HAWORTH

Neurodiversity Design Guide



Create an environment where all minds thrive.



Designing for Every Mind

Human brains function in a variety of ways—a concept known as neurodiversity. Designing for neurodiversity cultivates environments where everyone can thrive. Throughout this guide, you'll find insights, applications, and solutions to design workplaces that embrace neurodiversity, enhancing engagement, well-being, and performance.

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Neurodiversity

Insights

Spaces That Think Differently

Nine Trends in Neurodiversity Design

Forward-thinking organisations create workplaces where everyone can thrive. This includes both neurotypical and neurodivergent employees who may think, interact, and experience environments differently. Through our research, Haworth has defined nine trends that encompass important considerations in designing inclusive spaces and cultures.



Growing Neurodivergent Workforce

Reported neurodivergence in the global workforce has increased 15–20 percent. More than half of Gen Z identify as neurodivergent. By 2030, this generation will comprise 30 percent of the workforce, prompting organisations to develop more comprehensive support strategies and inclusive design solutions.



Sensory Sensitivities

Environmental factors have a significant impact on the workplace experiences of neurodivergent employees. Sensory sensitivities commonly co-occur, with 65 percent of neurodivergent individuals experiencing sensitivity to both sound and light. Thoughtful consideration of temperature and tactile elements can dramatically improve comfort and productivity.



Workplace Stress Management

A full 89 percent of neurodivergent individuals report that their workplace environments directly contribute to their stress levels. Organisations that have implemented dedicated quiet spaces and structured support systems have seen a notable reduction in reported stress levels.

Mental Health Integration

Organisations are prioritising design solutions proven to help alleviate stress and cognitive overload, organisations are prioritising design solutions proven to support focus, comfort, and inclusion. 85 percent of neurodivergent employees report that workplace stress affects their performance.



Neurodiversity & Strategic Design

Traditionally, companies have been reactive in adjusting environments and providing accommodations only after a need is disclosed. Now, organisations are proactively embedding neurodiversity considerations into the foundation of their design strategies. This creates adaptable workspaces that benefit all employees through inclusive design principles.

Culture and Policy Impact

Organisations that implement neuroinclusive policies and provide an inclusive culture can measurably improve employee retention, team innovation, and overall workplace satisfaction. Data shows that up to 30 percent higher retention rates can be achieved among neurodivergent employees.



Talent-First Approach

Work environments at leading companies are no longer being retrofitted to meet individual needs on a case-by-case basis. Organisations are instead building inclusive strategies from the ground up to support diverse ways of thinking. This enables them to better harness neurodivergent workers' talents in innovation, problem-solving, and analytical thinking.



Personalisation Through Technology

Smart workplace solutions that allow for individual control over environmental settings are increasingly linked to improved satisfaction and performance among neurodivergent employees.



Hybrid Work Evolution

Approximately 75 percent of organisations have adopted hybrid work models. Additionally, the average hybrid schedule consists of three days working in-office and two days working remotely.

Why Designing for Neurodiversity Matters

Fostering a Culture of Belonging

A diverse workforce offers numerous significant advantages to any organisation. Studies consistently demonstrate the positive impact of supporting diverse employees.

Neurodiversity is a valuable asset to organisations, fostering new perspectives, creative problem-solving, and enhanced innovation. Designing for neurodiversity strengthens individuals, as well as entire teams and communities.

Key Findings:

50% **Increase**
in employee retention is reported when staff feel appreciated and supported.

70% **Surge**
in new market capture is documented for companies with diverse teams.

35% **Higher Performance**
is observed in diverse teams, with a 70% greater chance of entering new markets.

Did You Know? Organisations that prioritise their employees' needs are generally more successful in attracting and retaining top talent. Creating an inclusive work environment is a crucial step in achieving this goal.

The Power of Different Minds

Tapping into Overlooked Talent

Neurodivergent individuals have unique strengths that can significantly enhance productivity, quality, innovation, and engagement. Yet, despite their potential, this group remains one of the most underrepresented in the workforce.



TIP

Use the term “neurodivergent” when referring to individuals. (Example: Jess identifies as neurodivergent.)

Missed Opportunities

While neurodivergent individuals offer immense value, they are often overlooked. Many are well-educated and highly skilled. However, employers often don't understand how to support neurodivergent individuals at work, leaving behind the untapped potential of this group. Organisations that embrace neurodiversity not only foster inclusion but also gain a competitive edge.



15-20%
of the global population exhibits some form of neurodivergence.



30-40%
of neurodivergent adults are unemployed or underemployed.

85%
of college educated autistic adults are unemployed or underemployed.

Research & Knowledge

Understanding Brain Differences

At Haworth, we believe spaces designed with inclusivity in mind empower every individual to perform at their best. Creating environments that support neurodiversity begins with a clear understanding of the correct terminology.

Simply put, certain individuals' brains develop differently, and they have unique strengths and struggles from people whose brains work more typically (neurotypical). While some neurodivergent people do have diagnosed medical conditions, others do not.

TIP

Use the term "neurodiverse" when referring to groups. (Example: The workforce is neurodiverse.)

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity refers to the natural range of differences in individual brain function and behavioural traits. The concept emphasises normal variations of the human population.

Neurodiversity is not:

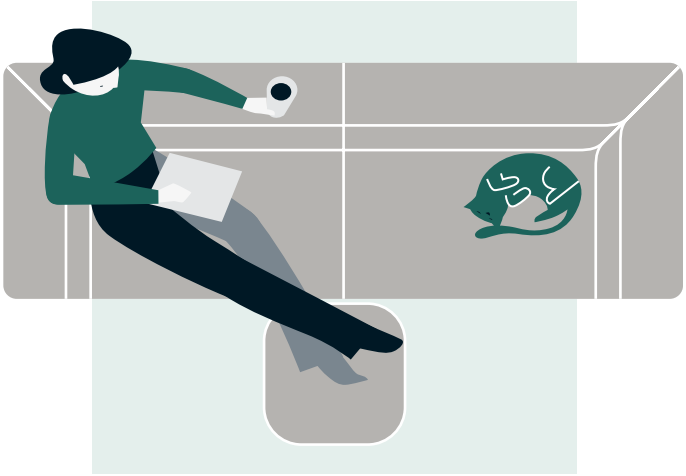
- A medical term
- A specific individual trait
- Better task management

Neurodivergence

Neurodivergence refers to differences in how a person's brain functions, impacting the way they behave, think, and interact with the world. These differences are natural variations.

Neurodivergence is not:

- A medical term
- A specific diagnosis
- Something to be cured



30% Boost
in productivity by neurodiverse teams.

Common Neurotypes

Neurodivergence encompasses a range of neurological differences, including but not limited to:

Anxiety

A mental health condition characterised by persistent worry, fear, or unease that can affect daily functioning and decision-making.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

A developmental difference that can impact communication, behaviour, sensory processing, and social interactions.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

A pattern of inattention, and/or hyperactivity and impulsively that can affect functioning and development.

Auditory Processing Disorder

A condition that affects how the brain processes and interprets sound, particularly speech.

Down Syndrome

A genetic condition causing developmental and intellectual variations, often accompanied by distinct physical characteristics.



Dyscalculia

A learning difference that impacts a person's understanding of numbers and mathematical concepts.

Dysgraphia

A neurological condition affecting fine motor skills and handwriting ability, making written expression challenging.

Dyslexia

A learning difference that primarily affects reading, spelling, and sometimes speaking or writing.

Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder)

A condition affecting physical coordination, planning of movements, and sometimes speech.

Epilepsy

A neurological disorder characterised by recurrent seizures and electrical disturbances in the brain.

Intellectual Disability

A condition characterised by limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour that appears before age 18.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

A condition characterised by recurring, unwanted thoughts and repetitive behaviours or mental acts.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

A mental health condition affecting memory and emotional regulation, caused by one or more traumatic experiences.

Tourette Syndrome

A neurological condition characterised by involuntary movements and vocalisations known as tics.

> **Did You Know?** Each neurotype brings distinct strengths and valuable perspectives. By intentionally designing spaces that cater to a diverse range of cognitive and sensory needs, we help create environments where everyone feels supported, respected, and empowered.

Sensory Processing

The Eight Senses

Creating inclusive workspaces requires a profound understanding of how individuals perceive and experience their environment. While each space should be uniquely designed to support its occupants, understanding the eight sensory systems provides valuable insights for creating environments that embrace neurodiversity.



Proprioceptive (Muscles and Joints)

Provides information about the location of a specific body part and its corresponding movement.

Sensitivities: Pressure on body parts and perception of discomfort with levels of motion or stillness; can lead to a desire to seek out or avoid movements (e.g., jumping, swinging, or running).



Interoceptive (Internal Body Sensations)

Provides information about how we feel and understand what's happening inside ourselves and how we regulate emotional response.

Sensitivities: Experiences that elicit a heightened or lacking emotional response; can affect self awareness, social understanding, problem-solving, focus, and flexible thinking.



Vestibular (Balance and Movement)

Provides information about our position in space, our movements, and movement around us; helps maintain balance and coordinate movements.

Sensitivities: Balance changes can cause distraction, dizziness, nausea, or anxiety, as well as fidgeting and other self soothing behaviours.



Visual (Sight)

Provides information about objects and people; helps us navigate spaces and interact with our surroundings.

Sensitivities: Light levels, flickering lights, glare, high-contrast patterns, bright or bold colours, and people moving directly into the line of sight or periphery.



Auditory (Hearing)

Provides information about environmental sounds, including volume (loud or soft), proximity (near or far), and direction.

Sensitivities: Sound levels, certain pitches and tones, people talking or moving, and repetitive noises.



Olfactory (Smell)

Provides information about different types of smells, including musty, acrid, putrid, flowery, and pungent aromas.

Sensitivities: Interpreting as unpleasant a smell that others perceive as neutral or pleasant. This could be the smell of food, chemicals, perfumes, or colognes.



Gustatory (Taste)

Provides information about different types of tastes, including sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and spicy.

Sensitivities: Loss of taste, aversion to or preference for certain food textures.



Tactile (Touch)

Provides information about the environment and object qualities, including pressure, texture, firmness, sharpness, temperature, and pain.

Sensitivities: Certain surface materials, trouble differentiating levels of firmness, temperature, air quality, and humidity.

Varied and Complex Sensory Needs

An individual can be hypersensitive to one element and hyposensitive to another. Providing people with appropriate tools, along with control and flexibility, is essential.

Hyposensitive
Abnormally decreased sensitivity
to external stimuli and under-reactivity

Hypersensitive
A heightened awareness of and
reactivity to external stimuli



Internal & External Sensory Factors

Internal Factors

In addition to sensory sensitivities, neurodivergent individuals often cope with several internal factors that impact their workplace experience, including:

Uncertainty: Anticipating new or uncertain experiences can be challenging. Examples include finding an unassigned desk every day or meeting new people.

Social Expectations: Neurodivergent individuals may feel judged for their behaviour. Having trouble communicating is a common example.

Coping Mechanisms: Coping with emotions and managing sensory input can involve strategies like masking (concealing behaviours) or stimming (self-soothing behaviours).



94.4%
of adults with ASD have sensory differences.

External Factors

External factors that significantly impact the in-office experience of neurodivergent individuals include:

Policies: Inclusive policies can significantly reduce stress for individuals at risk. These policies may include inclusive hiring and onboarding practices, flexibility in work location, and autonomy over work schedules.

Culture: A culture that values and celebrates diversity can foster a sense of belonging and acceptance, enhancing the overall work experience.

Trust: Providing diversity and inclusion training for managers and employees can foster a supportive environment. This ensures that once a neurodivergent individual is hired, they feel fully supported and trusted to perform their job, while also trusting others to support them.

Social Relationships: Having a supportive manager or friend at work can significantly enhance the work experience for neurodivergent individuals.

Inclusive Design

Creating Accessible Spaces

Inclusive design is a methodology that considers the full range of human diversity. This approach aims to create spaces and products that allow everyone to participate and feel a sense of belonging. The process includes:

- Identifying a representative user group and analysing existing exclusions and adaptations is integral to effective inclusive design.
- Fully integrating inclusivity into the design process to broaden the appeal and usability of products and spaces for a wider audience.

Five Inclusive Design Principles

1. Design for people.
2. Acknowledge diversity and difference.
3. Offer choice when a single design solution cannot accommodate all users.
4. Provide flexibility in use.
5. Create spaces and products that are both convenient and enjoyable for all.

Did You Know? High-concentration tasks make neurodivergent employees more sensitive to environmental stimuli, particularly in terms of lighting conditions and sound.

Defining Inclusive Design, Universal Design, & Accessibility

Inclusive Design
Looks at the diversity of experience that may exclude a person from using a product or space effectively.

Universal Design
Aims to create one experience that can be accessed and used to the greatest extent possible by all people.

Accessibility
Focused on ensuring that the environment can be used by people with disabilities.

Similarities Among Inclusive Design, Universal Design, & Accessibility

- Recognise that exclusion happens at the interaction point between people and their environments.
- Observe how people adapt to their enviornment based on their abilities in a given context and use those insights to inform design.
- Work hand in hand to lower barriers and make products and spaces accessible to all.

Workplace Opportunities for Sensory Support

Inclusive Design Considerations

Inclusive design plays a critical role in ensuring that the workplace fosters focus, comfort, and a sense of belonging for all members of a neurodiverse workforce. Asking questions like the following will help you evaluate employee needs and make space design choices through the lens of sensory sensitivity, cognitive load, and flexibility.

- Have we included neurodivergent individuals in our assessments and planning of the space?
- How can we manage noise levels, lighting, textures, scents, and visual stimuli to accommodate individuals with varying sensory sensitivities?
- Are spaces organised with clear navigation, structured layouts, and signage to minimise cognitive overload and ease navigation?
- Do various work settings, such as quiet zones and collaborative spaces, allow individuals to choose environments that support the activities take part in?
- Do individuals have the ability to adjust elements of their workspace to their comfort?
- Are smart technologies and assistive tools available to enable personalisation to individual needs?
- Have we chosen materials and colour schemes that avoid overwhelming patterns?
- Are the colours and materials used appropriate for the level of stimulation that is desired in a particular space?
- Have we provided a variety of space types designed to support the range of hyper and hypo sensitivities?
- Do all design choices contribute to a comfortable and inclusive environment for everyone, including individuals who are neurodivergent?

General Neurodiversity Design Principles



Sensory Considerations

- Provide control over environment.
- Create spaces with varying levels of sensory stimulation.
- Use materials that reduce noise and glare.



Navigation and Wayfinding

- Implement clear, consistent signage.
- Create intuitive layouts.
- Use multiple cues for navigation.



Flexibility and Choice

- Offer various types of spaces.
- Provide adjustable furniture and equipment.
- Allow for personal control of the environment.



Visual Comfort

- Minimise visual clutter.
- Use calming colour schemes.
- Provide adequate contrast for safety.



Acoustic Comfort

- Include sound-absorbing materials.
- Create zones with different noise levels.
- Provide acoustic privacy where needed.

Designing for Activity Support

When designing for sensory support, consider the specific activity in which people will participate. To assist with this, here are the top sensory considerations by activity:



Group Collaborative Work

Minimise auditory, visual, and internal distractions in group spaces.

- Screens
- Enclosed rooms
- User-controlled lighting
- Preset lighting for activity



Group Restoration / Breaks

Create relaxing, comfortable spaces for groups.

- Varying levels of enclosure
- Size variety for small and large groups
- Combine pre-set and user controlled lighting
- Free from strong odours



Individual Work

Provide a variety of work settings and user controls for individual preferences.

- Varying privacy levels
- User-controlled temperature
- Conference and meeting
- Flexible furniture



Individual Restoration / Breaks

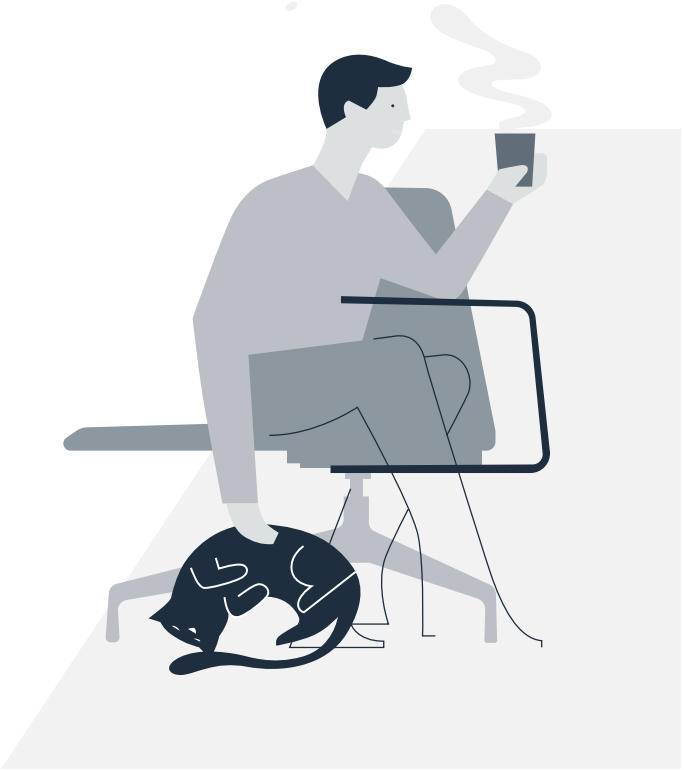
Provide quiet spaces where people can be comfortable relaxing, away from the work environment.

- Acoustic control
- Adjustable lighting
- Free from strong odours

Workplace Aids for Neurodiversity

Usage and Potential Impact

Research presents insights into workplace job aids and tools that support neurodivergent employees, showing current usage satisfaction rates for the top four workplace aids.



Did You Know? Building sounds can negatively impact both neurodivergent and neurotypical workers with 52% of neurodivergent and surprisingly even more neurotypical workers (64%) reporting a negative impact.

Top Workplace Aids for Neurodivergent Employees

55%
Headphones

46%
Relaxation/meditation apps

41%
Adjustable task chair

38%
Height-adjustable desk



"When a flower doesn't bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower."

Alexander Den Heijer



Neurodiversity

Applications

General Design Considerations for Planning a Workplace Floorplate

When it comes to the floorplate, the key to inclusive design for neurodiversity is offering choice.

Implement clear wayfinding systems that use multiple cues, including visual, tactile, and colour-coded elements. A sense of order and predictability supports the interoceptive sense to help people feel prepared, safe, and comfortable engaging with spaces. Incorporate signage, architectural differentiators, landmarks, and visual access points. Architectural differentiators, landmarks, and visual access points.

Create distinct zones with natural transitions. Clearly defined spaces are easier for people to understand and use for their specific needs. Consider adjacencies and boundaries that indicate activity levels. Ensure high activity spaces are situated away from low activity focus spaces to avoid noise travelling. Use medium activity spaces an enclosed spaces as buffer zones.

Use sound masking. These systems can help drown out distracting sounds from background conversations, equipment use, and other building noises.

Create easily accessible pathways. Ensure walkways and aisles are wide and free of sharp corners. This supports the visual, vestibular, and proprioceptive senses.

Include rooms that support a variety of movements. This supports the vestibular and proprioceptive senses with space for rocking, spinning, lying down, meditating and dancing.

Support individual user control. This includes adding adjustable controls for lighting, sound, temperature, and ventilation where possible. Create spaces with appropriate and varying privacy levels.

Create spaces with appropriate privacy levels. Consider the activities occurring in each space and the occupants. Provide enclosed touchdowns and meeting rooms to reduce visual and auditory distractions.

Control strong smells. Isolate food service areas, supply rooms, and cleaning closets.

Questions to Ask:

To begin the inclusive design process and determine your design objectives, use the following questions as a guide:

- What will the space be used for?
- Who will use this space? How often?
- How can the space accommodate diverse sensory needs and preferences?
- How will the space incorporate sensory-friendly elements (lighting, acoustics, textures)?
- Are there specific sensory elements that should be minimised or avoided?
- What type of atmosphere will the space create?

Determine Objectives/Purpose:

After asking these questions, you may determine that your design objective is one of the following:

- Create a gathering space that accommodates various sensory preferences for meetings, dining, or socialising.
- Cultivate a quiet environment for focused work, with options for sensory-friendly features.
- Design a space for relaxation and rejuvenation, incorporating sensory-friendly elements such as soft lighting and natural sounds.
- Optimise flexibility with zones to support various activities, ensuring spaces can be adapted to meet diverse needs.

Evaluate the Space for:

In addition, you'll want to evaluate the space for the following opportunities to provide sensory support:

- Orientation around sensory-friendly features (lighting, acoustics, textures) that provide comfort and stimulation.
- Areas where different textures (carpet, hardwood, soft seating) exist or can be easily incorporated, considering sensory preferences.
- Potential to create distinct areas or "rooms" within a larger space, offering options for both open and enclosed environments.
- Options to create defined structures with elements such as partitions for privacy and sensory control.
- Protection from sensory overload (noise, bright lights) to ensure comfort and accessibility for all users.


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Sample Floorplate

A variety of spaces form a cohesive floorplate that supports a neurodiverse workforce with choice in a comfortable, easy-to-navigate environment.

A **Reception**
A welcoming space, clearly defines space that offers energy and social engagement.

B **Work Café**
The work café is a space for a variety of activities in a more buzzing and social atmosphere.

C **Community**
The community space is the social hub of the floorplate, offering differing levels of stimulation from group spaces to quiet zones with nature views.

D **Workstations**
Different types of workstation set ups support varying levels of privacy, focus and collaboration.

E **Library Lounge**
Library lounge serves as a quiet destination to support focused work for individuals or groups. Established user protocols help keep the space a refuge.

F **Focus Rooms**
Enclosed individual spaces that support focus work or VC / phone calls have high levels of privacy to ensure noise from the inside or outside doesn't distract.

G **Restoration rooms**
Restoration spaces serve as retreats for employees who need a break from sensory stimulation. They offer varying furniture and setting types to allow for different ways of recalibrating.

H **Enclosed Collaborative**
These areas cater for groups to work together with a variety of tools and equipment, while keeping sound distractions to a minimum.

I **Open Collaborative**
Often situated near workstations to allow for quick team collaborations, with varying levels of user operated acoustic and visual privacy measures.

J **Focus Booths**
An alternative for collaboration with high levels of acoustic privacy. Distributed throughout the floorplate to ensure they are accessible to all.

Planning for a Variety of Spaces

The goal of a neuro-inclusive design is to create a range of spaces that are comfortable and conducive to productivity for neurodivergent individuals. To help guide your design, use the colour-coded icons to identify the intended use of a space.

High Impression

Spaces that set the tone and make an impression, impacting how people feel and connect with your culture and brand.

Restore & Connect

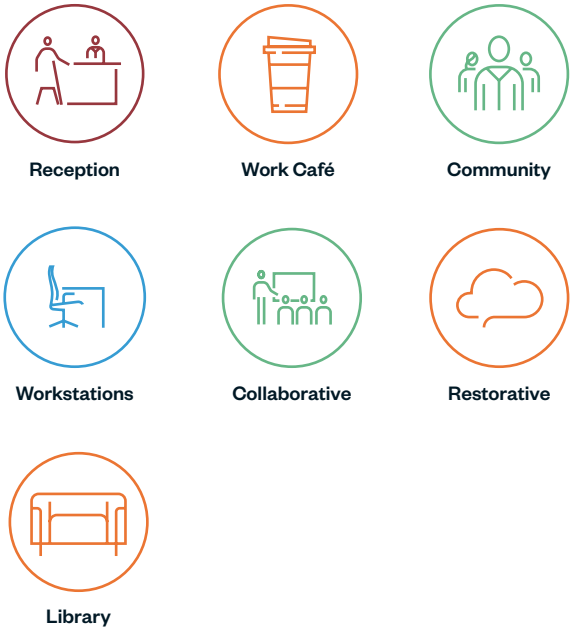
Quiet havens or community spaces that help people refresh, rejuvenate, and interact to foster well-being.

Team Engagement

Formal or informal collaborative spaces for idea generation, strategic activities, and learning, generally away from disruption or noise.

Individual Focus

Dedicated areas designed to support concentration, deep work, and privacy. These spaces enable individuals to minimise distractions and maximise their cognitive performance.



Reception

The reception should be a warm, welcoming, and memorable space that makes a positive first impression on everyone. It sets the tone for your brand and culture, offering comfortable and accessible seating for all visitors.



Design Considerations

- Navigation & Wayfinding: Provide clear directional signage with both text and symbols. Use anchoring elements such as architectural features, lighting, and flooring that help people navigate the space.
- Look & Feel: Avoid high-contrast colours and patterns that can create visual confusion. Select materials and finishes that create a lasting impression, considering how people feel when entering the space.
- Settings & Furniture: Include a quiet waiting area away from the main traffic flow. Offer a variety of seating options (e.g., firm/soft, with/ without armrests).
- Lighting: Use non-glare lighting and minimise harsh lighting. Install adjustable lighting zones with natural light where possible.
- Acoustics: Install sound-absorbing elements to reduce echo and reduce sound transmission between connected areas.


DIRECTORY
Cafe

Work Café

The work café serves as the heart of the office, encouraging people to gather. This multipurpose social hub gives people access to refreshments and allows them to interact casually and unwind. The space also provides opportunities for informal conversations among cross-functional teams and should accommodate different comfort levels and sensory preferences.



Design Considerations

- Navigation & Wayfinding: Use colours, signage, walls, screens, and varying ceiling heights to clearly delineate different zones and levels of enclosure.
- Look & Feel: Use durable and easily cleanable materials to maintain hygiene and appearance.
- Settings & Furniture: Support a variety of work, social, and relaxation activities with varied seating, tables, and power connectivity options. Create individual destinations with different levels of privacy for retreat, working, or relaxing while maintaining a connection to the lively surroundings.
- Scent & Gustatory: Provide convenient storage and service options offering diverse tastes and textures for individuals with gustatory sensitivities; consider proximity to other areas and ensure proper ventilation to manage food odours.



Community

This large, open, and flexible space accommodates a variety of activities and group sizes, offering access to technology, refreshments, and comfortable furnishings. Flexible furniture accommodates collaboration, social interaction, solo and group activities.



Design Considerations

- Navigation & Wayfinding: Use colours, signage, furniture elements, and lighting to define distinct zones and assist with wayfinding. Ensure clear sight lines to enhance visibility and awareness.
- Look & Feel: Consider durable and easily cleanable materials to maintain hygiene and appearance.
- Settings & Furniture: Include active and quiet zones that support work, social, rejuvenation, and retreat activities. Incorporate varied postures, comfort levels, and privacy with varied seating, tables, screens, and booth applications
- Acoustics: Install acoustic treatments to manage noise levels.
- Technology: Integrate display monitors to support brand messaging, collaboration, communication, and entertainment. Provide multiple power, charging, and connectivity options



Workstation #1

This variation of an adaptable team workspace addresses individual visual and sensory needs in a shared team environment. The flexible setup enables people to adjust their orientation to both engage with colleagues nearby and minimise distractions from individuals walking directly into the line of sight or periphery.



Design Considerations

- Navigation & Wayfinding: Create clear visual cues to distinguish between collaborative and focused work settings.
- Settings & Furniture: Provide workstations that individuals can re-orient throughout the day to accommodate their changing sensory needs. Ensure adequate personal space between workstations to reduce sensory overload.
- Ergonomics: Provide height-adjustable tables that support changing postures and movement whenever needed. Include ergonomic task chairs with multiple adjustment points for personalised comfort and flexibility.



Workstation #2

These individual workspaces in an open office encourage collaboration and efficient space utilisation. The open layout promotes a sense of community and strengthens team cohesion, while enabling the user to control elements in their workstation to provide privacy.



Design Considerations

- Navigation & Wayfinding: Use lighting and architectural elements, such as pendant lights and green walls, as wayfinding tools to aid navigation.
- Look & Feel: Avoid high-contrast patterns, which can be overstimulating for many users. Incorporate biophilic elements, such as greenery and nature-inspired patterns, to provide a comforting connection to the outdoors and subtle visual stimulation. Include storage solutions to minimise visual clutter and maintain a tidy workspace.
- Settings & Furniture: Ensure adequate space between workstations to provide personal space and reduce crowding. Provide adjustable privacy screens, enabling individuals to tailor their level of visual privacy.
- Lighting: Incorporate individual task lights with adjustability and dimming, allowing users to customise lighting to suit their needs.



Workstation #3

These individual workspaces within a dedicated focus zone encourage uninterrupted work in an open environment. The open layout allows natural light to flow through while maintaining a sense of connection to the broader workspace. Users can control elements within their workstation to personalise their experience and minimise distractions



Design Considerations

- Navigation & Wayfinding: Use pendant lighting and architectural elements, such as lower ceiling heights, as tools to aid wayfinding and communicate space use. Position the area away from high-activity zones to mitigate noise transmission.
- Settings & Furniture: Proximity to enclosed restorative or phone rooms supports the low-activity feel of the space. Select furniture that doesn't create visual or auditory distraction when being used or moved.
- Look & Feel: Avoid high-contrast patterns, which can be overstimulating for many users. High screens support visual privacy while created individual pods to encourage focused solo work.
- Acoustics: Incorporate acoustic strategies throughout, with carpet and soft furniture elements aiding sound absorption. High desk screens and acoustic lighting assist in minimising auditory distractions.


03
Focus

Library Lounge

A dedicated library lounge can serve as a destination for deep focus or quiet group work. This space encourages relaxed postures and provides auditory and visual privacy. Soft lighting, rugs, and warm, inviting materials enhance the tactile experience, to create a soothing ambiance that provides comfort for neurodivergent individuals.



Design Considerations

- Navigation & Wayfinding: Provide clear signage and wayfinding to help individuals navigate the space with confidence. Locate the lounge away from main traffic areas, yet conveniently accessible. Low ceiling height helps communicate space use.
- Look & Feel: Prioritise material options that are durable, yet soft to the touch and visually calming. Incorporate adjustable lighting options to allow individuals to customise their environment
- Settings & Furniture: Cater for a range of activities, from social interaction to rejuvenation and quiet retreat. Consider varying applications, comfort levels, and privacy requirements with soft seating solutions, including individual lounge pieces, sofas, sectionals, and banquettes
- Acoustics: Use booths, screens, or partitions to divide the space, provide visual privacy, and enhance acoustics.


Where silence sings

Focus Rooms

Small, enclosed spaces are designed for focused individual work, respite or short-term use. As the spaces are available to anyone who may need them, they should be adaptable. At their core, these spaces should offer user control and features such as height-adjustable desks, ergonomic seating, and adjustable lighting.

Design Considerations

- Visual & Privacy: Use non-reflective surfaces to minimise visual distractions Provide drapery or frosting for glass-fronted rooms to allow visual privacy when needed. Install adjustable lighting controls to customise the environment
- Technology: Provide clear occupancy indicators to determine availability. Ensure easy access to Wi-Fi and power outlets for connectivity and charging
- Look & Feel: Vary colours and finishes across touchdown areas to accommodate both those seeking environmental stimulation and those preferring subdued spaces. Include adjustable ventilation options for comfort
- Acoustics: Ensure good acoustic isolation to prevent noise from adjacent spaces.



Restoration Rooms

Restoration spaces serve as retreats for employees who need a break from sensory stimulation. These quiet areas feature soothing, layered elements, such as soft seating, neutral colours, and subdued lighting. Include biophilic elements, like plants, nature-inspired visuals, or views to the outdoors to promote relaxation.



Design Considerations

- Visual & Privacy: Add draperies to create micro-environments and control auditory/visual input. Provide window access to serene outdoor views
- Look & Feel: Locate retreat away from traffic while maintaining accessibility. Add natural elements to enhance calming effects. Offer a variety of seating textures to suit preferences
- Sensory Comfort: Use adjustable temperature controls for personal comfort. Add sensory-friendly elements: weighted blankets, movement spaces, and fidget tools to support self-regulation preferences Include window treatments that individuals can close if desired



Enclosed Collaborative Space

Enclosed collaborative spaces provide improved privacy and environmental control, fostering focused collaboration and confidential discussions. They also feature a variety of furniture configurations to accommodate different meeting styles and sensory needs.



Design Considerations

- Settings & Furniture: Include tablet chairs with casters to support movement and allow users to adjust their orientation. Provide standing-height tables to allow for individual control and movement. Flexible accessories and key furniture can ensure a space that can be changes to suit the users needs.
- Look & Feel: Offer a variety of seating options to cater to different comfort levels and preferences. Provide adjustable lighting to accommodate the group's diverse needs.
- Acoustics & Privacy: Use sound-absorptive materials and sound-masking systems to mitigate auditory distractions. Use curtains or frosting on glass walls to control visual distractions or breaches.



Open Collaborative Space

Open meeting spaces promote collaboration while offering flexibility and adaptability. The goal is to achieve a balance between openness and privacy, using buffers that enable cognitive work while reducing distractions.



Design Considerations

- Settings & Furniture: Provide large, anchoring table to support group work. Use chairs with castors to encourage movement and micro-adjustments. Include dual-height surfaces to support movement and choice of posture.
- Look & Feel: Strategically place screens, furniture, and architectural elements as buffers to minimise distractions and support cognitive work. Ensure adjustable lighting levels to accommodate different sensory preferences
- Acoustics & Privacy: Use sound-absorptive materials and sound-masking systems to mitigate auditory distractions. Use curtains or screens to create semi-enclosed spaces that control auditory and visual distractions for both those inside the space and in proximity outside.



Acoustic Booth

Acoustic booths provide quiet, enclosed meeting spaces within open-plan areas. Their compact, modular design allows for flexible placement without requiring permanent construction. The booths are designed to reduce noise, making them ideal for focused conversations, virtual meetings, small group collaboration, or calming restoration.



Design Considerations

- Spatial Planning: Select pod sizes and features that reflect the team's workstyles, privacy needs, and available floor space. Position booths to support natural movement and avoid interrupting key circulation paths
- Look & Feel: Consider finishes and materials that are both durable and calming, supporting a welcoming and restorative experience. Include adjustable lighting and ventilation to allow users to personalise their environment for comfort and sensory needs
- Technology: Ensure access to power and connectivity for a range of digital tools and collaborative needs. Having some booths with booking systems can also ensure fair use among employees, reducing stress around not having access.





Neurodiversity

Solutions

Product Categories

Haworth offers a range of solutions to meet your neurodiversity design needs. Our extensive portfolio, along with our family of brands, allows you to provide the flexibility and choice necessary in today's workplace. Here are some examples from our portfolio to inspire you with product solutions that celebrate individuality, promote well-being, and foster innovative connections.

Seating

Office Chairs
Zody II



Conference Chairs
Maari with Tablet



Guest & Side Chairs
Poppy



Sofas
Cabana



Poufs & Ottomans
Chic Pouf



Stools
Maari Stool



Lounge Chairs
Cardigan



Desks &Tables

Desks
YourPlace Echo



Conference and Collaborative
Planes



Side Table
Pip



Booths & Partitions

Acoustic Booths & Pods
Hush



Partitions & Screens
Collaborate Screens



Storage

Lockers
Be_Hold Smart



Accessories

Table Lights
Pablo Circa



Floor Lights
BuzziJet Standing



Ceiling Lights
BuzziPleat Light



Rugs
Mangas Space



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