



INCLUSION COUNTS

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The Author



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Nazia is an Inclusive Educational Consultant and the Chairperson of the Society of Education Consultants (SEC). She is originally from Kenya and is currently based in Leicestershire, UK. While in Kenya, Nazia worked on a 1:1 basis with learners on the spectrum, as well as those with global developmental delays. She also worked as a trainer for local pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. Her modules surrounded special education and inclusion.

Nazia continues to support families and students globally. Specifically, she develops bespoke programmes and provides regular ongoing support. Locally, she works with the students and the school, developing tailor-made programmes and supporting the resourcing of learning activities for each learner.

Hello!

As we continue to support families across the globe, the Covid-19 Pandemic is presenting completely opposite situations from one country to the next, which means that Inclusivity Education must remain flexible in meeting the needs of students, irrespective of their situation.

While measures gradually relax in the UK, they have become stricter in Kenya, which means that children in the UK are back at school and will soon be able to attend after school activities, but students in Kenya are back to online learning.

Fortunately, we have been here before and we managed to pull through - and we will do the same this year. Please have a look at the resources page on our website and you will be able to find plenty of information on how to support your child, whether we need structure at home or if we need to prepare them for Covid tests.

Inclusivity Education is always looking for ways to support and advocate for neurodiverse learners. Please reach out to us on inclusivityeducation@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you!

Nazia Ansari



Embracing Neurodiversity



By Nazia Ansari

I was at a school last week and witnessed the most eye-opening conversation between an autistic girl and her headteacher. The young girl had a difficult morning and the headteacher was encouraging her. The headteacher used a positive approach, telling the girl that she had come so far and that she should allow others to see how amazing she was. The young girl clung on to every word the headteacher was saying, nodding her head and staying completely engaged. When it was her turn to speak, the little girl said in agreement with the headteacher regarding all the progress she made, "Yes, it is almost like I am not autistic anymore. You cannot even tell!"

At this point, I could not help but question whether in supporting our neurodiverse learners, do we try to 'normalise' them. This will lead to many asking:

1. What is normal anyway?
2. Who gets to decide what normal is?

We are going to look at the words 'normal' and 'neurodiverse' morphologically and literally.

Normal stems from the word norm. This means that normal is what the majority of individuals within a particular group are able to do. In child development, this often refers to what a child can typically do at a certain age based on what majority of children or the average number of children can do.

Neurodiversity- if we break up this word, into its main morphemes. then we have 'Neuro' - meaning to do with the brain and 'diverse' meaning different and of variety. Therefore, this diversity also includes the average person or those within the norm - the normal person.

However, the words normal and neurodiverse do not imply that there is a benchmark and a need to mask one's neuro-identity.

We live in a diverse globe and we encourage people to celebrate racial, religious, cultural diversity among all the other forms that exist. At no point do we insist that any individual should change who they are to match the norm or the average. Say for an example, a British girl moves to Brazil - she would not be expect to become Brazilian. Yes, she may need to learn the language in order to function independently, but at no point would anyone expect her to change her identity.

It is important to understand that supporting neurodiverse learners means that we teach them to meet their fullest potential so that they may achieve happiness, independence and fulfillment. We aim for all students to be able to reach adulthood with an ability to form relationships and live in a self-sufficient manner as much as possible while ensuring their wellbeing is protected.

It is vital that we do not confuse support and teaching with normalising which in essence is really taking away an individual's identity.



Covid Testing



By Nazia Ansari

Covid-19 is still prominently determining what 2021 looks like. However, we are approaching the end. Where testing was difficult in 2020 with high costs in some countries and limited testing centres in others, there are now easily accessible opportunities for Covid testing.

Testing is a new experience for many of us and this can trigger anxiety in a neurodiverse individual.

There are two main factors that can be stressful:

1. Not knowing what to expect
2. The sensation of the swabbing

While there is little we can do to desensitise a person sufficiently to help them cope with the sensation, we can most certainly support them in knowing what to expect.

This can be done through social stories. Trixie Pujol, a highly experienced professional who has spent most of her career working with autistic children, has continually emphasised the need for these stories to help manage expectations. Covid tests are a prime scenario that calls for the need for a social story.

It is advisable to review this story with your child a few times before the test. If you have time, you can even role play it. Where possible, take the social story to the test in order to show the individual how far along they are in the process.

A downloadable version of the social story is available via the following links:

- [Testing at school](#)
- [Testing steps](#)

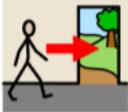
Printable resources available on the next page.



Covid Testing

Printable resource

COVID TEST AT SCHOOL

 <p>Something new is going to happen at school</p>	 <p>All the students will have to see the nurse</p>	 <p>The nurse needs to make sure everyone is healthy</p>	 <p>The nurse will do a test</p>	 <p>You will need to sit down</p>	 <p>They will use something that looks like a long ear bud</p>	 <p>This is called a swab</p>
 <p>The nurse will need to wipe the inside of your throat</p>	 <p>She will need to use the swab again</p>	 <p>The nurse will need to wipe the inside of your nose too.</p>	 <p>It may feel a little funny</p>	 <p>Then you are all done</p>	 <p>You will have done a great job sitting still and staying calm</p>	 <p>You can go after that.</p>

This social story outlines the process of a Covid test. It is advisable to go through it a few times with the individual before the test. You can also take it with you to the test and check off each step once it is done.



Covid Testing

Printable resource



Sit down



Nurse swabs
throat



Nurse swabs
nose



All done

Created in WidgeitOnline.com for Nazia Ansari

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This social story outlines the process of a Covid test. It is advisable to go through it a few times with the individual before the test. You can also take it with you to the test and check off each step once it is done.



Services we Provide



Inclusivity Education offers a range of services. Our mission is to do as much as we can to support schools, neurodiverse learners and their families anywhere in the world.

We have found that through virtual sessions, we have been able to open up our support to more families and it has been a pleasure to work with various cultures and celebrate diversity even further.

The services we offer are based on whether we are working as a practitioner or a consultant. Our main focus is academic achievement in terms of numeracy and literacy as these provide functional life skills at the very least. We recognise the need for a holistic approach and therefore, also work on social, behavioural and interaction skills.

We are always excited to work with other professionals such as occupational therapists and speech therapists. Where possible, we like to ensure a strong team dynamic is maintained between the home and the school and we aim to advocate for the learner to be able to get the most that they can in any given situation.

We pride ourselves in our transparency and strong communication. We ensure that we are always providing all members of a child's support system with information on what the child is working on. We know that this enables all of us to work cohesively toward a common goal.

Practitioner

Here we identify the learner's profile and set targets for them in an IEP. We work with the learner three times a week to achieve these targets. Parents have a copy of the IEP and at the end of 3 to 4 months, depending on the agreement, they receive an evaluated version. In the meantime, we ensure that parents are informed of progress through monthly reports. These can also be sent to the school if the parents wish. Sometimes, we may require input from families and schools to help us achieve targets especially social and communication ones.

Consultant

Here we prepare the learner's IEP and meet with the team once a week to monitor progress and provide guidance. We also work with the learner once a month and request for opportunities to observe sessions between the teacher and the student on a once a month basis. Parents and schools receive a new IEP at the start of the term and an evaluated one at the end. They also receive monthly reports.



Services we Provide



Resourcing

We realise that it can be difficult for teachers to prepare bespoke resources for learners who present with a significant discrepancy between their learning level and that of their same age peers. Therefore, we assist schools with preparing resources to meet our IEP, for teachers and teaching assistants to use. Again here, we meet with the team once a week to review targets and usefulness of resources. As with all other services, parents and the school receive a new IEP, an evaluated one and monthly reports.

Global and Local

We are based in Leicester and are able to work face to face with clients. For those who are outside of Leicester, we are able to offer equal support through virtual meetings. This includes working with parents and teachers as well as students where possible. I have experience in working with students virtually since 2017 and have found numerous ways to ensure that students are engaged and are progressing. Furthermore, we value diversity and are happy to work with students all over the globe.

We are currently working with learners in the UK (Leicester and London) and outside of the UK (Uganda and Kenya). We have worked with clients in other countries too and find a way to ensure that it is mutually convenient for everyone.

Limited Availability

We prioritise quality over quantity, this means that we have a limited number of students we work with at any given time. We divide our time between working with learners face to face and virtually which means that we aim for no more than:

- 3 face to face students
- 4 virtual students

We have one more space open for a virtual student. We will have space for a face-to-face student in September 2021.

To arrange a chat about us working with your child, please contact us on inclusivityeducation@gmail.com

To find out more about our rates, go to <https://inclusivity.education/services/>



Why we should opt for inclusion



By Ann Lou Biating

Inclusive Education for children with Special Needs can be considered to be a double edge blade. We are talking about equity for all children.

It's been proven that placing a neurodiverse children with neurotypical children has significantly positive social and academic effects. Typically developing children can act as models for those with specific concerns in demonstrating social skills and communication that will enable them to successfully navigate through adulthood.. Isn't that the ultimate goal of everyone associated with a neurodiverse learner? The goal of supporting learners to become more independent and functional.

Another benefit of inclusive education is that it is a two way process. Neurotypical children are, at a very early age, sensitized to individuals who are 'different'. Kids understand that it is okay if their 'special' friend talks loudly to them. Having learnt in such an inclusive classroom, they do not fall prey to the stigmatizing voices of others. They are also more willing to actively help special needs populations. For the neurodiverse child, being in a mainstream classroom is in itself a major learning experience. It is only fair to expose them to the same level of education and rights from the beginning as others. Even teachers observe the interaction the kids have among themselves and learn about the needs of students with specific concerns. They over time learn to

help special children better in the school setting. There are a number of factors we need to consider when we look at inclusion:

Equal Rights to Education

There has been a rapid increase in Inclusive schools recently. But there are a lot of difficulties that neurodiverse children in mainstream schools face. For example, lack of flexibility in curriculum, infrastructure, being bullied in class, not getting adequate attention from the teachers and much more. Regardless, there remains a large number of neurodiverse children trained in mainstream schools who are doing comparatively well. So, the parents of neurodiverse children might have to do a bit of school hopping initially until they find the right fit, but it will pay off well to have your child educated in a mainstream school.

Ensure special attention at school

Often, neurodiverse learners receive one to one support throughout the school hours. They use various psychologically tested teaching methods to tune teaching as per the child's mode of learning. In addition, they are sensitive to the child's difficulties and aim to help them with academic as well as social and behavioural concerns. Allowing for one to one support is ideal in the initial stages of inclusion and where possible can be systematically faded out over time.



Why we should opt for inclusion



Limitations of inclusion

Does Inclusive Education really works for the best interest of all children including those of typically developing children in the classroom? In Kenya, although the recent education reform clearly advocates Inclusive Education for Special Needs children; the reality on ground says otherwise. The school curriculums are academically intense, beyond the capabilities of some neurodiverse students which leads to a significant discrepancy among students, not to mention the behavioural challenges, in the classroom of more than 35 children to 1 teacher. This results in parents of neurotypical children, having the best interest of their children at heart often conflicting with the school administrators and teachers with regard to inclusive education.

Attempt to resolve conflict:

As a possible solution, schools may have a department to accommodate neurodiverse children in a separate classroom which provides flexibility to manage diverse learning needs. It is worth noting that often, behavioural outbursts of some neurodiverse learners may be triggered by overwhelm or sensory overload in a mainstream classroom; therefore separate learning hubs also help neurodiverse learners by creating a calmer environment. In this set up, all children are then given an opportunity to mingle together during P.E., recess/lunch break and non-academic school activities. As much as everyone supports the Inclusion education, one size does not fit all and some flexibility may be required based on the setting and the learners.



Ann Lou Biating is an Educational Psychologist who works as both a teacher and an educational consultant at Dawn Dew Educational Intervention Support Centre, Nairobi, Kenya.