

# **“Begging to be heard”: The Profession’s Exclusion and Marginalization of Neurodivergent Librarians**

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## **ABSTRACT**

While libraries are increasingly implementing practices and services designed to serve neurodivergent patrons, such efforts have not yet been extended to neurodivergent library employees, resulting in a lack of research or best practices for workplace neuroinclusion. This research addresses that gap by investigating neuroinclusion in public and academic library workplaces and identifying barriers to and enablers of inclusion and empowerment. This work highlights the voices of neurodivergent librarians and their journey of negotiating identity and deploying embodied knowledge to navigate the barriers and enablers they encounter in their workplace and profession. This study will inform how libraries can alter their workplace environment, practices, and professional norms to improve the recruitment, retention, and advancement of neurodivergent librarians.

Historically, neurodiversity research has been conducted *on* neurodivergent people from a medicalized perspective, focusing on diagnosis and characteristics of individuals and proposing interventions or changes to the individual or their behavior. This study instead centers neurodivergence by adopting a neurodiversity paradigm and critical disability approach to conducting research *with* and *by* neurodivergent people themselves, in accordance with their priorities and values.

This study will expand library literature by attending to the various intersecting identities of neurodivergent people and analyzing the impact of professional norms and expectations on the workplace experiences of neurodivergent librarians. Through the development of this unique critical approach to ‘centering neurodivergence,’ this work will also contribute a new research paradigm for future research on neurodiversity. Furthermore, this dissertation will highlight neuroinclusive workplace practices that librarians can enact in their library workplaces.

## **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

Academic libraries; Public libraries; Social justice

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

Neurodiversity; Library employment; Neuroinclusion; Neurodivergent librarians; Disabled librarians.

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