

Waltham Forest Mayor's Event 10th April 2025

Celebrating Neurodivergence (ND) in Leadership with our ND Advocates

Dr Katherine Hewlett MBE

- Co-Chair of the Waltham Forest Dyslexia Association (WFDA) Charity
- CEO of the AchieveAbility Charity
- Programme Leader for Neurodivergent Advocate Leadership (NALP) at WFDA



Inclusive Leadership.

The Neurodivergent (ND) Advocate
Leadership Programme (NALP)

The Economic Case for NALP

The purpose and aims

The Neurodivergent Advocate
work

Who Are The Advocates?

The Nine Advocates are:

Alicia	(East London)
Andree	(Hertfordshire)
Andrew	(Harlow)
Becky	(North of England)
Dee	(London)
Jennifer	(London)
Kenyah	(based in Rwanda)
Maddie	(South of England)
Sadia	(East London)

<https://youtu.be/vjeonS0sMLg>

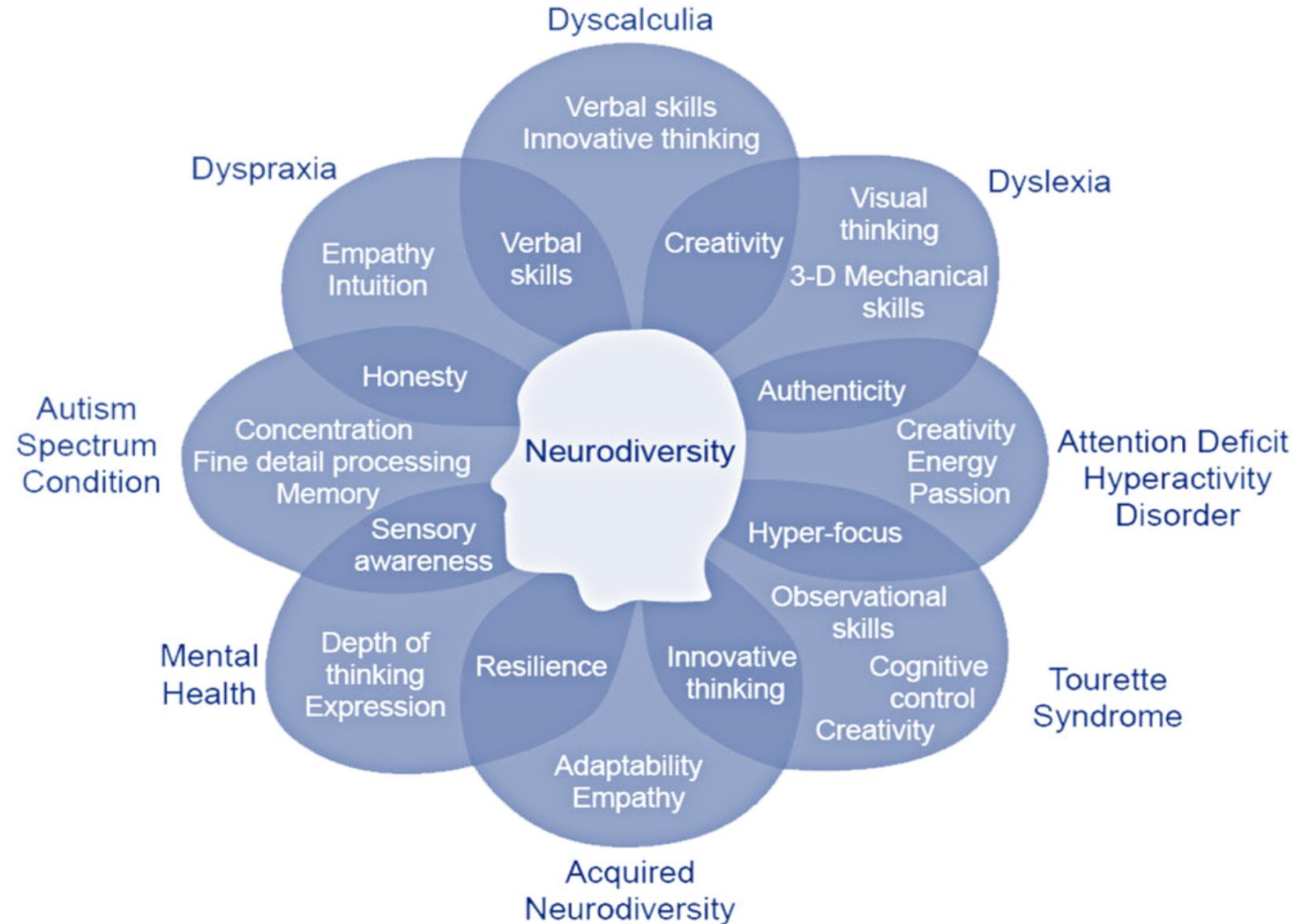


NALP- Key points

- Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund
- Championed by the Waltham Forest Mayor - Sharon Waldron
- Nine Advocates drawn from a wide range of professions
- Six training sessions delivered by Advocates on ND Leadership
- All developed in one year - May 2024 to April 2025
- All are available free on YouTube
- Reaching out across the UK



Neurodiversity and Neurodivergence



The Overlapping Skills and Strengths of Neurodiversity by Nancy Doyle, based on work by Mary Colley

Why did we do this?!

- ▶ Because Neurodivergent people are highly skilled
- ▶ It makes economic sense!
- ▶ To promote Inclusive Leadership
- ▶ To raise awareness of Neurodivergence and Neurodiversity
- ▶ To further the Socio-economic argument for neuro - inclusion
- ▶ To ensure Intellectual Capital for our society

What makes an effective Leader?

Compassion and empathy are important qualities for leaders – these were hardly mentioned in past decades.

Honesty, integrity, authenticity
motivational, inspiring
and leading to success.



Inclusive Leadership



Having the ability to lead a diverse group of people with respect for each person's unique characteristics

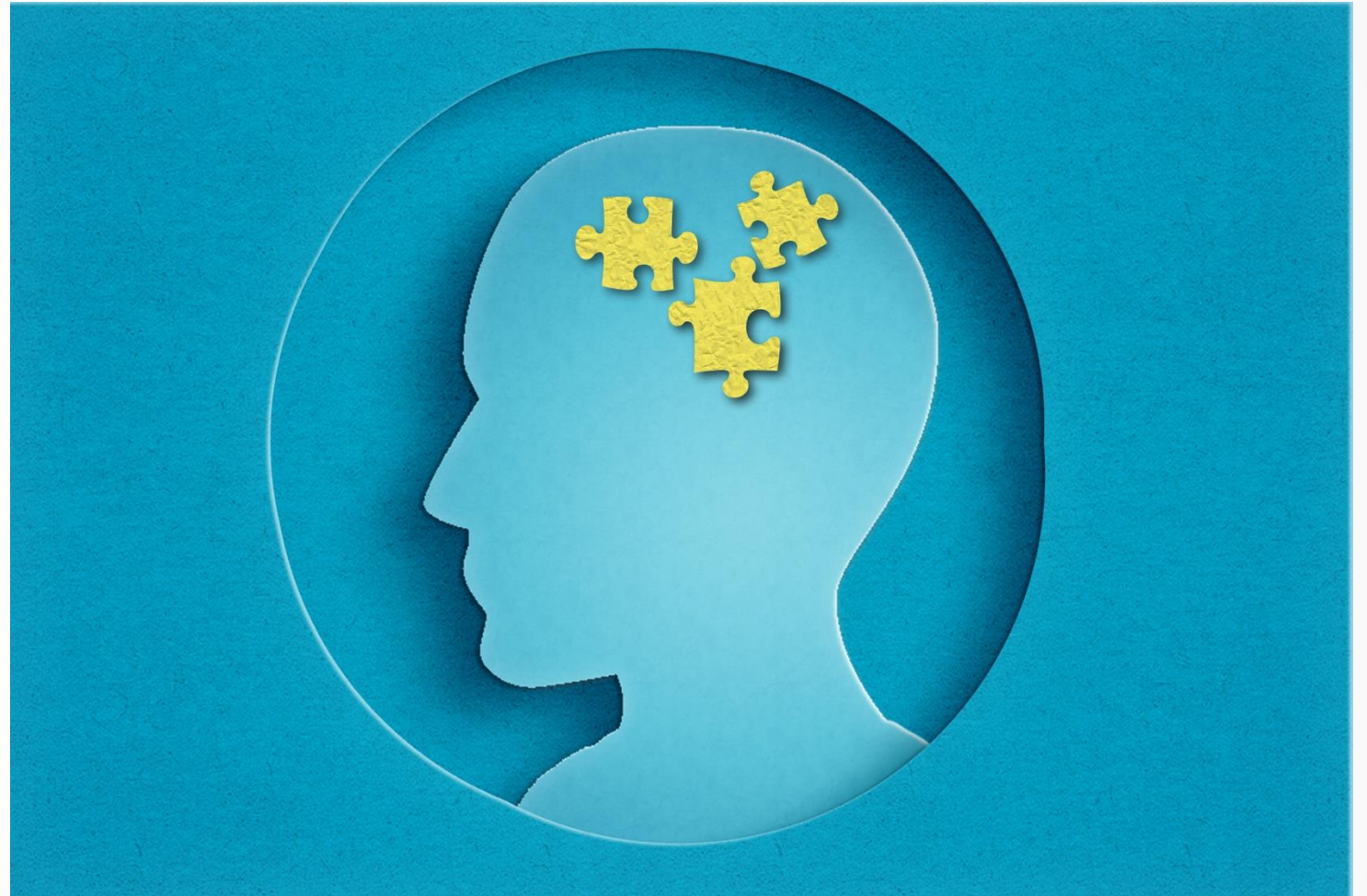
There are three specific things inclusive leaders do. They:

- ▶ Create psychological safety
- ▶ Ensure cultural advocacy
- ▶ Embrace work-life integration.

Recognising that - neuro differences have a lot in common - some of them are common differences.

Neurodivergent Leadership Characteristics

- ▶ Commitment.
- ▶ Courage.
- ▶ Cognizance of Bias.
- ▶ Curiosity.
- ▶ Cultural Intelligence.
- ▶ Collaboration.
- ▶ Humility,
- ▶ Empathy,
- ▶ Vulnerability yet resilience



Source CIPD report (2024)

Top 5 skills of 2025 – it makes economic sense!

Analytical thinking and innovation

Active Learning and learning strategies

Complex Problem solving

Critical thinking and analysis

Creativity, originality and initiative

**Source: Future of Jobs
report 2020 World
Economic Forum**



Purpose and Aims of NALP



Purpose

This training was to help **raise awareness** of the **unique attributes** of Neurodivergent (ND) adults.

Aims

- To **increase understanding** of **how effective ND leaders can be** for neuro-majority colleagues.
- To show that **unique ND perspectives** can **contribute** hugely to **success** whether **in education, training or employment**
- To show **effective advocacy by ND people for ND people** as **core** to our **inclusive leadership programme**.



The Talk Topics. 1 to 3:

- Types of Leadership
- Dr Katherine Hewlett
- <https://youtu.be/LG2LiGQYqCQ>
- The Unique Attributes of ND Leaders- Inclusive Leadership
- Becky Oxley
- <https://youtu.be/0ElfHaslhbw>
- Organisational Culture –Value - EDI - Leadership- Intersectionality.
- Jenny O
- <https://youtu.be/wKk-9OlycY8>

➤ Credit to Dee and Andree

Talk topics 4-6



Emotional Intelligence- difficult conversations, leading teams, and dealing with complexity/ fragility by **Kenyah Nyameche**.

<https://youtu.be/PhHbiUDlrOM>

Communication & Values- Understanding people's motivations and common goals by **Alicia Browne**

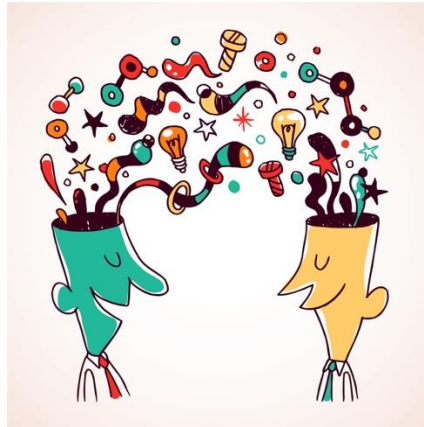
<https://youtu.be/OQY5DMI6dDs>

Recognising Neurodivergent Leadership Effectiveness –

By **Andrew Veasey**

<https://youtu.be/joztVhzYuSk>

Credit to Dee and Andree



What the Advocates say

NALP is about:

Community

Safe Place

Personal Development

Leadership

Credit to Dee and Andree

Advocate Voices at the Mayor's event and film

<https://youtu.be/vjeonS0sMLg>

The Advocate Voices:

Dee

Andree

Andrew

Jennifer

Alicia

Sadia





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What The Advocates Said



“Our talks have all been inciteful showing all our personalities. Through the support of the group, our confidence has grown. ” **Jenny O**

“ I feel more self-assured and also open to learning. The advocate programme has had a huge and positive impact on me personally and professionally. ” **Anonymous**

“The program helps with the community amongst NDs. I am learning how to communicate better as a leader”. **Dee**

The Overview of the Advocate films

Dee and Andree

<https://youtu.be/vjeonS0sMLg>



The future is collaboration, networking,
and advocacy mentoring.

We are all leaders!



Great Leadership Is a Network, Not a Hierarchy | - Gitte Frederiksen
(TED 2022) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZ7ySrDVqOs>

Also see the CIPD report (2024) “Pursuing equality of outcomes for
all is simply the right thing to do”

<https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/neuroinclusion-at-work/>)