

## **Call for Participation: Neurodivergent Perspectives in Academia – Join the Conversation**

We are setting up a new network for neurodivergent researchers and staff at the University of Cologne, open to everyone from the PhD level onwards. Our aim is to create a space for exchange, support, and visibility – shaped by those who take part and responsive to different experiences in academia.

The idea grew out of the talk *“Atypical – Neurodivergence in Science”*, organized by the Cluster of Excellence ML4Q during Diversity Week. It sparked conversations we’d like to continue: about challenges, strengths, strategies, and ways of working.

As Chapman points out, academia is a product of a society's desire for normalisation: educational formats and career paths often remain inaccessible and precarious for neurodivergent people, or lead to burnout and health issues. At the same time, an academic career also offers freedom – to organize work according to one’s neurotype, to pursue intellectual interests, and to question neuronormative realities. Our network wants to bring these perspectives together: sharing experiences, discussing accessibility, and exploring what a “neuroqueering” (Walker/Yergeau) of education could look like.

We are planning three to four informal events this semester, ideally in person with a remote option. Contributions are welcome in German or English. Whether you’d like to present your research, share a perspective from your academic life, or simply join the conversation – we’d love to hear from you. The format is open and low-threshold: no polished talk or perfect topic needed, just curiosity and openness.

Colleagues who do not identify as neurodivergent but are interested in thoughtful exchange are also very welcome.

If you’d like to participate, present, or contribute ideas, please contact Julie or Eva ([julie.heinrichs@uni-koeln.de](mailto:julie.heinrichs@uni-koeln.de); [e.kanis@uni-koeln.de](mailto:e.kanis@uni-koeln.de)).

We look forward to hearing from you – and to shaping this together.

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