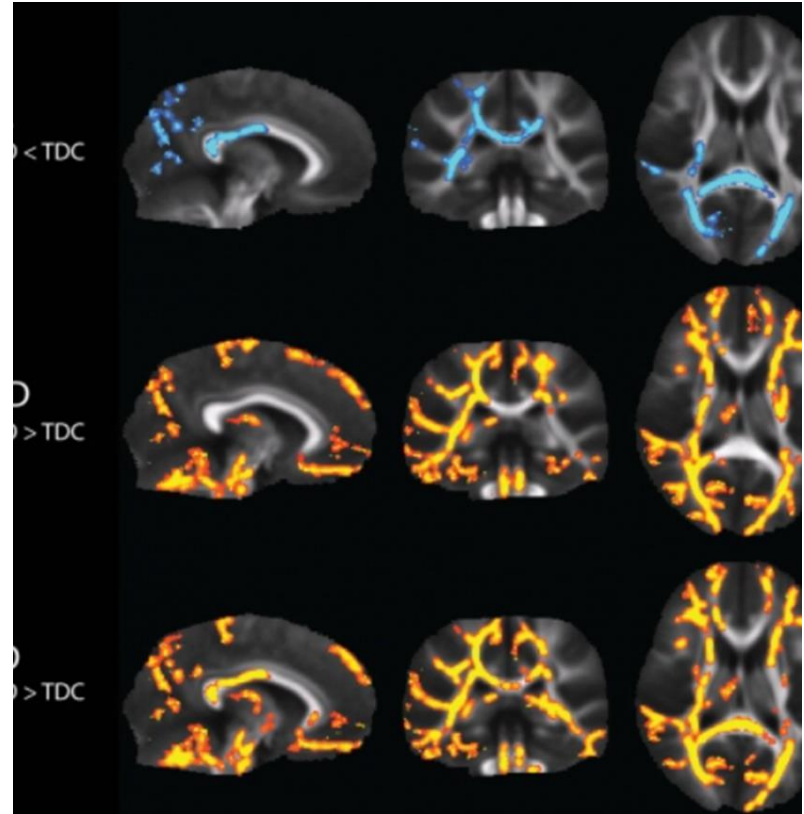# **Domains of Inclusion**

1. Sensory Processing
2. Timing & Structure
3. Group Work
4. Belonging
5. And more!

Sensory Processing Differences

Arise from differences in the amount of white matter in the brain

Results in hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity

The Benefits of Stimming

Stimming is a repetitive sensory input (rocking, hand-flapping, repetitive noises, etc) that can:

1) Reduce anxiety

2) Bring enjoyment, relaxation

3) Help with awareness of body position

4) Help with focus

"I was feeling anxious and didn't know why. While rocking, my mind calmed, and the answer about my anxiety came to me. I had been overly worried about a person I could not help… I immediately felt relieved and was able to actually be supportive to them later that day and not just freaked out over their problems…" - Anonymous

Sensory-friendly checklist

❏ Lighting is natural

❏ Background noise is minimised

❏ Advance notice is given for content involving flashing lights, loud noises, etc.

❏ Chairs and desks are spaced out

❏ It is easy to access the exit

Structure and Consistency

Understanding the course schedule and expectations is beneficial for all students, but may be especially important for autistic students!

Last minute changes, unpredictability, and uncertainty can be major sources of stress.

Timing

Information about course timing:

Example: *"The start time for our class is 8pm, and at the latest class will start by 8:05pm"*

*"All office hour times will be announced by the end of the first week**"*

Email policy:

Example: *"I usually reply within 2 business days, feel free to come to my office hours if it is urgent or follow up if you haven't had a reply within 3 business days"*

Going above and beyond

- You could provide pictures of the classroom and potentially the path to the classroom that students can view prior to term

- You can even let students know what to expect if they arrive early:

    - Is there another class beforehand?

    - Is there a place they can wait if the room isn't open yet?

Class participation

Class participation can be broadened to include:

- Asking the professor questions after lecture

- Asking or answering questions on Sakai

- Attending office hours

- Emailing the professor relevant resources, such as suggestions for supplementary material

- Creating clear summary notes for the class

Presentations and Group Work

- Let students know in advance which classes will involve group work.

- Potentially provide students with the option of giving a prerecorded (versus "live") class presentation

- Give students the option of emailing you to discuss questions or concerns about group assignment.
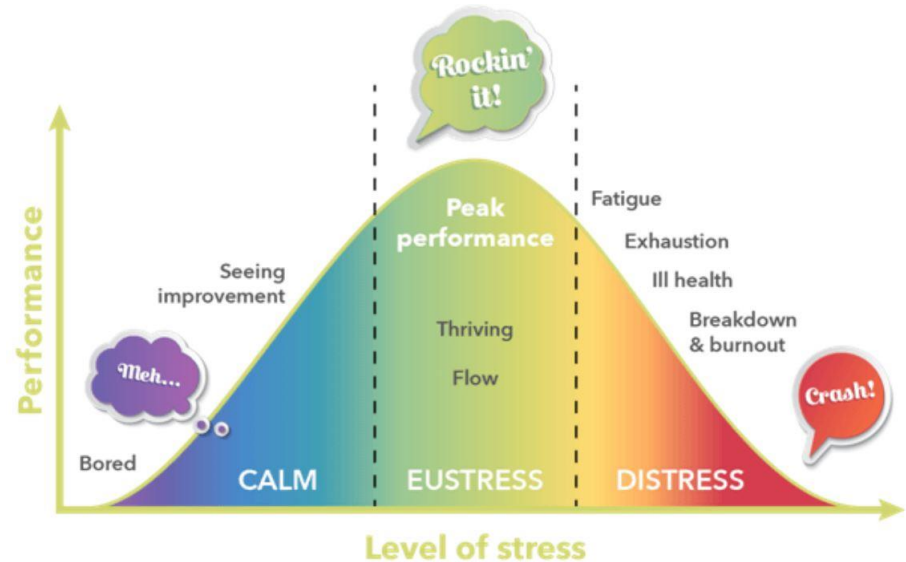
Stating the Unspoken Rules

Indirect: "You're asking a lot of questions"

Direct: "I realised you have a lot of questions and unfortunately I can't answer them all right now. Why don't we [set up a separate meeting later, connect you to a different person who can answer more questions, other concrete suggestion…]?"

Examples of unspoken rules:

- "Optional" class events (or research group events) that aren't purely optional

- Expectations about how often students can email professors/TAs

- Other conventions (e.g. how much someone is supposed to raise their hand in class)

Security and Belonging

Importance of a Proactive Approach: Many students may be nervous about self-disclosure or asking for accommodations (even if they really need them!) for fear of how the professor will react
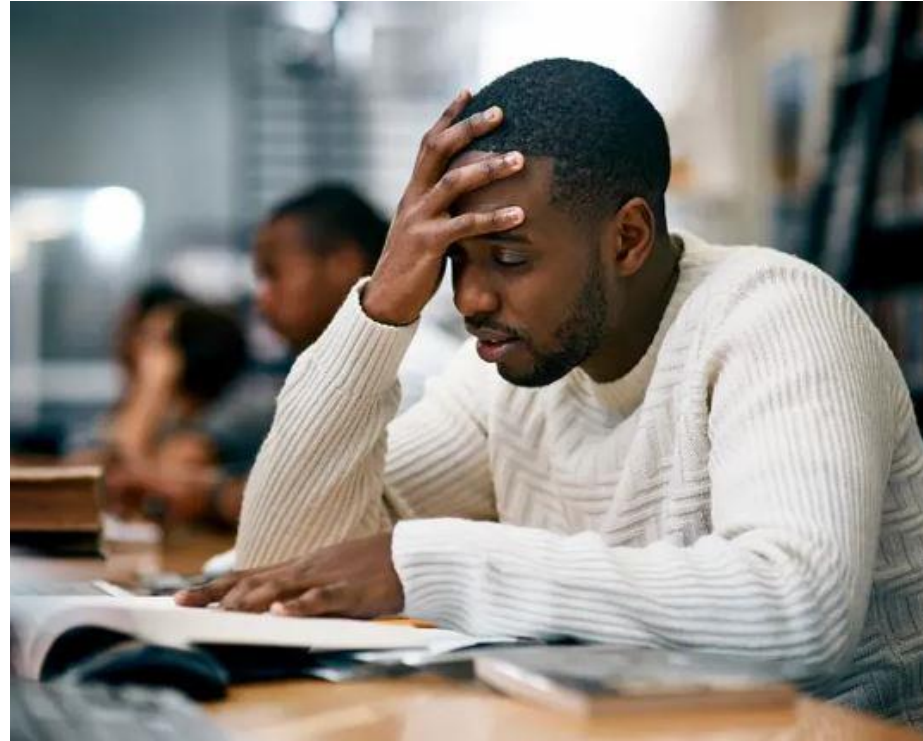
Example of inclusive language on a syllabus

"This course aims to be inclusive of all students and learning styles. Feel free to move/fidget or otherwise do what you need in order to best engage with the course material. I welcome feedback related to course accessibility and the classroom environment. While it may not be possible to grant every request, I am happy to discuss potential accommodations with students, including students who are not currently registered with [-- official accommodations system–]. "
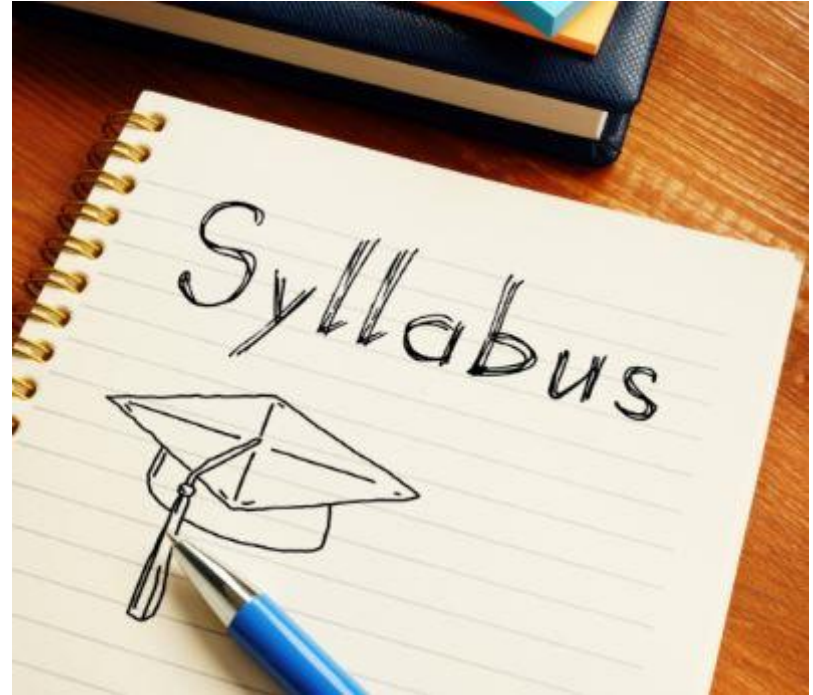
Please reach out with questions!

Sam Brandsen, sam.brandsen@duke.edu