# Idea 2

## Lesson plan: Embracing neurodiversity – Understanding ADHD

**Subject:** PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education)

**Year group:** Secondary school (Years 7–11)

**Duration:** 2 × 1-hour sessions (over 2 weeks)

**Learning objectives**

* Students will understand the concept of neurodiversity and its importance in an inclusive classroom.
* Students will learn about ADHD and how it can affect learning and behavior.
* Students will identify the unique strengths and challenges associated with ADHD.
* Students will create a poster or presentation that promotes an inclusive learning environment.

**Materials needed**

* Whiteboard and markers.
* Handout with information on neurodiversity and ADHD.
* Art supplies for poster creation (paper, markers, stickers, etc.).
* Computer and presentation software (if opting for digital presentations).

### Session 1: The concept and signifiance of neurodiversity

**Introduction (10 minutes)**

* Introduce the concept of neurodiversity and its significance in an inclusive classroom setting.
* Briefly explain ADHD, emphasising that it is one of many neurodiverse conditions.

**Main activity: Research and planning (40 minutes)**

* Hand out information sheets about ADHD.
* Instruct students to form small groups to research and discuss ADHD, focusing on both strengths and challenges.
* Each group will decide on a poster or presentation topic related to ADHD awareness and inclusion.

**Conclusion (10 minutes)**

* Groups share their chosen topics with the class.
* Discuss the plan for creating the posters or presentations in the next session.

**Homework**

* Students can begin gathering additional information and resources for their posters or presentations.

### Session 2: Creation and Reflection

**Recap and reflection (15 minutes)**

* Begin with a recap of the previous session's key points on neurodiversity and ADHD.
* Ask a few students to share what they learned in the previous session or any interesting facts they found while doing their homework.
* Have a brief reflective discussion on how this information might affect their approach to learning and interaction with peers.

**Poster/presentation creation (35 minutes)**

* Students work in their groups to create their posters or presentations, using the information and resources they have gathered.
* Encourage the use of positive messaging that celebrates differences and promotes inclusivity.

**Sharing and class discussion (10 minutes)**

* Groups briefly present their posters or draft presentations to the class.
* Engage the class in a discussion about the various approaches and messages.
* Encourage constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

# HANDOUT

## Understanding ADHD and neurodiversity: Embracing differences

**What is neurodiversity?**

Neurodiversity is the concept that variations in brain functioning within the human population are normal and should be accepted and respected as any other form of diversity. It's about understanding and celebrating the variety of neurocognitive abilities, including conditions like ADHD, autism, dyslexia and more.

**ADHD in focus**

ADHD, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, is a neurodevelopmental difference characterised by patterns of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. Emotion control is also a significant part of the struggle. It's chronic and pervasive, meaning it's life-long and affects multiple areas of life. This is different from just having a ‘bad day’ — it's a consistent part of daily life for those with ADHD.

**The strengths and challenges**

Individuals with ADHD often exhibit remarkable creativity and energy, and the ability to think outside the box. They may excel in areas that require rapid thinking and spontaneity. However, they can also face challenges with organisation, time management and maintaining focus, which can impact learning and social interactions.

**Positive role models**

Many individuals with ADHD have achieved incredible success across various fields:

* Emma Watson, celebrated for her role as Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter film series, has spoken about her experiences with ADHD and how it has shaped her life and work ethic.
* Tom Hanks, an Academy Award-winning actor, has discussed his ADHD openly, emphasising the importance of understanding and managing it.
* Simone Biles, an Olympic gymnast, has demonstrated that with support and determination, someone with ADHD can achieve athletic excellence.
* Michael Phelps, the most decorated Olympian of all time, has used his ADHD to his advantage by channeling his hyperfocus into swimming.
* Scott Kelly, an astronaut, has proven that the sky is not the limit, even with ADHD.

These individuals represent just a fraction of those with ADHD who have embraced their condition to do extraordinary things.

**Everyday struggles and support**

It's important to acknowledge that while ADHD can come with unique strengths, it also brings daily struggles. The key is support and opportunity. With the right strategies and accommodations, students with ADHD can manage the challenges and harness their abilities.

**Recognising vulnerability and potential**

While there is a higher risk of adverse life trajectories for individuals with ADHD, recognising the condition's challenges allows for support systems to be put in place. With understanding, patience, and the right accommodations, students with ADHD can thrive academically, socially and in later life.

Remember, ADHD is a part of who someone is, but it does not define them. With fair support and opportunity, the possibilities are limitless.