

# Study says it's time to highlight positive skills associated with neurodevelopmental conditions

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New research says the wide variety of skills displayed by people with conditions such as ADHD, dyslexia, and autism should be celebrated to

help reduce stigma and change society's expectations.

Creativity, resilience, and [problem-solving](#) are just some of the strengths exhibited, and a study is now calling for a change in the way we think about people with neurodevelopmental conditions.

Dr. Edwin Burns, senior lecturer from the School of Psychology at Swansea University, worked with academics from Edge Hill University on the study and [their findings](#) have been published by online journal *Neuropsychologia*.

The researchers say people with these conditions are almost always discussed in terms of the problems that they face.

They are often characterized by a range of associated cognitive impairments in, for example, sensory processing, [facial recognition](#), [visual imagery](#), attention, and coordination.

However, Dr. Burns said, "We would say that if only the wider public were aware that these groups exhibit many strengths and skills—some which are actually enhanced compared to the general population—then this should reduce stigma and improve their educational and employment outcomes."

For the study, the team identified a wide variety of skills exhibited in different groups, such as Williams syndrome, dyslexia, autism, ADHD, developmental coordination disorder, aphantasia.

These skills include improved [social skills](#), creativity, problem-solving, resilience, and visual search.

The research also puts forward reasons why these skills occur, such as genetics, experience adapting to the environment, repurposing the brain,

and medication.

Dr. Burns added, "In our research, we present a table of potential strengths across conditions, and we hope that this may act as a stimulus for a major systematic review in the future. This should help reduce the stigma around neurodiversity, instead promoting greater social inclusion and significant societal benefits."

**More information:** Katherine J. Maw et al, Cognitive strengths in neurodevelopmental disorders, conditions and differences: A critical review, *Neuropsychologia* (2024). DOI: [10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2024.108850](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2024.108850)

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