

# Galaxy Of Terms

## - a glossary attempt

→ *The glossary attempt is currently still in written form, the collaged poster will follow in the coming week with the printed zine. The terms are arranged in relation to each other, rather than alphabetically.*

**Glossary Attempt:** I really struggled writing a glossary, I felt constricted by the format and nervous to do it wrong. Given that activist language is always in discussion and changes very quickly - as it should - it seems important to explain some terms and contextualize how I understand them. In order to give my mind-mappy brain an adequate form of expression, please look at the A2 Poster I have created. It will make clear how the concepts relate.

**Bibliography:** In this glossary attempt my explanations are gathered from different disabled communities and researchers, which speak from personal experience and have long studied the use of these terms. They are gathered across books, articles, instagram, other glossaries and personal experience. I only named the direct citations. All the sources as well as further resources be found at the very end of zine issue #1.

**Ableism** is a term originating from the American disability rights movement. It refers to discrimination against people with disabilities who do not conform to normative ideas of what people can and should be able to do—for example, walk, see, hear, speak or interact socially. In German, the phrase “behindert werden” (to be hindered/disabled by...) aims to make it clear that people are not disabled because of their individual bodies, but rather by architecture, barriers and societal exclusions.” *Glossary Schauspielhaus Zürich*

**Aesthetics of Access** describes a practice in the performing arts: accessibility is built into artistic production from the outset and with an artistic aspiration, rather than being added later on. Accessibility is an aesthetic choice which is exposed and celebrated, rather than trying to be hidden, which creates an array of new aesthetics and possibilities in theatre. One condition is that disabled artists are involved in the process with their expertise.

**Access** is the power, opportunity, permission, or right to come near or into contact with someone or something. Many people think access is mainly physical wheelchair access or having a sign language interpreter at events. The often forgotten things that make a space accessible for neurodivergent people are for example: Relaxed Performances (see issue #2), Easy Language,

detailed information in advance, dyslexia-friendly text fonts, quiet rooms and lateness policies.

**Bodymind** is a way of understanding that our body and our mind are deeply connected, rather than separate entities. It challenges the old idea of mind-body dualism by showing that our thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations are all parts of a unified experience. Margaret Price, Eli Clare and Sami Schalk shaped the disability justice concept of bodymind in the early 2010's by emphasizing the inseparable connection between mental and physical processes and highlighting the lived, integrated experience of disability.

**Crip or Crippling** is reclaimed from the slur *cripple* and is a self-empowering term used by people with disabilities, behaving similarly to the term queer/queering. Crip is an activist term that goes beyond physical disability and can be used by neurodivergent people too. Crippling as a verb is a practice which centers the experiences of disabled people by applying a disability justice lens to things, and challenging ableist norms and exclusions.

**Crip Theory** was established in the 2010's by Robert McRouer and Victoria Ann Lewis. It encourages political resistance against ableist societal expectations and describes people, relationships, and behaviors that exist outside traditional bodymind norms - also challenging the conventional able-bodied/ disabled binary.

**Crip Spacetime** is a concept by Margaret Price which explains how disabled people experience time and space in ways that differ from the norm. It highlights the everyday challenges - like delays, extra costs, inaccessible spaces and altered schedules - that neurodivergent and other disabled and chronically ill people face. Crip Spacetime criticizes systemic barriers and inadequate institutional support, and access only being fixed with individual accommodations.

**Disability Justice** is a framework that goes beyond legal accommodations to tackle the overlapping systems of oppression that marginalize disabled people face, especially those who face intersectional challenges because of race, gender, or other identities. To better support and value disabled lives, it emphasizes community care, self-determination, and rethinking social structures. It strives for a society that not only provides access but also truly recognizes the diverse contributions of disabled individuals.

*"This is disability justice. We honor the long standing legacies of resilience and resistance which are the inheritance of all of us whose bodies and minds will not conform."* Sins Invalid - Disability Justice Manifesto

**Internalized Ableism** occurs when disabled people absorb society's negative views about disability and compare themselves unfavorably to neurotypical or able-bodied people, setting unrealistic standards in the process. In relation to neurodivergence, we speak about internalized neurotypicality. Internalized neurotypicality often includes feeling ashamed, "lazy", "unprofessional" or too "weird". Many of these internalized beliefs end up in overcompensating behavior like perfectionism, overbooking yourself with plans or believing that "masking more" is necessarily always better.

*"What do you think 'healing' is? Do you think that it means becoming as close to able-bodied as possible? Do you think it is always sad or terrible to be sick or disabled? Do you think everybody wants to be able-bodied and neurotypical, and would choose it if they could?"*

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha - Care Work - Dreaming Disability Justice

**Masking** is when a person intentionally hides or suppresses their neurodivergent behaviors and traits to appear more in line with societal expectations. Masking is an adopted coping strategy which can help avoid negative consequences such as exclusion or bullying. It can take many forms such as masking processing style, lack of coordination and limited food preferences, to the fact that the need for rest is bigger than it is for most neurotypical people.

Masking shapes the fields of work, dressing styles and the formed relationships. It's a valuable tool that helps neurodivergent people navigate the neurotypical world. Hence being able to choose to mask can also be seen as a privilege.

**Neurodivergent** describes bodyminds that "divert" significantly away from mainstream societal neuronorms. Diverging is a spectrum and can take many shapes and forms, which can include the processing of sensory stimuli, spatial and temporal orientation, memory, or modes of communication. Instead of empathizing with different medical "disorders" - often seen by the broader society as a "deficit" - the term highlights variations as equally valuable. The term - coined in 2000 by Kassiane Asasumas- comes from autistic communities, who have welcomed folks with other marginalized brain/bodyminds to use them, including but not limited to people with cognitive, brain injury, epilepsy, learning and mental health disabilities. It also includes (voluntary or involuntary) undiagnosed people and anyone that is questioning if they are neurodivergent. It is widely used in disability activism as an umbrella term to describe common discriminations amongst different neuro-minorities.

**Neurodiverse** is the idea that all brains and connected bodyminds are diverse in how they work - no two brains or nervous systems are the same, and all types of thinking should be

regarded as naturally occurring variation. Indeed, society needs different ways of thinking to solve complex problems. This term includes both neurodivergent people, as well as neurotypical people - describing the existing neurodiversity amongst humanity.

**Neurodiversity Movement** is a social movement which emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990 when Autism networks started to form across the US. Around 1998 Judy Singer and others started to use the word in academic theory. The framework understands all the different human brain functions equally in their abilities and supports how they interact with the world around them. Differences are not considered to be deficits that need to be “fixed”, but just part of diversity.

An individual cannot be neurodiverse, this term is only used for groups, as it refers to the variety in population, place or group.

**Neurodiversity Paradigm** starts from the understanding that neurodiversity is an axis of human diversity, like ethnic diversity or diversity of gender and sexual orientation, and is subject to the same sorts of social dynamics as those other forms of diversity—including the dynamics of social power inequalities, privilege, and oppression. From this perspective, the pathologization of neuro-minorities can be

recognized as simply another form of systemic oppression which functions similarly to the oppression of other types of minority groups. When we recognize neurodiversity as a form of human diversity, and recognize the pathology paradigm as a form of systemic oppression like racism or heterosexism, it's easy to see that the concept of a “normal mind” is just as absurd and innately oppressive as the idea that white people are the default “normal” race or that heterosexuality is the one “normal” sexuality.”  
*Nick Walker - Toward a neuroqueer future*

“The two Paradigms - the pathology paradigm and the neurodiversity paradigm - are as fundamentally incompatible as, say, homophobia and the gay rights movement, or misogyny and feminism.”  
*Nick Walker - Toward a neuroqueer future*

**Neuroqueer** is “actively choosing to embody and express one’s neurodivergence (or refusing to suppress one’s embodiment and expression of neurodivergence) in ways that “queer” one’s performance of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, occupation, and/or other aspects of one’s identity.”  
*Neuroqueer Disidentification, Justine E. Enger*

**Unmasking** is a term developed by the autism community to describe the process of shedding the masks that are put up to mask one’s neurodivergent traits. The term is now widely used

in the neurodivergent community. Unmasking looks different for each person and can include communicating more openly about one's neurodivergence, less covering up of struggles and overwhelm, asking for more adaptations to your neurotype and embracing the "weirdness" more. Unmasking can be seen as a constant tension of shedding and taking back up different masks and is a vulnerable, ongoing process that requires a supportive environment. It is proven that unmasking can lead to increased self-acceptance and mental well-being and helps to connect with others on a deeper level.

**un//masking** is a neuroqueering and a crippling practice for neurodivergent artists and performers, developed by Lovis Heuss (2025). It supports artists in making more un//masked choices in their practice, parallelly supporting their access needs and making neurodivergences - which are often non-visible disabilities - more visible in the long run. With an aesthetics of access approach, it supports artists in creating new ways of thinking and creating performance pieces and spaces from and for neurodivergent people. The term is based on the neurodivergent concept of masking and is part of the neurodiversity movement. The two backslashes (//) emphasize the constant tensions of masking and unmasking all the different masks and highlight the term's nonbinary, dynamic nature.

**sCRIPts** are scores or little instructions written by neurodivergent artists to inspire and instruct other neurodivergent artists to cripp and un//mask their own work. sCRIPts are real life examples which help to expand your un//masking toolbox and find your own ways to integrate your disability and access needs more into your artistic work. sCRIPt's can include instructions for the performance itself, or for any stage of the creation process.

**Social Model of Disability** describes a perspective where disability is seen as one aspect of a person's identity, much like race/ethnicity, gender, etc. It argues that nothing is "wrong" with the disabled bodymind but that it is the inaccessible society that is the issue or problem that needs to be fixed. The social model of disability came up in the disability rights movement in the 1970's and is the basis for the disability justice theory and therefore still widely used. It's based on physical access and has been criticized to not include chronic pain or neurodivergent views on disability. So to describe all the different perspectives on disability, there are many other models that emerged over time (for example the political model, the human rights model or the identity model). The neurodiversity paradigm can be understood as the neurodivergent model of disability.

**Pathology paradigm:** “starts from the assumption that significant divergences from dominant sociocultural norms of cognition and embodiment represent some form of deficit, defect, or pathology. In other words, the pathology paradigm divides the spectrum of human cognitive/embodied performance into “normal” and “other than normal,” with “normal” implicitly privileged as the superior and desirable state.” *Nick Walker - Toward a neuroqueer future*

**Intersectionality** is an analytical framework by Black feminist Kimberle Crenshaw. It describes the intersection and interaction of different forms of discrimination. People are made up of many different characteristics and identities. Intersectionality takes into account that people are often disadvantaged because of multiple characteristics/identities. For example, a lesbian deaf Black woman can be discriminated against simultaneously and in different ways because of her gender, her sexual orientation, her race and her disability (ableism).