

We welcome neurodiversity

So to be neurodivergent, I guess, in the past people have seen it as, well, it's technically under the disability umbrella, but I think neurodiversity is more of thinking or a different way of approaching and learning.

By thinking differently, actually, traditionally, it's been thought that there's been a lot of weaknesses to this.

But actually, in a way, it's a really good thing.

I think for the bank, because by being neurodivergent, they're able to call on all sorts of different ways of thinking.

I believe neurodiversity can be the way our brain develops and works differently, so we bring in a different perspective and we have different strengths and weaknesses as well.

So in the last five, six years I have been really positive of neurodiversity, been an advocate of neurodiversity and been extremely proud to be neurodiverse as well.

I don't, personally, myself have a neurodiverse diagnosis or condition but I appreciated that it wasn't something widely spoken about.

When we joined the graduate scheme, they were really vocal about making sure we knew all ERGs that were available and I made it part of my, kind of, ambition to learn about each of them first.

Particularly, my writing is pretty weak, my spelling can sometimes be bad.

So, in a work context, I felt when I was emailing senior stakeholders, I felt I might sound a bit, maybe not as professional as I want to, in my head, I struggle to get words out.

Through education, I've really struggled with neurodiversity.

But in the workplace, I've been able to utilise more of that different way of thinking, that out-of-the-box thinking, as well, and some of the critical skills I have in a workplace, which I always did find very difficult in education.

So, some support that I've had available to me is having a software that's able to read out a lot of my work so that I make less errors because often, sometimes my thinking moves faster than when I write.

I'd never thought about getting assessed for dyslexia.

I know that on the outside world it can be quite hard to get assessment for it.

But within the bank it was pretty easy once I knew who to get support from when I showed interest in wanting to do that.

Particularly for graduates as well, there's a lot of support and education when you join the bank around neurodiversity.

Challenges are diluted for me through technology such as speech-to-text, Read&Write, which basically is reading the text back to you.

There's a mind-mapping software, when I struggle to get thoughts onto paper.

So, for employees like me who are experiencing Tourette's syndrome, the bank is very supportive and provide work booth.

So being part of the Graduate Working Group has really made me aware that just having conversations every day really crushes that stigma.

So, normalising the topic has made it really apparent that certain adjustments can be made really easily and you don't need a whole guideline written about it, but it's just being aware of that.

I would say just to declare it because they don't see it as a bad thing at all, you're not going to be discriminated at all, it's literally there just so they can offer you extra support.

My advice for the neurodivergent candidate is that don't be afraid, speak up and share with us your neurodivergent condition and the reasonable adjustment required and there is always help along the way.

Because that allows someone to open up and be open and honest with them.

And then, since I've been able to do that, I've had a really great experience through every team, every placement, whatever it might be, inside or outside the graduate scheme has been really positive once understandings there.

Having my managers being aware helped in being able to have all the support that I could have needed from the bank and made it a really successful, hopefully, grad scheme so far.

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