



The World Needs More **Birkbeck**



Case Study: What Neurodiversity Practice Can Learn from Wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Research

Centre for Neurodiversity Research at Work

Birkbeck University of London
Professor Almuth McDowall
a.mcdowall@bbk.ac.uk

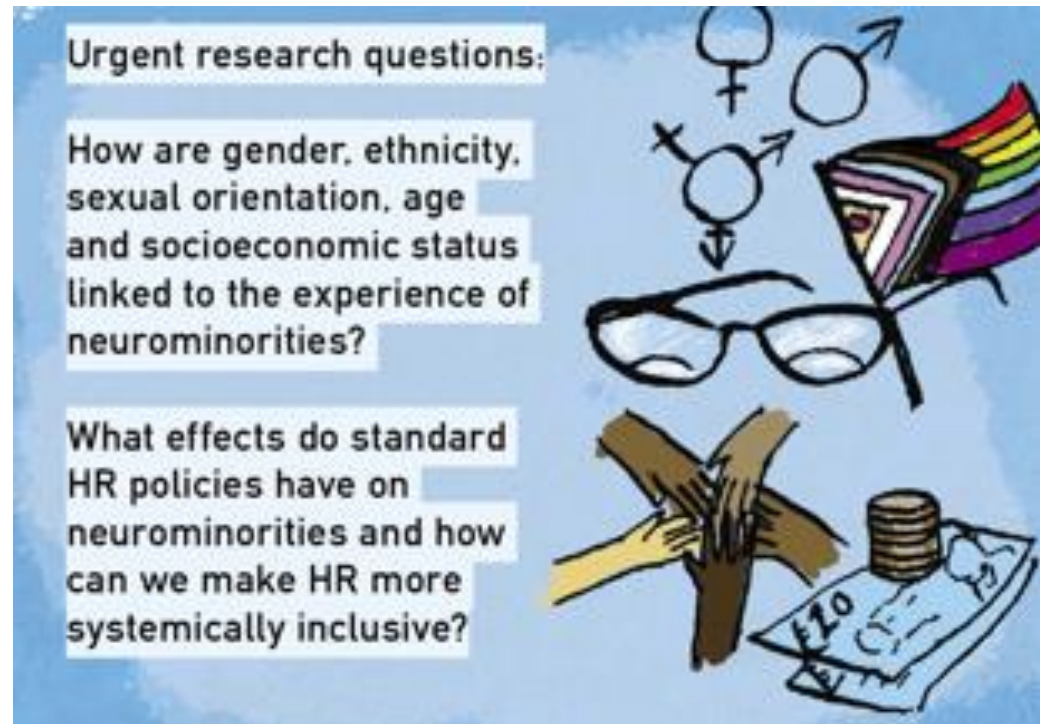
CENTRE FOR NEURODIVERSITY AT WORK — BIRKBECK, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON (BBK.AC.UK)

Spearhead practice relevant research to champion neuro-inclusion

Ensure that activities and policies are underpinned by evidence

Diverse advisory board

Psychological expertise paired with cross-disciplinary input: law, sociology, economics etc



BACKDROP FOR OUR STUDY

Evidence – based management: evaluate evidence from different sources to make informed personnel decisions. Many current neurodiversity at work initiatives lack an evidence-base

Necessity to connect to the **wider field of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB)** which has evolved over several decades (Phillips & O’Reilly, 1998).

EDIB research considers **group** processes, intergroup relations and **outcomes** such as performance

Critical perspectives: attend to language and framing, focus on business case might mask structural inequalities

Intersectional theory (Crenshaw, 1991): people can belong to more than one minoritized group

OUR APPROACH

Systematic mapping: Where is the evidence strong, where is it weak from a critical perspective

Mechanisms: what are the relevant activities and interventions?

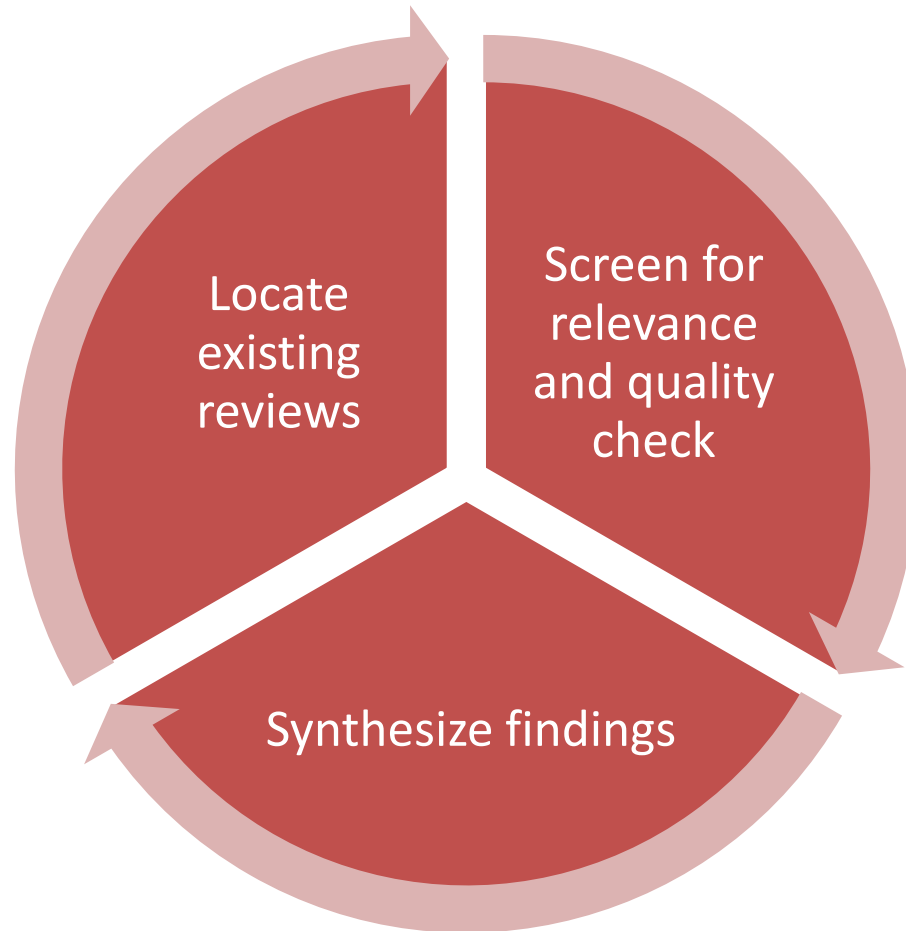
Conceptual: what theoretical perspectives and frameworks have been applied and can we harness these to frame a theory- and evidence-informed model for change?

Outcomes at four levels

OUTCOMES



RAPID EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT



How strong?	Awareness / culture	Individual supports	Organisational policy
Weak	Lived experience champions ERGs without senior management support Awareness training	Mentoring matched without influence	Business Case without consideration of intersectionality
Medium	Live internal training: more evidence for knowledge than changing attitudes ERGs with senior management support	Affirmative hiring Intersectional mentoring Leadership role modelling their minority status	Clear statements of intent and support from HR and relevant policies Consequences for discrimination
Strong	Interactive diversity training which includes reflection and live practice Active involvement of leadership in training, ERGS	Critical mass in diverse leadership Standard adjustment protocols embedded	Management accountability for diversity Hiring by capability only

THREE KEY MESSAGES

Initiatives need to be designed well

Embed activities into strategy and policy

Representation matters

THE SOLUTION? ACADEMIC PRACTICE COLLABORATIONS

Harness **existing knowledge** – scrutinizing the evidence, avoid re-inventing the wheel

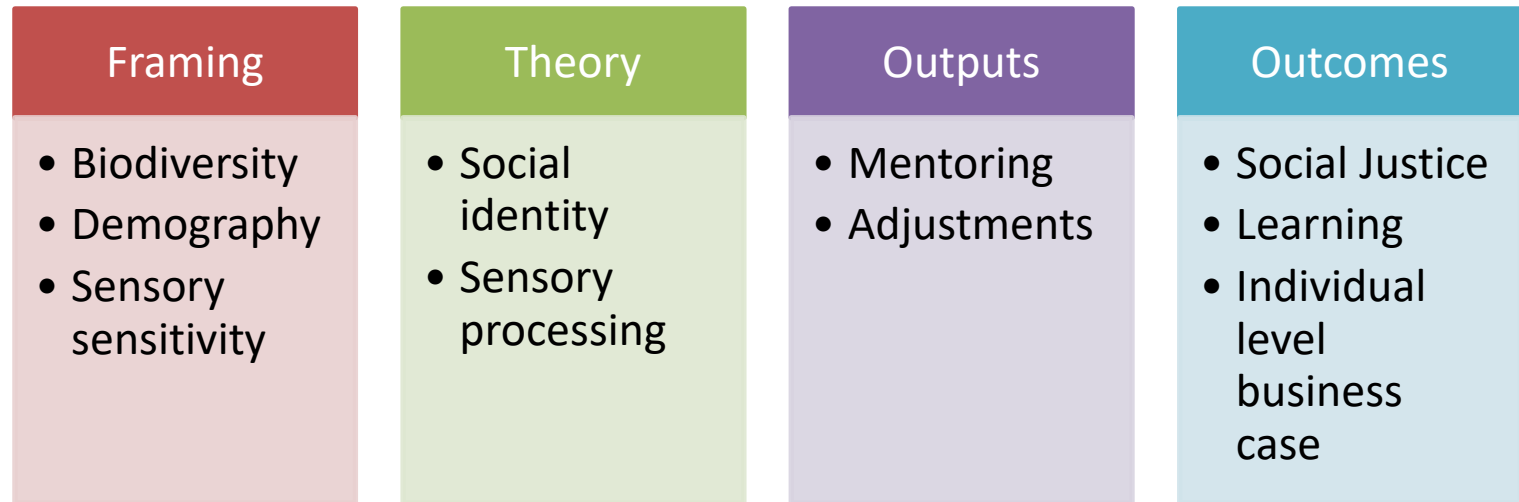
Organizational psychology expertise

Ensure that any strategy and activities recognize **local needs and context**

Senior management buy in crucial to facilitate culture change

Think beyond outputs to **outcomes** – what does good look like?

FOR EXAMPLE...INDIVIDUAL LEVEL



SUMMARY

Know where evidence is weak, moderate, strong

Importance of intersectional perspective

No 'quick fixes'

Popularity does not mean it will work

Gain clarity on outcomes – fourfold taxonomy is a good start

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE EVIDENCE BASE

Complete our survey:

https://bbk.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5B9s2MSbByHSBts



The World Needs More **Birkbeck**

Thank you!
a.mcdowall@bbk.ac.uk
@almuthmcdowall

Centre for Neurodiversity Research at
Work

Birkbeck University of London
Professor Almuth McDowall
a.mcdowall@bbk.ac.uk