UNDERSTOOD.ORG RESEARCH REVEALS THAT MORE THAN HALF OF AMERICANS DON'T TRUST INFORMATION ABOUT NEURODIVERGENCE THAT THEY SEE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Despite using social media to learn more about neurodivergence, 58% of Americans say they don't have a clear understanding of what neurodivergence is

NEW YORK, Dec. 8, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- Understood.org — the resource for the 70 million people in the United States with learning and thinking differences like ADHD and dyslexia — today unveiled its "Neurodiversity and Social Media Study" that assesses understanding of neurodivergence and attitudes toward neurodiversity-related information on social media. The survey was conducted online on behalf of Understood.org by The Harris Poll among over 2,000 U.S. adults.

51% of Americans don't trust the information about neurodivergence that they see on social media.

"Our research found that while social media has created a groundswell of conversations around neurodiversity and provides people a place where they can connect, it's not enough," said Nathan Friedman, co-president and chief marketing officer at Understood.org. "To truly reduce stigma around learning and thinking differences and help neurodivergent individuals thrive, there's an urgent need for access to credible information and expert-backed resources."

Key results from Understood.org's "Neurodiversity and Social Media Study" include:

Awareness Around Neurodiversity Is Building, But Misconceptions Are Common

Despite growing societal awareness of diversity in the United States, the study revealed that more than half of Americans (58%) say they don't have a clear understanding
of what neurodivergence is. In addition, the study found:

- Only 52% of Americans know that neurodivergent people don't all have autism.
- 43% of Americans incorrectly believe people can outgrow learning and thinking differences.
- Less than half of Americans (47%) are aware that neurodiversity is a viewpoint that brain differences are normal, rather than deficits.

**Misinformation Around Neurodiversity Is Influencing Younger Americans**

While the need to educate Americans around neurodiversity remains, those who need the most education are younger individuals. Despite younger generations seeming to embrace diversity and individuality more than prior generations, many still believe myths and misconceptions about people with learning and thinking differences.

- 24% of adults ages 18–34 falsely believe that learning and thinking differences don’t exist, compared to only 7% of adults ages 35+.
- 54% of adults ages 18–34 recognize that neurodivergent individuals are not all alike, compared to 74% of adults ages 35+.
- Only 57% of adults ages 18–34 know that neurodivergent people can be successful, compared to 75% of adults ages 45+.

**Social Media Is Helping Some Americans Learn About Neurodivergence**

Social media continues to be a place for people to share stories and experiences related to learning differences, which can have a positive impact on people's journeys.

- 59% of Americans think social media has impacted attitudes and perceptions around neurodivergence, with 30% saying it helps people feel more comfortable talking about their neurodivergence after seeing others do so.
- 43% of Americans say social media has given them the opportunity to connect with a community where they feel seen and understood on their own journey with neurodivergence.
- 21% of Americans say that social media has helped them better understand what neurodivergent individuals experience and why neurodivergent people sometimes act in a different way.

**Despite Conversations Around Neurodiversity on Social Media, Barriers to Action Remain**

Almost a third of Americans (32%) say that seeing people talk about their neurodivergence on social media made them feel like they could be neurodivergent. In fact, the study found that 69% of Americans would take action if they saw something on social media that made them think they might be neurodivergent.

- 39% would do additional online research/information-gathering about neurodivergence.
- 33% would schedule an in-person appointment with a doctor or psychologist for a formal evaluation.
- 30% would talk to their family or friends and get their opinion/insight.
However, Americans are still skeptical of the information around neurodivergence on social platforms.

- 51% don't trust the information about neurodivergence that they see on social media.
- 15% of Americans believe social media promotes misinformation for neurodivergent people and increases stigmas around neurodivergence.

**Survey Methodology**

The "Neurodiversity and Social Media Study" was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Understood.org among 2,019 U.S. adults ages 18 and older. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 2.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. For the complete survey methodology, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please visit [https://mediacenter.understood.org/research-and-surveys](https://mediacenter.understood.org/research-and-surveys).

**About Understood.org**

*Understood.org* is the resource that helps the 70 million people in the United States with learning and thinking differences anticipate the challenges, barriers, or opportunities in life and confidently reach their potential. Our mission is to shape a world for difference so that people who learn and think differently can thrive. We want to build a more equitable world where neurodiversity is championed and celebrated, and everyone can be uniquely understood. *Understood.org* is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in New York. For more information, to donate, or to partner, visit [u.org/media](u.org/media) and follow us @UnderstoodOrg.

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