

<b>Session Title:</b>	<b>Session 2.7. Reflections on The Lived Experiences of Neurodivergent Student Recruitment Practitioners</b>
<b>Speaker(s):</b>	<p><b>Heather Cliffe – International Admissions Officer, Lincoln Bishop University</b></p> <p><b>Jo Reed – Senior Widening Participation Officer, London School of Economics and Political Science</b></p> <p><b>Luke Chapman – Student Access, Success and Development Officer, University of Manchester</b></p> <p><b>Sophie Flieshman – Student Access, Success and Development Manager, University of Manchester</b></p> <p><b>Gemma Spencer – Lecturer in Pre-Registration Nursing, University of Lancashire</b></p>
<b>Chair:</b>	<b>David Metcalfe – North East, Yorkshire and Humber Group Chair Newcastle University</b>
<b>Reporter:</b>	<b>Ross Pickering – London Group Chair City St George's, University of London</b>

<b>Speaker(s)</b>	<p>Each panelist provided their background, how they came to work in Student Recruitment and Outreach, and what their neurodiversity is and isn't.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heather Cliffe</li> <li>• Jo Reed</li> <li>• Luke Chapman</li> <li>• Sophie Flieshman</li> <li>• Gemma Spencer</li> </ul>
<b>Overview and Aim of session:</b>	<p>This panel-style discussion featured the five panelists(as outlined above) exploring their lived experiences of being neurodivergent student recruitment practitioners and their managers.</p> <p>It provided unique insights into the challenges and also strengths of neurodivergent colleagues, as well as offer tangible solutions which are practical to support colleagues and managers</p>
<b>Workshop Content</b>	<p><b>Please note:</b> This session explored reflections on the lived experiences of neurodivergence and explored individual circumstances, some of which are omitted or made anonymous in these minutes to ensure anonymity and respect to the individual(s) who declared personal information about themselves which may not have otherwise been in the public domain.</p>

<b>Common Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Initial discussion centered around getting a diagnosis for various neurological conditions such as ADHD, Autism, Dyspraxia and Dyslexia is very challenging and many practitioners may have gone through childhood and even in the workplace undiagnosed, although privately they may suspect that they have a condition but haven't disclosed publicly, or had an official diagnosis</li> <li>o Getting a Diagnosis – Once you are able to get a diagnosis, this often provides a real sense of relief and 'weight off your shoulders' as you can come to terms with it and begin to move forward with your life and make adaptations</li> <li>o Many neurological conditions can be managed so that you can participate within the workforce or as a student (e.g. further study) at ease and it doesn't have too much impact on your day-to-day life</li> <li>o Many neurodivergent people have so much to offer, and sometimes their condition(s) can mean that they offer specialist expertise which can be so valuable to your organisation or higher education institution e.g. being excellent with data or being very extroverted in presentation delivery</li> <li>o <b>For Managers</b> – Fostering an environment where your colleagues can be open and transparent, and they can feel supported makes a significant difference - Compassionate leadership and being flexible, making adaptations if needed</li> <li>o <b>Becoming a Manager</b> – There is nothing stopping you from becoming a manager and progressing in your career, and in fact many neurodivergent managers are excellent managers, being very understanding and empathetic to fellow colleagues who may have neurodiversity</li> <li>o Some neurodivergent practitioners like to specialise in certain areas which often play to their strengths, which may mean that their career pathway is less linear and more sideways depending on their area of expertise e.g. data analyst/specialist</li> </ul>
<b>Practical solutions and next steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o There is lots of support for practitioners within higher education institutions to help – it can be through wellbeing services or EDI initiatives</li> <li>o Many institutions have networks that you can get involved in which can ensure that you don't feel alone and scared e.g. disability network</li> <li>o <b>Signposting</b> - There is lots of support available to help if you</li> </ul>

	<p>think you may be undiagnosed and would like to get a diagnosis. Even if you have been diagnosed there are some useful links below to help you further and provide support.</p>
<p><b>Summary Key Takeaways and Useful Links:</b></p>	<p><b>Starting Conversations: Wellness Action Plan –</b>  <a href="http://www.mind.org.uk/media/lbahso3x/mind-wellness-action-plan-workplace.pdf">www.mind.org.uk/media/lbahso3x/mind-wellness-action-plan-workplace.pdf</a>  This template adapted from <a href="http://www.mind.org.uk">www.mind.org.uk</a> is a useful way for people to share information with others without the pressure of being face-to-face. It can be used as a starting point for conversations around work adjustments</p> <p><b>Business Disability Forum: Toolkits –</b>  <a href="http://www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/resource/toolkits/">www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/resource/toolkits/</a></p> <p><b>Workplace Support: Supportive Practice Tool –</b>  <a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching/effective-practice/universal-design/supportive-practice-tool/">www.ncl.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching/effective-practice/universal-design/supportive-practice-tool/</a>  This is designed for staff working with students, but is very helpful to see ways you might be able to make your practice inclusive based on some common things experienced by neurodiverse students</p> <p><b>Book Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Learning from Neurodivergent Leaders: How to Start, Survive and Thrive in Leadership by Nancy Doyle and Professor Almuth McDowall  <a href="http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/1805011421">www.amazon.co.uk/dp/1805011421</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggestions for HELOA</b></p>	<p>HELOA – Can we establish a Disability Champion in each of the HELOA Groups who can provide support, signposting and help raise awareness of these issues as practitioners?</p>