

## AREA 62

### THE ALCOHOLIC WHO IS NEURODIVERGENT

*From A.A. Pamphlet “Making the A.A. Message Accessible” (F-107, pp. 8–11)*

#### What is Neurodivergence?

- Neurodivergence describes people whose brains process information differently from most.
- Includes a wide range of strengths and challenges.
- Examples: Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, OCD, Down Syndrome, Tourette Syndrome, to mention a few.

#### Key Insights from Members: Mindful, Accepting, & Aware

- Some process information more slowly and may need extra time.
- Simplified language (e.g., Plain Language Big Book) can improve understanding.
- Sensory sensitivities (sound, light, touch, smell) can be overwhelming. (The individual gets overstimulated)
- Self-regulation (“stimming”) may include movement or sounds.
- Tools like headphones support focus and are not disrespectful.
- Masking (hiding traits) can be exhausting and harmful.
- Neurodiversity is a spectrum... disclosure is a personal choice.

#### Communication Tips

- Clear, simple language can improve understanding
- Avoid vague or abstract phrasing.
- Provide written or visual supports when possible (can be helpful)

#### Suggestions for Meetings

##### Structure & Predictability

- Follow consistent format; start/end on time.
- Use visible clocks and clear agendas.

##### Accessibility & Environment

- Allow movement, fidgeting, and quiet self-regulation.
- Offer a short break in longer meetings. (Area Assembly shorter, more frequent breaks)
- Reduce sensory triggers (noise, fragrances, harsh lighting).
- Provide seating near an exit for individuals who may feel overwhelmed by crowds and need a quick, easy way to step out, or offer an additional room with live coverage of the main meeting for those who may benefit from extra space.
- Providing quieter or alternative spaces may support participation
- Providing a contact list with each person’s name, phone number, and email address.

## Participation

- Share topics in advance.
- Allow written/prepared shares.
- Include a brief statement normalizing accessibility needs.

## Online Meetings

- Allow cameras off – helps those who have trouble focusing due to movement in the squares
- Ensure materials are screen-reader accessible.

## Literature Access

- Provide large print and audio options.

## Suggestions for Sponsorship

- Offer flexible communication (text/phone/in-person).
- Help match sponsors if the process feels overwhelming.
- Break step work into smaller parts.
- Use varied methods (writing, visuals, audio).
- Respect boundaries, avoid pressure to overcommit.
- Use direct explanations (e.g., clarify “God of your understanding”).
- Consider working alongside sponsees (“body doubling”).

## Key Terms

- Stimming: Self-regulation through movement, sounds, or repetition.
- Masking: Hiding traits to appear neurotypical; can impact mental health.

## Goal

Create inclusive meeting spaces where all members feel safe, supported, and able to participate without needing to mask.

*“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.”*  
- Tradition One