



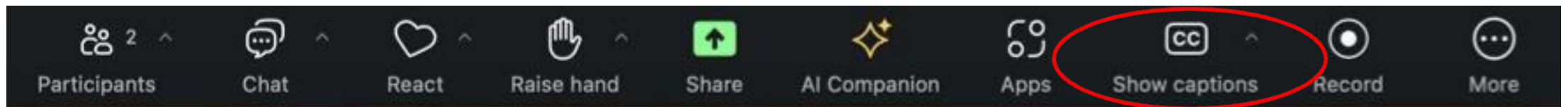
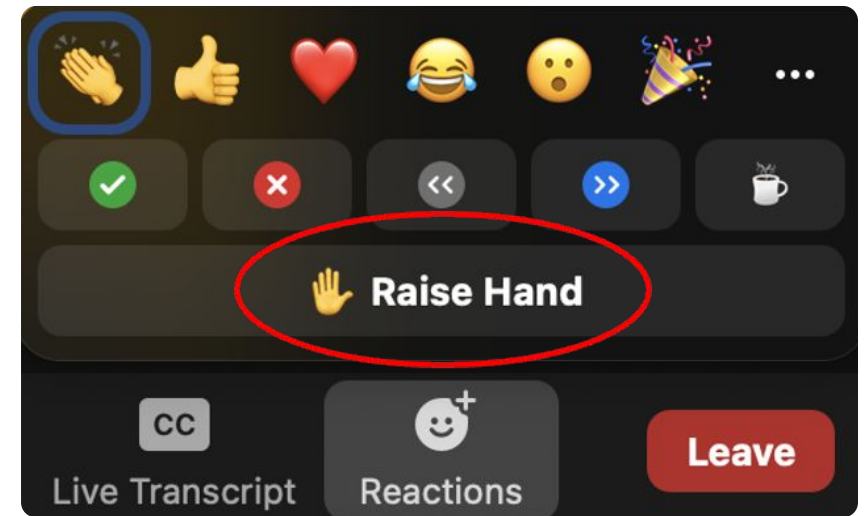
**Neurodiversity,
Trauma, and
Campus Response:**
Supporting Student
Survivors of Sexual
Assault

Tuesday, June 30, 2026
10-11:30 am PDT

VALORUS 

Accessibility

- English Closed Captions can be accessed by selecting the “Show Captions” button
- Use the raise hand feature or chat function to ask questions throughout the web conference
- Message conference facilitator, [staff name], for technical support



VALORUS[®]

Statewide Conference **August 26-27, 2026**

Rooted and Reimagined





Campus Summer Series

Game Mode: Utilizing Interactive Violence Prevention Tools for College Campuses

Supporting International and Immigrant Students After Sexual Assault: Navigating Protections, Barriers, and Culturally Responsive Campus Care

Working With Interpreters:
Supporting Multilingual and Deaf Survivors of Sexual Assault in Campus Settings

Neurodiversity, Trauma, and Campus Response: Supporting Student Survivors of Sexual Assault



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Presenters



Ashleigh Klein-Jimenez
she/her
Director of Prevention,
ValorUS®



Priscilla Klassen
she/her
Project Coordinator,
ValorUS®

Objectives

Following this training, participants will be able to:

- Explain how trauma impacts the brain and describe how these effects may present differently in neurodivergent students
- Identify common communication differences and trauma responses that may influence disclosure, forensic exams, and Title IX investigations
- Apply trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming strategies when responding to disclosures and supporting students through institutional processes

Explaining Neurodivergence

Language Matters!

Person-first language

"person with a disability"

e.g. "They are a person with autism."

- Centers the person, not the disability
- Counters ableism and the use of diagnoses as derogatory language

Identity-first language

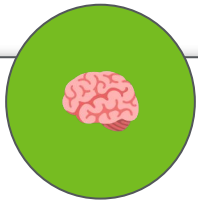
"disabled person"

e.g. "They're autistic"

- Recognizes that disability is a part of the person's identity
- Positions disability to be the same as any other identity category

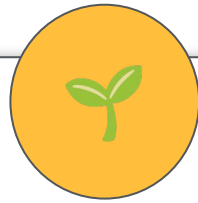
Understanding Key Terms

These terms help us understand the natural variation in how people's brains work.



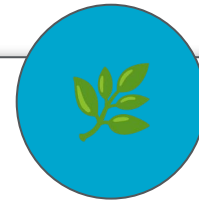
Neurodiversity

The natural variation in how brains work.



Neurotypical

A person whose thinking and behavior generally align with what society considers typical.



Neurodivergent

A person whose brain works differently than what is considered typical.

Types of Neurodivergence

Neurodivergence includes many different ways of thinking, learning, processing, and experiencing the world.

Examples include:

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism
- Intellectual Disability
- Learning disabilities
- Tourette's Syndrome
- Dyslexia
- Some mental health conditions

Factors That Can Increase Risk

These factors do not cause abuse. They can make it easier for someone to exploit another person.



Social communication differences

May make it harder to navigate social situations and read cues.



Difficulty identifying unsafe situations

May make it harder to recognize potential danger or red flags.



History of masking or compliance

Past experiences may teach people to hide needs or prioritize others' comfort.



Reliance on caregivers or peers

Dependence on others can limit opportunities for information or advocacy.



Misinterpretation of consent cues

May make it harder to understand boundaries, consent, or discomfort in others.



Limited experiences with independence & making choices

Fewer chances to build skills and confidence in decision-making.



These factors are not deficits or personal failings.

They are characteristics or experiences that, in some environments, may increase vulnerability.

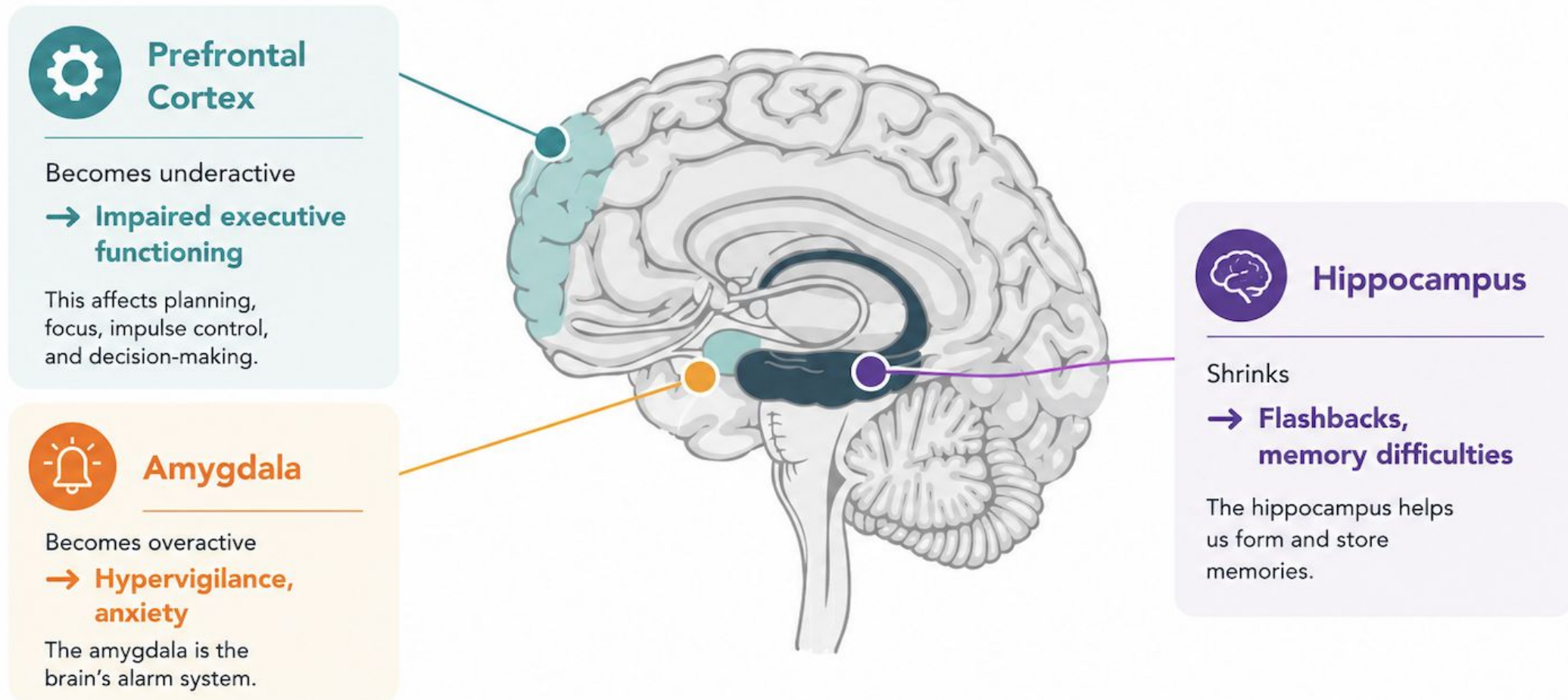
Audience Question

Please answer in the text chat

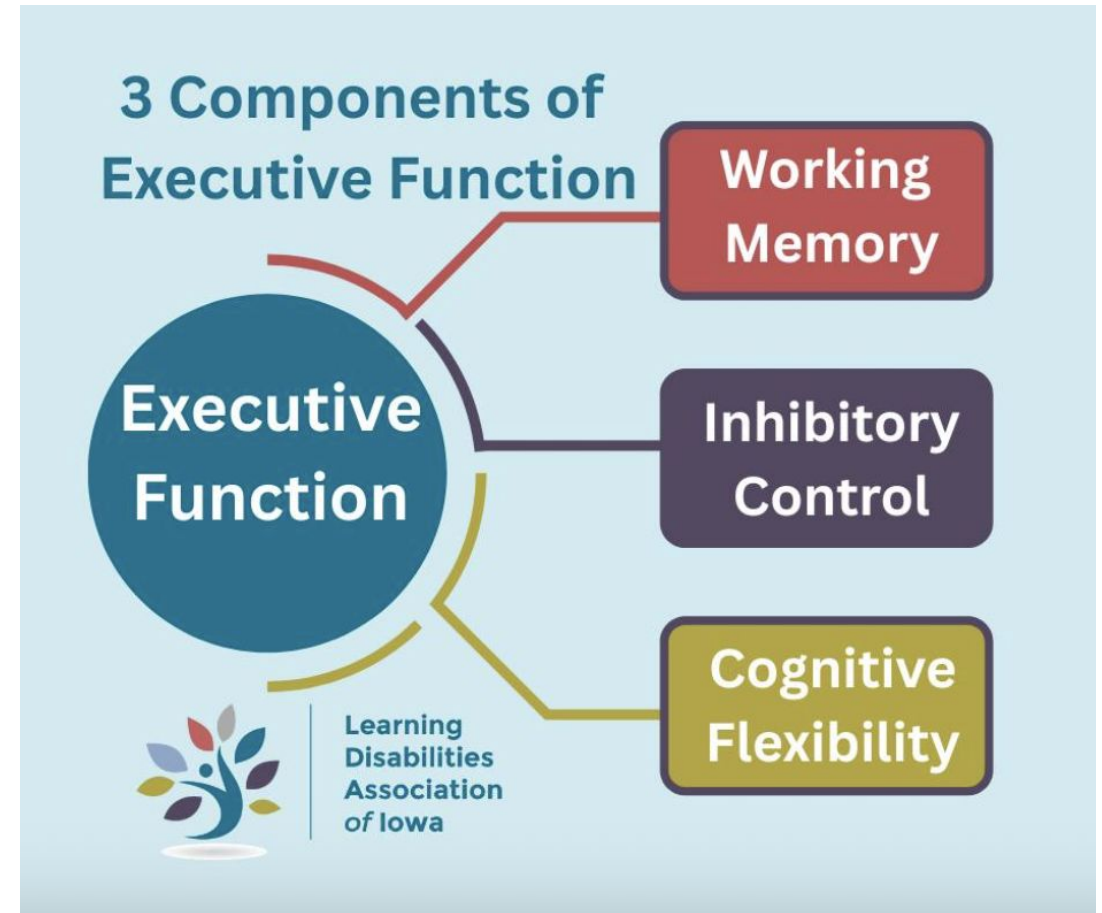
Have you ever supported a neurodivergent student?
What were some lessons you learned?

Trauma & the Brain

Impact of Trauma on the Brain



Executive Functioning Skills are mental processes that help us plan, organize, regulate our behavior, and achieve goals.



<https://ldaiowa.org/>

Audience Question

Please answer in the text chat

In what ways might students struggle if their Executive Functioning Skills have been impaired?

Trauma and Neurodivergent Brains

Increased

- Masking
- Sleep
- Sensory sensitivity
- Meltdowns
- Literal thinking
- Scripting or echolalia

Decreased

- Masking
- Sleep
- Acquired skills
- Memory
- Attention span
- Emotional regulation

Trauma Presentation

- Show flat affect
- Laugh or smile inappropriately
- Provide highly detailed but non-linear accounts
- Struggle with timeline sequencing
- Avoid eye contact
- Repeat phrases
- Seem emotionally detached
- Change their story as memory integrates

Title IX Process

Preparing Students for the Title IX Process

- What Title IX is and is not
- Step-by-step process
- Timeline expectations
- Who will know
- Possible outcomes
- Their rights
- Retaliation protections
- Possible accommodations & process

Investigations & Interviews

- Provide visuals for each step
- Avoid rapid-fire questioning
- Avoid interpreting flat affect as lack of credibility
- Understand memory fragmentation
- Allow written statements
- Allow breaks
- Use structured, concrete questions
- Be aware of masking fatigue

Credibility

Inconsistent story

trauma memory
integration

Odd details

sensory
encoding
differences

Delayed
reporting

processing time,
fear, confusion

No emotion

flat affect

Too emotional

dysregulation

Communication Differences

- Literal interpretation of language
- Difficulty with abstract questions
- Delayed processing time
- Difficulty with time perception
- Inability to speak under stress
- Augmentative/alternative communication use (AAC/Communication devices)
- Difficulty labeling emotions

Communication Strategies

AVOID

- Technical/complicated language
- Rapid questioning
- Leading questions
- "Why" questions
- What time/How long?
- Skipping over interviews
- Rushing
- Pressuring for eye contact

INSTEAD

- Use clear, direct language
- Ask one question at a time
- Clarify meaning ("When you say... ")
- "How did you respond? Then what happened?"
- Relating times to daily events (lunch/class)
- Offer options for materials
- Allowing extra time

- Repeat what was heard if unclear
- Offer choices whenever possible

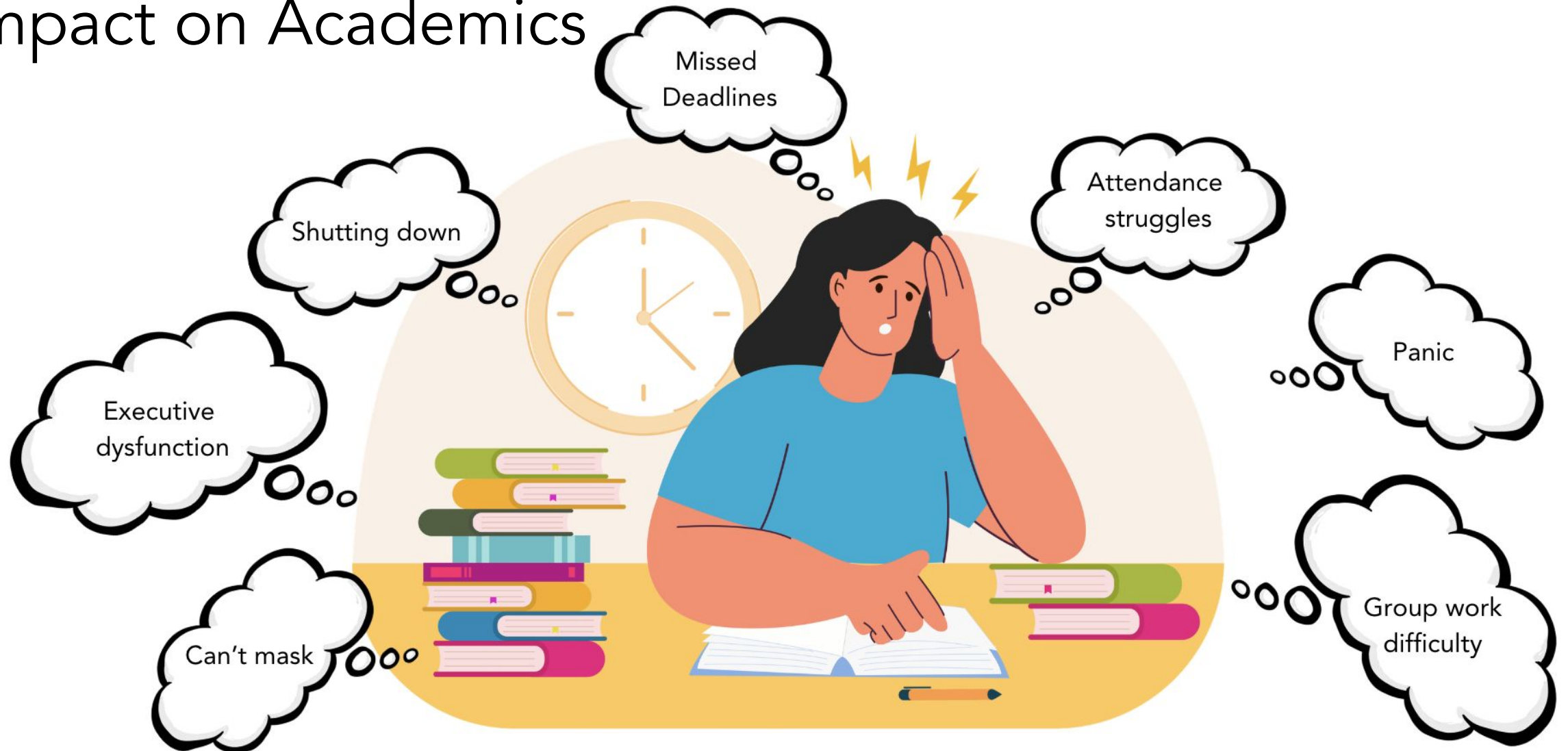
Audience Question

Please answer in the text chat

What supportive measures could we put in place to support neurodivergent students?

Supportive Strategies

Impact on Academics



Impact on Academics

Supportive Measures

Reduced course load

Flexible deadlines

Modified attendance

Alternative participation

Campus escort services

Priority registration



Audience Question

Please answer in the text chat

What sensory tools do you currently have to support students when they are struggling?

Sensory Considerations

Survivors may struggle with:

- Bright lights
- Loud environments
- Strong smells
- Physical touch
- Unexpected transitions
- Overwhelm/Meltdowns
- Communicating
- Language transition
- Urge to elope/flee
- Restlessness
- Comprehension

Accommodations:

- Dim or varied lighting, Sunglasses
- Earplugs/defenders
- Scent-free environments/masks
- Weighted blankets/pads
- Step-by-step preview
- Offering breaks, Sensory tools/fidgets
- Support person. alt. methods
- Interpreter
- Weighted blankets/pads
- Alternative seating options
- Build in extra time

Forensic Exam Supports

- Explain each step before it happens
- Provide visuals for each step
- Affirmative consent throughout
- Avoid sudden touch
- Reminders of autonomy ("You can stop at any time.")
- Supportive awareness of stimming
- Reduce unnecessary staff in room
- Clarify purpose of evidence collection

Collaboration Across Campus

- Title IX office
- Counseling services
- Disability services
- Campus police
- Academic advisors
- Residence life

Empowerment & Autonomy

- Choice
- Predictability
- Clear communication
- Validation
- Control over process
- Respect for neurodivergent identity

Thank you for joining us!

QUESTIONS?



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