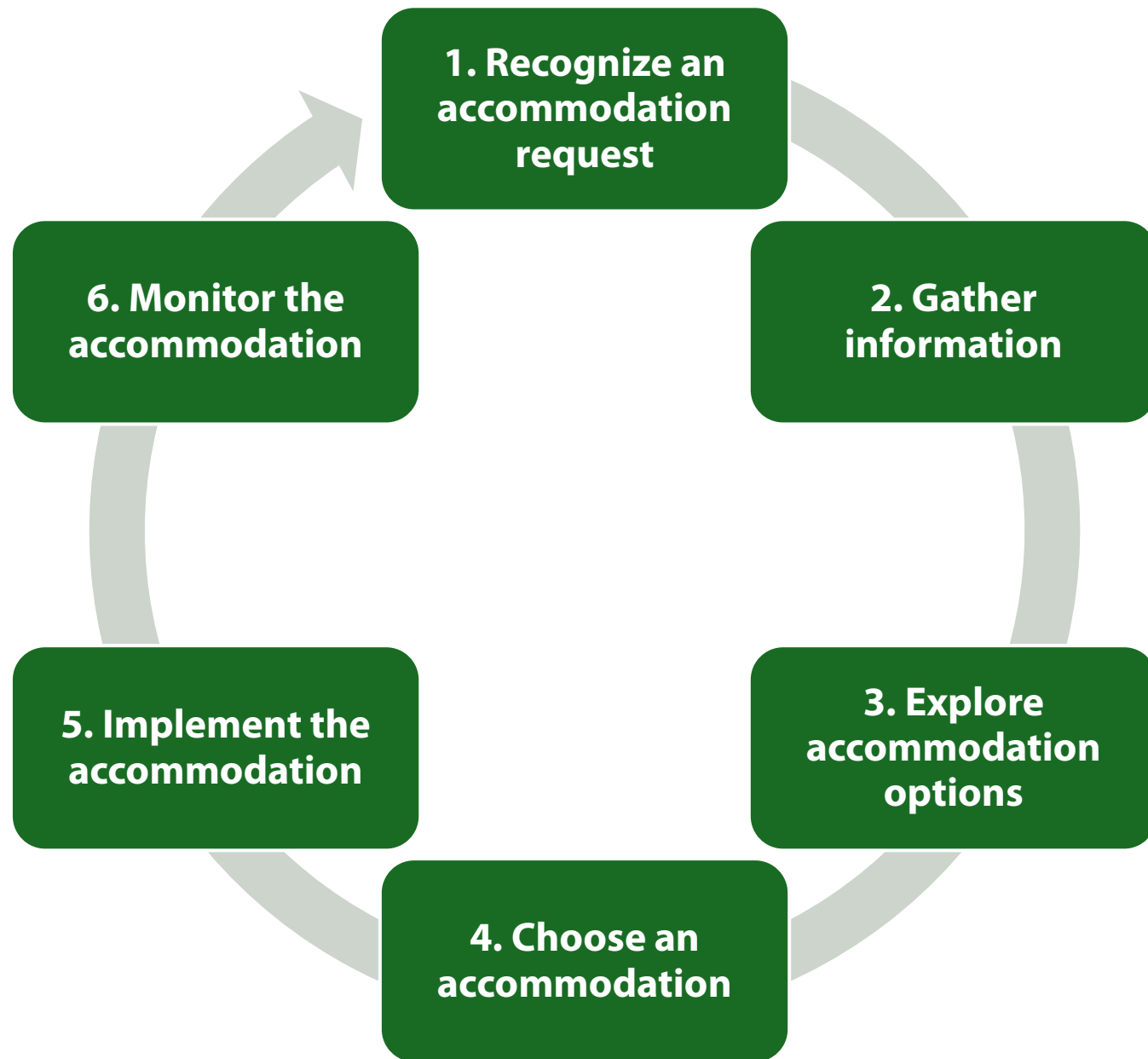
Question: Do you think neurodiversity is a qualifying disability under the ADA/ADAAA?

Answer Choices:

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No, never
- I don't know



The Interactive Process



Source: ADA: Reasonable Accommodation/Interactive Process, SHRM, October 7, 2025.

Support with the Interactive Process



Neurodiverse individuals may struggle with specific issues during the interactive process.

Offer	a menu of choices for interactions – virtual meetings, phone only, or in writing.
Break	the process into a series of brief interactions rather than a marathon session of negotiations.
Let	the employee determine the pace of the process and allow breaks as needed.
Encourage	the employee to discuss each issue with their provider, especially around accommodation options.
Follow up	with written summaries with action items for employers and/or employees with specific target dates.





Case Studies

Case studies are for illustrative purposes only. Actual savings may vary depending on a variety of factors. Interventions discussed are specific to the cases presented and should not be taken as blanket recommendations.

Case Study 1: Working While Neurodivergent

Scenario: Government employee with Generalized Anxiety Disorder and ADHD needed support to do his job.

- Employee struggled maintaining concentration amid external distractions, sustaining focus during periods of low engagement and effectively perceiving or tracking the passage of time.

Accommodations:

- Employee was provided ear plugs and a noise-cancelling headset, fidget tools, a visual timer with whiteboard, an active footrest and a flexible start time.



Total Cost: \$1,794

Case Study 2: Neurodiversity, the ADAAA and the Interactive Process

Scenario: A manager with the following environmental triggers, symptoms and limitations:

- Cognitive overload/fatigue
- Executive function delays
- Memory deficits
- Difficulty with social interactions
- Time blindness
- Auditory and visual distraction
- Verbal comprehension delays
- Communication deficits



Polling Question #3

Question: Which limitations and restrictions noted could be a barrier to the interactive process?

Answer Choices:

- Memory deficits
- Difficulty with social interactions
- Executive function delays
- Verbal comprehension delays
- All the above
- None of the above



Case Study 2: Accommodations during the Interactive Process (cont.)

Accommodations: communications for this employee were handled via email.

- All verbal communication or conversations were summarized in writing and sent via email.
- All emails clearly listed out any action items required from the employee and the due dates for each item.
- Emails were formatted to present the information needed into small, focused sections.



Case Study: Essential Job Functions

The essential job functions for this manager's role include:



Driving



Manage a team
of up to 100
direct reports



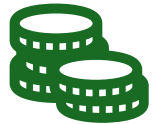
Lead field
operations team



Act as a
storyteller and
operational
executive



Leads with
curiosity and uses
hands on
learning and
communication
methods



Develops, reports
and delivers
budget



Polling Question #4

Question: Which of the essential job functions could be key contributors to the manager experiencing burnout?

Answer Choices:

- a) Driving
- b) "Hands on" communication
- c) Reporting and Budgeting
- d) Storyteller
- e) Team Management
- f) All the above
- g) B, d and e



Case Study: At-work Accommodation

Scenario: The manager requested the following accommodations.

All communication in written format

Camera Fatigue

Captions and transcripts for virtual meetings

Continue hybrid work schedule

Decompression/transition time after events i.e., presentations, meetings

Dedicated focus time

Floating days off, as needed

Limit meetings to 3-4 hours per day

Processing time to respond

Case Study: At-work Accommodation (cont.)

Decision: The following accommodations were approved.

All communication in written format

Camera Fatigue

Captions and transcripts for virtual meetings

Continue hybrid work schedule

Decompression/transition time after events i.e., presentations, meetings

Dedicated focus time

Floating days off, as needed

Limit meetings to 3-4 hours per day

Processing time to respond

Required routine 1:1s with supervisor

Case Study 3: Working While Neurodivergent

Scenario: Manager with ADHD diagnosis needed support to do her job.

- Employee worked in an open area and was often distracted, impacting her ability to complete paperwork. Her lack of organization affected efficiency and productivity.

Accommodations:

- Four job coaching sessions were provided; employee was moved to a lower-traffic area and was given a noise-cancelling headset, white board on wheels (to show availability and focus time), and written expectations and time frames from manager.



Total Cost: \$1,725

No Cost Accommodations Can Prevent Burnout

Attention:

- Chunk tasks into designated blocks of times
- “Do Not Disturb” times
- Relocate employee

Task Management and Prioritization:

- Weekly 1:1 meetings to review progress on tasks
- Provide priority levels with assignments
- Document due dates

Sensory overload:

- Natural lighting
- Fragrance-free zones
- Modified uniform or dress code
- Use of avatar vs. being on camera

Sleep disturbance:

- Flexible start time
- Modified breaks

Workplace expectations and management:

- Flexible work schedules
- Remote work
- Advance notice for all changes
- Change management strategies

Neurodiverse management strategies



Low-Cost Accommodations Can Prevent Burnout

Attention:

- Fidgets
- Active seating
- Therapeutic glasses
- Recording devices

Task Management and Organization:

- Label items, color coding, checklists
- Organizing technology
- Visual timers or alarms
- Smart pen/notebook

Sensory overload:

- White noise machines
- Sound reduction
- Cooling or heated clothing or tools
- Cubicle doors and shades
- Air purifier

Sleep disturbance:

- Doze alert, nod-stopper, and anti-sleep alarms

Social demands

- Social skills training
- Job coach or job buddy

Training and Education:

- Disability etiquette training for team
- Anti-stigma campaigns
- Education about mental health
- Assertiveness training



A Final Thought



The unique perspectives, skills, and experiences of neurodivergent persons are often undervalued in our society and in many of our workplaces. Employers who leverage this talent pool frequently enjoy higher productivity, better decision-making, higher employee satisfaction and retention, and more innovation in products, services, and solutions.

Alan Kriss

Why Hire Neurodivergent Workers?



Source: A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats: Creating a better work environment for all by embracing neurodiversity, Deloitte, 2022.

DMEC COMPLIANCE
2026 CONFERENCE

Thank You



Ronald Boudreau Jr.

MS and CRC

Ronald.Boudreau.Jr@standard.com



Heidi Izunagbara

MS

Heidi.Izunagbara@standard.com



Daniel Jolivet

PhD

Dan.Jolivet@standard.com



Resources

- [The Job Accommodation Network: Neurodiversity](#)
- [Council of State Governments: Disability Awareness, Etiquette, and Training](#)
- [The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability \(EARN\): Neurodiversity in the Workplace](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\): Trauma-Informed Approaches and Programs](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor: Recovery-Ready Workplace Resource Hub](#)



Trends & Employer Resources

Expert insights on benefit news and topics.



The Standard is a marketing name for StanCorp Financial Group, Inc. and subsidiaries. Insurance products are offered by Standard Insurance Company of 1100 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, Oregon, in all states except New York, where insurance products are offered by The Standard Life Insurance Company of New York of 445 Hamilton Avenue, 11th Floor, White Plains, New York. Product features and availability vary by state and company and are solely the responsibility of each subsidiary. Each company is solely responsible for its own financial condition. Standard Insurance Company is licensed to solicit insurance business in all states except New York. The Standard Life Insurance Company of New York is licensed to solicit insurance business in only the state of New York.

