

Empathy and Neurodiversity

Recognising our differences to create empathy and understanding for multiple forms of processing and communicating.

COGNITIVE EMPATHY

Understanding and imagining intellectually another's thoughts and feelings

EMOTIONAL EMPATHY

Feeling and resonating with another's personal feelings

COMPASSIONATE EMPATHY

Acting in a compassionate way. Taking compassionate action.

MYTH : People with autism lack empathy.

FACT

Autism can create differences and sometimes challenges with cognitive empathy (understanding emotions), but many autistic individuals have strong emotional and compassionate empathy, especially when they can connect to someone's experience.

MYTH: ADHD reduces empathy.

FACT

People with ADHD often experience intense emotional empathy but may struggle to regulate their responses due to impulsivity. This is simply a different form of processing and communicating.

MYTH: Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) leads to low empathy.

FACT

People with BPD often have heightened emotional empathy but may struggle with regulating their own intense emotions, which can affect interpersonal relationships.

MYTH: Psychopaths lack all forms of empathy.

FACT

Psychopaths often have high cognitive empathy (understanding others' emotions enabling strong connection) but can lack emotional and compassionate empathy. In some cases, individuals with psychopathic traits may have emotional empathy but actually enjoy others' discomfort, deriving satisfaction from observing or causing emotional pain.