



MIRROR ON Neurodiversity

Following our award winning research 'Mirror On The Industry', which explores the levels of representation in TV advertising, we are bringing to you a series of insight projects that deep dive into the perceptions and experiences of different groups in society, and how we can better represent them. The next in this series is 'Mirror On Neurodiversity'.

Background

We used our **4Youth** (16-24s) community to speak to people about their perceptions and experiences of neurodiversity, along with exploring opinions on the current portrayal of neurodiversity within the media and the role brands can play in increasing awareness, understanding and shifting perceptions. Our sample featured a mix of neurotypical and neurodivergent respondents, enabling us to get wide ranging views on the topic.

We supplemented this with supporting research from 'The Real Britain Series: Designing for Disability Inclusion' study, OMD UK's proprietary research programme, as well as resources from Neurodiversity Celebration Week, in partnership with Lexxic.

Headlines

01. The disabled community is currently under-researched, stigmatised and under-represented, particularly in relation to **non-visible disabilities** and specifically **neurodiversity** - highlighting the need for brands to consider disability across a wider spectrum.



It is estimated that around **1 in 7 people** (more than 15% of people in the UK) are neurodivergent

02. Despite positive steps being taken in reframing neurodiversity, **discrimination is still rife** through societal barriers, stereotyping and lack of understanding. Improving education at all levels of society is essential to making true progress.

91% of our youth community sample said there was a **discrimination issue** for neurodivergent people, with **11%** stating it's a major problem

85% of our youth community sample said lack of education was a contributing factor to society's **poor understanding of neurodiversity**

03. The **media is an instrumental tool** in raising awareness, shifting perceptions, and increasing understanding of neurodiversity, and we're not currently doing enough to improve the representation and portrayal of neurodivergent people. There are simple steps ads can take for great commercial and societal benefits.

90% of our youth sample agree that **most brands can do more** to raise awareness, shift perceptions and increase understanding of neurodiversity

04. Brands need to **better design for disability inclusion** - not only through accurate representation, but also by achieving **accessibility at a holistic level**. This should include a consideration for how they can authentically include, represent and engage with the neurodiverse community in other forms outside of advertising.

"Brands should have diverse employees and inclusion policies to ensure people who are neurodivergent are represented within their organisation. **If brands are only interested in representing neurodiversity to be accepted in the political climate or to make money then it's not an authentic pursuit of change.**"
Female 4youth community respondent

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