

Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline Speaker Series

“Diverse Minds, Unified Goals: A Journey into Neurodiversity at Work”

November 18, 2025

- **Introductions**
- **Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline overview**
- **“Diverse Minds, Unified Goals: A Journey into Neurodiversity at Work” with Rachel Rouse**
- **Wrap up and upcoming events**

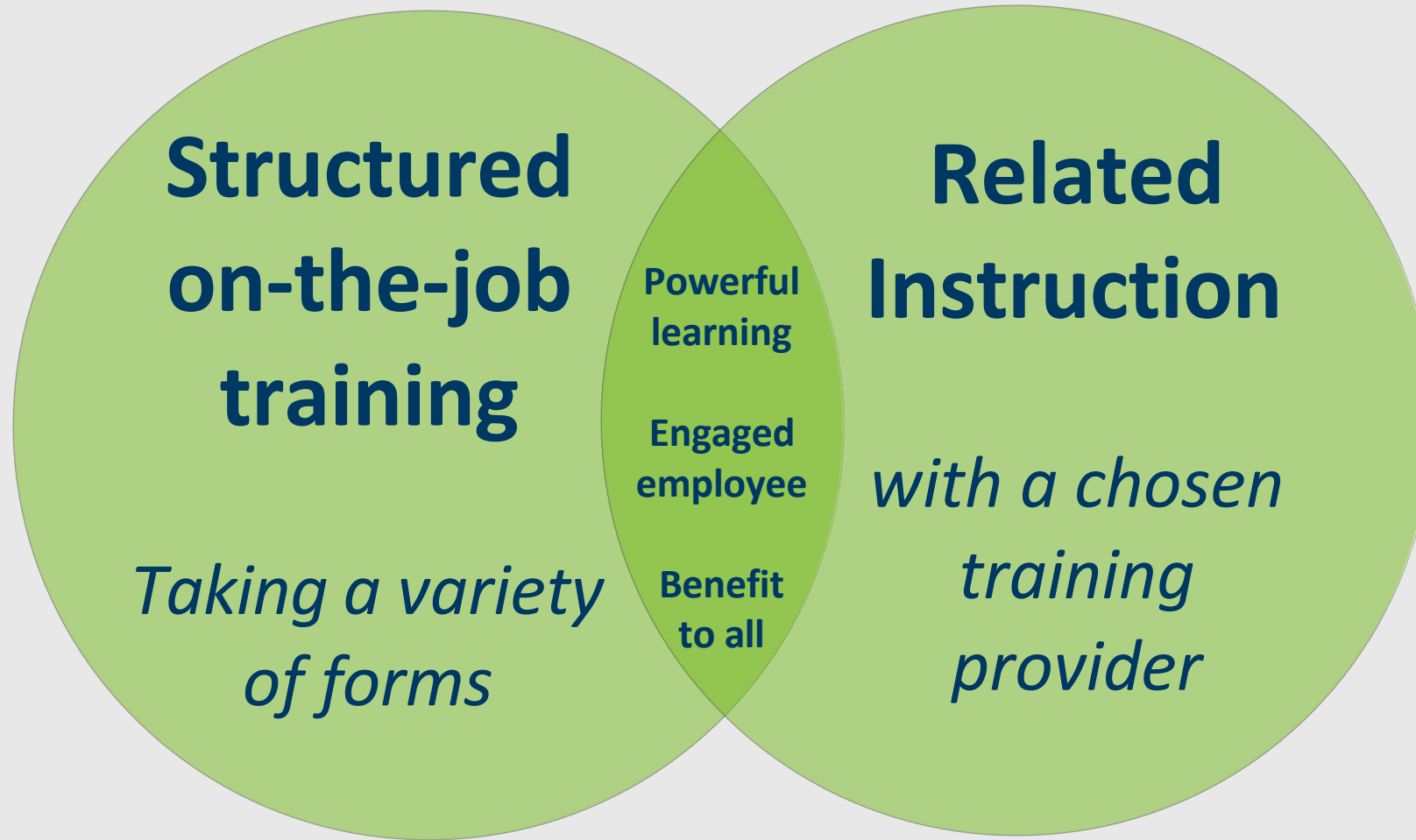
What is Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline?

- Source of support to employers to develop their own employment-based, dual-training programs
- An innovative approach to address current and future workforce needs in the key industries of **advanced manufacturing, agriculture, child care, health care services, information technology, legal cannabis industry and transportation.**

Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline Strategies

- **Industry Forums:** *Inform and direct* Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline on industry trends and needs through discussion and strategic planning aimed to expand dual training.
- **Competency Councils:** *Define and identify* specific occupational competencies for the seven key industries.
- **Dual-Training Consulting:** *Create and disseminate* dual training resources for employers, employees and dual trainees: toolbox, grants, and expanding mentorship networks to set up dual training.

Employment-Based Training



Featured Speaker: Rachel Rouse

Rachel Rouse



www.rachel-rouse.com

Diverse Minds

Unified Goals

A Journey Into Neurodiversity At Work

Who Am I?

- Mom
- Educator
- Weirdo
- Awkward
- Annoying (too many questions!)
- Aloof
- Emotional

- Mom
- Educator & Entrepreneur
- Problem Solver
- Still Awkward
- Curious
- Introspective
- Empathetic

Let's Define Some Things

Neurodiversity



The natural variations in how the brain processes and interprets information

Neurodivergent (ND)



An individual with cognitive differences.

Neurotypical (NT)



Individual with a brain that functions in a typical way

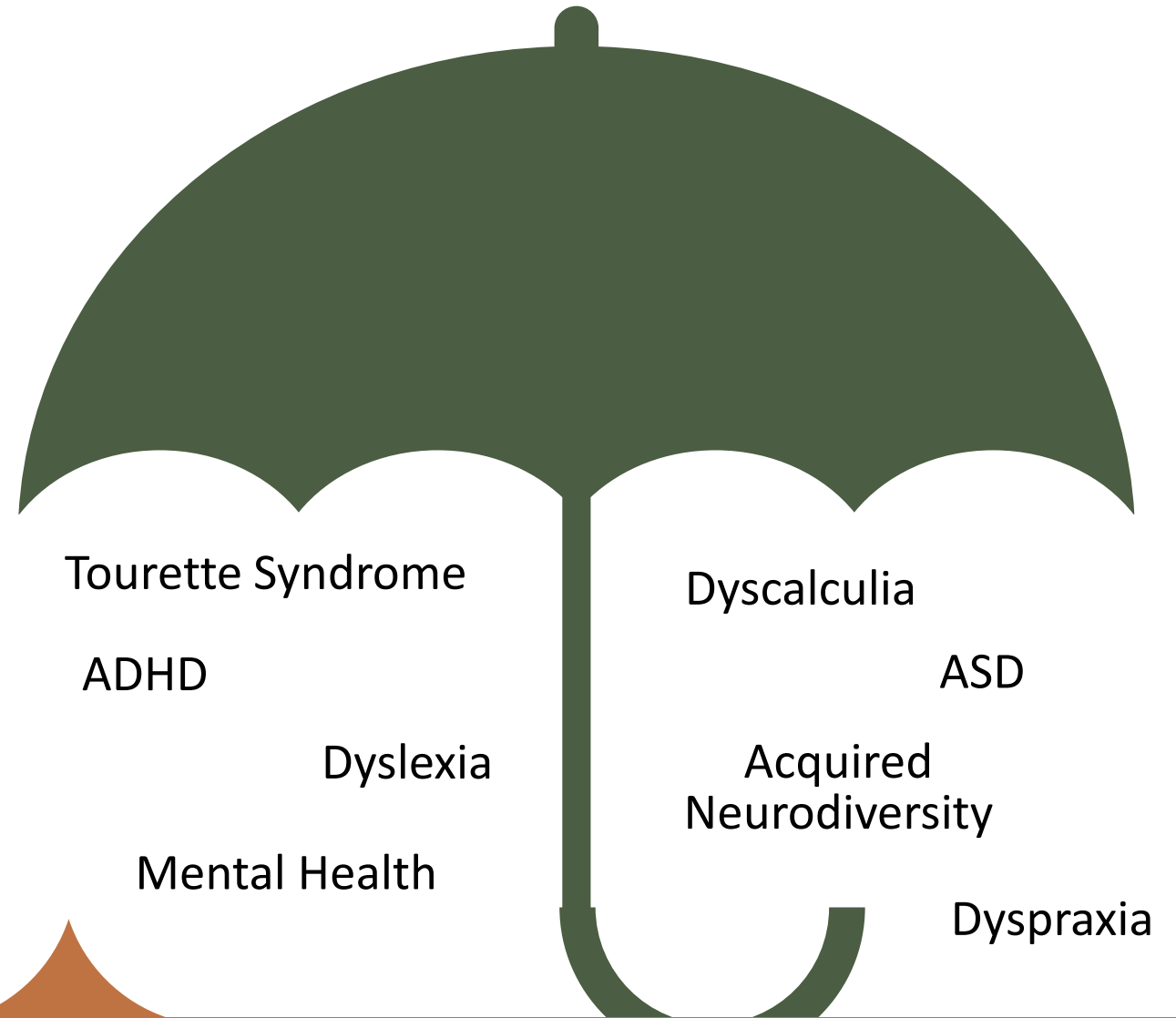
Allistic



Non-autistic people - often referring to NT

Neurodiversity

An Umbrella Term

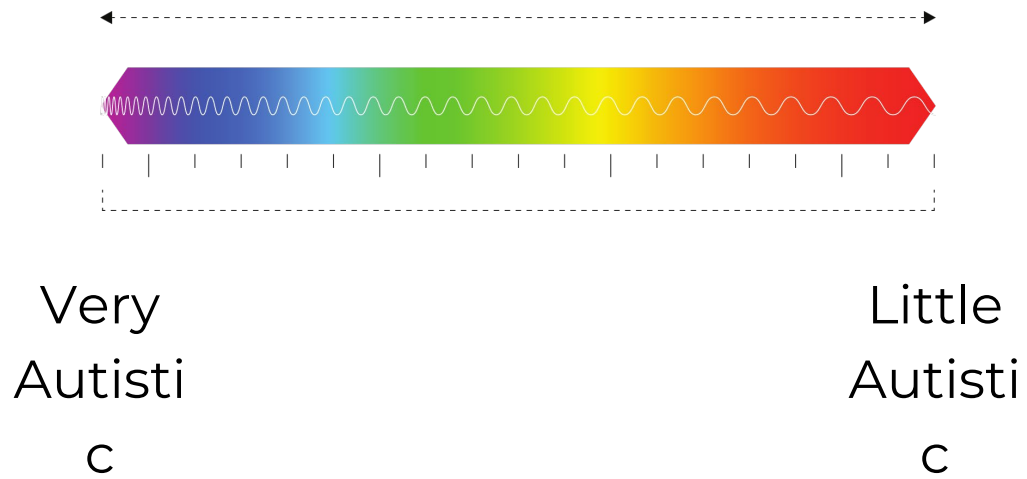


What is *neurodiversity*?

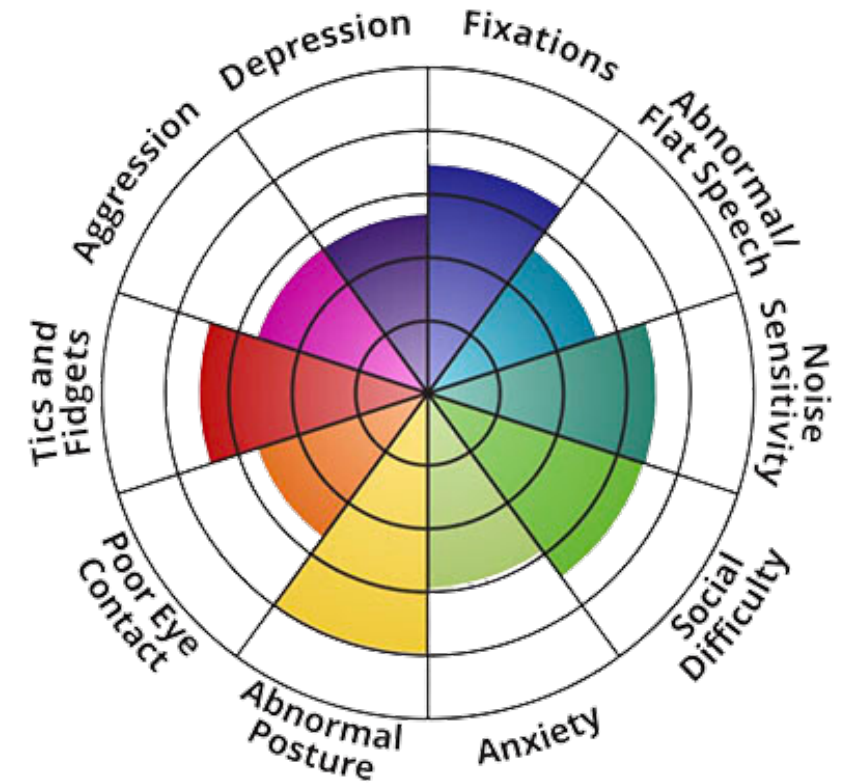
Checking Our Biases

**Is Being ND a
Super Power or a Tragedy?**

What People Think Autism Looks Like



What Autism Looks Like



Perception Vs. Reality

ADHD

Myth

Only boys have ADHD

It's a learning disability

Kid's with ADHD outgrow it

Fact

Girls are more likely to be overlooked and remain undiagnosed.

ADHD can lead to learning challenges due to issues with global skills like paying attention or impulse control

Most people continue to have ADHD symptoms into adulthood

Autism

Myth

People with autism are cold and lack empathetic feelings.

People with autism have no sense of humor.

Autism is a mental health disorder

Fact

Autistic people may express it in ways that are harder to recognize.

Many autistic people share humor in less obvious ways

Autism is a neurological disorder. Studies of the people with autism have revealed abnormalities in brain structure and neurotransmitter levels

Dyslexia



Myth

People with dyslexia cannot read

People with dyslexia see things backwards.

Dyslexia is rare

Fact

Most children and adults with dyslexia are able to read.

Dyslexics do not see things backwards because dyslexia is not a problem with the eyes.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 15% of the U.S. population has dyslexia.

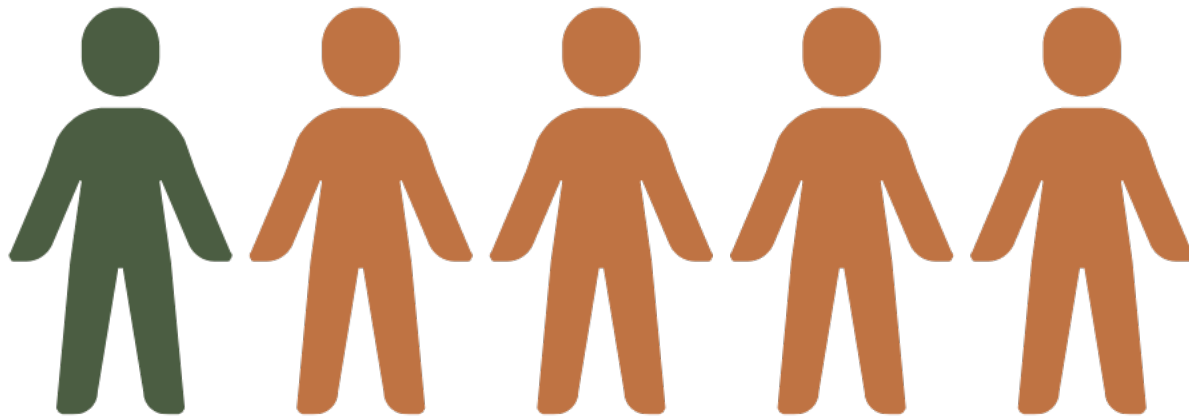
Checking Our Biases

**Is Being ND a
Super Power or a Tragedy?**

Why Does This Matter At Work?

65.6 MILLION People are Neurodivergent

That's 1 in 5 people



Benefits of an Inclusive Work Space

- Team Productivity & Performance
- Retention
- Engagement
- Innovation
- Talent Attraction

Stress Responses

FIGHT

Outbursts with explosive behaviors. Dictatorial tendencies.

FLIGHT

Always on the go. Obsessive over tasks. Over achiever - wants perfection

FREEZE

Dissociates and "spaces out". Is achievement averse. Has difficulty making decisions.

FAWN

People pleasing. Won't say what they really think. Doesn't say "no" or stand up for self.

FIB

Fear that truth will get them in trouble. Saying they completed a task they didn't



BRAIN Framework

B

Break
down
barriers

R

Redesign your
environment

A

Adapt tasks

I

Implement
flexible work
practices

N

Nurture a
culture of
acceptance

Break Down Barriers to Communication

- **“Quick Updates”**
- **Avoid Long Blocks of Text**
- **Provide Information in Various Formats**



R edesign your environment for sensory success

- **Lighting**
- **Noise**
- **Breaks/Resets**



Adapting Tasks to Superpowers

- **The Square Peg Problem**
- **Match Jobs to Brains**
- **Build Strong Teams**



Implementing Flexible Work Practices

- **The 9-5 Fallacy**
- **Flexible hours, remote work, and unconventional productivity hacks**
- **Flexibility can reduce sick days by 40% and increased output by 25%**



Nurturing a Culture of Acceptance

- **The Weight of the Mask**
- **Create Safety**
- **Celebrate Successes & Strengths**



Our Sensory Systems



Auditory

The auditory system is responsible for hearing and detecting sounds, sound frequency, sound loudness and interpreting language.



Visual

The visual system is responsible for seeing and detecting objects, shapes, colours, orientation and motion.



Proprioception

The proprioception system is responsible for sensing position, location, orientation and movement of the body muscles and joints. Detecting where our body parts are in space relative to other parts and how much effort we use to move our body parts.



Vestibular

The vestibular system senses our balance and orientation in space. It informs us about the movement, rotation and position of our head relative to gravity. It influences our posture, head and eye movement and breathing.



Interoception

Responsible for detecting and interpreting internal senses that inform us about our physiology and what our internal organs are feeling. Reports what is going on inside our bodies. Detects hunger, thirst, tiredness, nausea, heart rate, breathing and other bodily sensations..



Tactile

The tactile system helps us process touch sensations from the body and detect light touch, deep pressure, texture, temperature, vibration and pain.



Olfactory (smell)

The olfactory system is responsible for processing smell and detecting different odours, discriminating between odours, determining the importance of odours and signalling to the brain about their significance.



Gustatory (Taste)

The Gustatory system is responsible for our sense of taste and detecting safe and harmful foods, and signalling when we need hydration.





We have to welcome, accommodate, and support a wider range of ‘normal’, only then will we benefit from the extraordinary difference these diverse minds can bring.

-Roxanne Hobbs

Thank You!



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Upcoming Events

Pipeline 101 – Dive deeper into the basics of the Dual-Training Pipeline model

December 17, 2025, from 9 to 10 a.m. [Register here.](#)

Save-the-Date – Winter Industry Forums

- Child Care – 1/26/2026 @ 1 p.m.
- Transportation – 1/27/2026 @ 9 a.m.
- Health Care Services – 1/27/2026 @ 1 p.m.
- Legal Cannabis – 1/28/2026 @ 9 a.m.
- Agriculture – 1/28/2026 @ 1 p.m.
- Information Technology – 2/3/2026 @ 9 a.m.
- Advanced Manufacturing – 2/3/2026 @ 1 p.m.

Thank You!



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