

Neurodiversity in Educational Settings

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Neurodiversity in Astronomy Session

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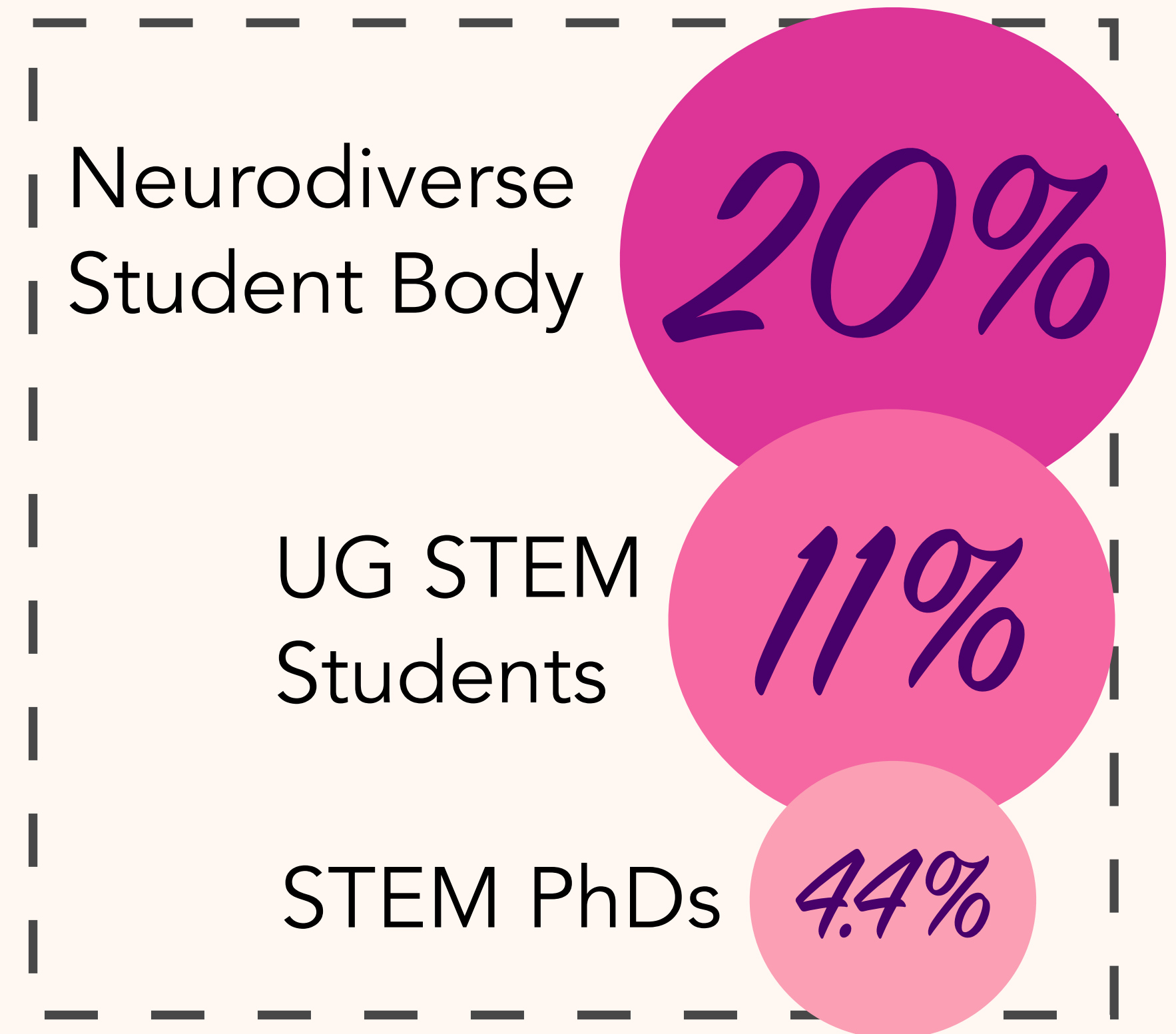
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Three Key Takeaways

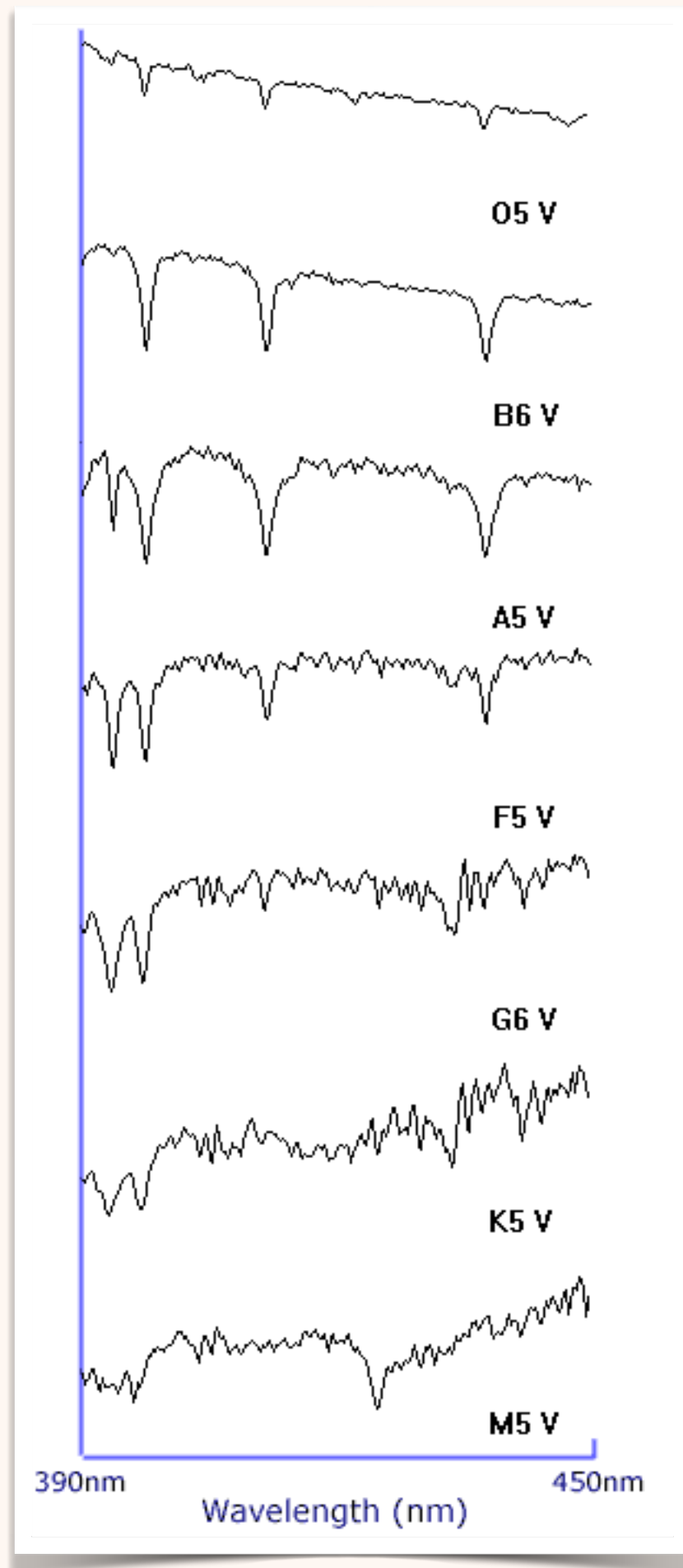
1. Neurodiverse children grow into neurodiverse adults, it is not just a 'grade school' phenomenon.
2. Accommodations and supports are not one-size-fits-all, but there are common practices.
3. There are existing programs that can be learned from to improve your department/campus for neurodiverse students.

Neurodiverse Children Grow Into Neurodiverse Adults

- There are many supports in the grade school education system for neurodiverse children.
- Neurodiverse individuals can do very well academically, which masks to others that they are struggling.
- These supports are lacking in the higher education space.



Accommodations and Supports are not One-Size-Fits-All



Just like stars can have different spectra, neurodiverse individuals can have completely different symptoms and struggles one another.

As the spectrum gets more complex (think M5 dwarf) so does the severity of the neurodiverse individual's experience.

Because of this, disability services can struggle to provide accommodations; individual faculty and research mentors face an important role.

Autism Summer Internship Program

- Annual summer internship program at Vanderbilt University.
- Think REU but for neurodiverse undergraduate students.
- Also serves student volunteers (18+, no college experience and an interest in STEM).



Photo by Susan Urmey, courtesy of the Frist Center for Autism and Innovation.

NISE Fellowship

- The Neurodiversity Inspired Science and Engineering Fellowship at Vanderbilt University.
- Graduate level program for neurodiverse graduate students in and STEM discipline, or those studying neurodiversity.
- Fellowship stipend included.
- Summer internships and student driven courses.
- Design and engineering driven courses for all fellows.



Irvine California, Summer 2022



Seattle 2023

College Autism Network



- University Resources and Collaboration.
- Links various stakeholders engaged in evidence-guided efforts to improve access, experiences, and outcomes for post-secondary students with autism.
- Yearly summits in Nashville.
- Members include universities, self-advocates, autism researchers, and support professionals; a great resource for college and university faculty!



College Autism Summit, Nashville, 2023.

We Need More of these Programs

- More neurodiverse students are being diagnosed and need supports; you have neurodiverse students but you may not know it!
- Neurodiverse students thrive when given the tools and resources that support and accommodate them. And everyone else thrives too!
- Through collaboration and communication you too can create programs and supports for your students!



Anderson Cooper Interviews Dan Berger.



Frist Center Appear on 60 Minutes.



Temple Grandin Visits the Center.

Other Neurodiversity Talks This Week

1. Poster — The Frist Center for Autism and Innovation: Resources for Neurodiverse Students in Science and Engineering — [M 5:30pm](#) (162.03).
2. Exhibitor Theater — Access & Astronomy — AAS Working Group on Accessibility and Disability — [M 2:30pm](#).
3. Oral - Community and Profession: Outreach and Mentoring — NASA's Neurodiversity Network: Creating Inclusive Informal Learning Opportunities across the Spectrum — [Tu 11.00am](#) (221.07).
4. Oral — Education and Public Outreach — SciAccess: Making Space for All — [W 10:50am](#) (307.06).

In Closing: Some Simple Steps

- When a neurodiverse student discloses to you; LISTEN!
- Ask them what supports and accommodations you can help them with. These can vary from an office with lower light/noise levels, zoom meetings (as opposed to in person meetings).
- Approach with a strength-based perspective!
- Learn from them; we are stronger with a diversity of minds!
- Reach out: jessica.s.stasik@vanderbilt.edu — @Jesstella

