MindMate Neurodiversity Information Hub
Marbles in a jar analogy
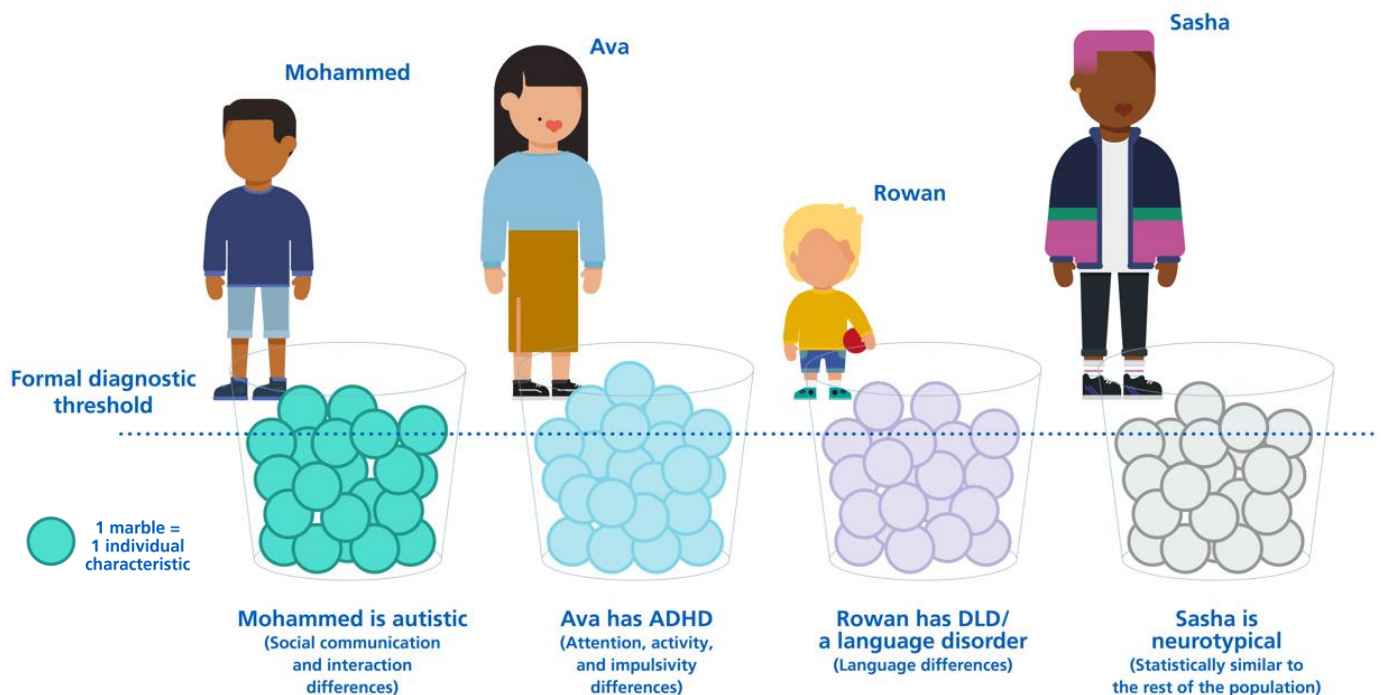
Each individual's own profile can be thought of as a **jar of marbles**. Each marble in the jar gives the person specific characteristics and patterns of thinking / processing.

Formal diagnosis - marbles in a jar

Some individuals have lots of similar marbles in their jar. These individuals have enough of those marbles to meet the **diagnostic threshold** to be given a **formal diagnosis**, e.g. autism, ADHD, DLD.

This is shown with the characters below.

Mohammed

Ava

Rowan

Sasha

Formal diagnostic threshold

1 marble = 1 individual characteristic

Mohammed is autistic
(Social communication and interaction differences)

Ava has ADHD
(Attention, activity, and impulsivity differences)

Rowan has DLD/ a language disorder
(Language differences)

Sasha is neurotypical
(Statistically similar to the rest of the population)

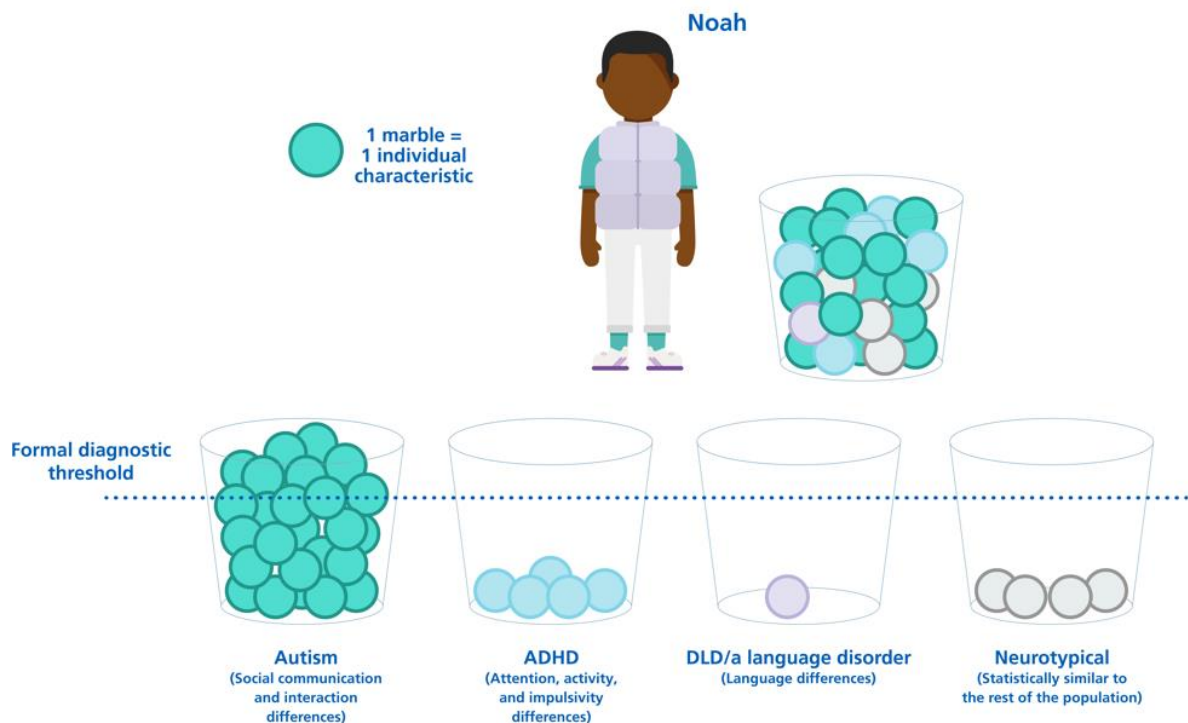# Mixed profile with a diagnosis - marbles in a jar

Some individuals have a high number of one particular marble type, or characteristic, with a range of other marble types. This means they meet the threshold for one specific neurotype diagnosis, e.g. autism.

They do not meet the threshold for other neurotypes, e.g. ADHD. However, the individual still shows differences in that area and may still need support in that area, e.g. attention and activity.
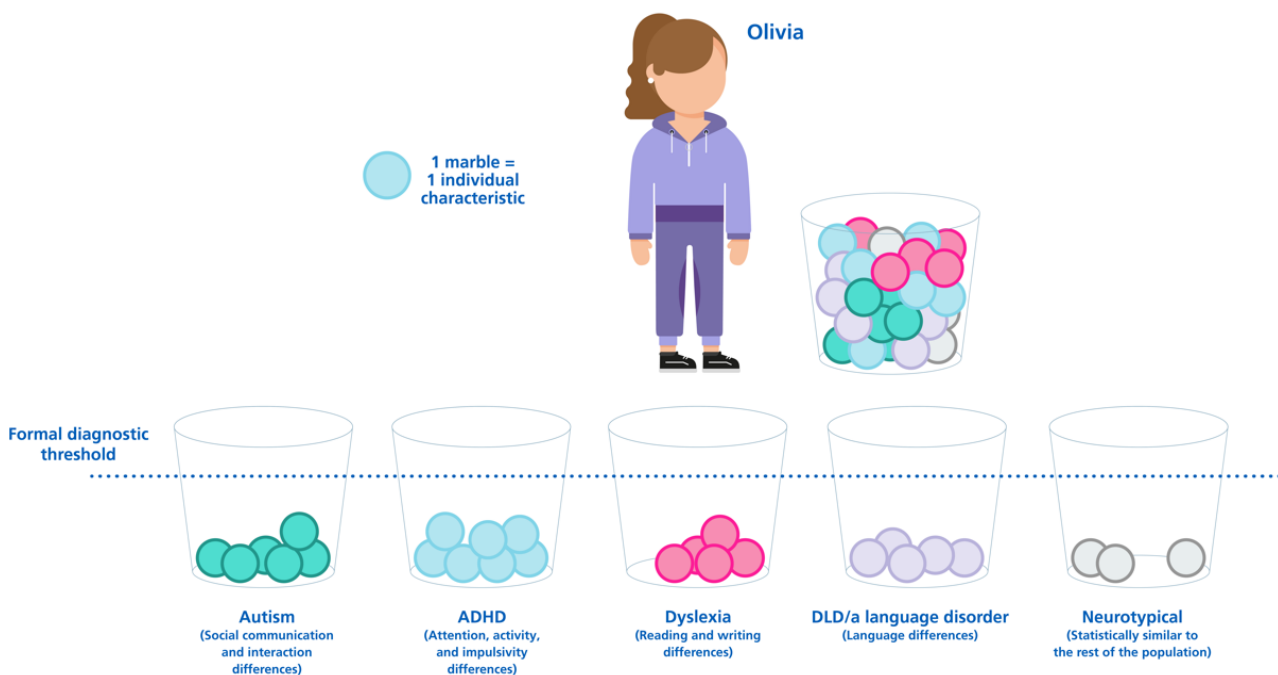
This type of profile is shown with the character, Noah, below.

Mixed profile with no diagnosis - marbles in a jar

Some individuals have lots of different types of marbles, or characteristics. They may not have a high enough number of any particular marble, or characteristic, to meet the threshold for any individual diagnosis. Nevertheless, they show a significant range of differences in their thinking and processing.

This is shown with the character Olivia, below.

Olivia

1 marble = 1 individual characteristic

Formal diagnostic threshold

Autism
(Social communication and interaction differences)

ADHD
(Attention, activity, and impulsivity differences)

Dyslexia
(Reading and writing differences)

DLD/a language disorder
(Language differences)

Neurotypical
(Statistically similar to the rest of the population)

These individuals are likely to experience the world around them differently to a neurotypical peer and may need significant **support** at times, despite having no diagnosis.

They may benefit from being **identified** as neurodivergent and given **appropriate support** to meet their individual needs, strengths and differences.

If individuals are not supported for all their individual differences and needs, with or without a diagnosis, they are at risk of **feeling misunderstood** and not enabled to thrive in their own way.

Why needs-led support is important

Understanding each individual's profile of characteristics (their marble jar), enables their individual needs to be met. This is also referred to as a 'needs-led' approach.

A needs-led approach is taken in Leeds. This means that children and young people do not need a diagnosis to receive appropriate support and adaptations. Even with a diagnosis, each individual's needs, strengths and differences need to be considered and supported to enable them to thrive.

You can find out more about needs-led support and the **graduated approach** to support in schools at
https://mindmate.org.uk/neurodiversity-information-hub/education/.

The 'Marbles in a jar' analogy has been developed in partnership with West Yorkshire ADHD Support Group.