

World
Autism Awareness Week
2020
30 March - 5 April

Being part of a
neurodiverse
community

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Being Part of a Neurodiverse Community

Neurodiversity is a very wide-ranging subject, and one which I have been part of pretty much all my life.

I was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome (a form of autism), at the age of five and have met many others within the neurodiverse community over the years.

This week it's World Autism Awareness Week, an event which I have marked in my calendar pretty much every year. This is a week that celebrates neurodiversity and its many different forms, but especially Autism, which is by far the most broadly distributed condition. It affects many people in many different ways, but a common experience is finding social situations difficult. Whether that be experiencing social anxiety, having a reduced

emphatic response, or even being completely non-verbal.

I personally experience social anxiety, which I have been managing and treating for several years and overall stems from my Asperger's Syndrome. But this is just the start of how it affects people. You can read more about Autism and it's different forms on the website of the [National Autistic Society](#).

Within NCC Group and the broader cyber security sector, neurodiversity is common to see. I am one of several people at NCC Group who have a form of autism and there are many more that make up our own neurodiverse community.

I joined NCC Group in September and since joining have had a great experience with both colleagues and management who have provided support and understanding no matter what the situation might be. The company has proven to be flexible and able to support my needs and ways of working, which has enabled me to work effectively, develop my skills, and support those around me, without having to worry about my differences causing a problem.

It would be amiss for me not to talk about the current situation worldwide and speak about my experience of working from home. Many people who are neurodiverse experience difficulties in work, whether that be in the office or working from home, and I am no different.

I personally experience what I refer to as a home/work divide, which leads me to find working from home quite difficult. Essentially, my mind designates spaces for relaxing or entertainment, such as my house or spaces for doing work, such as the office. This means that I struggle to start doing work and get easily distracted when I am at home, unless I have a space in my house which I just use for work. At the moment, this isn't the case, so the way I get around this is by exploiting another of my personal traits, which is my ability to work better later in the day.

Over the years I have found that often my most productive hours are between 9pm and 3am, which means that traditional working hours, especially when working from home, are difficult. I am lucky however that my line manager is understanding and has allowed me to be more flexible with my hours (given the current period), which has allowed me to break up my work into more productive times and ensures that my overall productivity doesn't take a hit.

These are my experiences, but if you want to learn more about different experiences of working from home from a number of different neurodiverse people, this blog post is a good resource:
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-manage-your-neurodiverse-staff-when-theyre-rachel-morgan-trimmer>

I hope you've found this post interesting and I encourage everyone to do their own research and explore the different experiences of people within the neurodiverse community. If you know someone who is neurodiverse, talk to them about it and see what you can do to help them and others.

Many people find that they themselves have similar traits to those in the neurodiverse community, even if they have never been diagnosed before.

I wish you all a great World Autism Awareness Week, and hope you'll all keep in mind what I've said.

By a NCC Group colleague

About NCC Group

NCC Group exists to make the world safer and more secure.

As global experts in cyber security and risk mitigation, NCC Group is trusted by over 15,000 clients worldwide to protect their most critical assets from the ever-changing threat landscape.

With the company's knowledge, experience and global footprint, it is best placed to help businesses identify, assess, mitigate and respond to the evolving cyber risks they face.

To support its mission, NCC Group continually invests in research and innovation, and is passionate about developing the next generation of cyber scientists.

With over 1,800 colleagues in 12 countries, NCC Group has a significant market presence in North America, continental Europe and the UK, and a rapidly growing footprint in Asia Pacific with offices in Australia and Singapore.

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