



NEURODIVERSITY LISTENING

Supporting Black Neurodivergent
Individuals and Families in Croydon



Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Key Findings
4. Recommendations
5. Conclusion
6. Call to Action



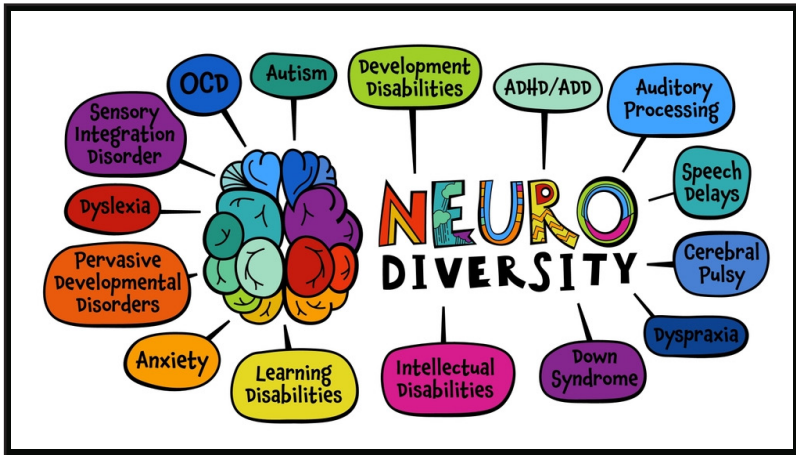
**Presented by:
Croydon BME Forum
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WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

Neurodiversity is a fancy word for the idea that our brains are as diverse as our fingerprints.

Some of us might think differently, process information in unique ways, or have extra special talents. And guess what?

That's something to be celebrated, not judged!



WHY IS NEURODIVERSITY IMPORTANT

Recognizing and celebrating neurodiversity is essential as it helps to break down the toxic and divisive “us vs them” mentality. Rather than viewing neurodivergent individuals as “other,” let’s accept that we are all different, yet ultimately the same species.

Additionally, by acknowledging that no single person’s brain functions in the same way, we can move towards building an inclusive and accessible society for everyone.

Introduction

The Neurodiversity Listening Project was launched to understand the lived experiences of Black neurodivergent individuals and their families in the London Borough of Croydon. By amplifying their voices, the project aims to identify barriers in accessing diagnosis and support, reduce stigma, and create actionable solutions for systemic improvement.

This project is essential because neurodivergent individuals from Black communities often face compounded challenges due to systemic inequities, cultural stigma, and socio-economic barriers. The project seeks to provide practical recommendations to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for these individuals and their families.

OBJECTIVES

The Neurodiversity Listening Project was designed to:

1. Understand the experiences of Black neurodivergent individuals.
2. Identify barriers to accessing diagnosis and support.
3. Explore cultural stigma and intersectional challenges.
4. Amplify the voices of neurodivergent individuals and families.
5. Develop actionable recommendations for stakeholders.

HOW DID WE GATHER INSIGHTS?

Surveys: Captured quantitative and qualitative data from 55 participants.

Focus Groups: Explored specific themes such as stigma and culturally sensitive interventions.

Case Studies: In-depth interviews with neurodivergent individuals and families to highlight intersectional challenges.

Community Engagement: Collaborated with local organizations for outreach and feedback.

NEURODIVERSITY EXPO

THURSDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2025





KEY FINDINGS

1. Systemic Challenges

- Long waiting times for diagnosis and fragmented support systems.
- Lack of culturally competent services.
- Limited access to specialist support services.

2. Cultural Barriers

- Cultural stigma within Black communities prevents early diagnosis.
- Misdiagnosis or lack of diagnosis for Black neurodivergent women.
- A lack of awareness and understanding of neurodiversity among community members.

3. Advocacy and Resilience

- Families rely heavily on primary carers to navigate complex systems.
- Peer support networks are vital for reducing isolation and sharing resources.
- Despite systemic inequities, families demonstrate remarkable resilience and adaptability.

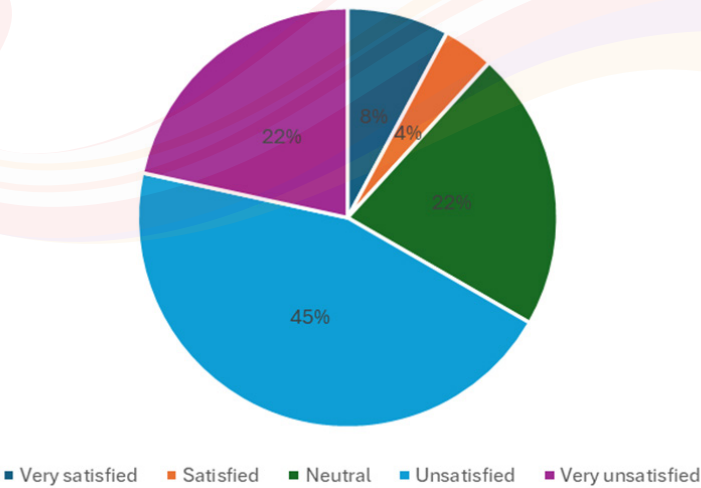
CULTURAL AND INTERSECTIONAL BARRIERS

How Do Culture and Identity Shape Experiences?

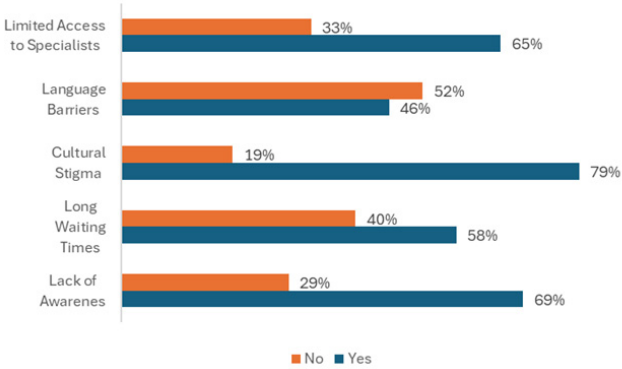
- **Stigma:** Neurodevelopmental conditions are often seen as a weakness or spiritual failing in Black communities.
- **Intersectionality:** Compounded challenges due to race, neurodiversity, and socio-economic status.
- **Underdiagnosis:** Black neurodivergent women and girls often go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.

DATA FROM THE STUDY

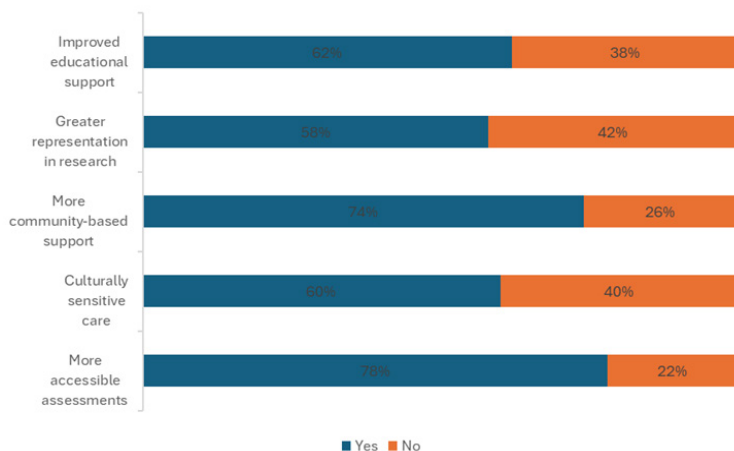
- How satisfied are you with the current level of support and care provided to neurodiverse individuals from black and ethnic minority communities?



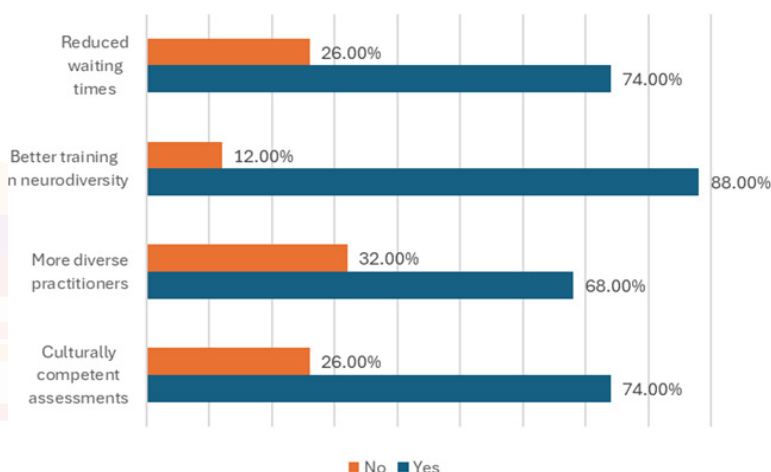
- What do you think is the biggest barrier for black and ethnic minority communities when accessing assessments for neurodevelopmental conditions?



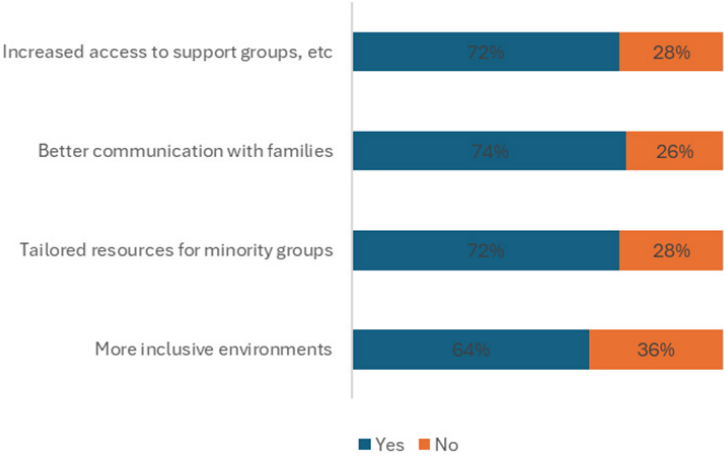
- Which areas do you believe need the most urgent improvement for better supporting neurodiverse individuals from minority backgrounds



- What changes or improvements would you like to see in how healthcare providers approach the diagnosis and care of neurodiverse individuals from minority backgrounds?



■ How do you think support services (e.g., schools, community groups, or workplaces) can be improved to better address the needs of black and ethnic minority neurodiverse individuals?



RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the challenges identified, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Monthly Online Seminars

Create safe spaces for Black neurodivergent individuals to share experiences and build networks.

Include guest speakers and experts to provide guidance.

2. Training Black Neurodiversity Advocates

Develop a cohort of trained advocates to assist families in navigating diagnosis and support systems.

Ensure advocates are culturally competent and familiar with local resources.

3. Drop-In Support Space

Establish a welcoming space at the Croydon BME Forum Wellness Centre.

Provide a first point of contact for individuals seeking support.

4. Awareness Workshops

- Deliver workshops in schools, colleges, churches, and community spaces to reduce stigma.
- Focus on fostering inclusion and understanding of neurodiversity.

5. Community Collaboration

- Build partnerships with healthcare providers, educational institutions, and local organizations.
- Promote culturally responsive and equitable service delivery.



CALL TO ACTION

We invite funders, service providers, and community leaders to act on the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

Funders: Invest in community-driven, culturally relevant programs.

Service Providers: Implement training and create more accessible pathways.

Community Members: Participate in initiatives to reduce stigma and promote inclusion.

By working together, we can address systemic barriers, reduce stigma, and ensure that Black neurodivergent individuals and their families receive the support they need to thrive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Croydon BME Forum would like to thank all who supported and contributed to the Neurodiversity Project.

We would particularly like to thank the members of the Joint Working Group for their advice and guidance; community groups like the Independent Advisor Group (IAG); and members of the community for attending the engagement sessions and expressing their feelings and views strongly and eloquently, and special acknowledgement to the individuals who offered to take part in the individual case studies.

Finally, we thank South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and Southwest London Integrated Care Board for making the project happen

FINALLY...

The Neurodiversity Listening Project highlights the urgent need for systemic reforms and culturally relevant interventions to support Black neurodivergent individuals and their families. The findings underscore the importance of addressing barriers such as cultural stigma, fragmented services, and inequities in access to support.

By implementing the recommendations outlined, stakeholders can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment. Collaboration between funders, service providers, and community leaders is key to creating meaningful change.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Here are some organizations where you can find more information and support for neurodiversity and neurodevelopmental conditions:

National Autistic Society

Website: www.autism.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 800 4104

ADHD Foundation

Website: www.adhdfoundation.org.uk

Helpline: 0151 541 9020

British Dyslexia Association

Website: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Helpline: 0333 405 4555

Dyspraxia Foundation

Website: www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

Helpline: 01462 454986

OCD Action

Website: www.ocdaction.org.uk

Helpline: 0845 390 6232

Dyscalculia Network

Website: www.dyscalculianetwork.com

Email: info@dyscalculianetwork.com

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