

# Neurodiversity, Social Work and Social Justice: Key Issues and Overlaps

## Plain English Summary

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This paper is about the differences that are present across human minds which is sometimes called 'neurodiversity'. There was a movement around neurodiversity that happened after the 1980s. This paper suggests that the movement is relevant to social work as a profession because social work is about social justice. This is stated in the global definition of what social work is.

The neurodiversity movement is also about social justice as all people should have justice despite differences in human minds. This paper says, however, that social work is now a profession that has changed from what the global definition says it is. It is now less focused on making change happen on a large-scale level so that there is social justice. Due to having less of this focus, social work is less able to support neurodiverse people to live in societies where there is social justice for them. This paper explains how social workers can try to fix this problem, so they work better with neurodiverse people.

This paper makes four suggestions for the future of social work. Firstly, it explains how social workers can understand and address social differences. This includes difference between the minds of social workers, and how social workers manage difference across the minds of the people they work with. Secondly, it explains some of the challenges that neurodiverse social workers might have in doing their job. This includes the fact that social work is a social job as it deals with people and that neurodiverse people can be misunderstood in this context or treated like they don't fit in. Thirdly, it shows that a loss of creativity and flexibility in social work is a problem. This includes social workers having to rely on putting people into groups so that they can manage the high demands of their work when they have little time. Fourthly, it shows how social workers need sometimes to use ways of classifying people as 'normal' to do their work, which is not good for neurodiverse people.

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