



NeuroPREP (**P**rofessors' **R**elationship and **E**ducation **P**rogram in **N**eurodiversity) was born from a series of studies conducted to understand the postsecondary experiences of neurodivergent students and the faculty who teach them^{1,2}. The neurodiversity movement recognizes that neurological differences are normal and should be embraced rather than considered as deficits³. Our published studies demonstrated that neurodiverse conditions, such as autism and ADHD, are often “invisible” disabilities on campus, where students’ needs are questioned or go undetected. As a result, these students report feeling marginalized by their professors and peers. From the faculty perspective, neurodiversity training is rarely offered though expressly needed^{1,2}.

This program:

- offers information on neurodiversity, autism, and ADHD to faculty in higher education;
- focuses on relevant knowledge, applied strategies, and accessible resources towards improving postsecondary experiences and outcomes for neurodivergent students; and
- facilitates an understanding of best practices, campus supports, and higher education federal law so that faculty are equipped to support neurodivergent students in the classroom.

This program has been designed for faculty by researchers in the field of education using real-world situations, research-informed content, and adult learning principles. In 2021, the NeuroPREP Advisory Committee was formed; its members served as knowledgeable and important contributors to this program. The primary role of the Advisory Committee members was to extensively review and provide recommendations for the developed training materials, including specific objectives, content, and feasibility. The Committee included four faculty members, two disability support staff, and four neurodivergent individuals (who were current or former college students). Each member represented varying levels of experience, and, therefore, their contributions to the program’s development were intended to support the vast experiences of NeuroPREP participants.

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NeuroPREP was created *specifically* for faculty. That is, at every stage of development, faculty members were represented and involved – either as research participants who were solicited about their learning and training needs OR as advisory committee members who provided their input on the immediate relevance and impact of the training for faculty.

Neurodivergent college students, too, were involved at all stages of program development. Thus, their voices and real-world experiences are reflected throughout the training program, making it applicable to faculty members’ teaching and interactions with students.

How to Access the Training

Faculty with varying levels of teaching experience and experience working with neurodivergent students are welcome to participate in NeuroPREP! NeuroPREP can be accessed as (a) a self-paced, online program or (b) a half-day, group training offered in person or remotely.

The Self-Paced Program. Participant involvement in the online program includes the completion of four self-paced video modules and accompanying module worksheets. Each worksheet includes defined terms, references to research articles, available resources, and prompts for self-reflection to promote learning. In total, faculty can expect to spend 2-3 hours to complete the program.

Department- or campus-wide access to the online program can be provided. At this time, individuals are unable to take the course on their own. We can setup all program materials on your institution's learning management system (LMS), such as Blackboard or Canvas. *These materials may not be stored on a publicly accessible platform or website (e.g., YouTube).* While you will have access to the course materials on your LMS in perpetuity, please know that we regularly update program content to reflect current research, discourse, and trends. You may wish to contact us later to find out if you still have the most updated version of the program and, if not, how you can access it. The program can be purchased for a fee, OR the fee will be waived if data can be collected from participants as part of our research evaluation on the program's impact. For more information on the program fee or the scope of research, please email NeurodiversityPREP@gmail.com.

The Group Training. The in-person training is an interactive course that can be customized, to some extent, based on the needs of the department/institution. Attendees will be presented with the program materials, including the four key modules, and will receive all accompanying module worksheets (described above). *These materials may not be stored on a publicly accessible platform or website (e.g., YouTube) nor can they be disseminated to persons not attending the training.* In total, faculty can expect to spend 3-4 hours in the group training.

The training can be offered to faculty across the campus or within specific departments. The training facilitators, Drs. Yasamin Bolourian and Sasha Zeedyk, can meet with organizers, as well as other key persons (e.g., disability support staff), to gather information on specific needs to be addressed during the training. For example, Module 4 scenarios can be modified to reflect instances that may have occurred for faculty or students at your campus. The training can be offered in-person or virtually. If in-person is preferred, ideally, the facilitators would have access to a room with a projector and, depending on the size of the training, microphones. The fee may vary depending on the training format (in-person vs. virtual) and number of attendees. For more information on the group training and fee, please email NeurodiversityPREP@gmail.com.

References:

1. Bolourian, Y., Zeedyk, S.M., & Blacher, J. (2018). Autism and the university experience: Narratives from students with invisible disabilities. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 48(10), 3330-3343. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-018-3599-5>
2. Zeedyk, S.M., Bolourian, Y., & Blacher, J. (2019). University life with ASD: Faculty knowledge and student needs. *Autism: International Journal of Research and Practice*, 23(3), 726-736. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361318774148>
3. Kapp, S. K., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Sherman, L. E., & Hutman, T. (2013). Deficit, difference, or both? Autism and neurodiversity. *Developmental Psychology*, 49(1), 59-71. <https://doi.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0028353>