



# **An Introduction to Neurodivergent Birth CIC**

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[www.ndbirth.com](http://www.ndbirth.com)

@neurodivergentbirth  
@realkimberleynixon

A non-profit Community Interest Company

1) CPD- accredited training for birth professionals (250 trained so far)

2) Online ND-affirming antenatal education and downloadable resources

3) Access Fund for antenatal education and doula support

4) Policy and advocacy

## Why Neurodivergent Birth Matters

*“Autistic women experience unique challenges during childbirth that contribute to the perception of traumatic birth”  
(Lewis et al, 2021; JOGNN, 50, 679–690).*

Sixty percent of autistic people and those with ADHD experience postnatal depression

Autism and ADHD are significant risk factors for both postnatal depression and anxiety disorders



# The Four Support Pillars of Neurodivergent Birth



Sensory  
Processing



Communication



Executive  
Functioning



Mental  
Health

# The Four Support Pillars of Neurodivergent Birth

## Pillar 1 Sensory Processing

8 senses – sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, proprioception and interoception

Dim lights, limit unnecessary alarms, reduce people in the room, support the use of ear defenders, weighted blankets, fidgets, access to regulating movement

What are we missing when we rely only on expected pain behaviours?



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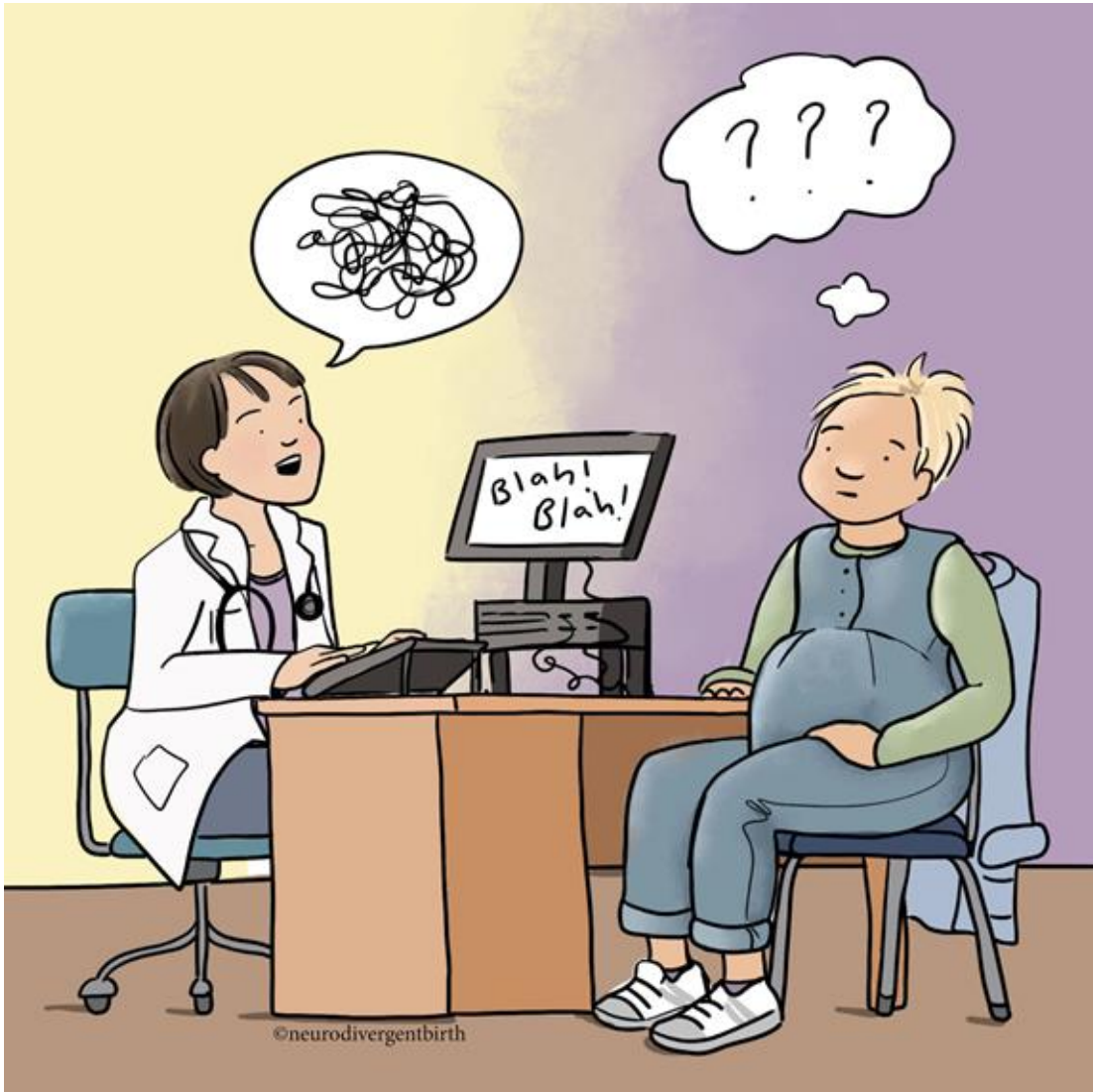
## Pillar 2 Communication

Different communication styles

Auditory processing challenges, literal interpretation of language, difficulty with non-verbal cues

“The Double Empathy Problem”

Use clear, specific language, avoid ‘filler’ words, pause between key points, often written summaries

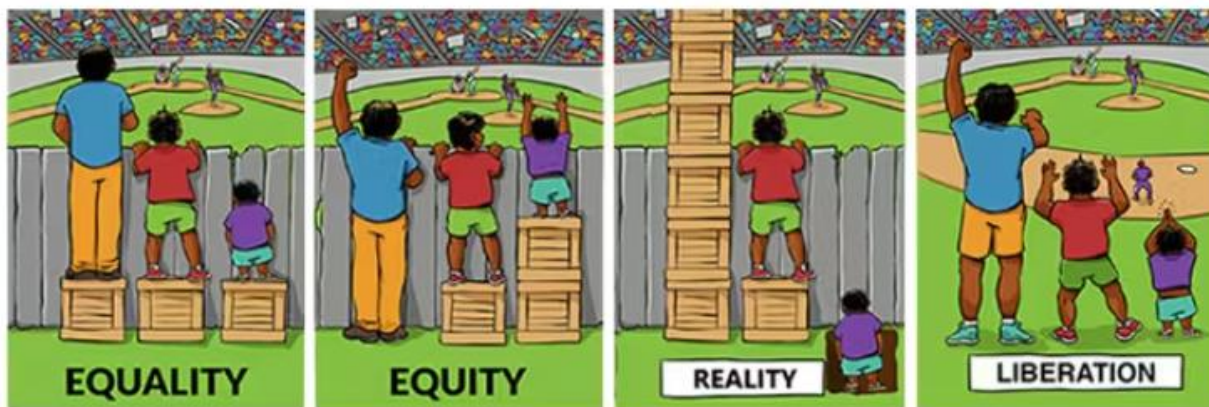


# The Equality Act 2010

Under the **Equality Act 2010**, neurodivergence qualifies as disability.

NHS Trusts have a legal duty to make **Reasonable Adjustments** so that maternity care is accessible in an equitable way.

Lack of awareness is a barrier to accessing reasonable adjustments to care.

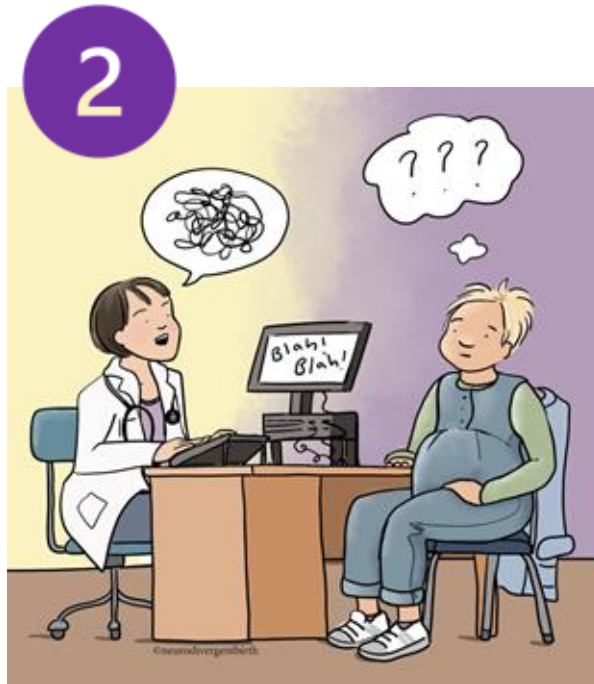


"Adapted from original concept by Craig Froehle (2012) and subsequent iterations by Interaction Institute for Social Change and others."

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## Pillar 3 Executive Functioning

Cognitive skills like planning, organisation, working memory, attention, impulse control and decision-making

Challenges impact the ability to make informed choices and give truly informed consent

Introduce yourself by name and role at each interaction, break information into small chunks, summarise key points, use visual aids, give extra time for decision-making



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## Pillar 4 Mental Health

Many ND people have higher baseline anxiety and depression, increased risk of trauma

Meltdowns are intense emotional responses to overwhelm, not chosen behaviours

Shutdowns – appearing detached, stopping speaking, brief responses

Stimming is self-regulating and shouldn't be discouraged



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# Reasonable Adjustments

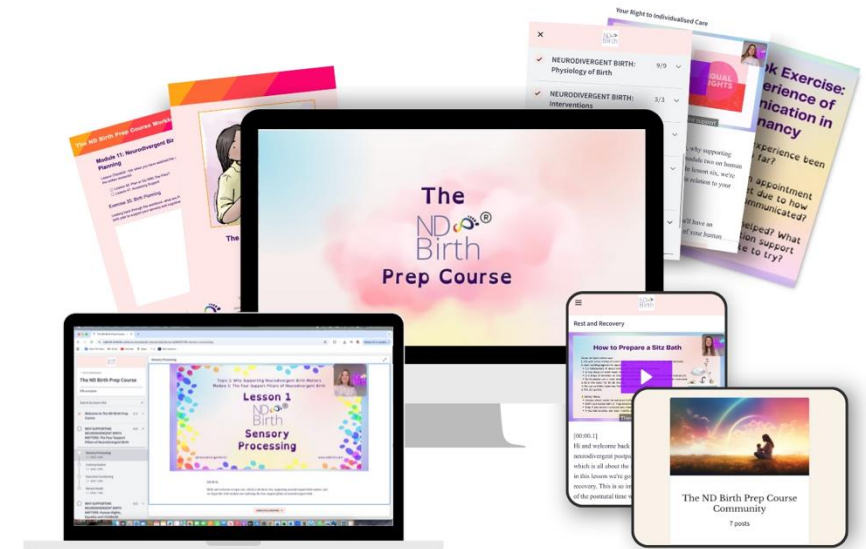
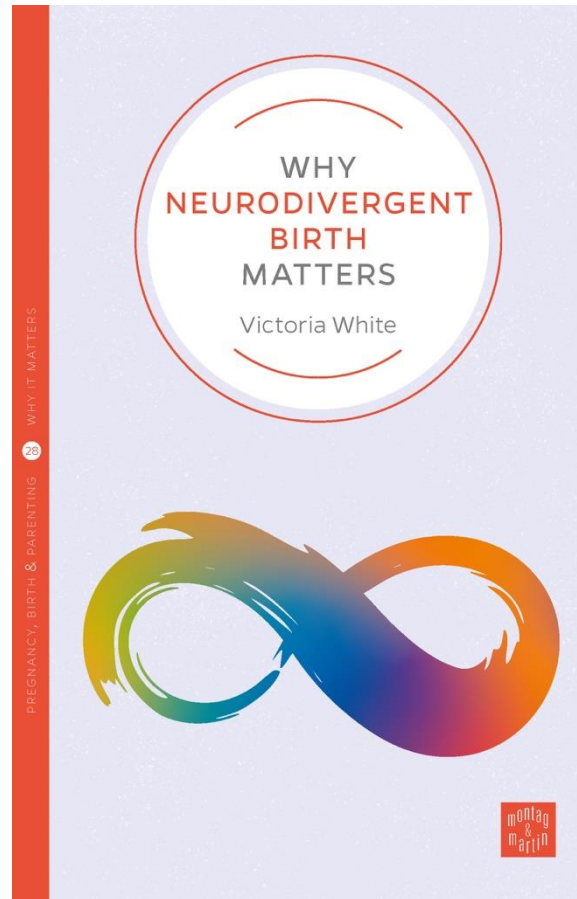


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# Resources



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