



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
School of Social Work
Vancouver Campus



Continuing Education and Certificate Programs

Neurodiversity-Affirming Care

Dates: September 26, 2025

Time: 10:00am – 5:00pm

CEU: 6 hours

Location: Virtual*

Cost: \$180

[Registration Link](#)

**Zoom link will be provided 72 hours before the start*

Audience:

This course is ideal for social workers and other professionals in healthcare and human services.

Description:

Neurodivergent-affirming care is not only about individual interactions; it is also a form of cultural competence embedded within professional practice. To be neurodiversity- and neurodivergent-affirming is to acknowledge that all brain types, including those that are different to what society considers the norm, are equal in value and valid in their right to exist without conforming. This means valuing an individual's strengths, understanding and accommodating their challenges, and accepting differences in social interaction, communication, behaviour, and learning.

This 1-day course is designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to a neuro-affirming conceptual practice framework and tools for integrating its principles when working with individuals, families, and groups. The course will balance theoretical learning with interactive discussions, case scenarios, and guided practice.

Participants will begin with an overview of a neuro-affirming care model, exploring topics such as the neurodiversity movement; neurodivergent diversity; neurodivergence across the lifespan; neuronormativity and systemic ableism; domains of experience (body, emotional, sensory, thinking) and how they impact behaviour and interactions; masking and camouflaging; neurodivergence and mental health; and neurodivergent-affirming communication.

This course is the first of a three-part series on neurodivergent-affirming care, and a recommended pre-requisite for the following two courses. *(See a short description of courses 2 and 3 at the bottom of this description.)*

In the event that a future certificate program in neurodiversity-affirming practice is developed, these courses will count toward the required hours for the completion of that program.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the core principles of a neuro-affirming conceptual practice framework.
2. Cultivate a neuro-affirming lens and bolster confidence in supporting neurodivergent individuals and their families.
3. Identify and apply specific strategies and techniques for implementing neuro-affirming care in practice.

Learning Activities:

- Lecture, practice examples, and skills teaching.
- Experiential learning through group discussions, activities, guided practice, and debriefing.

Schedule:

| Time | Topic / Activity |
|-------------------|--|
| 10:00am – 10:30am | Introductions |
| 10:30am – 11:00am | Neurodiversity and neurodivergence |
| 11:00am – 11:30pm | Domains of experience |
| 11:30am – 12:00pm | Interactive activity |
| 12:00pm – 1:00pm | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 1:00pm – 1:30pm | Masking / camouflaging |
| 1:30pm – 2:00pm | Neurodivergence and mental health |
| 2:00pm – 2:30pm | Interactive activity |
| 2:30pm – 3:00pm | Neurodiversity-affirming conceptual practice framework |
| 3:00pm – 3:15pm | <i>Break</i> |
| 3:15pm – 4:30pm | Guided practice |
| 4:30pm – 5:00pm | Debrief |

Facilitator: Erika Ono, PhD, RSW

Dr. Erika Ono is a neurodivergent POC (she/her) who lives on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Erika is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Social Work and Clinical Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia. She is a Social Work Clinician in the Neuropsychiatry Clinic at BC Children's Hospital, Evaluator at the Complex Developmental and Behavioural Conditions Program at Sunny Hill Health Centre, and Subject Matter Expert Consultant on Neurodivergent Mental Health Literacy for the Ministry of Children and Family Development's Child and Youth Mental Health Policy, Prevention and Early Intervention Team.

Her research explores the violence of care at the nexus of diverse-abilities, gender, race, and socioeconomic status, particularly in the ways that this manifests through policy and practice with families.

Subsequent courses planned as part of this three-part series:

Course 2

Neurodiversity-Affirming Therapy: Mental Health Assessments

This course will provide knowledge and skills for clinicians to increase their capacity to recognize and validate neurodivergent identities during the assessment and treatment planning stages of the therapeutic process, and distinguish these presentations from symptoms of DSM V mental health diagnoses.

Course 3

Neurodiversity-Affirming Therapy: Adapting Treatment Approaches

This course will explore the importance of embracing neurodivergence in clinical care and provide practical strategies to create more inclusive and supportive therapeutic environments. This course will also explore evidence-informed modifications that can be made to certain therapeutic modalities in order to better meet the needs of neurodivergent clients.

Cancellation Policy: *Learners who need to cancel their registration for a course will be offered a 50% credit up to 14 days before scheduled course, which can subsequently be used for any other course in the Continuing Education and Certificate program. Please ensure that any cancellations are submitted to sowk.coned@ubc.ca.*