

# Neurodiversity and Law Libraries: Supporting Patrons in Your Physical and Digital Spaces

---



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™



## Geraldine Kalim

Reference & Instructional Services Librarian  
University of Baltimore Law Library



## Mari Cheney

Research Librarian  
Perkins Coie LLP  
@MariCheney



## Annalee Hickman Pierson

Head of Reference & Faculty Services  
BYU Law Library  
@HickmanPierson



## Julia Pluta

Faculty Services &  
Collection Development Librarian  
UMKC Law Library  
@tomekeeperjulia



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

Scan the QR code, and answer a few questions on Menti for us!



[Menti Presenter View](#)



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

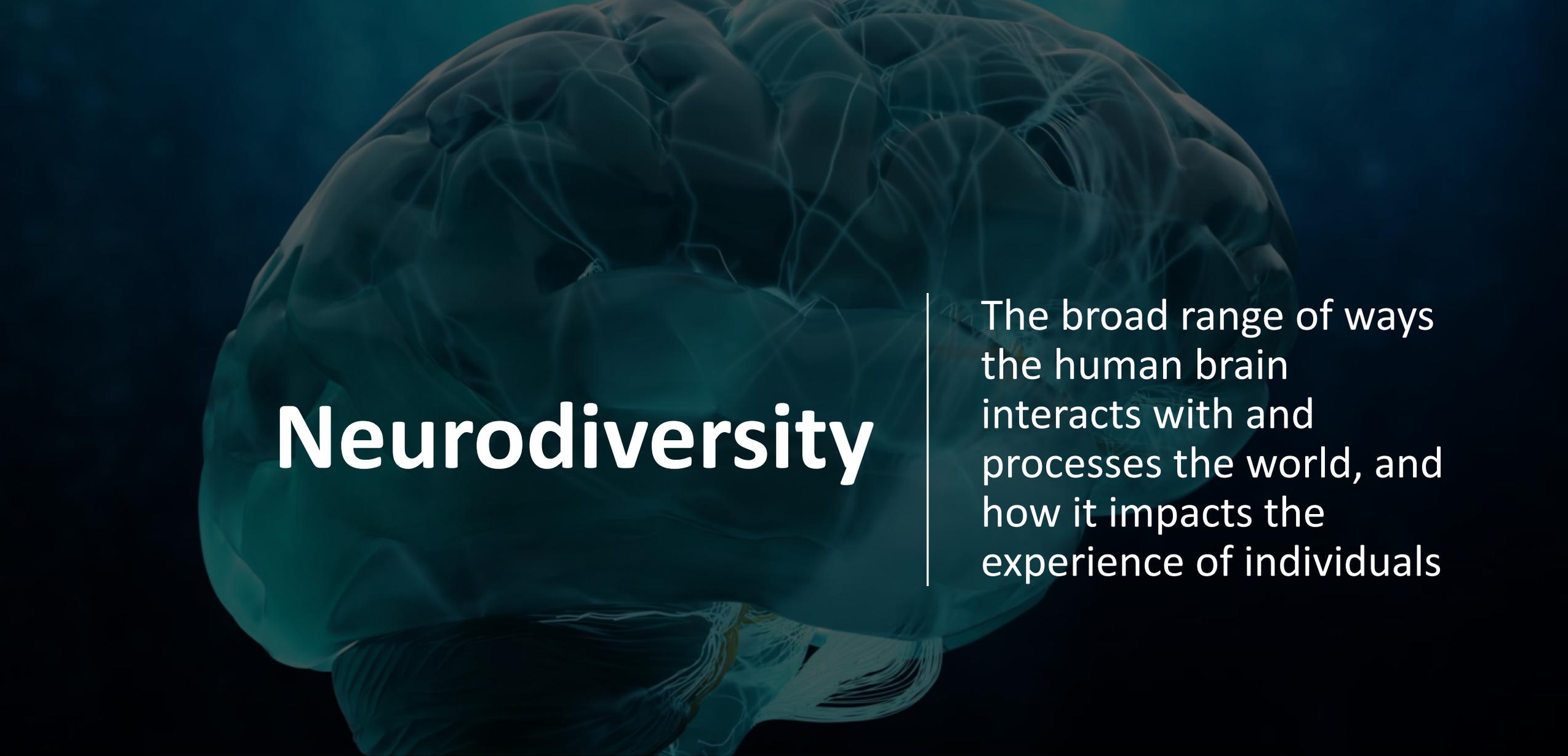
# Road Map

- Intro to Neurodiversity & Universal Design
- Physical Spaces: Service Points & Study Spaces
- Digital Spaces: Web Presence & Virtual Services
- Outreach & Conclusion
- Q&A



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™



# Neurodiversity

The broad range of ways the human brain interacts with and processes the world, and how it impacts the experience of individuals



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Neurodivergent

A person who experiences patterns of thought that are atypical for the general population.

A person who is not neurodivergent is considered neurotypical.



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™



# Neurodiversity Is a Spectrum

---

And a multi-dimensional one at that! No one is perfectly neurotypical. Neurodivergence is a matter of degree.



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

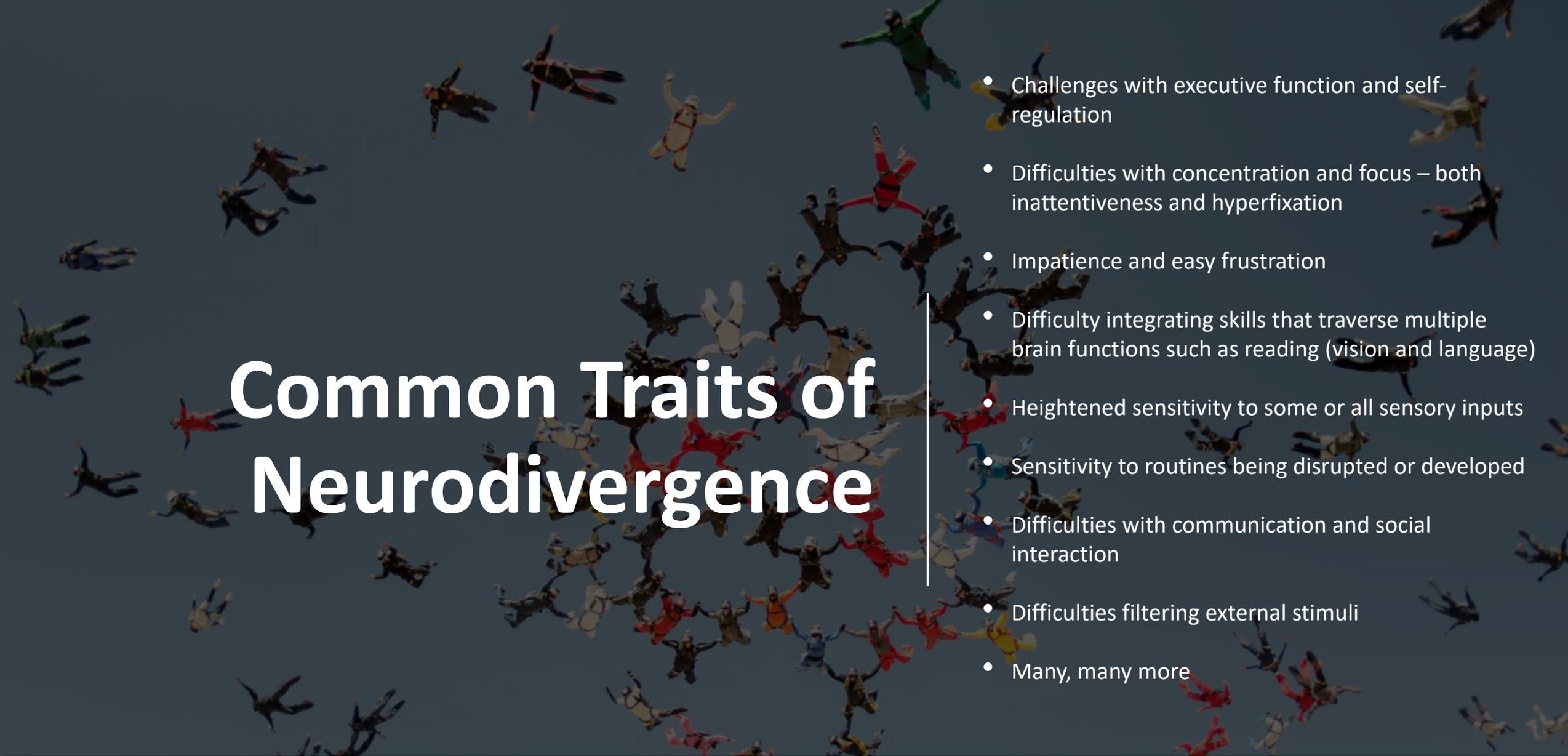
# Forms of Neurodivergence

- Autism Spectrum
- ADHD
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia
- Tourette's Syndrome
- Hyperlexia
- Sensory Processing Sensitivity
- Probably more we haven't defined



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™



# Common Traits of Neurodivergence

- Challenges with executive function and self-regulation
- Difficulties with concentration and focus – both inattentiveness and hyperfixation
- Impatience and easy frustration
- Difficulty integrating skills that traverse multiple brain functions such as reading (vision and language)
- Heightened sensitivity to some or all sensory inputs
- Sensitivity to routines being disrupted or developed
- Difficulties with communication and social interaction
- Difficulties filtering external stimuli
- Many, many more



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Principles of Universal Design



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# What is Universal Design?

Universal Design (UD) is a set of principles designed to make spaces and products as accessible as possible to all people, minimizing the need for specialized adaptations, interventions, or accommodations



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Principles of Universal Design

UD is based on seven principles:

- Equitable use
- Flexibility in use
- Simple and intuitive use
- Perceptible information
- Tolerance for error
- Low physical effort
- Size and space for approach and use



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™



# Universal Design in Action

Exton Train Station, West Whiteland Township, PA

Image from Chester County Planning Commission,  
<https://www.chescoplanning.org/MuniCorner/eTools/18-UniversalPublic.cfm>



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™



# Physical Spaces

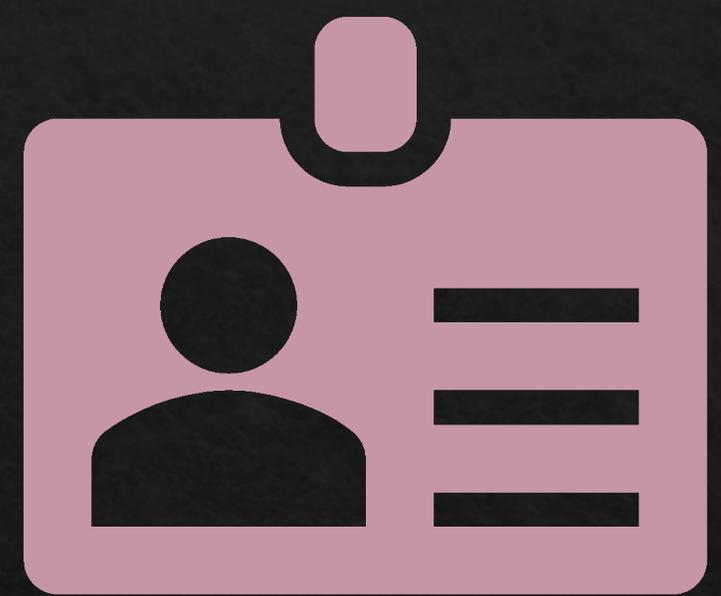
# Service Points



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Assistive Cues to Include



Example questions & services

Who staffs this desk? (e.g., students, RAs, librarians)

Other ways to interact with that service point (e.g., chat, phone, email)

QR code to all of the above information on a webpage



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# What NOT to Include

Is there anything only available at a service point that would make a student self-conscious?

- e.g., fidget access outside of service points



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

## Library Entrance

Consider noise level, activity level, lighting, etc.

Signage overload

Consider ways to convey crowd level at entrance, on website

Offer printed map or QR code to digital map

image credit: additudemag.com



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Study Spaces

ons

ate governance is very much an evolving area. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on ensuring that the UK's corporate governance framework is robust and effective. This is driven by the need to restore investor confidence in capital markets and to ensure appropriate use of funds. Governments alike have been proactive in seeking reforms that will ensure that boards are more accountable, that qualified independent non-executives



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Sensory Avoiders: Study Rooms and Reading Room Set-Up



Low-Light Options



Sound-Proof Study  
Rooms



Privacy/Frosting if  
All Glass



Make Individual Study  
Rooms Available to All Students  
Without an Official  
Accommodation



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Items Available for Check-Out for Sensory Avoiders

Headphones

White Noise Machine

Weighted Neck Wrap



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Sensory Seekers: Study Rooms and Reading Room Set-Up

- ✦ Multiple Seating Options:
- ✦ Standing Desks
- ✦ Treadmill or Bike Desks
- ✦ Wiggle/Wobble Cushions
- ✦ Yoga Balls





## Items Available for Check-Out for Sensory Seekers

Fidgets

Spinners

Stress Balls

Rubik's Cubes

Stretch Strings

Bubble Poppers



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Digital Spaces: Web Presence and Virtual Services



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Web Presence



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™



# Descriptors

Clean

Calm

Simple

Connected

Customized

# Checklist for Website



Webpage Titles



Organization of  
Menu



Photos



Font



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

## Resources for Law Students

---

### Library Spaces

---

Library Access and Hours for Law Students

---

JRCLS Building Security Policy

---

Carrels

---

Group Study Rooms

---

Quiet Study Room

---

Rex E. Lee Room

---

Library Innovation Space

---

Library Instruction Room (267)

---

1st Floor

---

### Electronic Resources

---

Access to Electronic Resources & Digital Reserves

---

Access to Xchange for Law Students

---

Final Exam Study Aids

---

Library and Technology Services Available After Graduation

---

### Research Help

---

Reference Services & Research Consultations for Law Students

---

Research Consultations for Substantial Writing

---

Reference Services Hours

## Circulation Services

---

Borrowing Privileges for Law Students

---

Recall Policy

---

Interlibrary Loan

---

## Library Collection

---

Course & Reserve Collections

---

Finding a Book

---

Library Floor Maps

---

Rare Books

---

BYU Law Digital Repository

---

Book Purchase Requests

---

## Library Technology

---

Legal Technology Training Program

---

AI and How to Use it in Law School

---

Printers for BYU Law Students

---

Library Computers

---

Faxing

---

Scanning

# Checklist for Website



Webpage Titles



Organization of  
Menu



Photos



Font



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Checklist for Website



Webpage Titles



Organization of  
Menu



Photos



Font



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Virtual Services



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Virtual Services: Reserving Study Rooms



Recurring



Filters

# Virtual Services: Reference & Research Services

Be overly kind—greet them, thank them

Give clear and thorough context

Use straightforward language

Let them “drive”

Provide step-by-step written instructions or screencasts

Allow them to record the virtual encounter in case that is helpful for them to come back to

Don't discount reference chat, text, and email

# Outreach



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Reaching Neurodivergent Patrons



Virtual contact methods for both Reference and Circulation



Explain service expectations on your website so patrons know what to expect when they visit the library for the first time



Don't overwhelm patrons with information—timing is key!



Opt-in for email/text message due date reminders



Visual cues for services throughout the library



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™



# Reaching Neurodivergent Patrons

Ask neurodivergent patrons what they need to succeed.



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

Thank you!  
Feel free to reach out and  
connect with us:



- Geraldine Kalim [GKalim@ubalt.edu](mailto:GKalim@ubalt.edu)
- Mari Cheney [Mcheney@perkinscoie.com](mailto:Mcheney@perkinscoie.com)
- Annalee Hickman Pierson [HickmanA@law.byu.edu](mailto:HickmanA@law.byu.edu)
- Julia Pluta [PlutaJ@umkc.edu](mailto:PlutaJ@umkc.edu)



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Further Reading & Resources



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

- Mari Cheney, Annalee Hickman Pierson, Geraldine Kalim & Julia Pluta, *How We Can Best Support Neurodivergent Patrons*, 28 AALL SPECTRUM 30 (2024).
- Jamie E. Bloss, Amanda Haberstroh, G. J. Corey Harmon & Jana Schellinger, *Library Services*, in, SUPPORTING NEURODIVERSE COLLEGE STUDENT SUCCESS 182, 183, 188 (Elizabeth M. H. Coghill & Jeffrey G. Coghill 2021).
- HALEY MOSS, GREAT MINDS THINK DIFFERENTLY: NEURODIVERSITY FOR LAWYERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS (2021).
- Matthew L. Timko, *Applying Universal Design in the Legal Academy*, 114 LAW LIBR. J. 343 (2022).
- RACHEL M. MCMULLIN & KERRY R. WALTON, SUPPORTING STUDENTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES (2019).
- Charlie Remy, Priscilla Seaman & Kelly Myer Polacek, *Evolving from Disability to Diversity: How to Better Serve High-Functioning Autistic Students*, 54 REFERENCE & USER SERVS. Q. 24, 27 (2014).
- SARAH HORTON, A WEB FOR EVERYONE: DESIGNING ACCESSIBLE USER EXPERIENCES (2013).
- Amelia Brunskill, *“Without That Detail, I’m Not Coming”*: The Perspectives of Students with Disabilities on Accessibility Information Provided on Academic Library Websites, 81 COLL. & RSCH. LIBRS. 768 (2020).
- DISABILITIES AND THE LIBRARY (Clayton A. Copeland ed. 2023).
- Jessica R. Blaemire, *More Neurodiversity Among Law Students Than Lawyers*, BLOOMBERG LAW (Feb. 29, 2024, 11:01 AM), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/bloomberg-law-analysis/analysis-more-neurodiversity-among-law-students-than-lawyers>.
- Brittany Morris, *Law Libraries’ Role in Technical Competence and the Effects of COVID-19*, 116 LAW LIBR. J. 95 (2024).
- Amanda Boyer & Amir El-Chidiac, *Come Chill Out at the Library: Creating Soothing Spaces for Neurodiverse Students*, 8 J. NEW LIBRARIANSHIP 41 (2023).
- Erica Braumberger, *Library Services for Autistic Students in Academic Libraries: A Literature Review*, 2 PATHFINDER: A CANADIAN JOURNAL FOR INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENTS AND EARLY CAREER PROFESSIONALS 86 (2021).
- ACCESSIBE, <https://accessibe.com/> (last visited June 28, 2024).
- OPENDYSLEXIC, <https://opendyslexic.org/> (last visited June 28, 2024).
- W3C Accessibility Standards Overview, W3C, <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/> (last updated Feb. 29, 2024).



#AALL24

AALL / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# Q&A



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™

# AALL Program Evaluation



#AALL24

**AALL** / YOUR LEGAL  
KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™