Neurodiversity-Affirming Service Evaluation Matrix

Assess whether a service, therapy, or programme is neurodiversity-affirming. Rate each criterion (Yes / Partially / No) and record supporting evidence in the Notes column. Domains follow the CARES framework (O'Neil Woods et al., 2025). The Eating & Feeding section applies only where relevant.

Domain	Criterion	Rating	Evidence / Notes
Collaborative Understanding	Is the service collaborative, or does it position the clinician/provider as the sole expert?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service explicitly acknowledge neurodiversity as a natural form of human variation?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Has the service been developed in consultation with neurodivergent individuals and/or lived-experience communities?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Is the service well-received by neurodivergent communities (e.g. peer reviews, community feedback)?	Yes / Partially / No	
Accessibility	Is the service deliverable in a neurodiversity-friendly environment (e.g. telehealth, low-sensory setting)?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Is the service flexible enough to adapt if a client experiences a shutdown, meltdown, or dissociation during a session?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service acknowledge and accommodate sensory preferences and aversions?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Can the service support individuals with multiple presentations, or is it designed for an 'ideal' client?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Are communication formats, materials, and scheduling accessible to diverse needs (AAC, plain language, variable session length, etc.)?	Yes / Partially / No	
Recognising Intersectionality	Does the service acknowledge that clients may hold multiple marginalised identities (e.g. neurodivergent, LGBTQ+, BIPOC, CALD, disabled, chronically ill, fat)?	Yes / Partially / No	
	If targeting a marginalised group, was the service developed in active collaboration with that community?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service recognise the overlap between neurodivergence and other presentations (e.g. mental health, eating difficulties, trauma)?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service avoid a single 'universal' standard of functioning that centres neurotypical or dominant-culture norms?	Yes / Partially / No	

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Service: _____ Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Domain	Criterion	Rating	Evidence / Notes
Empowerment	Does the service actively promote client self-advocacy and self-determination?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service offer harm reduction as a valid goal, rather than requiring elimination of all 'disordered' behaviours?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service avoid framing neurodivergent traits as deficits to be fixed or normalised?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Are clients given meaningful choice in goals, pacing, and the structure of the service?	Yes / Partially / No	
Strengths Recognition	Does the service use respectful, strengths-based language throughout?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service avoid pathologising language (e.g. 'non-compliant', 'unmotivated', 'treatment-resistant')?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service identify and build on client strengths, interests, and values rather than focusing solely on difficulties?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Is the service person-centred, treating the client as the expert on their own experience?	Yes / Partially / No	
Eating & Feeding (if applicable)	Is the service applicable and useful for clients with ARFID or atypical eating presentations?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Is the service weight-neutral and free from weight-loss or BMI-based goals?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service acknowledge diverse ways of eating that may legitimately meet a person's nutritional and sensory needs?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service recognise that some eating/feeding behaviours may be stims or sensory-seeking (e.g. chewing, carbonated drinks, rhythmic movement)?	Yes / Partially / No	
	Does the service untangle neurodivergent traits from eating disorder symptoms in a non-pathologising way?	Yes / Partially / No	

Scoring guide: **Yes** = criterion clearly and consistently met. **Partially** = met in some areas but gaps remain. **No** = criterion not met or evidence absent. **N/A** = not applicable to this service type.