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Hamilton, Lorna G., Williams, James and Petty, Stephanie (2024) Inclusive Neurodiverse Campuses. In: Neurodiversity in Higher Education 2, 13/09/2024, York St John University. (Unpublished)

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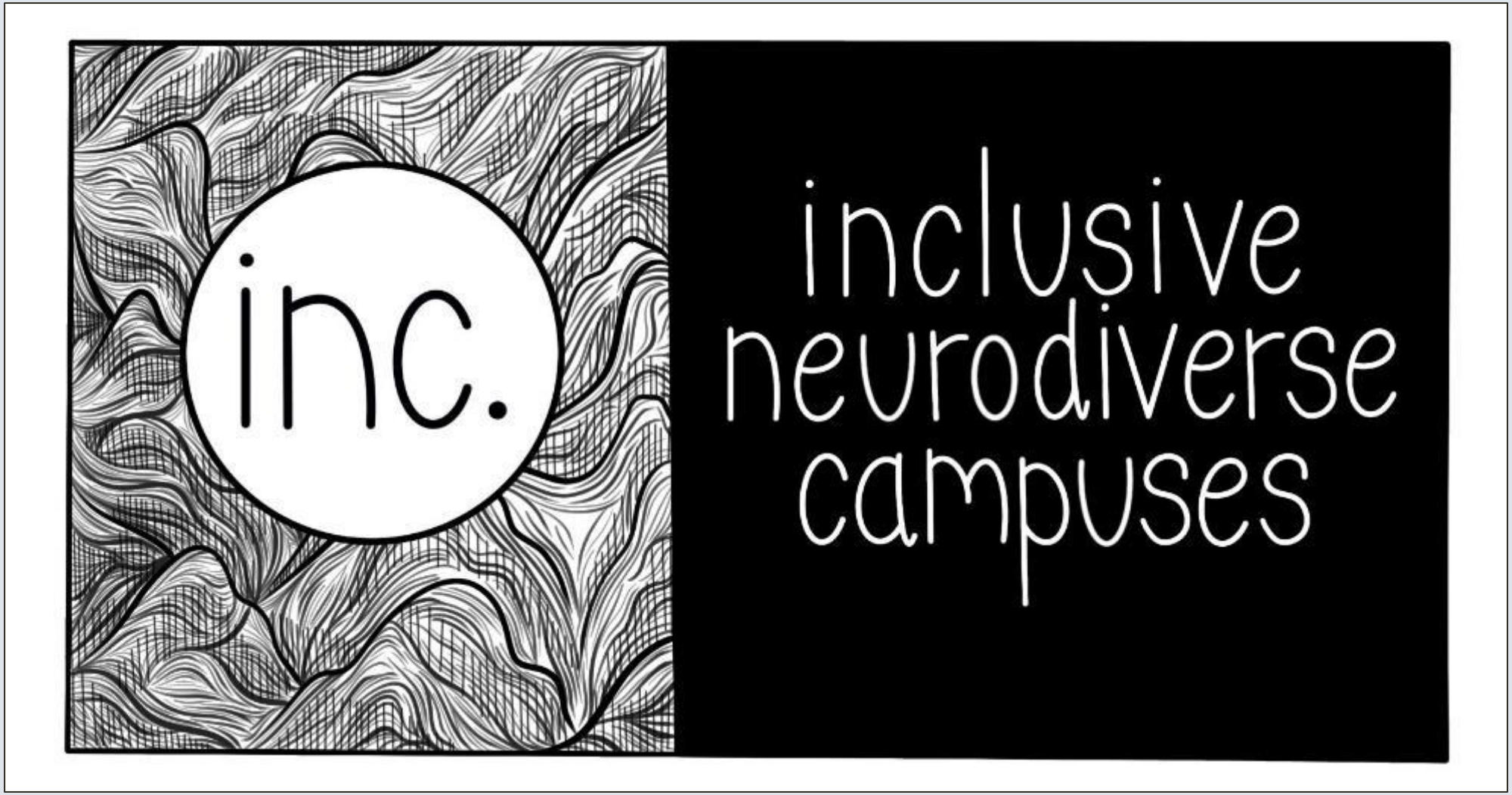
inc.
inclusive
neurodiverse
campuses

inclusive neurodiverse campuses

Lorna Hamilton - Professor of Developmental Psychology and Inclusive Education

James Williams - Co-Director of Spectrum First Education Ltd.

Darcy Neilson, Brianna Ralston, Kay Turner, & Christian Hanser - Research Associates

Stephanie Petty - Associate Professor, Chartered Clinical Psychologist

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SPECTRUM FIRST

13 September 2024

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH WITH AUTISTIC CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS

- Hamilton, L.G. (2024). Emotionally based school avoidance in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic: Neurodiversity, agency and belonging in schools. *Education Sciences*. 10.3390/educsci14020156
- Hamilton, L.G., Kelly, L., & Mesa, S. (2023). "I'm able to function better when I know there's a beginning and an end time": Autistic adolescents' experiences of lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Autism & Developmental Language Impairments*. 10.1177/23969415231179552
- Lewis, K., Hamilton, L.G., & Vincent, J. (2023). Exploring the experiences of autistic pupils through creative methods: Reflections on a participatory approach. *Infant & Child Development*. 10.1002/icd.2467
- Mesa, S., & Hamilton, L.G. (2022). "We are different, that's a fact, but they treat us like we're different-er": Understandings of autism and adolescent identity development. *Advances in Autism*. 10.1108/AIA-12-2020-0071

Centring first-person perspectives from neurodivergent children and young people is crucial – and can be done using accessible, flexible communication methods.

The pandemic provided an alternative to mainstream education for autistic pupils, and some have not returned to school since.

Educational experiences shape identity development.

REIMAGINING NEURODIVERGENT CHARACTERISTICS AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Petty, S., & Ellis, A. (2024). The meaning of autistic movements. *Autism*. 10.1177/13623613241262151
- Petty, S., Lambarth, S., & Ham[illegible]on, L. G. (2023). Rethinking anxiety and depression for autistic adults through personal narratives: mixed-method analysis of blog data. *Counsell[illegible]g and Psychotherapy Research*. 10.1002/capr.12729
- Petty, S., Tunstall, L., Richards[illegible], H., & Eccles, N. (20[illegible]2). Workplace adjustments for autistic employees: what is "reasonable"? *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. 10.1007/s10803-021-[illegible]5413-x
- Petty, S., Bergenheim, M-L., M[illegible]honey, G., & Chamb[illegible]lain, L. (2021). Adapting services for autism: recommendations fro[illegible] a specialist multidisciplinary perspective [illegible]ng freelisting. *Curre[illegible] Psychology*. 10.1007/s12144-021-02061-3

Some movements are stigmatised and censored. Stimming, dancing and physical exercise can enhance thinking/focus, regulate senses, increase body connection… Movement is natural and harmless.

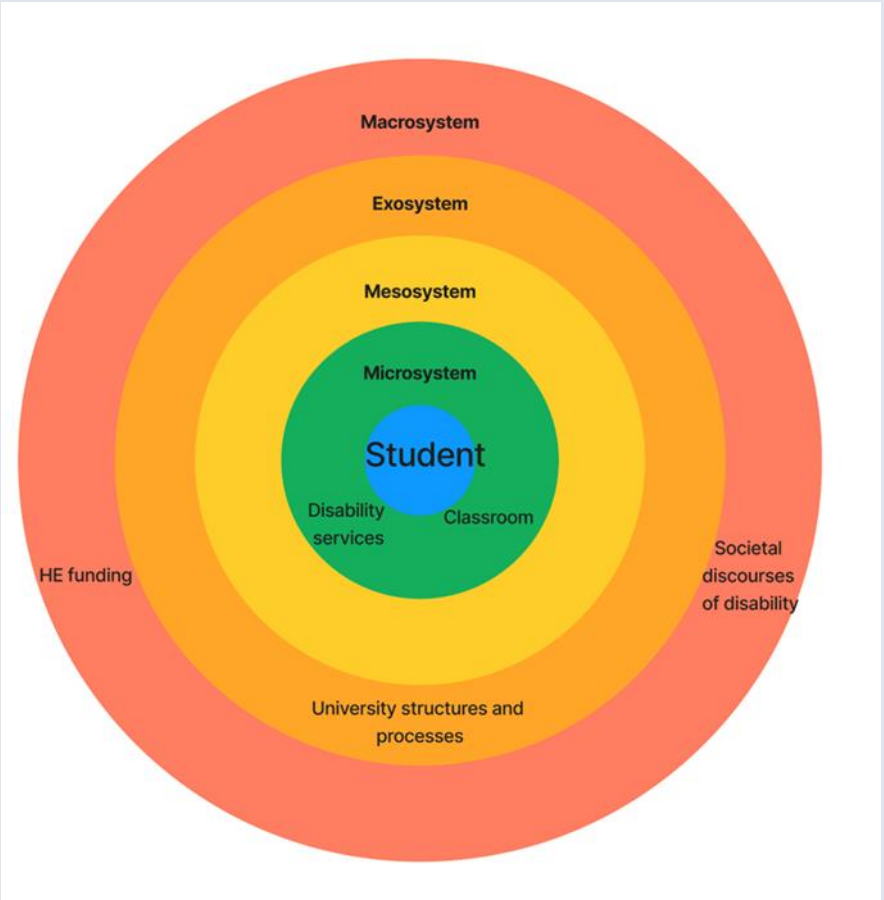
Emotions are misrepresented by 'anxiety' or 'depression' labels. Emotions interact with sensory tolerance, pain, and fatigue. Think about an 'overwhelm meter'.

Employers need low cost, easy solutions that benefit all employees.

TURNING TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Hamilton, L.G., & Petty. S. (2023). Compassionate pedagogy for neurodiversity in higher education: A conceptual analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. 10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1093290/full

Compassion means proactively considering the experiences of another without judgment, whilst acting where possible to alleviate marginalisation and suffering. Differences are noticed, welcomed and accepted.



Adapted from: Bronfenbrenner & Ceci (1994)

WHERE TO INTERVENE?

inclusive neurodiverse campuses

Mapping neurodiversity-affirming practice across campus.

Where, when and why do neurodivergent members of the university community thrive?

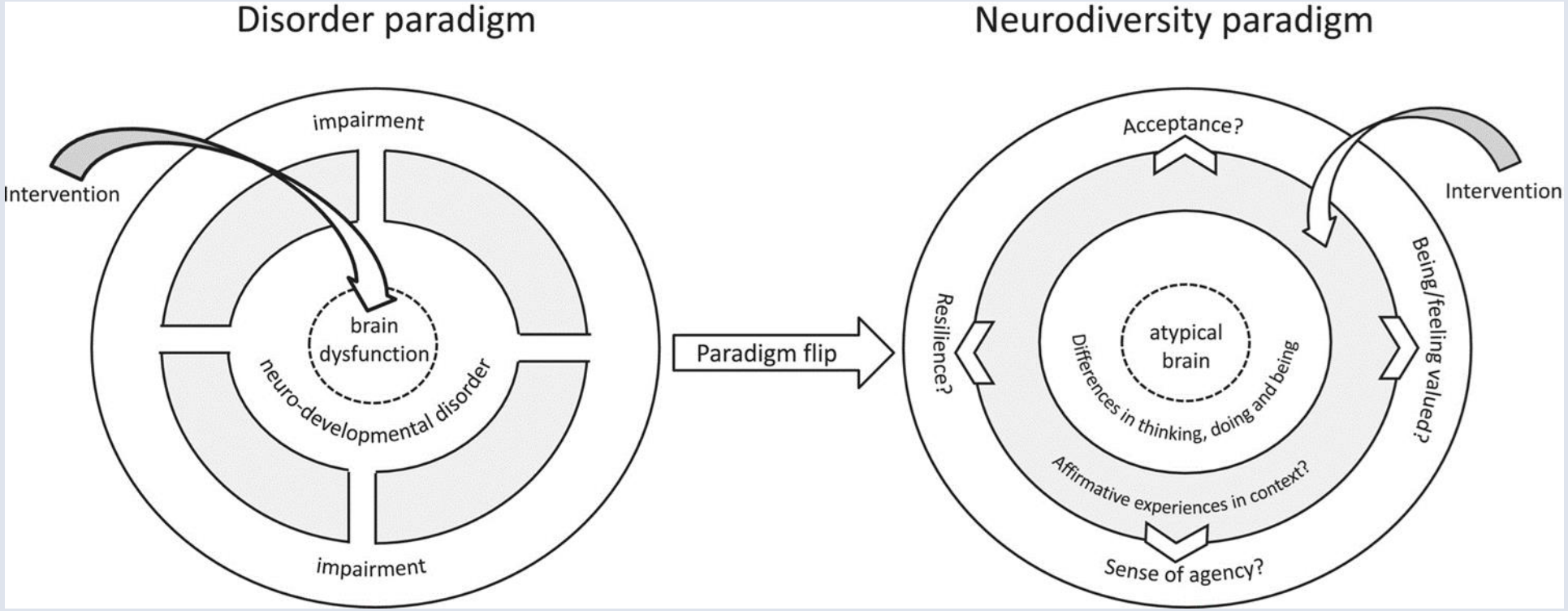
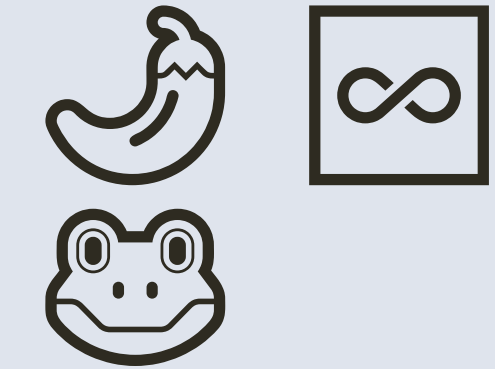
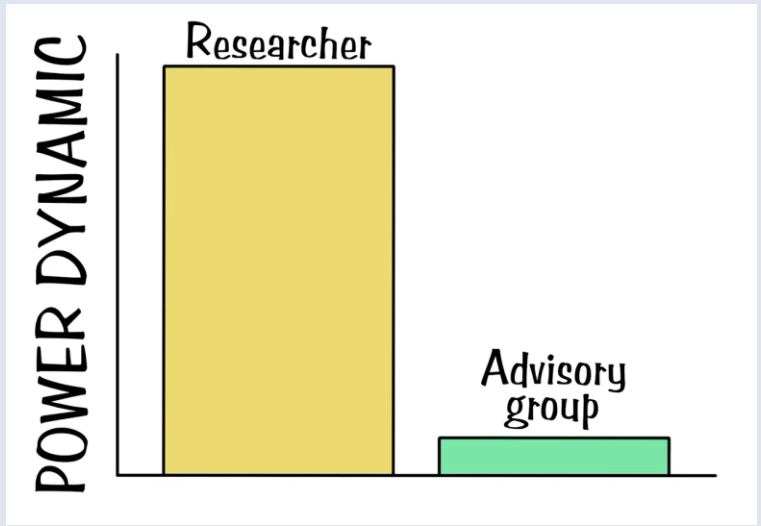


Figure source: Sonuga-Barke, E. J. (2023). Paradigm 'flipping' to reinvigorate translational science: Outlining a neurodevelopmental science framework from a 'neurodiversity' perspective. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 64*(10), 1405-1408. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13886.

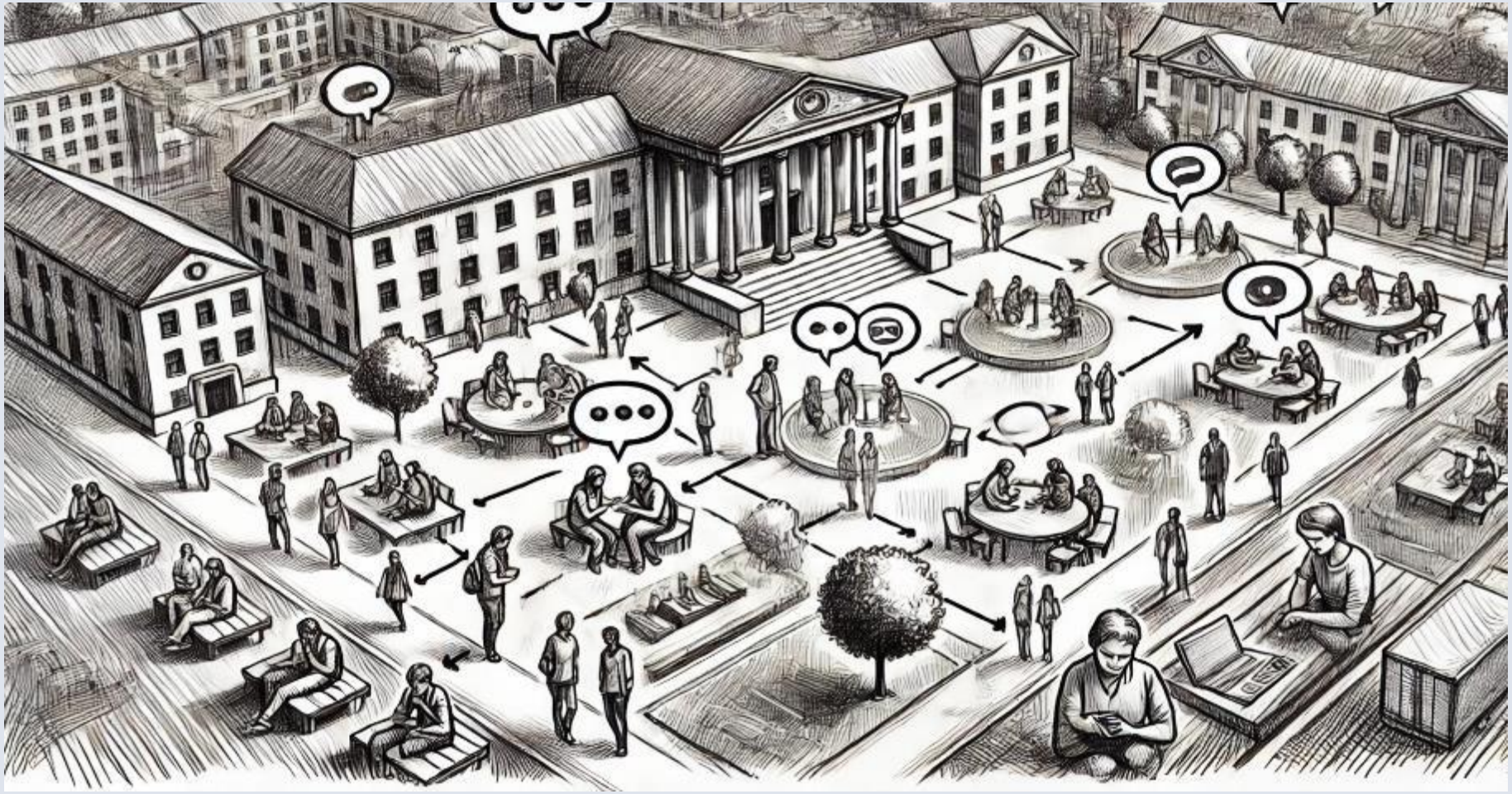
PAG GROUP




POWER DYNAMIC
Researcher
Advisory group

Does social interaction drain your energy or stress you out?
often?
We're asking for your opinion on how the university caters to you. Scan the QR code to have your say.
QR code here
Do you struggle with deadlines?
Do you easily lose track of time?
Do you find it daunting to try new things with little information?
Do you have intensely vivid daydreams and a rich inner life?
We're asking for your opinion on how the university caters to you. Scan the QR code to have your say.

DATA COLLECTION



Do you experience rejection more deeply than other people?

A project exploring what you need for a truly inclusive university experience*

*no diagnosis required

Scan the QR code to join us on padlet to share your views

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Do you have intensely vivid daydreams and a rich inner life?

A project exploring what you need for a truly inclusive university experience*

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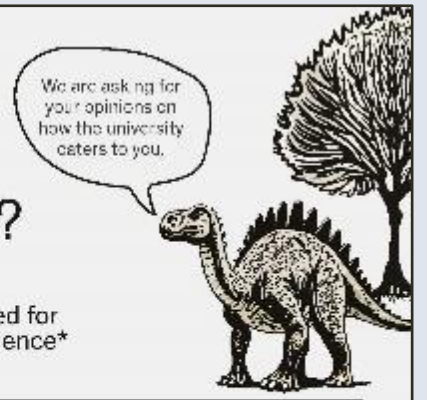
Does social interaction stress you out?



A project exploring what you need for a truly inclusive university experience*

*no diagnosis required

Scan the QR code to join us on padlet to share your views

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Do you get so into things you lose track of time and forget to eat or drink?

A project exploring what you need for a truly inclusive university experience*

*no diagnosis required

Scan the QR code to join us on padlet to share your views

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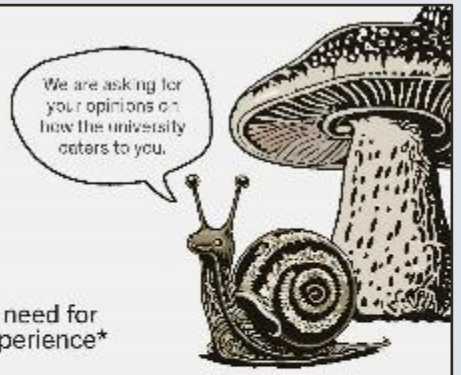
Do you struggle with loud spaces and weird textures?



A project exploring what you need for a truly inclusive university experience*

*no diagnosis required

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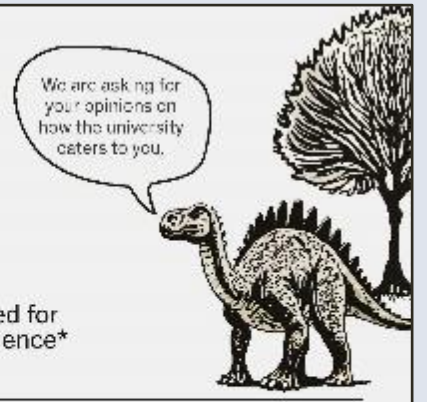
Does the campus feel too loud, too bright, and too much sometimes?



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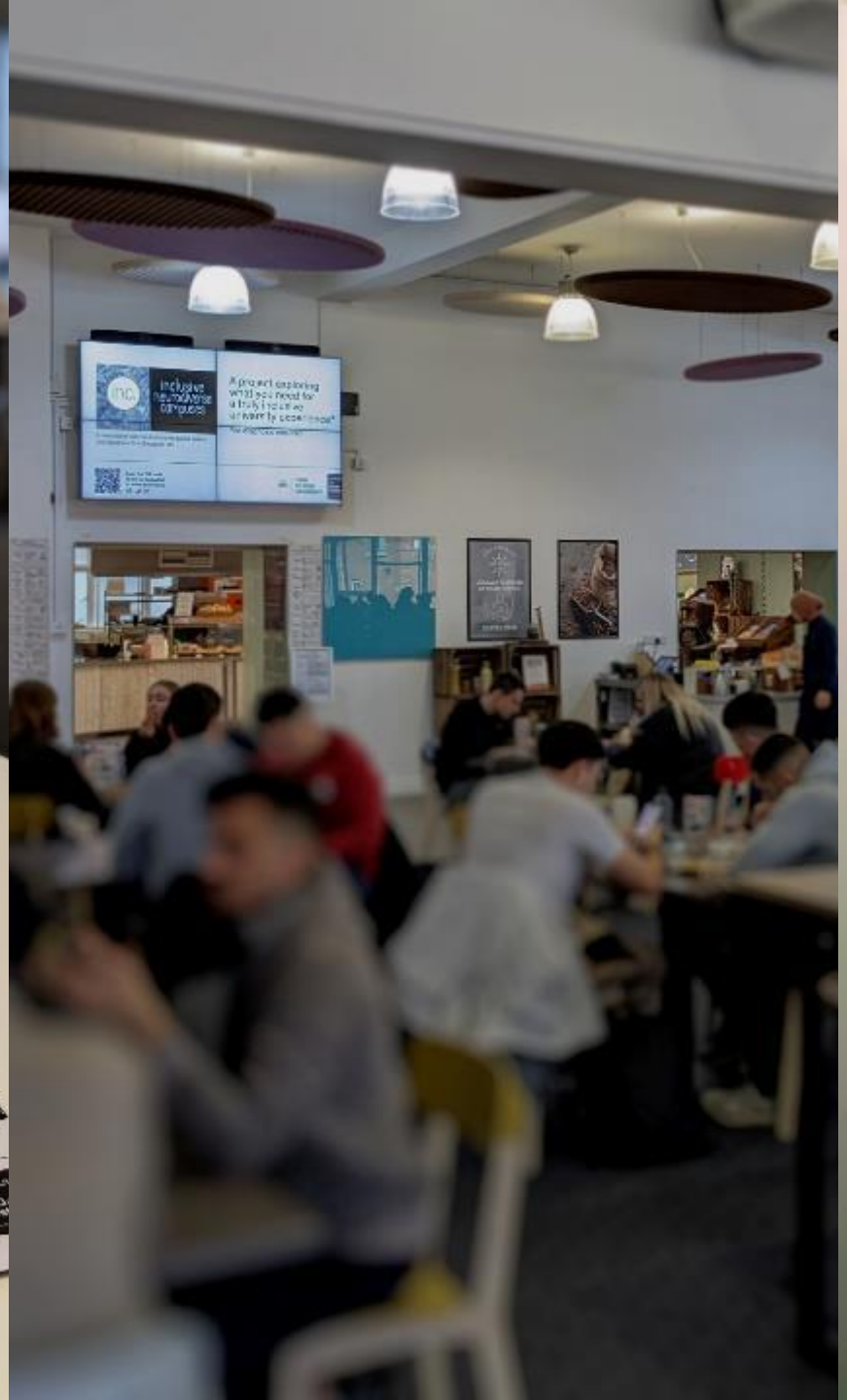
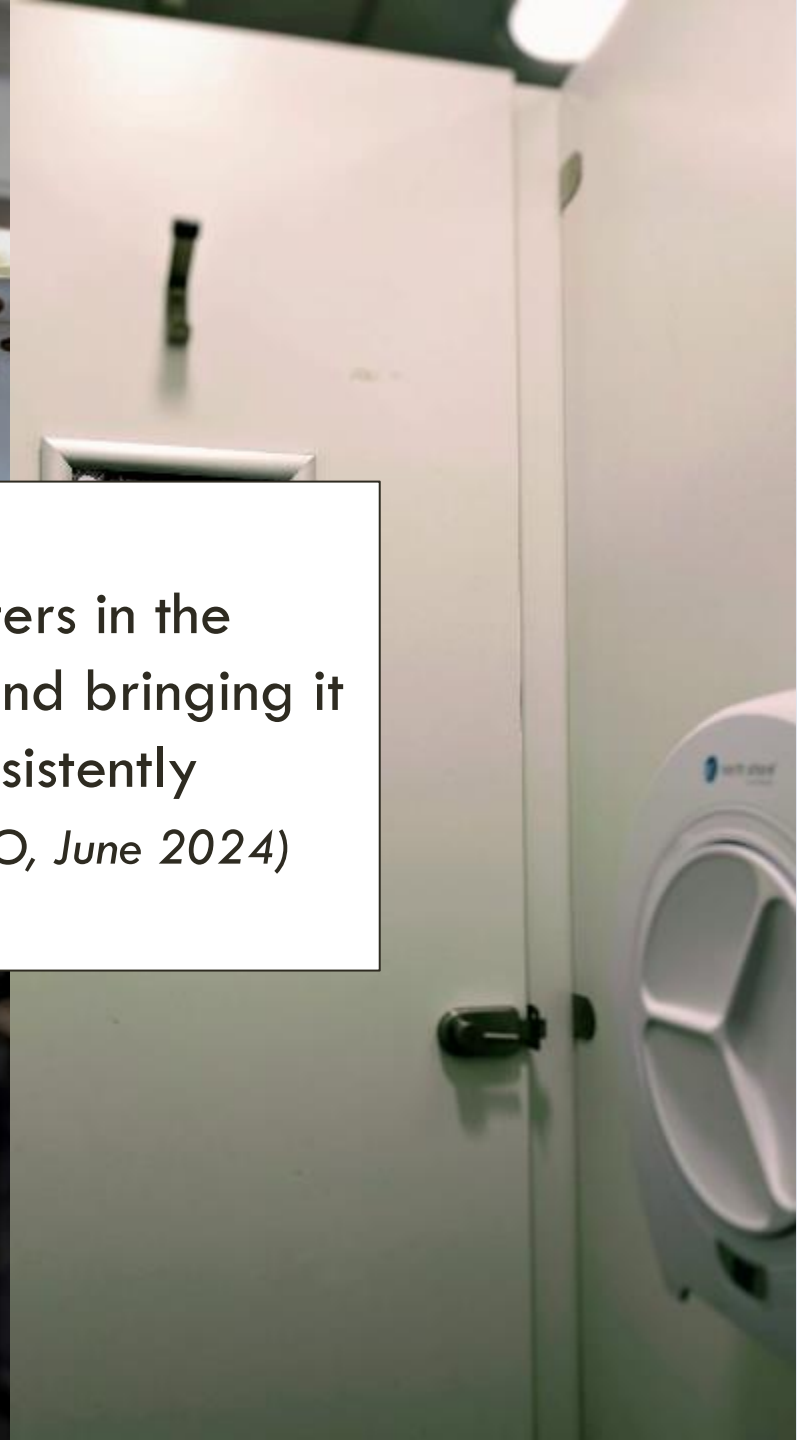
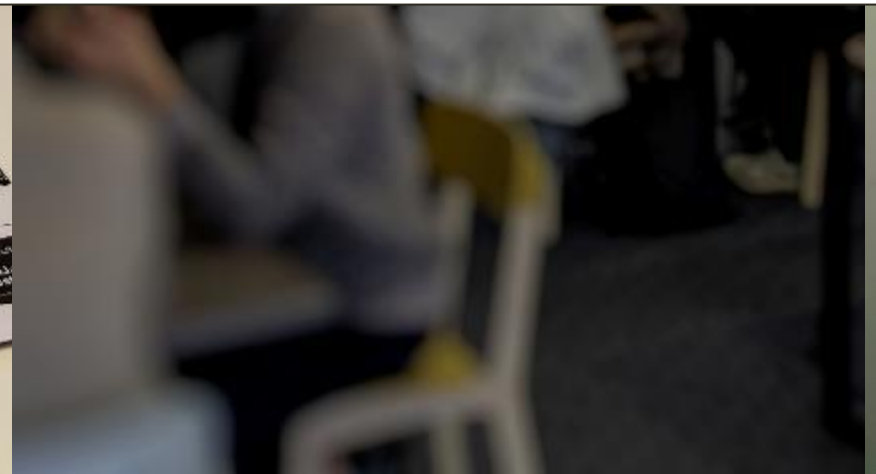
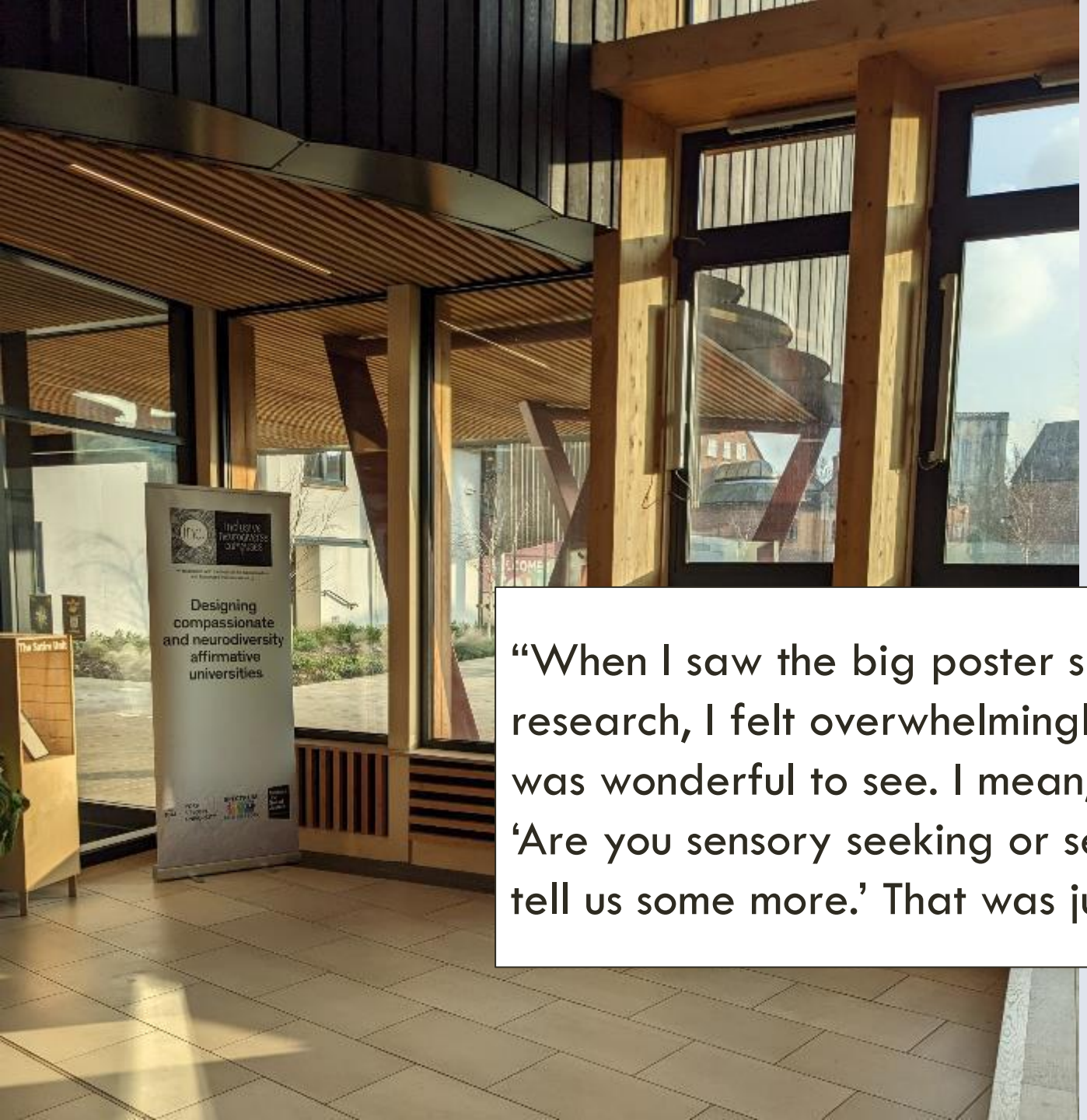


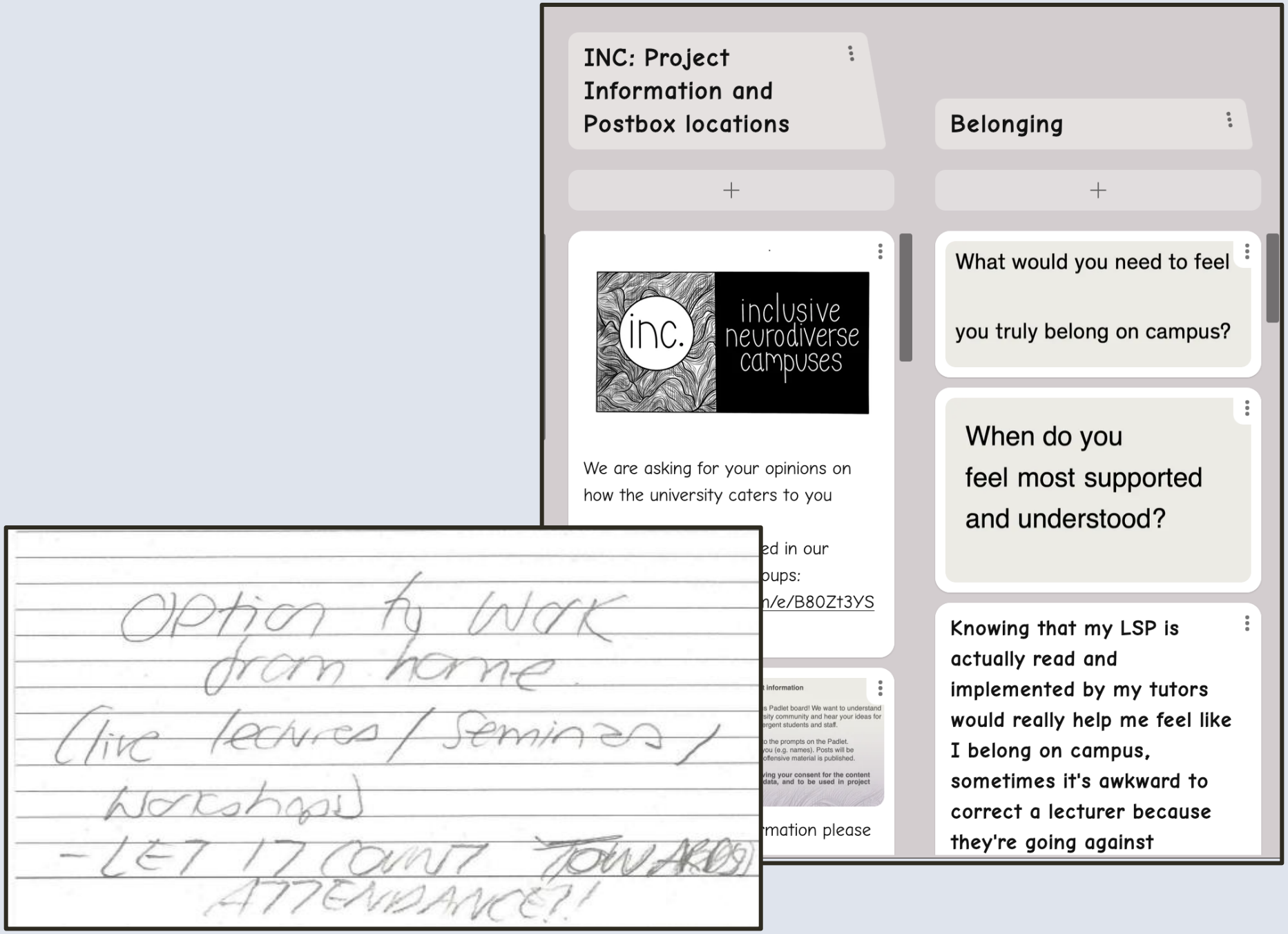


"I had an appointment at St John and noticed the posters in the ladies… Thank you for considering this sensory issue and bringing it to public awareness… Far too many public places consistently choose to ignore people such as me." *(Visitor, Business CEO, June 2024)*

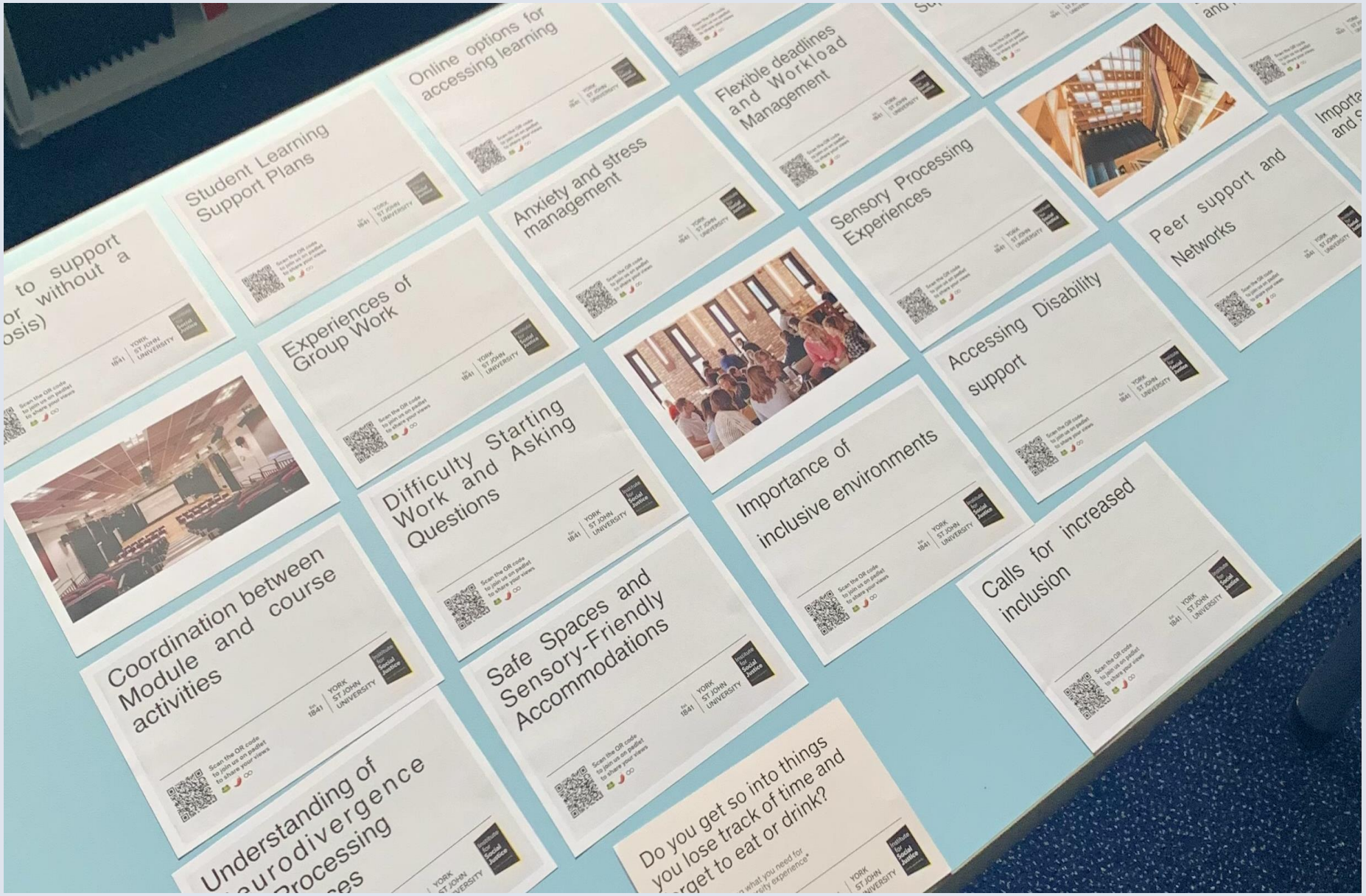




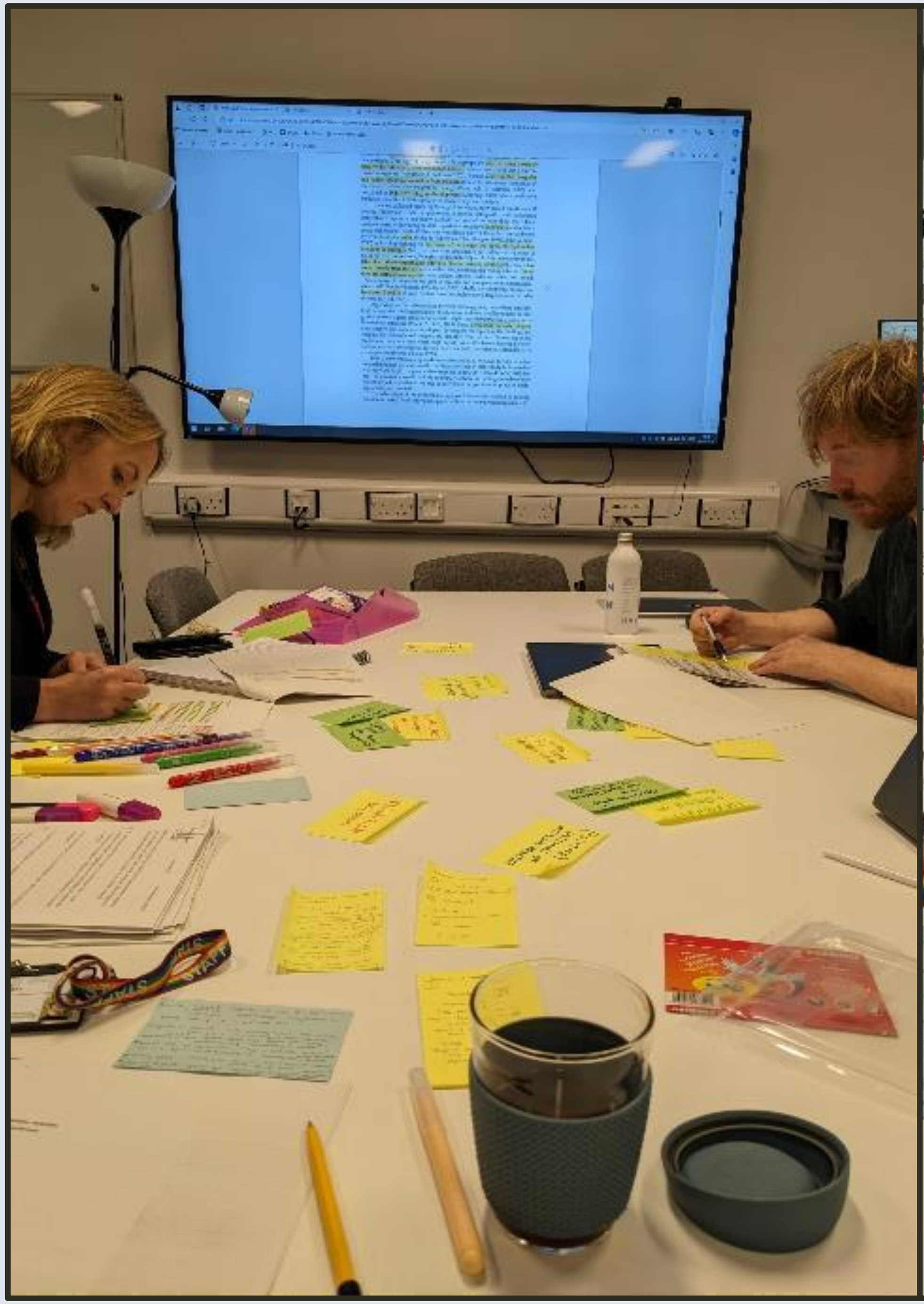
"When I saw the big poster saying that you would be doing this research, I felt overwhelmingly happy, uhm, and heard, and that was wonderful to see. I mean, all the posters everywhere saying 'Are you sensory seeking or sensory avoidant? Follow this link and tell us some more.' That was just phenomenal to see."

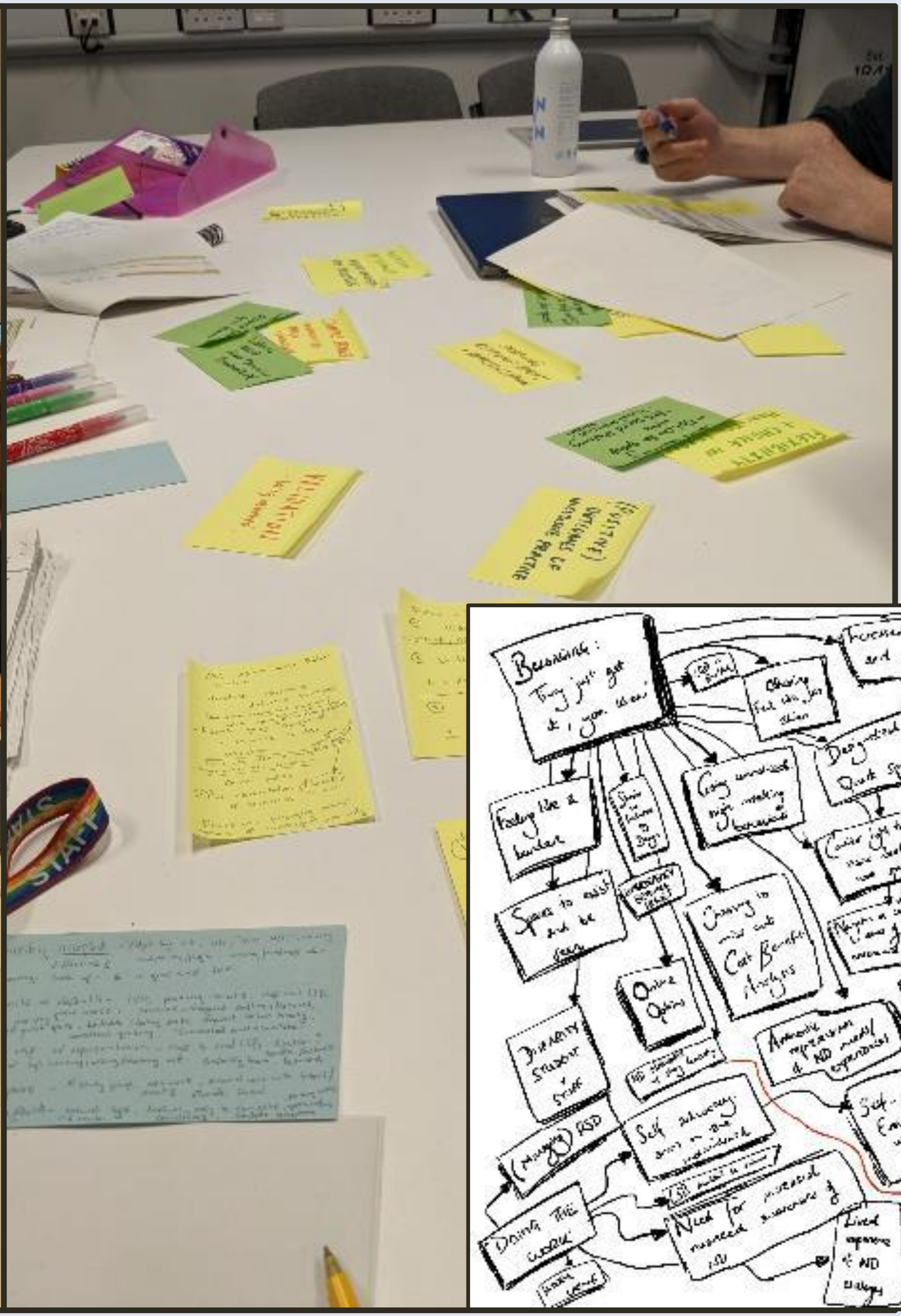

INC: Project Information and Postbox locations
Belonging
inc.
inclusive neurodiverse campuses
We are asking for your opinions on how the university caters to you
What would you need to feel you truly belong on campus?
When do you feel most supported and understood?
Knowing that my LSP is actually read and implemented by my tutors would really help me feel like I belong on campus, sometimes it's awkward to correct a lecturer because they're going against
option to work from home (live lectures / seminars / workshops)
- LET IT COUNT TOWARDS ATTENDANCE?!

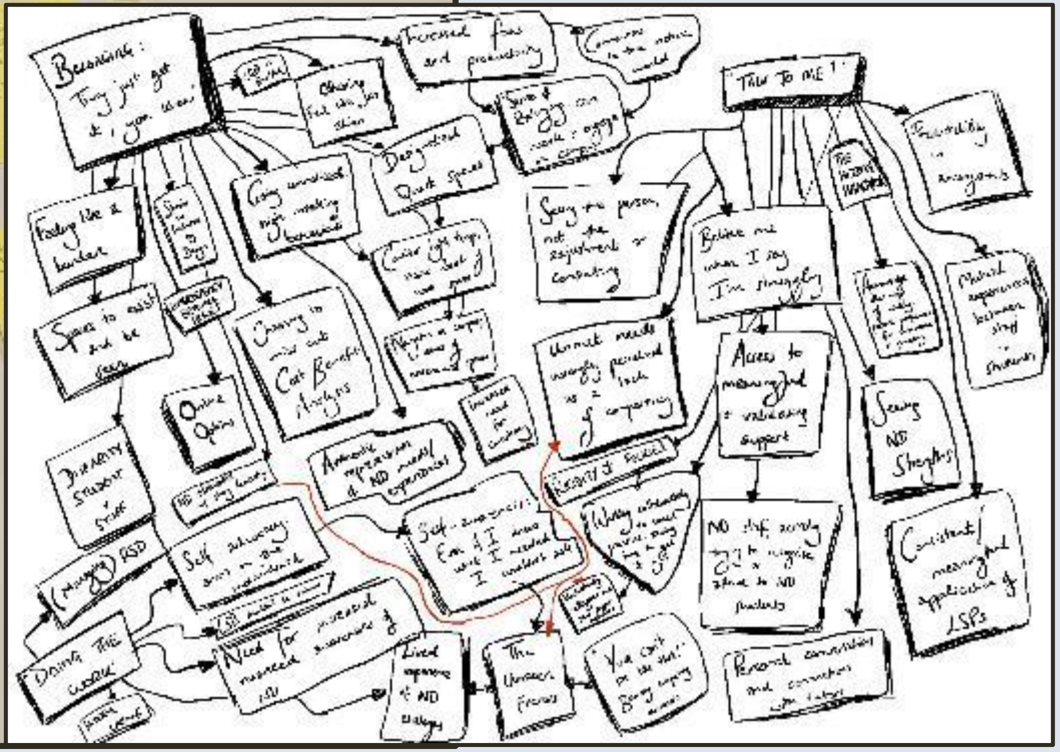
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TELL US?



ANALYSIS



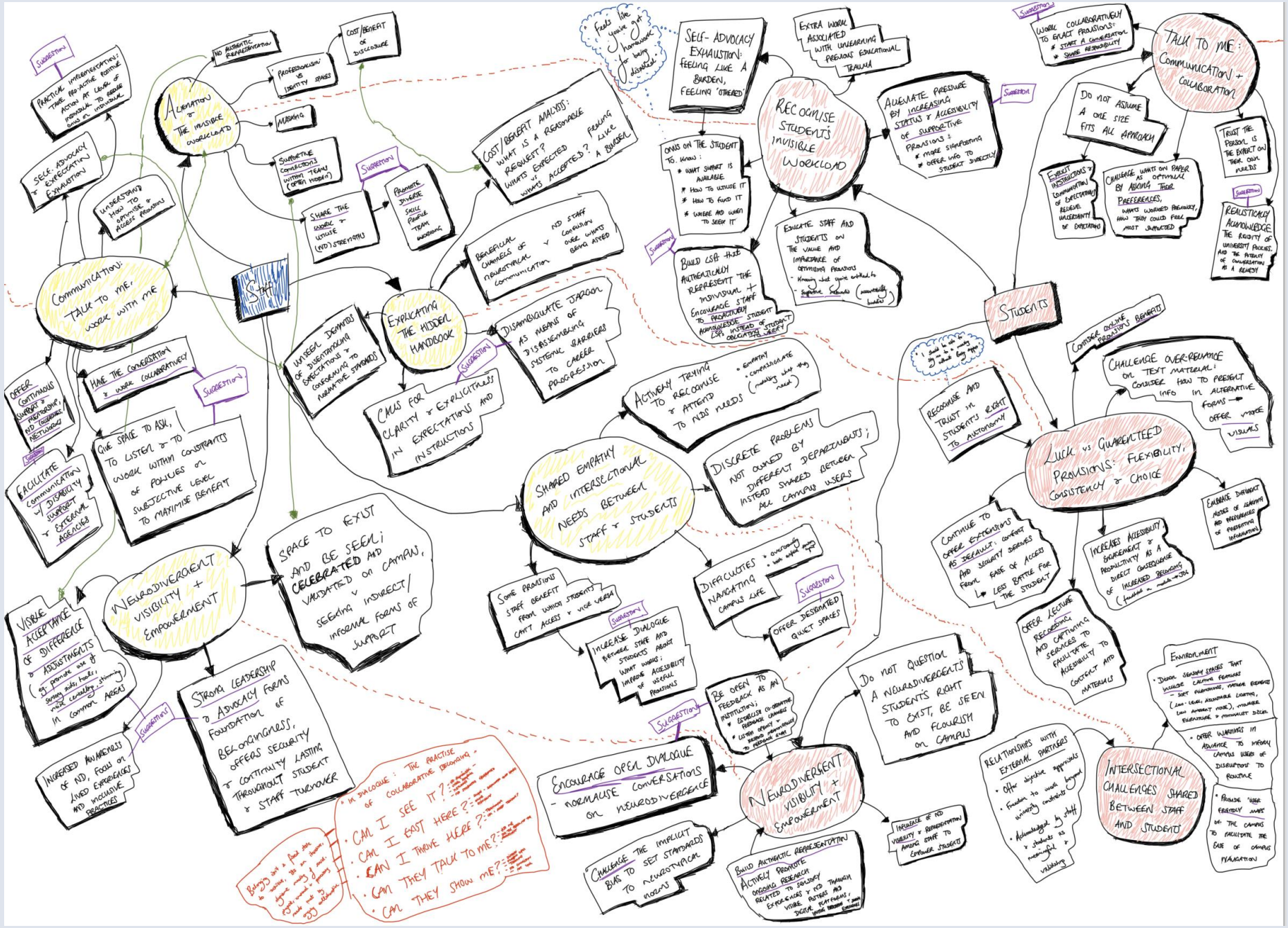



Belonging:
They just get it, you know
Increased focus and productivity
TALK TO ME!
Feeling like a burden
Designated Quiet Space
Seeing the person, not the adjustment or consulting
Believe me when I say I'm struggling
Space to exist and be seen
Cost Benefit Analysis
Online Options
Access to meaningful & validating support
Seeing ND Strengths
Disability student & staff
RSD
Self advocacy
Doing the work
Need for increased ... of ND
Lived experience of ND
The Unseen
Personal connections and connections with tutors
Consistent/ meaningful application of LSPs
Mutual experiences between staff & students

RESULTS

(Positive) Outcomes of Inclusive Practice
Flexibility and Choice in Learning Preferences
Shared Responsibility of Representation
Campus Environment by Default
Interdependency Between Spaces and Experiences
Identity Spaces
Validation; Being Believed
Inclusion By Default
Visible Acceptance of Difference
INC

RESULTS


Communication: Talk to me, work with me
Staff
Exploring the Hidden Handbook
Students
Talk to me: Communication + Collaboration
Recognise students' invisible workload
Self-advocacy exhaustion: feeling like a burden, feeling 'otherised'
Extra work associated with unlearning previous educational trauma
Alleviate pressure by increasing status + accessibility of supportive provisions
Do not assume a one size fits all approach
Trust the person is the expert on their own needs
Challenge norms on paper by asking their preferences, what's worked previously, how they could feel most supported
Realistically acknowledge the reality of university policies and the patient of conversation as a remedy
Work collaboratively to enact provisions:
Share responsibility
Ideation = the invisible workload
Cost/benefit analysis: what is a reasonable request? vs what's expected vs what's accepted? Feeling like a burden
Beneficial channels of neurotypical communication
No staff confusion over what being asked
Unseen identity of disentangling expectations + conforming to normative standards
Disambiguate jargon as means of dismembering systemic barriers to career progression
Calls for clarity + explicitness in expectations and instructions
Shared empathy and intersectional needs between staff + students
Actively trying to recognise + attend to NDs needs
Discrete problems not owned by different departments; instead shared between all campus users
Some provisions staff benefit from which students can't access + vice versa
Difficulties navigating campus life
Offer designated quiet spaces
Increase dialogue between staff and students about what works; increase accessibility of useful provisions
Space to exist and be seen; celebrated and validated on campus, seeking indirect/informal forms of support
Neurodivergent visibility + empowerment
Visible acceptance of difference + adjustments (e.g. promote use of sensory aids; foster neurodiversity in common areas)
Increased awareness of ND, focus on lived experiences and inclusive practices
Strong leadership + advocacy forms foundation of belonging, offers security + continuity lasting throughout student + staff turnover
Encourage open dialogue - normalise conversations on neurodivergence
Challenge the implicit bias to set standards to neurotypical norms
Be open to feedback as an institution; establish co-operative feedback channels + listen openly + actively to feedback given
Do not question a neurodivergent student's right to exist, be seen and flourish on campus
Build authentic representation
Actively promote ongoing research related to epilepsy + ND experiences + ND visible actors as digital platforms
Influence of ND visibility + representation among staff to empower students
Relationships with external partners
Intersectional challenges shared between staff and students
Environment
Offer warnings in advance to inform campus users of disruptions to routine
Provide 'user friendly' maps to the campus to facilitate the ease of campus navigation
Lack vs guaranteed provisions: flexibility, consistency + choice
Recognise and trust in student's right to autonomy
Challenge over-reliance on text material; consider how to present info in alternative forms → offer more visuals
Consider online provisions benefits
Continue to offer extensions as default; context and security serves from ease of access ↳ less battle for the student
Increased accessibility + empowerment as a proactivity + direct consequence of increased resources
Embrace different modes of learning and preferences of presenting information
Offer lecture recordings and captioning services to facilitate accessibility to content and materials
Build CSR: this authentically represent the individual + encourage staff to proactively acknowledge student CSR instead of student obligation to verify
Educate staff and students on the value and importance of optimising provisions
- Knowing what you're entitled to
- Supportive networks (community leaders)
Clear instructions + communication of expectations to reduce uncertainty + expectations
Promote diverse skills, flexible team working
Share the work + utilise (ND) strengths
Understand how to optimise + access provisions
Practical implementation: take proactive stance of action at level of individual to focus on individual
Self-advocacy + explanation
Offer continuous support + encouragement, and fostering network
Facilitate communication w/ disability support + external agencies
Have the conversation + work collaboratively
Give space to ask, to listen + to work within constraints of policies on subjective level to maximise benefit
Masking
Performative connections (often hidden)
Professionalism vs identity stakes
Cost/benefit of disclosure
No authentic representation
Feels like you've got homework for being disabled
Orals on the student to know:
* what support is available
* how to utilise it
* how to fund it
* where and when to seek it
Suggestion
Increased awareness of ND, focus on lived experiences and inclusive practices
Belongs not a fixed state, its an ongoing, messy, fluctuating process made and unmade by affect
In dialogue: the practise of collaborative ideation
- Can I see it?
- Can I exist here?
- Can I thrive here?
- Can they talk to me?
- Can they show me?

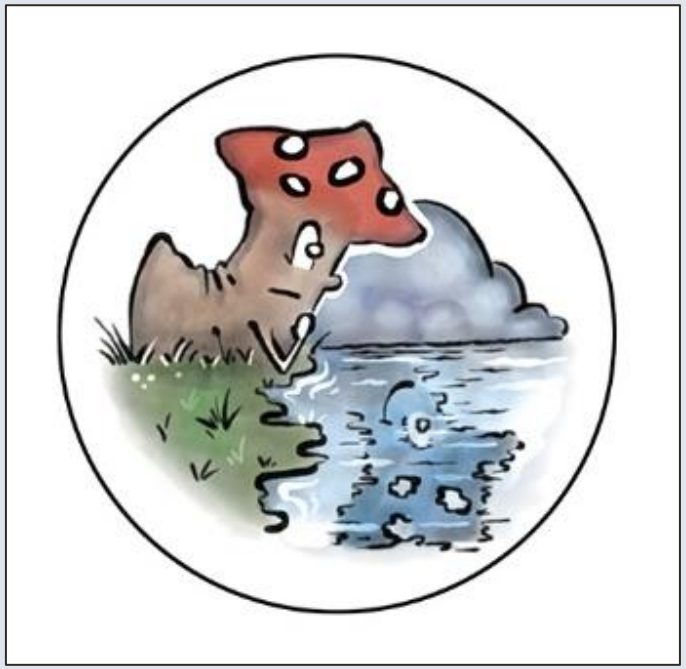
RESULTS

A suitable environment by default

"You can have that time away from being in an artificial, built-up, indoor environment... Perhaps having a more of a focus on an indoor-outdoor space or nature focus, I mean, the Creative Centre is brilliant, has loads of plants in it, smells like wood. It smells brilliant."

Illustrations by Matt Cole: https://mattcoleillustration.co.uk

Visible acceptance of difference



"I wish there was a place on campus that was 'Stim safe' where I didn't have to worry about what others thought of my stimming when I'm studying."

Illustrations by Matt Cole: https://mattcoleillustration.co.uk

Provision guaranteed, not based on luck

"I think I've been incredibly lucky to have been mentored and championed by other disabled academics. And I think, I think not all, obviously there's a huge range of impairments, not everyone gets it, but having mentorship from autistic senior colleagues has been life changing for me."

Illustrations by Matt Cole: https://mattcoleillustration.co.uk

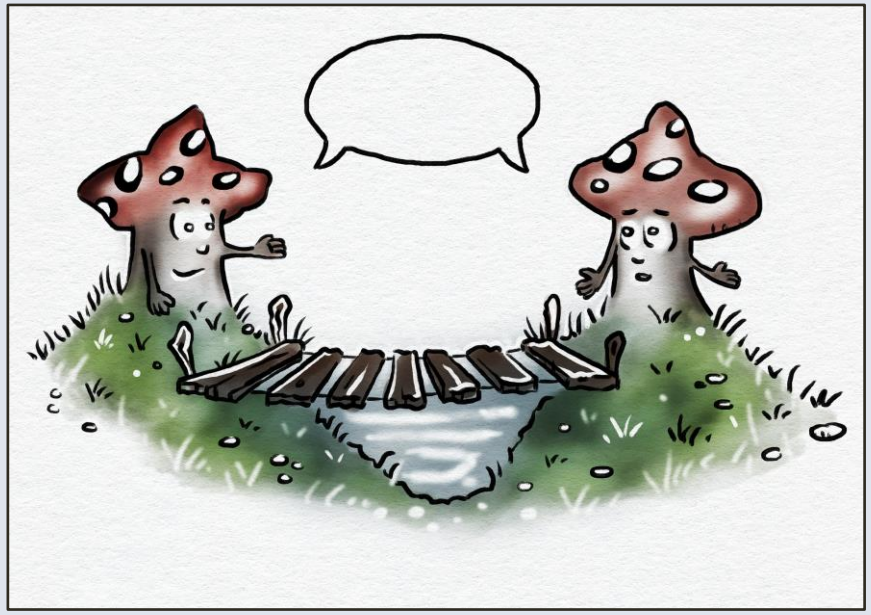
Share responsibility

"I am also really high masking and that can make it feel hard to ask for help because I think lecturers forget that I still have those needs"

Illustrations by Matt Cole: https://mattcoleillustration.co.uk

Flexibility and choice in practices

"Yeah, our conversation with, like, words coming out of my mouth is so much easier for me. But, how do you assess that? So it has to be done on like, written work and stuff like that."



Illustrations by Matt Cole: https://mattcoleillustration.co.uk

Talk to me, listen, believe me

"Believe me when I say I am struggling; don't question me."

Illustrations by Matt Cole: https://mattcoleillustration.co.uk

All experiences are interdependent

> “I don't have a diagnosis because I'm a woman and because [this city] doesn't allow you to get a diagnosis anymore unless you pay for it, and I can't really afford to pay for it.”

Illustrations by Matt Cole: https://mattcoleillustration.co.uk

A model of **inc**lusive belonging:

The collaborative and active practices of inclusive belonging

Can I see it?

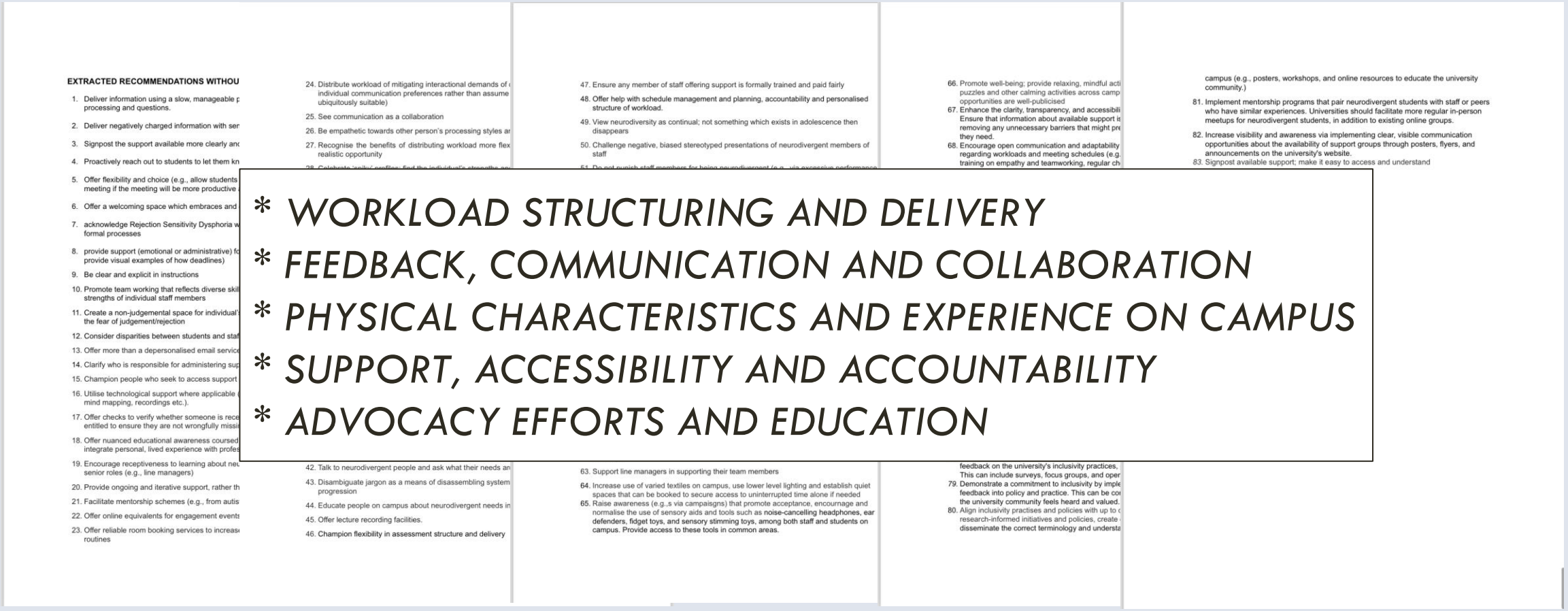
Can I receive it?

Can we talk?

Can I exist here?

Can I thrive here?

PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS



EXTRACTED RECOMMENDATIONS WITHOU

1. Deliver information using a slow, manageable p processing and questions.
2. Deliver negatively charged information with ser
3. Signpost the support available more clearly and
4. Proactively reach out to students to let them kn
5. Offer flexibility and choice (e.g., allow students meeting if the meeting will be more productive
6. Offer a welcoming space which embraces and
7. acknowledge Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria w formal processes
8. provide support (emotional or administrative) fo provide visual examples of how deadlines)
9. Be clear and explicit in instructions
10. Promote team working that reflects diverse skil strengths of individual staff members
11. Create a non-judgemental space for individual' the fear of judgement/rejection
12. Consider disparities between students and staf
13. Offer more than a depersonalised email servic
14. Clarify who is responsible for administering sup
15. Champion people who seek to access support
16. Utilise technological support where applicable (mind mapping, recordings etc.).
17. Offer checks to verify whether someone is rece entitled to ensure they are not wrongfully missi
18. Offer nuanced educational awareness coursed integrate personal, lived experience with profes
19. Encourage receptiveness to learning about neu senior roles (e.g., line managers)
20. Provide ongoing and iterative support, rather th
21. Facilitate mentorship schemes (e.g., from autis
22. Offer online equivalents for engagement events
23. Offer reliable room booking services to increas routines
24. Distribute workload of mitigating interactional demands of individual communication preferences rather than assume ubiquitously suitable)
25. See communication as a collaboration
26. Be empathetic towards other person's processing styles ar
27. Recognise the benefits of distributing workload more flex realistic opportunity

42. Talk to neurodivergent people and ask what their needs ar
43. Disambiguate jargon as a means of disassembling system progression
44. Educate people on campus about neurodivergent needs in
45. Offer lecture recording facilities.
46. Champion flexibility in assessment structure and delivery
47. Ensure any member of staff offering support is formally trained and paid fairly
48. Offer help with schedule management and planning, accountability and personalised structure of workload.
49. View neurodiversity as continual; not something which exists in adolescence then disappears
50. Challenge negative, biased stereotyped presentations of neurodivergent members of staff

63. Support line managers in supporting their team members
64. Increase use of varied textiles on campus, use lower level lighting and establish quiet spaces that can be booked to secure access to uninterrupted time alone if needed
65. Raise awareness (e.g.,s via campaisgns) that promote acceptance, encourage and normalise the use of sensory aids and tools such as noise-cancelling headphones, ear defenders, fidget toys, and sensory stimming toys, among both staff and students on campus. Provide access to these tools in common areas.
66. Promote well-being; provide relaxing, mindful acti puzzles and other calming activities across camp opportunities are well-publicised
67. Enhance the clarity, transparency, and accessibili Ensure that information about available support is removing any unnecessary barriers that might pre they need.
68. Encourage open communication and adaptability regarding workloads and meeting schedules (e.g. training on empathy and teamworking, regular ch

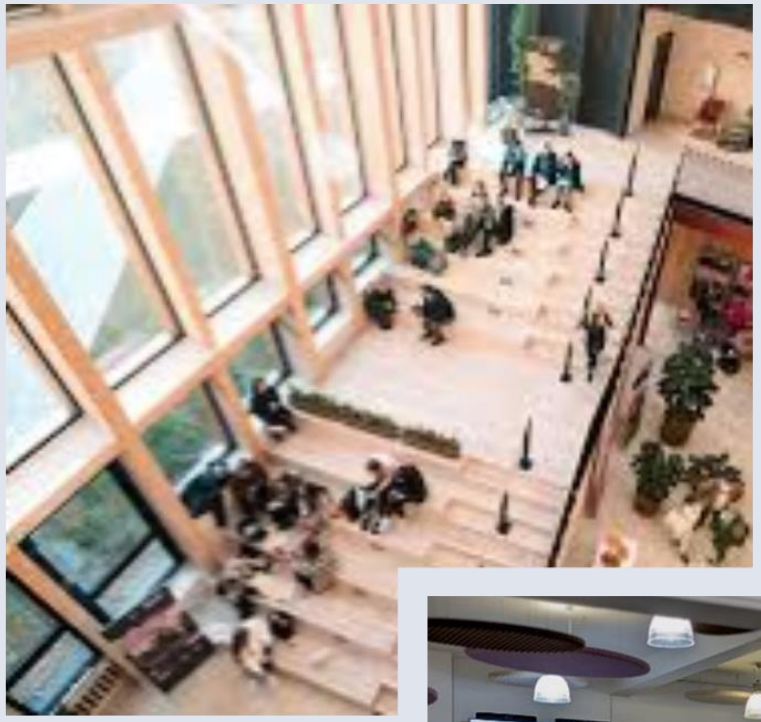
feedback on the university's inclusivity practices, This can include surveys, focus groups, and oper
79. Demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity by imple feedback into policy and practice. This can be co the university community feels heard and valued.
80. Align inclusivity practises and policies with up to research-informed initiatives and policies, create disseminate the correct terminology and understa

campus (e.g., posters, workshops, and online resources to educate the university community.)

81. Implement mentorship programs that pair neurodivergent students with staff or peers who have similar experiences. Universities should facilitate more regular in-person meetups for neurodivergent students, in addition to existing online groups.
82. Increase visibility and awareness via implementing clear, visible communication opportunities about the availability of support groups through posters, flyers, and announcements on the university's website.
83. Signpost available support; make it easy to access and understand

* *WORKLOAD STRUCTURING AND DELIVERY*
* *FEEDBACK, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION*
* *PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPERIENCE ON CAMPUS*
* *SUPPORT, ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY*
* *ADVOCACY EFFORTS AND EDUCATION*

WHAT NEXT?



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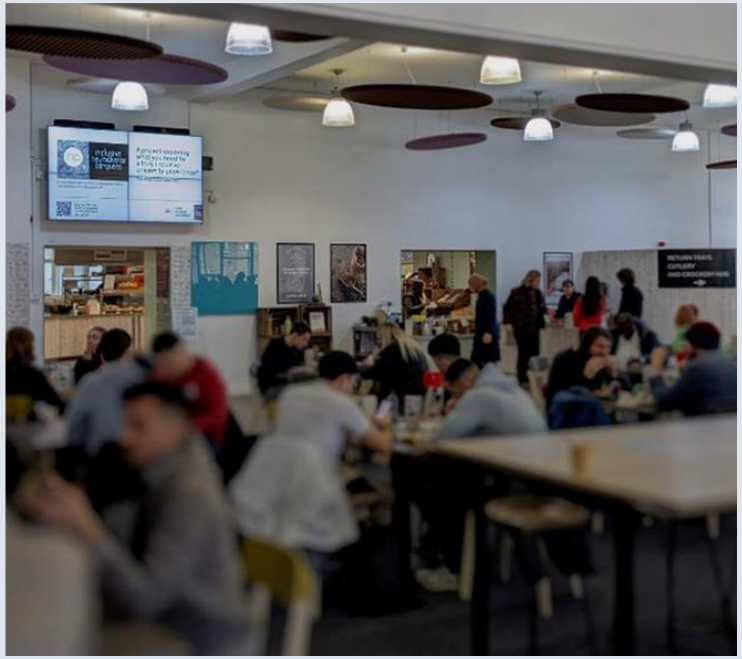
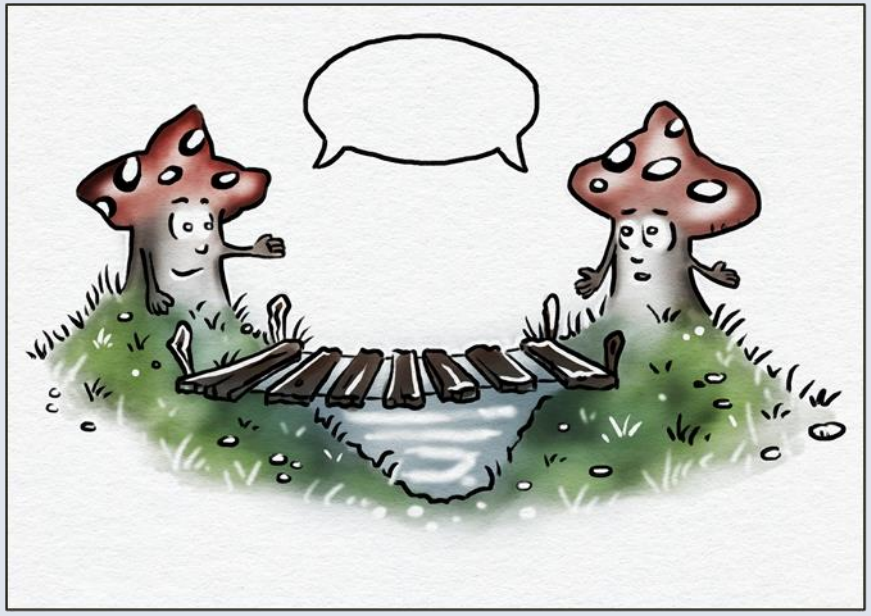
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING. ANY QUESTIONS?