



TRANSLATE "DEFICITS" TO DIFFERENCES

Characteristic	Deficit-focused descriptions	Affirming descriptions
Neurodivergent social style	Lacks social reciprocity; poor reciprocity; reduced back-and-forth communication	Enjoys telling others about their interests and knowledge; shares interests joyfully; prefers to do activities alongside or next to others
Neurodivergent social style	Misses social cues; doesn't recognize the impact of their behavior on others; reduced empathy for others	Prefers direct, clear communication; speaks their mind; doesn't make others read between the lines; advocates for themselves; shares personal connections to show care
Hyperactivity, experiences impulses differently	Poor impulse control; interrupts others; poor behavior regulation	Is very energetic; thinks and acts quickly; open to taking risks; active participant; enjoys introducing new ideas; is full of ideas; creative
Interest-based attentional system	Weak executive functioning; lacks initiation and follow-through; impaired ability to transition between tasks; deficits in working memory, task initiation, task switching	Can focus on interests for a long time; gets in a flow state and dives deep when they're into something; focuses best when a task is meaningful, relevant, interesting, or urgent
Strong drive for autonomy	Oppositional; defiant; non-compliant; struggles to follow through on directions or instructions from others; school refusal	Has a strong sense of what works for them and what doesn't; strong self-advocate; auto-didact (learns well when self-taught); figures out their own way to do things