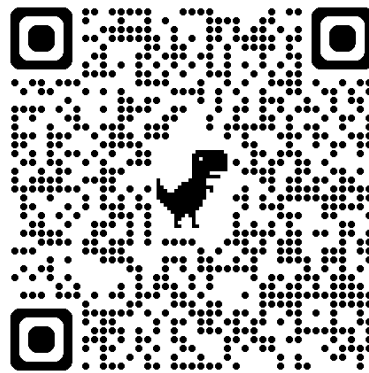


Journeys in Diversity

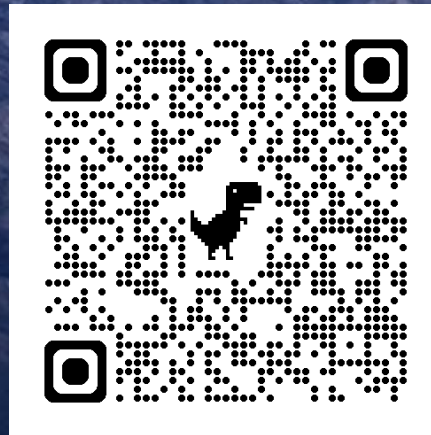
What difference really means



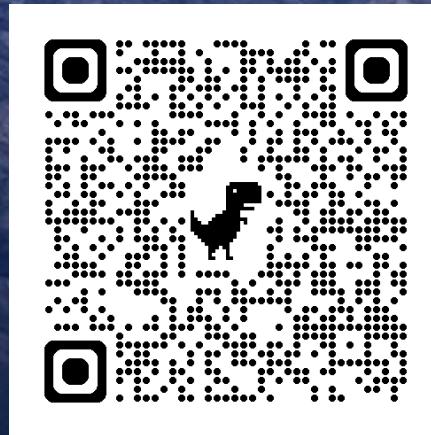
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TRIGGER WARNING

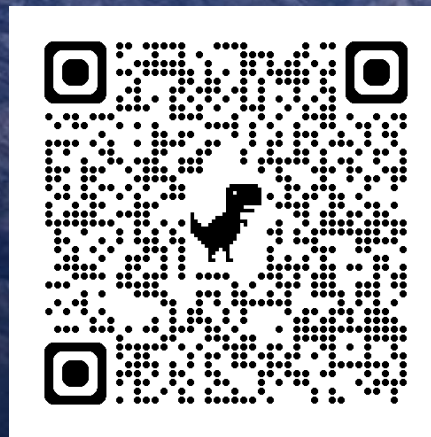
**I will be describing - and
showing - scenes of distress**



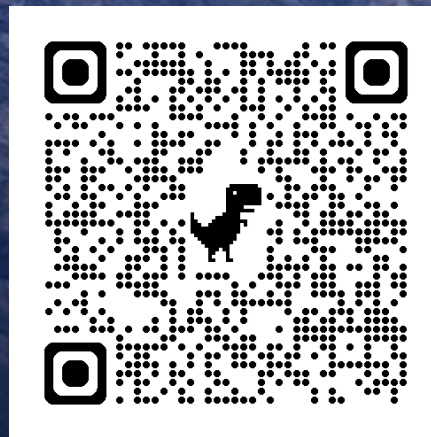
"What I wish I could tell my boss: 'My autism is not a problem'"



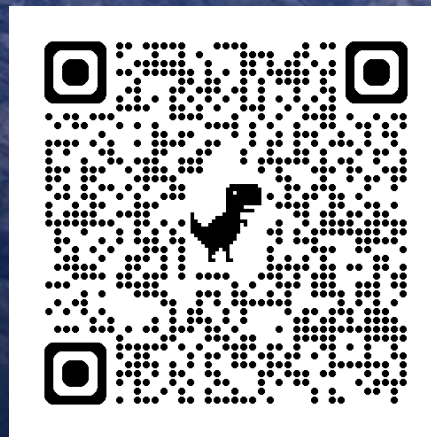
**“Cutely eccentric”
or
“The one with the developmental
disability”?**



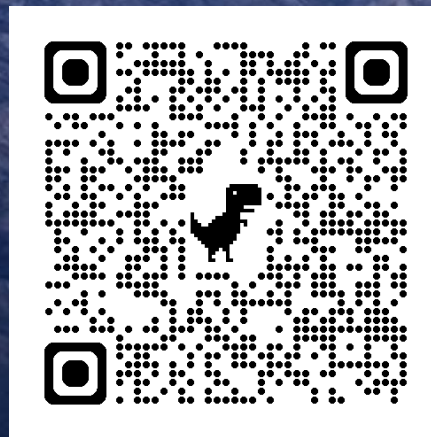
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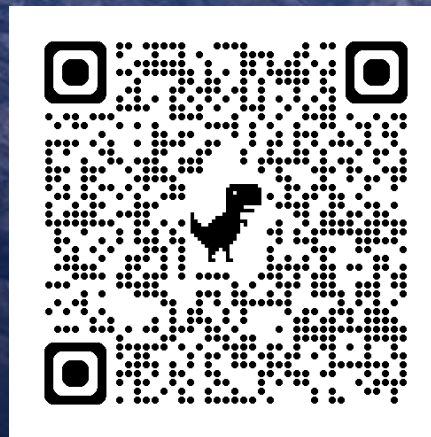
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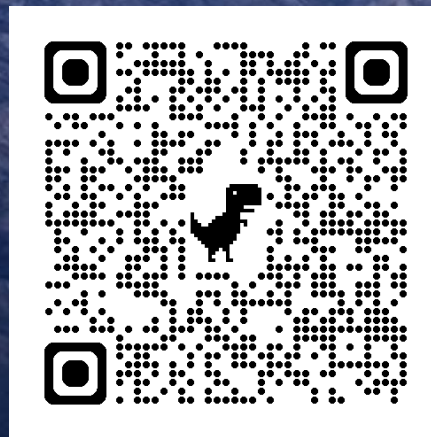
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Sudbery Software Engineering Ltd

Does your team want help to improve their software delivery?



Coaching, keynotes & workshops



Events and info: bit.ly/claressudbery

Mastodon: mastodon.social/@ClareSudbery

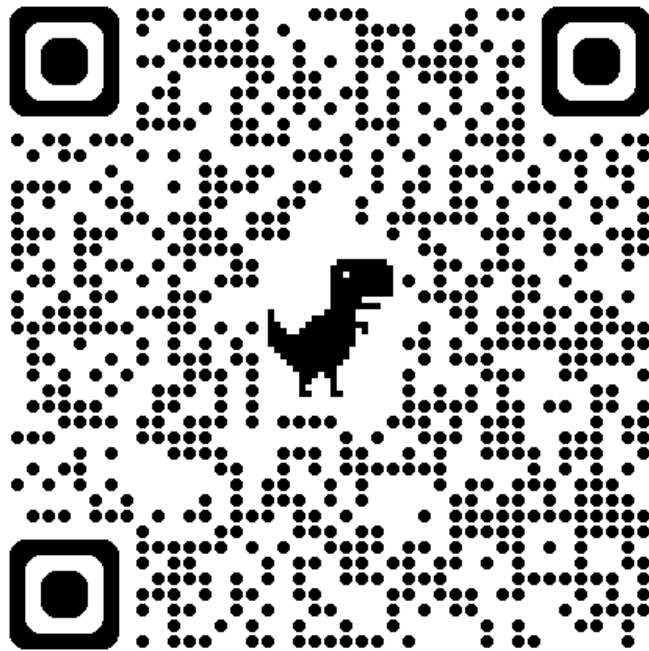
LinkedIn: bit.ly/lin-csudbery

Podcast: bit.ly/3XvyNbU



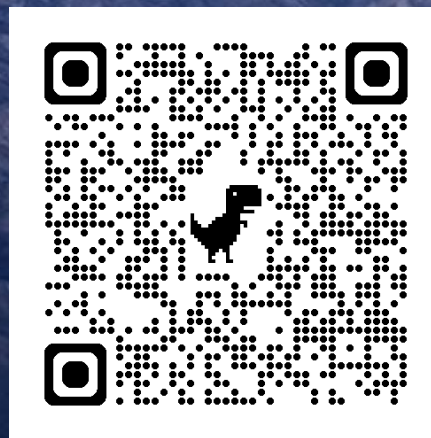
ALL LINKS FROM TODAY

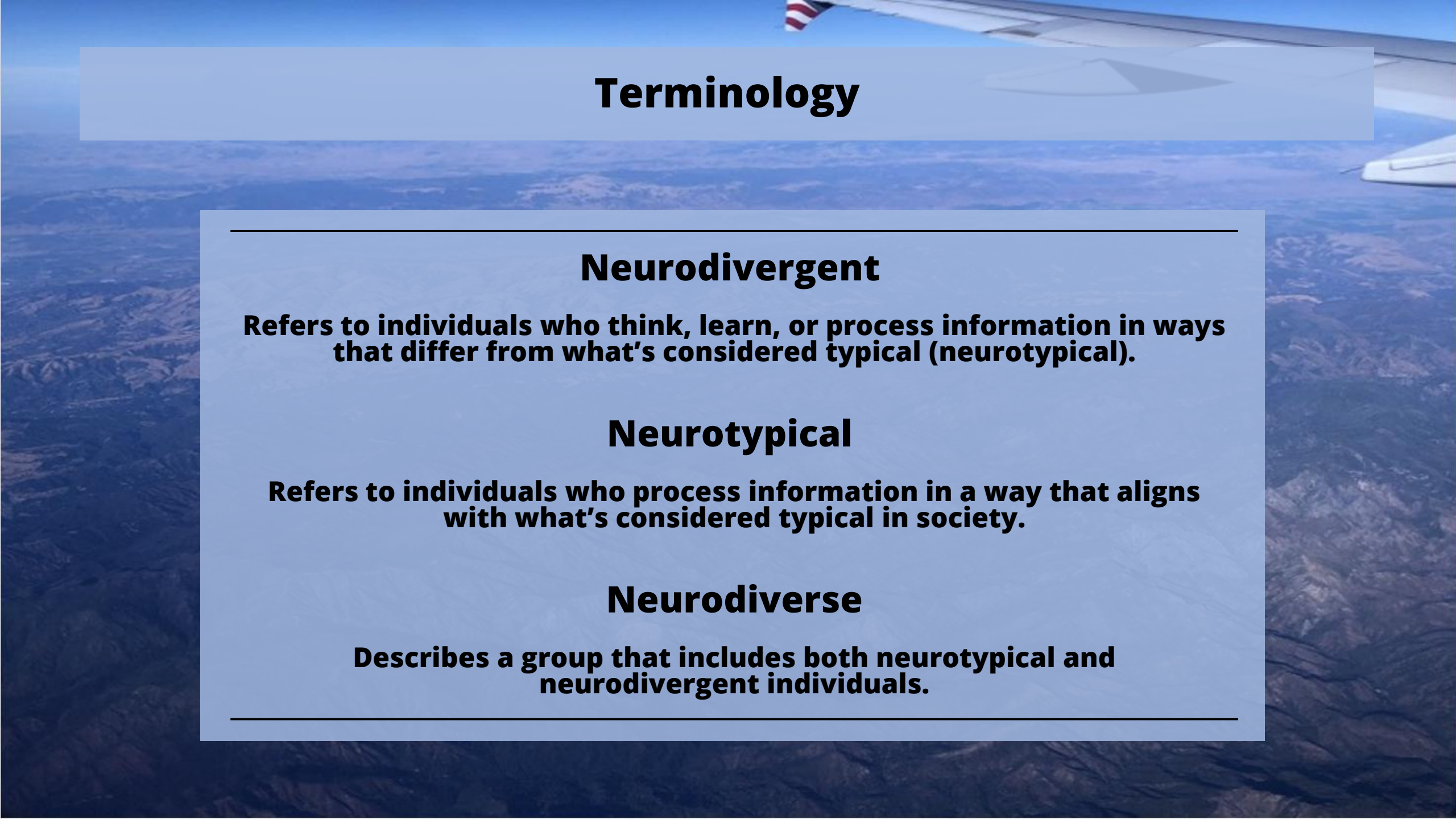
(including a link to these slides)



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Why the velvet shoelace?





Terminology

Neurodivergent

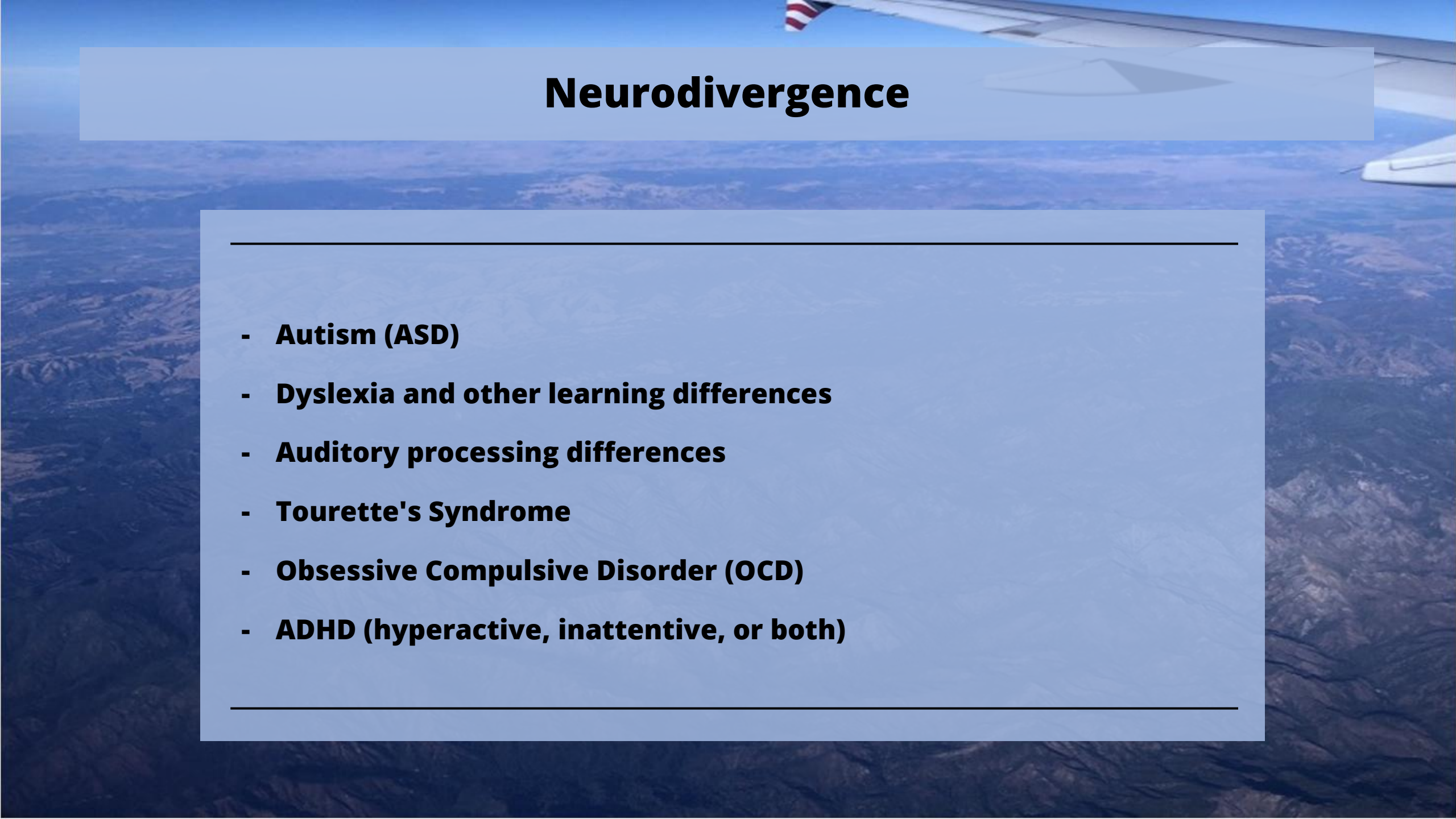
Refers to individuals who think, learn, or process information in ways that differ from what's considered typical (neurotypical).

Neurotypical

Refers to individuals who process information in a way that aligns with what's considered typical in society.

Neurodiverse

Describes a group that includes both neurotypical and neurodivergent individuals.



Neurodivergence

-
- **Autism (ASD)**
 - **Dyslexia and other learning differences**
 - **Auditory processing differences**
 - **Tourette's Syndrome**
 - **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**
 - **ADHD (hyperactive, inattentive, or both)**
-

There is overlap between “neurotypical” and “neurodivergent”
...but it’s a 3D spectrum, not a continuum
...and people can be under-responsive as well as over-responsive



My own challenges

- **Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria (RSD): conflict-averse + highly sensitive**
- **Contradiction between love of predictability and love of change**
- **Take things literally**
- **Slow thinker**
- **Hate ambiguity**
- **Concentration / distracted / easily diverted**
- **Too many ideas, too many thoughts**
- **Easily overwhelmed**
- **People are tiring and confusing, social situations are hard**
- **“Inappropriate” / over-sharing / “too much” / turn-taking**
- **...I keep thinking of more, but I have to stop somewhere!**

My own strengths

- **Attention to detail**
- **Hyperfocus**
- **Pattern matching**
- **Obsessive drive to complete tasks**
- **Honesty + straight-talking**
- **A high level of empathy and integrity**
- **Creativity**
- **Love of change**
- **Spontaneity + energy + joyfulness**
- **No assumptions / thinking outside the box**
- **Asking questions**

Strengths that have been scientifically linked to ADHD include:

Rapid idea generation & thinking outside conventional boundaries

Creativity

Courage & a strong sense of social justice

Energy & enthusiasm

Resilience, adaptability & problem-solving under stress

Optimism & persuasiveness

Curiosity & spontaneity

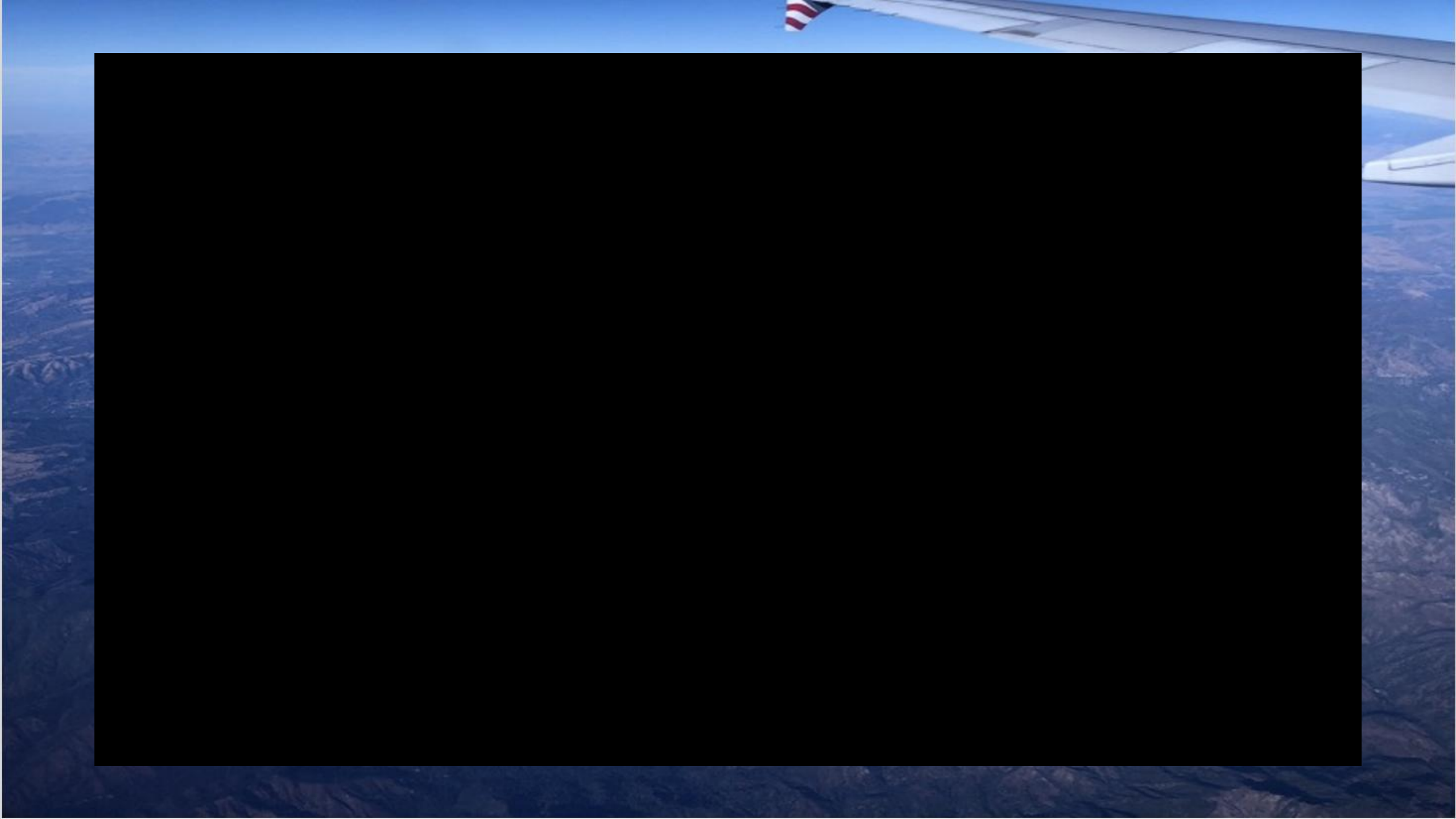
The ability to hyper-focus in areas of interest

**An example of when things are
hard:**

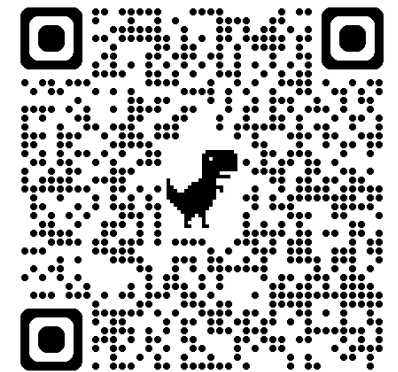
Travel (TRIGGER WARNING)







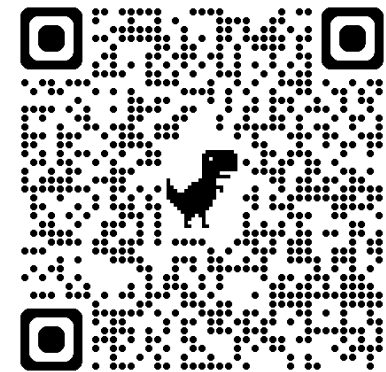
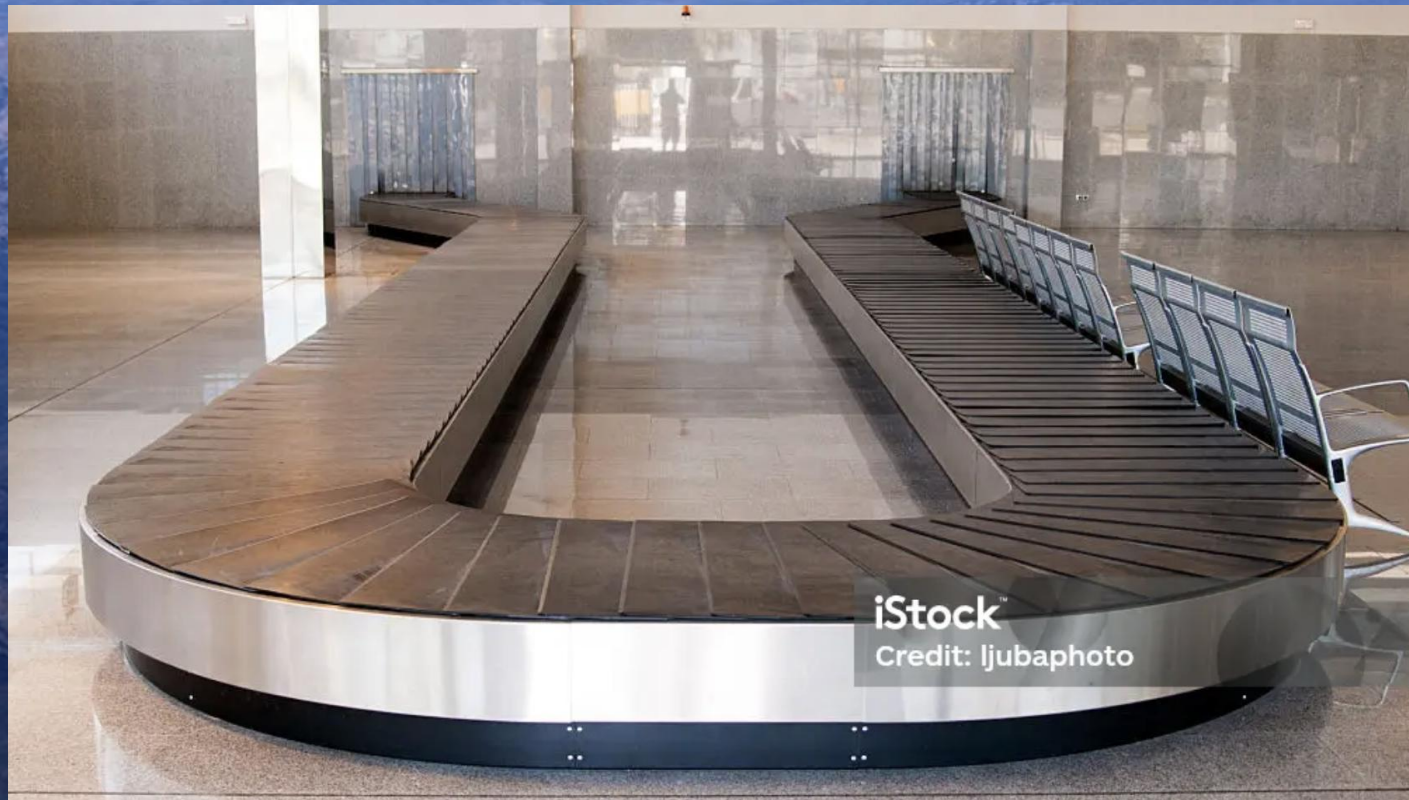
“Why did he say that?”



"Is it rude to open my laptop?"



"Where's my luggage gone?"

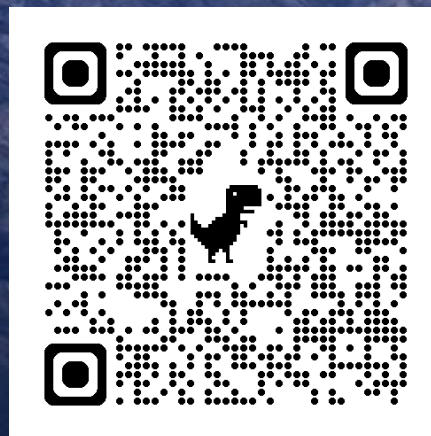


Now I'm sobbing...

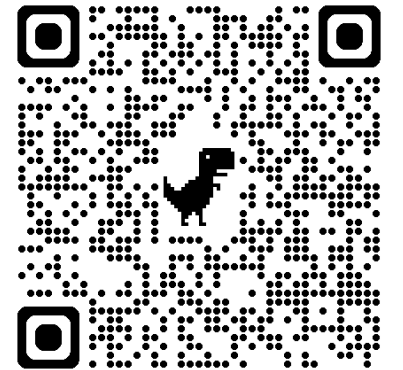


But what will help?

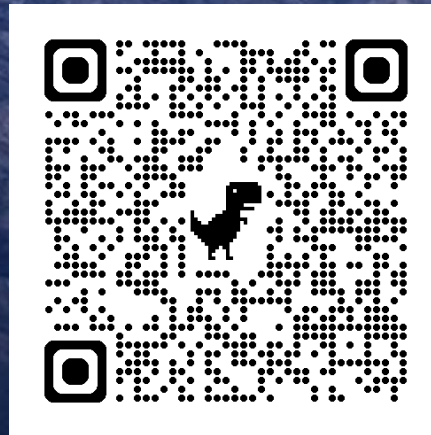
**Don't want to be selfish /
expensive**



The "hidden disability" sunflower lanyard

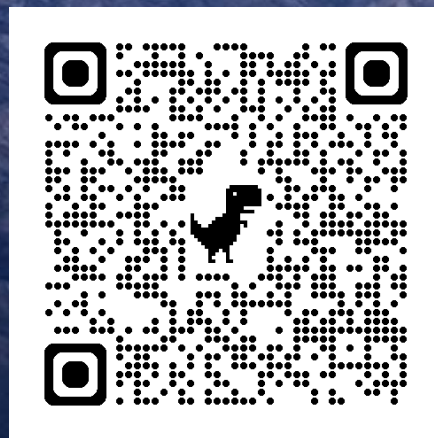


Another example:
Can't change anything
Just leave



No idea what I want or need

Not getting real help

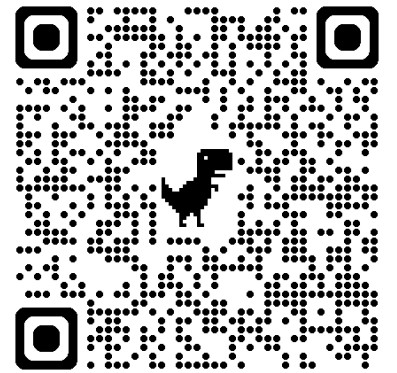


Getting it wrong as a mentor

Unsolicited advice

Assumptions

Not listening



Doing better as a mentor

Asking questions

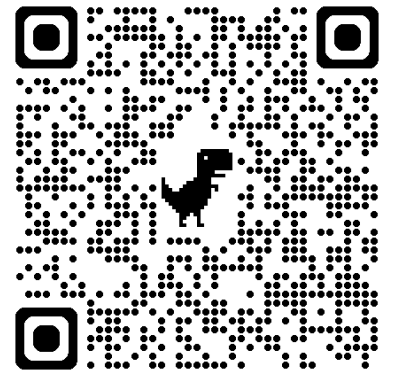
Listening

No advice unless asked for



**“Would you like advice? Or do
you just want to vent?”**

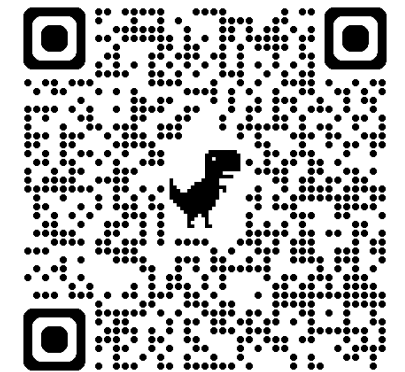
Or even better...



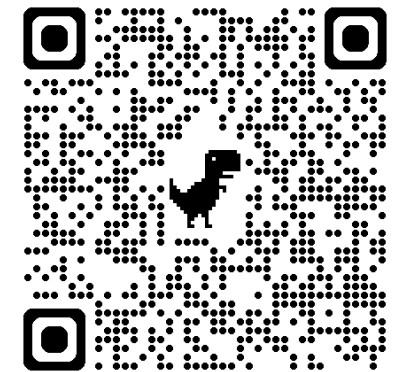
...don't offer advice at all!



- **Talk about it**
- **Distraction**
- **Space**

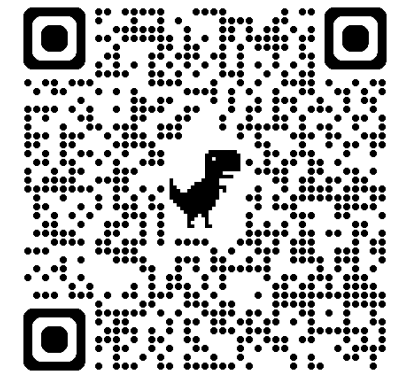


Communication example: The smell in the room

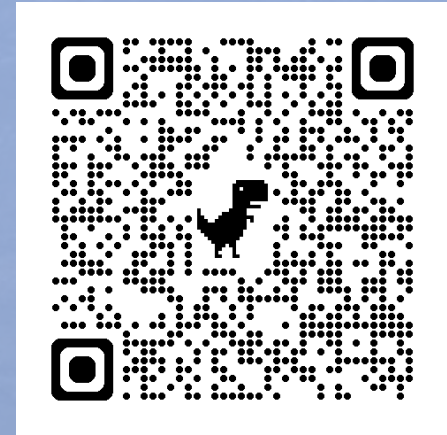


The delight of mutual confusion

Cloves
vs
Clothes



The silent colleague



SOME Conclusions for the world

Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria => repeated positive feedback

People don't always know what they need

Some will be embarrassed to ask

Ablism exists both externally and internally

Some costs are not just luxuries

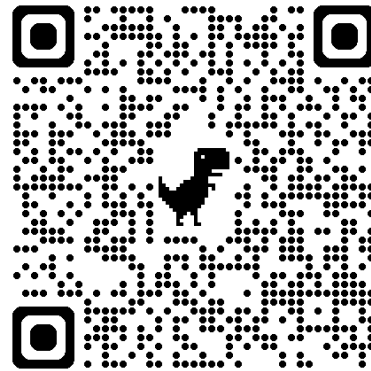
You have to mean it when you offer support

Answer questions + explain if necessary

Informal support is just as important as formal HR policy

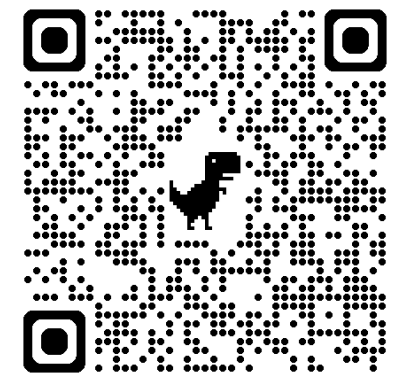
Don't only consider needs of those you know to have challenges

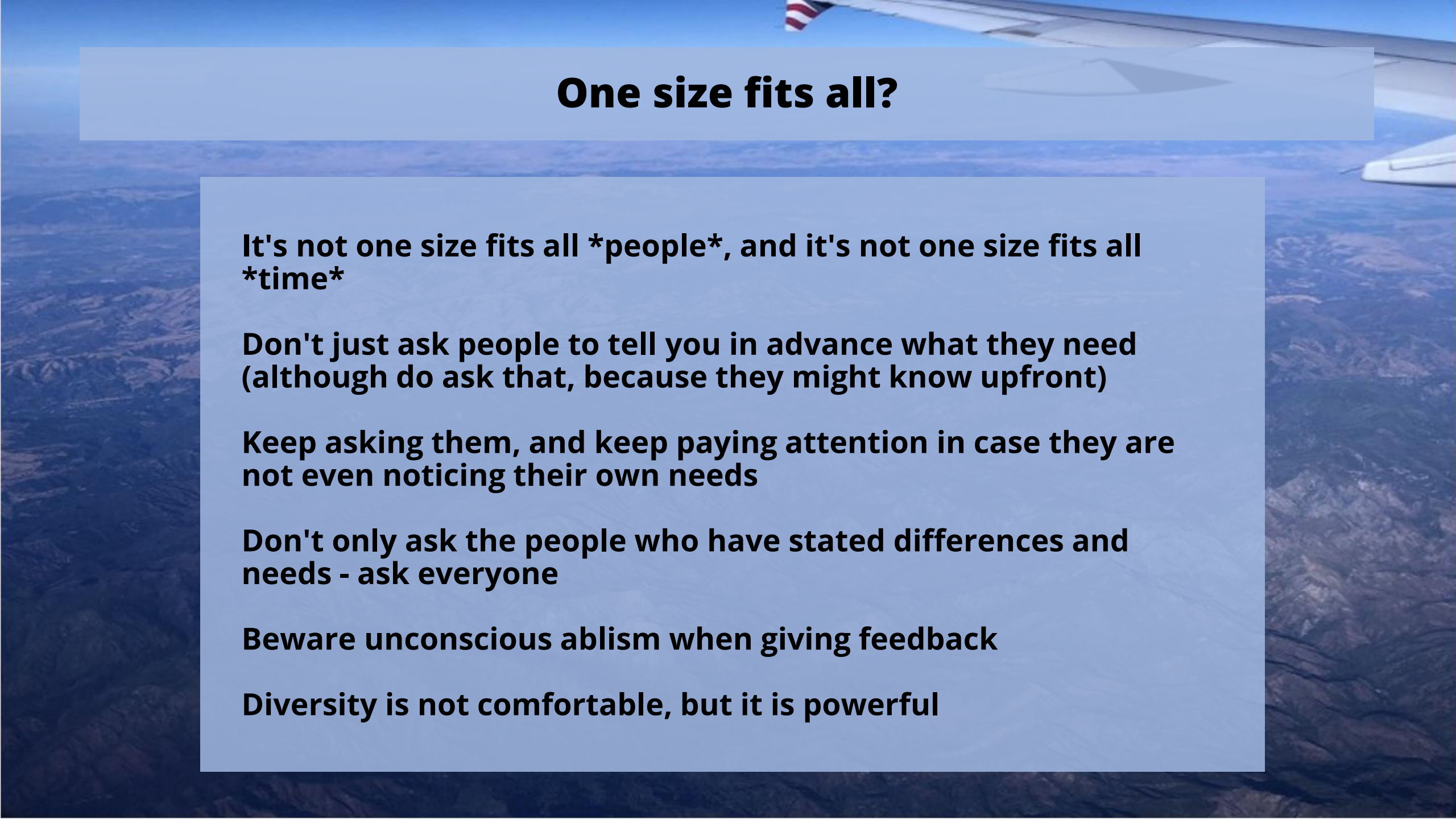
Enable people to do what helps them (eg stimming)



MIGHT be helpful

- **Clearly defined routines and expectations**
- **Flexible environments**
- **Extra support when travelling**
- **Sound and light adjustments or accommodations**
- **Task management tools**
- **Permission for remote employees to turn the camera off during a meeting**





One size fits all?

It's not one size fits all *people*, and it's not one size fits all *time*

Don't just ask people to tell you in advance what they need (although do ask that, because they might know upfront)

Keep asking them, and keep paying attention in case they are not even noticing their own needs

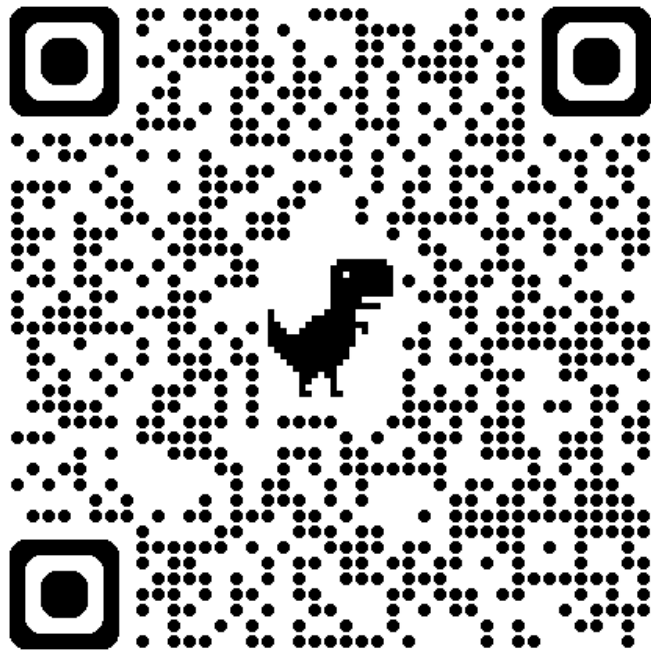
Don't only ask the people who have stated differences and needs - ask everyone

Beware unconscious ablism when giving feedback

Diversity is not comfortable, but it is powerful

ALL LINKS FROM TODAY

(including a link to these slides)



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