NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Interests, Issues, and Opportunities

Edited by
Susanne M. Bruyère and Adrienne Colella

First published 2022

ISBN: 9780367902988 (hbk)
ISBN: 9780367902971 (pbk)
ISBN: 9781003023616 (ebk)

Chapter 2

SHAPING ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATES TO DEVELOP AND LEVERAGE WORKFORCE NEURODIVERSITY

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DOI: 10.4324/9781003023616-2

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

SIOP
SOCIETY for INDUSTRIAL and ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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> I have high-functioning autism, and this means that I usually look normal on the outside . . . If I was standing next to you waiting for an elevator, I would make small talk and smile and you wouldn't know I'm autistic. This is purposeful and requires significant intellectual investment . . . I wish I could shout from the rooftops: You have no idea how hard I have to work to appear this way! . . . Then imagine that, under this assault, you concentrate on maintaining an elaborate performance to relate to those around you while suppressing your natural mode of speaking and acting . . . I have tried being myself, plenty of times, and the universally negative feedback I received from early childhood through college taught me that that self is not welcome in a neurotypical world.
>
> – Christine Condo in the *Washington Post* (Condo, 2020)

As this quote illustrates, our world is set up with neurotypical people in mind, and this can place a considerable number of barriers into daily interactions for individuals that are neurodivergent. By neurotypical, we mean having cognitive functioning within the bounds of what society dictates as 'normal' (CIPD, 2018), whereas neurodivergent or neurodiverse means that cognitive functioning is different from what society dictates as 'normal' (CIPD, 2018). Conditions that have been considered under the umbrella of the term 'neurodiversity' include attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD), autism (including Asperger's syndrome), depression, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dyslexia, dyspraxia, learning disabilities, and Tourette syndrome (Armstrong, 2010; Babineau, 2010; Burnett & Trerise, 2019; Hendrickx, 2010; Richards et al., 2019; Rogers, 2017; Rothstein, 2012; Sumner & Brown, 2015). Instead of placing the unnecessary burden on neurodivergent individuals, what if workplaces altered their environments so that all employees – including those who are neurodivergent – could easily apply

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their strengths at work? That is, instead of having applicants and employees spend significant intellectual resources trying to fit into a world that is not designed to embrace neurodiversity, what if organizations bolstered their climates in ways that take into account the natural variation in human neurocognitive functioning and, in doing so, positioned themselves to reap benefits that contribute directly to the bottom line?

At first glance, one might ask why it is important to examine the role of climate in considering neurodiversity in the workplace. For many readers, exposure to neurodiversity comes from media portrayals that often oppose the experience described in the opening quote by depicting that workplaces are inclusive of, and value, the skills and abilities of neurodivergent individuals. That is, through the use of characters in books, TV shows, and movies that have savant-like abilities, storylines are built around these characters' sought-after skills and abilities. For example, in crime dramas, viewers are often presented with a detective or investigator that solves crimes others cannot (e.g., Sherlock Holmes, Monk in *Monk*, Carrie in *Homeland*, Dr. Brennan in *Bones*; Faragher, 2018; Loftis, 2014; McHugh, 2018). Similar portrayals are also seen in medical dramas, such as Dr. Shaun Murphy in *The Good Doctor* and in academic contexts such as Dr. Sheldon Cooper in *The Big Bang Theory*. Based on such media portrayals, it seems that workplace climates accept and welcome neurodivergent employees and, in fact, that their skills and abilities are sought-after while the 'realities' of the neurodivergent condition often are brought into the storyline in ways that enhance the entertainment value (e.g., awkward social interactions with others providing a moment of comic relief).

In contrast to these many media portrayals, the idea of organizations supporting or even seeking out neurodiversity for their workforces is not a typical experience for many neurodivergent employees; there is evidence for the unemployment, underemployment, and exclusion of neurodivergent individuals from workforces (Eden, 2019; Carter et al., 2012; National Autistic Society, 2016; Richards, 2012; Snowling et al., 2000). In fact, research shows that most organizations at this point have failed to consider the benefits that a neurodiverse workforce can bring to their employees and the organization overall. However, this gap that exists between the lived reality of many neurodivergent employees (one marked by unemployment, underemployment, and exclusion) and the limited portrayals of neurodiversity through books, TV, and movies (one marked by employment and inclusion) presents an opportunity for researchers and practitioners looking to change the way organizations operate so that they are more supportive of neurodiversity. To elaborate, the addition of these characters to mainstream media is increasing society's understanding of the strengths that neurodivergent employees can bring to their jobs as detectives, investigators, doctors, and scientists through the use of the limited savant stereotype (Dale, 2013; Woods, 2014). This growth in neurodiversity as a social movement (Armstrong, 2010; Krcek, 2013; Haney, 2018; Orsini & Smith, 2010) presents an opportunity for researchers and practitioners to present evidence that counters narratives built on limited stereotypes

that focuses on genius (McHugh, 2018)[1] while also providing a platform to discuss how organizations can support a neurodiverse workforce through strategic changes that will bolster the climates in their workplaces.

Through this chapter, we discuss how neurotypical norms have dominated our human resource management practices for so long that organizations need to establish new norms if we are going to be able to support neurodivergent applicants and employees. Then, we suggest that developing and maintaining diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates in a way that supports neurodiversity can provide a foundation for organizations to be able to support all employees while also leveraging the strengths of their employees to increase the organization's bottom line. Because the neurodiversity movement is still in its infancy (den Houting, 2019) but gaining traction, now is the perfect time for researchers and practitioners to explore ways to include and support individuals in the neurominority, or those who are neurodivergent.

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: First, we discuss the role of psychological climates and their role in supporting neurodiversity in organizations. Psychological climates are defined in this chapter as an employee's "cognitive appraisals of environmental attributes in terms of their acquired meaning and significance to the individual" (James & Ashe, 1990, p. 54). Specifically, we identify diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates as crucial to focus on as organizations make changes in their workplaces to be more supportive of neurodiversity. Second, we review the literature surrounding organizational efforts thus far to discuss what practices have been successful as companies have implemented neurodiversity programs. To make this discussion as useful as possible, we discuss ways to bolster diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates across each of the eight primary functions of human resource management (HRM; i.e., selection, compensation/benefits, employee relations, occupational health/safety, training/development, talent management, job design, and retention). Third, we present directions for future research to offer research questions and topics that scholars should explore to contribute to the conversation about how changes in organizations' climates can increase support of neurodiverse workforces. Overall, this chapter aims to explore how organizations can bolster their climates in ways that take into account the natural variation in human neurocognitive functioning to provide altered workplace environments that leverage the strengths of all employees.

Organizational Climates – A Review of the Relevant Literature

We begin with an overview of three types of psychological climate and describe why these three facets in particular are essential for organizations to consider when bolstering their climates to support neurodiversity. Researchers have demonstrated previously that multiple facets of climate can exist concurrently in the work context (Ostroff et al., 2003). Though there is not always scholarly

agreement about the specific dimensions that comprise the construct of psychological climate (Martin et al., 2005; Parker et al., 2003), and different people can and do perceive different psychological climates when observing the same workplace environments (James et al., 2008), we believe that diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates have extensive research behind them such that considering these three facets in our exploration of how organizations can alter existing climates to better embrace neurodiversity will be fruitful. Specifically, in this chapter, we focus on three dimensions of psychological climate: (a) perceived diversity climate and (b) perceived inclusion climate and (c) perceived ethical climate.

Diversity Climates

First, diversity climate, or "the degree to which a firm advocates fair human resource policies and socially integrates underrepresented employees" (McKay et al., 2008, p. 350), is a type of psychological climate (Martin et al., 2005; Parker et al., 2003) that is a natural consideration for organizations to consider when building policies and procedures that are supportive of neurodiversity. The underlying idea behind building and maintaining strong diversity climates is that the organization focuses on equality of treatment across employees through the use of fair policies and the absence of discrimination (e.g., Larkey, 1996), as well as integration of all personnel. This focus could certainly benefit applicants and employees who are neurodivergent.

Previous research shows that the factors that make up employees' perceptions of an organization's diversity climate are the organization's demographic makeup, the presence of diversity across structures, leaders' commitment to diversity, and the employees' personal experiences with diversity (e.g., Hurtado et al., 1998; Mayhew et al., 2006). Organizations with strong diversity climates typically have demographic diversity in their workforce (Avery & McKay, 2010; Hyde & Hopkins, 2004) that is found throughout ranks of the organization (Kossek & Zonia, 1993).

Investing in a strong diversity climate has been shown to be advantageous for employees and organizations by providing a competitive advantage for organizations (Cox, 1994; Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000; Holmes et al., 2021). For example, diversity climate is related to how employees feel about their job and employer, job/career satisfaction, job involvement, organizational identification (Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000), sales performance (McKay et al., 2008), organizational effectiveness (Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000; McKay et al., 2008), and lower levels of turnover (e.g., McKay & Avery, 2005; McKay et al., 2007; Stewart et al., 2011). However, it is unknown how well these relationships apply to neurodiverse workforces, as many organizations have not considered this form of difference as a type of diversity. It may be that the type of accommodations required to support neurodivergent employees are unique from those of other potentially marginalized groups. Given that organizations invest a significant amount of money in

their diversity climate efforts (the median annual investment by organizations to improve diversity climate is $1.2 million; Catalyst, 2005) and that a majority of organizations will either maintain (i.e., 62%) or increase (i.e., 35%) their investments in diversity initiatives (Talley, 2017), it is imperative that researchers and practitioners begin to expand their definition of diversity to include neurodiversity. Only then can these investments build an infrastructure that supports neurodivergent stakeholders in addition to other types of diversities traditionally considered by organizations.

The need to expand current definitions to incorporate neurodiversity has true implications in an organization's ability to support neurodiversity. To elaborate, how society understands neurodiversity in many ways stems from the *medical model* (Haney, 2018; Waltz, 2013). This model promotes neurodiverse conditions as disabilities and disorders (Krcek, 2013) characterized by inabilities and impairments (Jaarsma & Welin, 2012) that need a cure (Haney, 2018). On the surface, the medical model supports organizations' efforts to strengthen diversity climates for neurodivergent employees because diversity-supportive organizations have an infrastructure in place around disabilities; and thinking about neurodiversity as a disability allows organizations to account for this new type of diversity without making too many changes in workplace practices.

However, thinking about neurodiversity within an existing diversity climate paradigm that includes neurodiversity as a type of disability[2] has been damaging to the neurodiversity community and is not truly supportive of neurodivergent stakeholders. Specifically, a line of thinking along the medical model has led the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to state that neurodivergent conditions such as autism should be almost always covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act given the limitations to brain function involved that often restrict major life activities (Hensel, 2017; c.f., Patton, 2019) when the applicant or employee is qualified to perform the essential functions of the job. The medical model is reinforced as the media continues to discuss neurodivergent conditions like autism using terms like 'autism epidemics' (Baker, 2011). This medical model has impacted research on neurodiversity, as well. For instance, the research on neurodiversity that has been produced so far has stemmed largely from perspectives that subscribe to the medical model (e.g., psychiatrists, psychologists, neuroscientists). This is demonstrated by the theoretical models (e.g., weak central coherence from Frith & Happé, 1994; executive dysfunction from Ozonoff et al., 1991) that are based on the cognitive deficits of neurodivergent individuals (O'Dell et al., 2016). While some individuals who are neurodivergent do have disabilities (Baron-Cohen, 2019), being labeled in terms specific to the medical model (e.g., as disabled, as someone with a disorder) has been limiting and even offensive for some individuals who may even develop a sense of pride regarding their neurodivergent identity. As such, using existing HR practices that follow laws and EEOC mandates around disability may help organizations begin to develop their diversity climates to incorporate neurodivergent individuals into

workplaces, but doing so without further consideration (e.g., redefining diversity to think of neurodiversity and disability as two types of diversity or considering the role of other types of climates to support efforts around building workplaces that are supportive of neurodiversity) will not produce the changes that are needed for organizations to be truly supportive of neurodiversity.

Indeed, creating strong climates in organizations that support neurodiversity will need to go beyond having diversity climates that implement equitable HRM practices focused on increasing the representation of employees with more varied types of disabilities. Others have realized the limitations of a medical model, birthing the *social model* as a way to view neurodiversity as a difference rather than as a disease, dysfunction, or disorder (Muskat, 2017; Paletta, 2013). The social model coincides with the *neurodiversity movement* (Baron-Cohen, 2019) that promotes inclusion, self-determination, and recognition of diverse cognitive styles as part of one's identity (Haney, 2018).[3] As such, to have climates in organizations that are supportive of neurodiversity, organizations have to broaden their reliance on a strong diversity climate and disabilities to explain the differences that employees are bringing into the workplace (Bruyère, 2016; Bruyère, 2019; von Schrader et al., 2014). To accomplish the incorporation of the social model and the neurodiversity movement into organizations' efforts to bolster their climates to support neurodiversity, we explore the role that a strong inclusion climate can have when paired with a strong diversity climate. Research supports the idea of multiple facets of climate working together to present consistent messages to stakeholders (e.g., Stewart et al., 2011). Moreover, given that stakeholders typically react positively to diversity climates that have strong inclusion elements (e.g., those that encourage employees to maintain their identity and include minorities through the formation of affinity groups and institutional commitments to diversity that are public; Berry, 1990; Chen et al., 2012; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Stewart et al., 2011) and promote synergies that help to leverage differences (Richard et al., 2019), we believe that the full effects of supportive climates for neurodiversity cannot be realized fully without also examining the effects of other facets of climate such as inclusion climate, as we will discuss next.

Inclusion Climates

Next, we explore inclusion climate as a form of psychological climate important for employers to consider – in addition to diversity climate – to strengthen support for neurodiversity within their organizations. This idea aligns with current research from inclusion researchers that suggests that organizations need to create inclusive environments to be able to leverage diversity's benefits (Hayes et al., 2002; Holvino et al., 2004). Overall, an inclusive climate is characterized as a feeling or sense of belonging (Shore et al., 2009, 2011). As such, inclusion climate is broader in scope than diversity climate, and this broad focus could be beneficial as

applicants redesign procedures to be more supportive of applicants and employees who are neurodivergent.

In inclusive workplace environments, the goal is that employees of all backgrounds are fairly treated, valued for who they are, and included in core decision-making (Nishii, 2013). That is, there are three dimensions of inclusion climate (Nishii, 2013). The first dimension of inclusion climate focusses on *fairly implemented employment practices*. This dimension closely resembles the principles of diversity climate but is more expansive, as creating inclusive climates requires more than increasing diverse representation and implementing equitable HRM practices; it requires a change in interaction patterns. The second dimension of inclusion climate focuses on the *integration of differences*, within the workplace that depicts the comfort employees feel when bringing their identities to work (Nishii, 2013). The third dimension of inclusion climate focuses on *inclusion in decision-making* within the workplace that captures the extent to which the diverse perspectives of employees are voiced and used (Nishii, 2013).

To provide an example of how organizations can strengthen their inclusion climates along each of the three dimensions to support neurodiversity, let's consider the topic of employee accommodations. It is often the case that organizations are familiar with implementing accommodations that are associated with physical disabilities. Indeed, installing ramps or elevators are common prototypes of accommodations. In an organization with a strong diversity and strong inclusion climate, leaders and managers would have broadened accommodation prototypes beyond a disability paradigm to embrace accommodations that are more typical for neurodivergent stakeholders (e.g., quiet workspaces, the use of noise-canceling headphones; see chapters by Patton and Doyle in this volume for more comprehensive discussion of accommodations). These efforts fairly implement accommodations across different types of employees, integrate the different needs of employees whose accommodation needs fall outside of traditional accommodations associated with physical disabilities, and also represent inclusion in decision-making, because if neurodivergent employees are comfortable requesting accommodations (many may have to, as neurodiverse conditions are not visibly detected, though this is not always the case), they are able to participate in designing their workplace to better leverage their strengths. Research suggests organizations are less ready to consider what accommodations look like for employees whose differences are not visibly seen and understood (e.g., those applicants and employees who are neurodivergent; Krcek, 2013). Hence, diversity and inclusion climates need to be considered simultaneously during efforts to strengthen organizational support for employee neurodiversity.

It is worth noting that accommodations may be mistaken for preferential treatment and, therefore, precipitate negative reactions among coworkers who may be unaware that the recipient is neurodivergent or what such status entails. It may also be difficult for the organization to be completely transparent about the need for the accommodation given the legal restrictions against the organization

disclosing sensitive health information about any of its employees. Nevertheless, a core component of diversity climate is the provision of equal employment opportunity (McKay et al., 2007), which entails creating and maintaining a level playing field through accommodations (Cox, 1994). Accordingly, employees can be informed (a priori) and reassured (ad hoc) that any observed differences in treatment are aimed at eliminating disadvantages as opposed to creating or enhancing advantages – even if the organization is not at liberty to discuss specific accommodations for neurodivergent forms of difference (unless the employee discloses it publicly).

Though diversity and inclusion climates are clearly important, to further the discussion on bolstering climates to support neurodiversity within organizations, we believe that considering ethical climate is necessary, as well. As Haney (2018) points out, neurodiversity is not as simple as applying diversity and inclusion principles to individuals with neurological differences, mostly because there are complex ethical considerations concerning neurodiversity. For instance, if all other employees are assigned to a highly concentrated common (and potentially noisy) workspace, a neurominority employee requiring a distraction-free environment could violate the principle of consistency (i.e., treating all employees the same). Therefore, we suggest that creating strong climates that support neurodiversity should consider diversity, inclusion, *and* ethical climates.

Ethical Climates

Next, we explore ethical climate, perceptions concerning the organization's rules, policies, values, and practices (Schwepker, 2001), as a form of psychological climate that provides a distinct and important lens to consider for organizations building and maintaining workplaces that support neurodiversity. Ethical climates are crucial to consider because to gain a full understanding of the neurodiversity movement, it is necessary to engage in conversations related to moral, social, legal, and medical topics that are strongly related to ethics (Eden, 2019; Herrera, 2013; Richards et al., 2019). In short, it is unethical to exclude any group of prospective employees based on a characteristic that is not indicative of performance capability, and many neurodivergent individuals are indeed capable if provided with accommodations where required. Overall, an ethical climate can be described as focusing on establishing and maintaining an ethical code through organizational communication and policies (Jaramillo et al., 2006; Mulki et al., 2008; Schwepker, 2001; Weeks et al., 2006) with elements related to instrumental, caring, independence, rules, and law (Martin & Cullen, 2006).

Investing in a strong ethical climate has been shown to be advantageous for employees and organizations (Mulki et al., 2008; Schwepker, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2008), as ethical climates are linked positively with job attitudes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Martin & Cullen, 2006) and negatively with turnover intentions (Coldwell et al., 2008; Martin & Cullen, 2006; Mulki et al., 2008; Pettijohn & Taylor, 2008; Tsai & Huang, 2008). However, it is not

yet clear whether neurodivergent employees exhibit these positive outcomes to a similar extent in response to ethical climates. Because the neurodiversity movement has a lens of positivity through its focus on an individual's strengths, how neurodivergent employees experience their workplaces is a big determinant of an organization's support for neurodiversity. As Constantino (2018) put it, "If quality of life is improved and neurodiversity helps people find meaning and joy in their experiences, then it is helpful. If the movement discourages neurodivergent individuals from seeking help and, therefore, it lessens their quality of life, then it is harmful." This means that in organizations, embracing neurodiversity as a type of diversity and including neurodivergent employees in the workforce may not be enough to support neurodiversity, as these diversity and inclusion efforts may not have positive effects for employees without considering social justice elements such as the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society that are often barriers for neurodivergent individuals.

Organizations are well positioned to promote social justice and ethical initiatives to support all employees, including those who are in the neurominority. Organizations have natural platforms to promote knowledge (e.g., through trainings) and their ways of doing business (e.g., through their cultures, norms) that can communicate the organization's support of neurodiversity while also emphasizing the organization's stance that supporting neurodiversity is a part of its efforts to maintain ethical practices and a strong ethical climate. Though research suggests everyone stands to benefit from an organizational emphasis on social justice and ethics (Martin & Cullen, 2006), a failure to do so disproportionately impacts those who differ from the prototypical employee in any meaningful way such as being neurodivergent. It may seem easier to avoid making any accommodations, thereby excluding neurodivergent employees. Doing what is easy, however, is not always synonymous with doing what is right (providing equal employment opportunity) and what is smart (hiring highly capable employees).

Considering Diversity, Inclusion, and Ethics Climates Simultaneously

To capture the spirit of the neurodiversity movement that focuses on leveraging the strengths of employees rather than viewing neurodiverse conditions as disabilities or diseases, we believe that diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates within organizations have to be considered simultaneously. To provide an example of these three climates interacting to create a workplace that is supportive for neurodiversity, we present an example from Ernst and Young (EY), a company that has been a pioneer in this area through the establishment and growth of its neurodiversity program (Cohn, 2017). Here is how Lori Golden, EY's abilities strategy leader, describes the company's efforts around neurodiversity:

> We've been a leader in this space. We have a very strong commitment to both fostering a culture that's what we refer to as 'abilities inclusive,' a

> culture that feels welcoming and productive for people of all physical, cognitive or socioemotional abilities, meaning mental health abilities. We have real proactive efforts and innovative efforts to reach out to candidates with disabilities . . . With the neurodiversity program, for example, we currently have 14 individuals with autism employed at two of what we call Neurodiverse Centers of Excellence . . . We have plans to open two more Centers of Excellence a year for the next three years, with an average number of 10 individuals per center.

From her description of its neurodiversity program (c.f. Cohn, 2017), it is evident that its efforts are rooted in a strong diversity climate that strives to promote diversity efforts (i.e., a neurodiversity program) with considerable demographic diversity in this area compared to other organizations in this industry (i.e., 14 employees with plans for 10 employees per center). Then, there is evidence of an emphasis on inclusion climate, as these employees are valued for who they are through the company's development of a culture that is abilities inclusive. Moreover, it is evident that a strong ethics climate is at the foundation of these considerations, as the changes the company has made in the HRM practices speak to caring, law, and other elements of ethics climates (Martin & Cullen, 2006) that are the foundation of how they have approached these changes to become a leader in creating a work environment with a strong commitment to maintaining a culture that is productive for employees that fall anywhere on the neurodiversity spectrum (i.e., all employees).

Strengthening Diversity, Inclusion, and Ethics Climates Around Neurodiversity Initiatives: What Organizations Can Do

To this point in the chapter, we have discussed how climates generally are important to consider for organizations in their efforts to create and maintain workplaces that are supportive of neurodiversity. In the remainder of this section, we describe key concerns that practitioners should consider when building diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates. Given neurodiversity practices are likely to be at an embryonic stage of development in most organizations, we include examples of the best HRM practices available in our effort to focus on the knowledge and skills that will be most useful in organizations' efforts to change their policies and practices to be more supportive of neurodiversity. To achieve this, we review the efforts of organizational thought leaders in this area, a title gained through their creation and development of successful neurodiversity programs in their organizations. Specifically, we will discuss the best practices reported by companies like Ernst & Young (EY), SAP, Microsoft, Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE; now known as DXC Technology), Ford, Deloitte, IBM, Dell Technologies, Hasbro, Walgreens, JPMorgan Chase, Caterpillar, Willis Towers Watson, the Australian Defense Department, and the Israeli defense force (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Eden, 2019; Faragher, 2018; Patton, 2019), as they have transformed their HRM processes to be more supportive of neurodiversity.

We place the spotlight on these organizations to show both progress and the difficulty associated with making it. For instance, we note that EY has a Neurodiversity Center of Excellence that was launched in 2015 that has been noted for its initiatives' efficacy in moving the needle (Association for Talent Development, 2018; Ovaska-Few, 2018). Conversely, SAP's Autism at Work program was launched in 2013 and has proven quite slow in producing change such that their organization has a goal to have 1% of its workforce made up of neurodivergent employees by this year (i.e., Faragher, 2018). Other interesting success stories come from governments, like the Israeli defense force that created a division focused on analyzing satellite images that is made up of employees who all identify as neurodivergent (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Faragher, 2018). We also acknowledge that we draw on the suggestions of well-known consulting companies (e.g., Specialisterne) that have worked with some of these organizations in establishing their successful neurodiversity programs.

Overall, we discuss how organizations should consider specific changes to their HRM procedures as a way to bolster their diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates to be more supportive of neurodiversity. The suggestions overall adhere to two guiding principles of tenets derived from the neurodiversity movement. First, the suggestions follow the idea that organizations should focus on the strengths that applicants and employees bring to the organization. Every employee has areas that are strengths and areas that present difficulties (Baron-Cohen, 2017; Faragher, 2018). What organizations with more successful neurodiversity programs have realized is that the benefits provided by having neurodivergent employees fill an important gap in their workplaces. For example, employees from the neurominority are typically committed and loyal workers (Association for Talent Development, 2018). Employees with dyslexia often have strengths around pattern recognition (Rothstein, 2012) and above-average presentation abilities (Burnett & Trerise, 2019; Rothstein, 2012). Moreover, employees with autism sometimes (though this too can be an overgeneralization) have strengths related to repetitive work, an ability to focus and develop an expertise in systems and their parts (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Elliott, 2018; Wright, 2016). Other examples are the strengths of employees with ADHD around their problem-solving abilities and predisposition toward entrepreneurial mindsets (Moore et al., 2021) and the strengths of employees with mental illnesses to tap into deep reserves of creative talent and exhibit unparalleled levels of warmth (Nyhan, 2018). Though these are only a few examples of the strengths that organizations have reaped, the overall point is that by focusing on employees' strengths, organizations can build and maintain climates that support neurodiversity. Importantly, we recognize that generalizations, whether positive or negative, inherently run the risk of stereotyping employees (or prospective ones). Our point here is to identify some of the potentially overlooked characteristics often possessed by neurominorities that might make these employees particularly well suited to enhance organizational functioning. This should not, however, be taken as suggesting that all members

of this diverse group are in any way uniform in their strengths, weaknesses, or characteristics.

Second, our suggestions in this section follow the idea that organizations should eliminate unnecessary barriers in the environment that would present obstacles to employees leveraging their strengths and bringing those to their work. By starting with the notion that each employee thinks differently rather than following the typical way of implementing HRM practices that are developed around neurotypical preferences, organizations eliminate many of the barriers that present challenges to applicants and employees in the neurominority (Faragher, 2018; Manning, 2018) – and applicants and employees in general.

Next, we present our suggestions for organizational practices that follow both principles (i.e., focus on strengths, eliminate unnecessary barriers) and do so for each of the eight major HRM functions while showing the impact of each set of suggestions for diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates. Moreover, we provide additional specific practical suggestions not covered in the text as a part of Table 2.1. This table is also organized across the HRM life cycle.

TABLE 2.1 Suggestions for Human Resource Management Practices That May Strengthen Diversity, Inclusion, and Ethics Climates to Be More Supportive of Neurodiversity

Selection
▪ Engage in target recruiting with community partners (Erickson et al., 2014) such as Landmark College, in Vermont, which exclusively enrolls students who learn differently (Nyhan, 2018)
▪ Avoid jargon in recruitment ads, as EY has success with this practice (Association for Talent Development, 2018)
▪ Review preemployment screenings to evaluate if applicants' strengths are being assessed (Erickson et al., 2014)
▪ Consider replacing traditional interviews, like EY does, with applied tasks that assess problem-solving abilities (e.g., using Legos to build robots) (Ovaska-Few, 2018)
Compensation and Benefits
▪ Ensure that opportunities to work full-time match the desires of the employee (Austin & Pisano, 2017)
▪ Do not assume the credentials of applicants with neurodivergent conditions (Ali et al., 2011)
Employee Relations
▪ Have leaders openly support accommodations (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Patton, 2019; Wright, 2016)
▪ Authentic leadership styles are often more supportive than transformational leadership styles for employees with many neurodivergent conditions (Wright, 2016)
▪ Encourage leaders and managers to play an active role in supporting neurodiversity (Patton, 2019)

(*Continued*)

TABLE 2.1 (Continued)

Occupational Health and Safety
▪ Acknowledge the lack of understanding the general public has about neurodivergent conditions (Rothstein, 2012) ▪ Address negative stereotypes and discrimination that employees with neurodivergent conditions often encounter in the workplace (Atherton et al., 2019; Gray, 2001; Hinshaw & Stier, 2008; Johnson & Joshi, 2016; Mawson et al., 1985)
Training and Development
▪ Have managers who have taken formal training in neurodiversity conduct onboarding trainings, as EY has success with this practice (Association for Talent Development, 2018) ▪ Provide opportunities for employees to acclimate themselves to the workforce and workplace before starting in their positions (Nyhan, 2018) ▪ Provide opportunities for employees to socialize with employees who are neurodivergent (Nyhan, 2018) ▪ Allow for alternative types of training (e.g., self-paced tutorials) (Sumner & Brown, 2015)
Talent Management and Performance
▪ Engage office champions as mentors or coaches (Ovaska-Few, 2018) ▪ Have external coaches consults by phone to help them navigate interpersonal and life-management issues (Association for Talent Development, 2018)
Job Design
▪ Listen to new hires about what they need in their work environment (Ovaska-Few, 2018; Patton, 2019) ▪ Dedicate workspaces as quiet areas, as EY has success with this practice (Ovaska-Few, 2018) ▪ Dedicate workspaces as low-traffic areas, as EY has success with this practice (Ovaska-Few, 2018) ▪ Create different working zones, such as a zone for 'creative' group work and another for 'quiet' project work (Burnett & Trerise, 2019) ▪ Support flexible working patterns for employees with ADD/ADHD (Adamou et al., 2013; Painter et al., 2008) ▪ Support flexible start times based on employees' preferred routines (Johnson & Joshi, 2016) ▪ Allow headphones to block out environmental noise and prevent auditory overstimulation (Austin & Pisano, 2017) ▪ Allow lighting changes to block out visual distractions (Hensel, 2017)
Retention
▪ Create supportive 'ecosystems' for employees. SAP has had success creating support circles, while HPE has had success uses a 'pod' system (Austin & Pisano, 2017) ▪ Support employees' interactions with online communities as a source of support for neurodivergent individuals (Haney, 2018; Jaarsma & Welin, 2012; Runswick-Cole, 2014) ▪ Encourage employees to celebrate in their neurodivergent identity(ies) (Bagatell, 2010; Baker, 2011; Jaarsma & Welin, 2012; Jordan, 2010; Ortega, 2009; Strauss, 2013)

Note. Not every suggestion is appropriate for each type of neurodiversity.

Selection

Recruitment

In this volume, Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson provide a comprehensive review of recruiting neurodivergent job seekers. But recruiting is where workplace (neurodiversity) inclusion begins, so for the sake of completeness, we briefly review extant research that may be useful in providing ways to strengthen diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates to support neurodiversity. First, diversity recruitment research shows that applicants have stronger intentions to accept an employment offer from organizations that are supportive of diversity (Avery et al., 2013), contributing to a stronger diversity climate as the organization gains more employees who are neurodivergent. This research is replicated in applicants with health conditions, especially if the organization has a history of committing to actions such as recruiting individuals from similar populations (von Schrader, Xu, et al., 2014; von Schrader, Malzer, et al., 2014). Overall, this effect is explained by organizations' efforts to be inclusive by affirming applicants' valued identities. This strengthens the inclusion climate of the organization, as their work environment is then one that is supportive of employees and their social identities. Moreover, it may make the organization more attractive to people who are more likely to accept the identities of dissimilar others (Avery et al., 2013).

Organizations have used a number of altered recruitment strategies to reach talent that is neurodivergent (Patton, 2019). Specific strategies are described in Table 2.1, but these can be summarized as reconceptualizing where targeted recruitment efforts take place (e.g., colleges that only admit students who are in the neurominority) and how that recruitment is taking place (e.g., changing the language traditionally used in job ads). Targeted strategies at the recruitment stage are necessary, as research in tangential literatures shows that only 11% of employers have recruiting strategy specific to attracting people with disabilities,[4] despite repeated statements about their desire to hire more people from this group (Dixon et al., 2003; c.f. Erickson et al., 2014). Such reconceptualized efforts around recruitment will help bolster diversity and inclusion climates in ways that better support applicants, including those who are neurodivergent.

A key consideration during recruitment around the organization's ethical climate concerns *disclosure*. Based on prevalence rates of neurodiverse conditions, we know that there are plenty of potential applicants for organizations to recruit that would achieve the goal of diversifying their workforce along the neurodiversity spectrum. For instance, approximately 1 in every 54 children in the United States (and 1 in every 160 worldwide) has autism (Baker, 2011; CDC, 2020; WHO, 2019). To give another example, between 5% and 20% of children in school (11% in college) have dyslexia (Rogers, 2017; Rothstein, 2012). Though we present some estimates here, the numbers are likely higher, but fear and stigma around neurodivergent conditions can prevent individuals from reporting or disclosing

that they are part of the neurominority (Elliott, 2018), especially in a workplace context as opposed to a school context. Even considering the possibility of low estimates, we know that approximately half a million individuals with autism in the U.S. are estimated to become adults and potentially join the workforce this decade (Chu, 2015; Demer, 2018). Therefore, there are plenty of potential applicants to recruit. But we have also started to uncover that not all individuals disclose their neurodivergent conditions. This could present a barrier for organizations wanting to recruit from this population.

Research supports the idea that employees with autism actively avoid discussing their condition at work and specifically point to concerns about stigma (Johnson & Joshi, 2016). This is echoed by other research that shows many who are dyslexic do not see many benefits that would come from disclosure (Morris & Turnbull, 2007). Moreover, we have to consider that some individuals do not disclose because they do not identify with the labels that would be assigned to them if they did so (Brown & Leigh, 2018). Because disclosure is associated with disabilities and medical conditions, these types of labels are increasingly rejected by those with neurodivergent conditions that support the social movement around neurodiversity (Brown & Leigh, 2018).

Considering that disclosure is a barrier that impacts the recruitment of neurodivergent applicants (or prospective applicants), organizations will find that common strategies for targeted recruitment efforts, such as working with universities to establish pipelines of talented recruits, may not be fruitful. This is because records about students' personal information are likely confidential and not made available to organizations outside of the university. Moreover, most universities do not have systems in place that account for if a student is neurodivergent as separate from having a documented disability and therefore may not even be able to give that information (if a graduating student belonged to the neurominority) to potential employers, even if it was not considered personal information (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Overall, the consideration of disclosure further promotes the need for organizations to have climates that support neurodiversity – so that employees feel comfortable disclosing their neurodivergent status. Researchers have shown the importance of trust with managers in research done with dyslexic employees (Brown & Leigh, 2018); perhaps this translates to trust with recruiters as well. As such, stronger diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates that are supportive of neurodiversity will aid not only recruitment efforts but also other HRM functions that we will discuss next.

Hiring

Saleh, Chang, Bruyère, and Vogus (this volume) describe the role of interviewing in selecting neurodiverse job candidates. But since we see this as a critical part of a broader workplace neurodiversity-inclusive culture, we here briefly discuss several ways that hiring practices can be improved to strengthen diversity, inclusion, and

ethics climates to support neurodiversity. To improve the organization's diversity climate, strategic changes can result in more neurodivergent applicants passing hurdles during selection. For example, many organizations include tests in their hiring process that heavily depend on reading and math. For applicants with learning disabilities, this can present a number of obstacles that have nothing to do with the strengths (e.g., intelligence or abilities in comprehension or mathematics) that they are going to contribute to the organization (Goldstein et al., 2011; Sumner & Brown, 2015). In short, these selection batteries often confound cognitive speed with power. A general approach recommended for organizations trying to enhance the supportiveness of their diversity climate concerning neurodiversity is to approach hiring with the idea that "Different isn't just good or bad. It isn't a qualifier. It just is" (Carmichael, 2013). Along these lines, it is the case that traditional hiring processes rely on strong communication skills that include timely verbal responses and expected eye contact (Goldstein et al., 2011; Sumner & Brown, 2015). At this point in the chapter, it should be clear that organizations supportive of neurodiversity should embrace people who express themselves in different ways (Rogers, 2017). This spirit towards neurodiversity is not captured in traditional interviews that are often constructed around structured question sets that assess behavioral responses as a way to eliminate bias. This is especially true as more and more companies are utilizing panel interviews or group interviews – both of which may require applicants to do some things not required by the job itself and therefore might unfairly screen out diverse employees. For neurodivergent applicants, Burnett and Trerise (2019) suggest altering these traditional hiring processes and let the applicant have space and time to analyze the questions, even being able to return their response on another day. This may support their strengths (e.g., the ability to focus on specific details) without needing to address the bigger picture or bigger issue that interview questions often target.

To improve inclusion climate, organizations can use the interview to support neurodiversity by asking questions designed to learn about the applicant's strengths. After gathering this information, the hiring manager can then move forward with the hiring process by "then try[ing] to match those skills up with a job that might be opening" (Lancaster, 2017; a strategy that Butler, a construction and development company, uses). Alternatively, organizations can assess applicants in ways that do not require interviews (Austin & Pisano, 2017). For instance, the Armed Services use more general assessments to ascertain which jobs align with a candidate's abilities rather than assessing how well the candidate fits with a specific job. These types of changes are truly inclusive of neurodiversity, as companies are redesigning hiring practices to go beyond measuring math and communication skills while aiming to focus on applicants' strengths that may lie outside of those particular skills (Faragher, 2018).

To improve the organization's ethical climate in ways that are more supportive of neurodiversity, we suggest adjusting the goal that is inherent in adopting traditional hiring practices. Most organizations rely on hiring practices that capture

generalizable skills and abilities for most of applicants they have in their system. This goal of scalability is cost efficient, but it is not ethical from the perspective of a neurodivergent applicant. This is because these traditional hiring practices commonly are not oriented toward capturing the unique strengths of many neurodivergent applicants (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Overall, to improve diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates through changes to selection processes, it is necessary to focus on applicants' strengths instead of applying the philosophy that the hiring process is to weed out people by testing them in ways that aren't relevant to their job or the tasks they will be focusing on while employed at the organization.

Compensation and Benefits

For incumbent employees, there are a number of considerations around compensation and benefits procedures that can be restructured to strengthen diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates in a way that better supports neurodiversity. For instance, neurodivergent individuals have high rates of unemployment and underemployment (estimates ranging from 80% [Eden, 2019] to as high as 90% [Autism Speaks, 2017]). Specifically, reports show that individuals with Asperger's (the highest level of functioning autism) have an unemployment rate of 80% to 85% (Richards, 2012; National Autistic Society, 2016). These statistics show a need for organizations to build diversity climates that support the employment of neurodivergent individuals.

To build inclusive climates that are supportive of neurodiversity, organizations should be aware of conflict that may arise when neurodivergent employees work in part-time, as opposed to full-time, positions. Research shows that differences in employment status can have effects on inclusion that lead to withdrawal (Avery et al., 2012). Though part-time positions can be a wonderful consideration of a neurodivergent employee's possible stress in the work environment (Austin & Pisano, 2017), full-time employees can find this problematic if project deadlines fall outside of a key team member's work schedule. This conflict can erode the gains that organizations are making in the inclusiveness of their climate around neurodiversity if not addressed.

Moreover, when neurodivergent employees are hired, it is important that the organization has a strong ethical climate that addresses the underemployment of neurodivergent employees. It is a common experience for those who are neurodivergent to be underemployed (placed in low-level, unskilled jobs beneath their qualification level; Bjelland et al., 2010). Organizations that are trailblazers in this area have reported that the applicants to their neurodiversity programs often have college degrees, master's degrees, dual degrees, and even patents (Ali et al., 2011; Austin & Pisano, 2017). Both of these points – about unemployment and underemployment – suggest that when neurodivergent employees are hired, organizations have an ethical consideration to deploy and pay them fairly, as the educated and skilled workers that they are. It is unethical to let standard

compensation and promotion practices of rewarding political skill (Munyon et al., 2015) continue if (a) political skill is not a job requirement and (b) such a practice adversely impacts many neurodivergent employees. Again, the point is that neurodivergent employees have unique strengths that are useful for the organization; these should be compensated as such. This approach will improve diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates by strengthening the association between rewards and performance.

Employee Relations

A third HRM area concerns the number of changes around traditional employee relations practices that can be restructured to strengthen diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates to support neurodiversity. Though there are numerous elements important to the topic of employee relations, we will focus on the role of managers and leaders, as they play a key role in how employees view their relationship with their organization. A key aspect of a strong diversity climate is that there is support for diversity throughout levels of the organization; and top management support is crucial. With neurodiversity, this is also true. Research on autism shows that having supportive senior managers and direct supervisors is related to having a work environment that is accepting of accommodations (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Patton, 2019; Wright, 2016). This support can be communicated in a number of ways. One example provided by Faragher (2018) describes how a director at an organization signed his emails with the following statement: 'excuse the typos, I'm dyslexic.'

Beyond management and leader support, certain types of leadership can aid neurodiversity-related efforts to be more inclusive. That is, transformational leadership often is not an effective leadership style for employees who are neurodivergent because the visionary aspects to transformational leadership are too abstract to provide guidance to employees that think in more specific ways (Hurley-Hanson & Giannantonio, 2017; Parr et al., 2013). However, a number of researchers have suggested that authentic leadership (Boekhorst, 2015; Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016; Hurley-Hanson & Giannantonio, 2017; Parr & Hunter, 2014; Walumbwa et al., 2008) is a leadership style that is inclusive of neurodiversity. This is also a truly inclusive approach, as authentic leadership will likely have a strong impact on how others in the organization embrace changes made to support neurodiversity (Patton, 2019). Further elaboration on leadership styles and their possible impact on maximizing workplace neurodiversity inclusion are addressed in the chapter by Seitz in this volume.

To maintain ethical climates that are supportive of neurodiversity, organizations can approach employee relations with the knowledge that strong management and leadership can exert a substantial impact on the experiences of neurodivergent employees (if their experiences are riddled with stigma, for example). Due to communication barriers and social deficits, employees with some neurodivergent conditions may not be especially proficient at discussing their condition,

advocating for themselves or for neurodiversity in general, and overall may not be skilled at conveying to others the strengths and values they bring to the workgroup or organization overall. As such, managers and supervisors have a role in creating strong diversity and inclusion climates – but also a strong ethics climate – in the organization to help ensure that the environments they are creating actively involve neurodivergent workers by eliminating negative attitudes and behaviors (e.g., stigmatization, stereotyping, ostracism, or discrimination) directed at any employees, but especially those who may find it difficult to communicate their strengths for themselves. Managers and leaders can play a huge role in these types of changes and should, from an ethical perspective (Patton, 2019).

Occupational Health and Safety

A fourth set of considerations involves the roles of diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates in facilitating occupational health and safety. For the purposes of this chapter, we look at stigma and discrimination as important aspects of occupational health and safety. Regarding diversity climate, neurodivergent applicants and employees often report that diversity climates in their organizations are weak regarding occupational health and safety for employees in the neurominority. Research supports this, as employees with neurodivergent conditions are shown to face discrimination in the workplace around hiring practices, treatment on the job, and others' resistance to their workplace accommodations (Richards, 2012). Giving attention to building a diversity climate that reduces and eliminates these experiences for all employees will make diversity climates in organizations more supportive of neurodiversity (and all employees).

Training and Development

Changes in organizational talent enhancement procedures also can help produce diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates that are more supportive of neurodiversity. To strengthen diversity climates in this regard, organizations should consider alternative types of learning (other than traditional classroom-type trainings) if they want training and development to be effective for all employees. Companies have had success with self-paced tutorials or on-the-job training as compared to classroom training or training that takes place on a computer (Patton, 2019; Sumner & Brown, 2015). It is easy to see how traditional classroom-type trainings may be ineffective for employees with dyslexia, for example, as they are expected to process large amounts of reading or text through training exercises, the training presentations, after-training quizzes, etc. (Sumner & Brown, 2015).

To strengthen their inclusion climates, some organizations have developed creative alternatives to traditional training and development procedures. For example, at the College of William and Mary, the Bridge Program provides the opportunity for new students to arrive on campus early to meet other students who are

neurodivergent and become familiar with the campus overall (Nyhan, 2018). Similar programs could be adapted easily to the organizational environment. Inclusion climates are also strengthened when managers meet directly with employees to demonstrate performance expectations during training initiatives and provide the level of detail needed during development efforts (Lancaster, 2017).

Concerning ethical climate initiatives, it is important that neurodivergent employees are considered for training and development opportunities. Research shows that neurodivergent employees are often overlooked and not selected for important career-building trainings (Patton, 2019; Sumner & Brown, 2015). Across the board, employees say that they want more training and development opportunities (O'Connor et al., 2007). As such, reconceptualizing how we prioritize and deliver training and development to reach more employees can only have positive implications for organizations along their diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates.

Talent Management and Performance

A comprehensive treatment of performance management of autistic employees by Hunter and Hunter is included later in this volume. Here, we want to include a brief set of considerations around how organizations can adapt their talent management and performance procedures to strengthen diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates in a way that supports neurodiversity. For example, good mentoring is a cornerstone of a strong diversity climate. For neurodivergent employees, experienced practitioners suggest that existing employees who are champions of diversity – or are even specifically neurodiversity champions – may make great mentors for employees who are in the neurominority. Given the prevalence of many neurodivergent conditions (e.g., autism, dyslexia), it would not be surprising to find that some current employees have family members who are neurodivergent and, therefore, possess experience in communicating across this form of difference (being aware of and using language associated with the social model rather than the medical model of neurodiversity) in addition to having a personal motivation to see employees who are neurodivergent succeed (Ovaska-Few, 2018).

Efforts that include others (champions as mentors) in the workplace also strengthen inclusion climates for neurodiversity. That is, by engaging employees as mentors, it spreads acceptance that this is the way that the organization chooses to conduct business. Some organizations have gone beyond mentoring systems to enhance diversity and inclusion climates to enhance their talent management practices. Some companies (i.e., SAP, Freddie Mac, and Hewlett Packard; Austin & Pisano, 2017; Wright, 2016) have had success with support circles made up of coworkers that act in different capacities to ensure that employees who are neurodivergent feel included and have access to advice and feedback from multiple perspectives within the organization (in both formal and informal ways). Overall, performance feedback can morph from an environment of correcting errors to

one of learning from mistakes and gaining skills (Rebora, 2017) or focusing on strengths (Kluger & Nir, 2010) to strengthen inclusion climates to be more supportive of neurodiversity.

To strengthen ethical climates to be more supportive of neurodiversity, performance management systems need to recognize that many neurodivergent employees possess above-average intelligence and ensure that this is mirrored in positive performance evaluations (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Patton, 2019; Parr et al., 2013). In the case of giving performance feedback to an employee who is neurodivergent, it is important to consider how the working environment may have contributed to his or her performance (or lack thereof). For example, if an employee with dyslexia received excellent performance ratings but was reprimanded during their annual evaluation and then marked down for failure to complete trainings required by HR, it may in fact be unfair that such a demand was expected of them (Sumner & Brown, 2015). Taking a step back and understanding the true spirit of the neurodiversity paradigm means that cultures understand that neurodivergent employees have faced numerous barriers in school and in employment settings, along with many challenges in society overall. Organizations have a role in righting these wrongs by creating work environments that help individuals in the neurominority (and other employees and stakeholders) understand that there is an appreciation for the strengths and that their strengths are appreciated and supported by the organization (Eden, 2019). Importantly, this is not about lowering expectations or standards. Rather, it is about developing the requisite environmental infrastructure to ensure that neurodivergent employees are equally enabled to achieve the same performance standards used to assess those in the neuromajority. An expanded discussion on considerations in performance management and career development of a neurodiverse workforce are provided in the chapter by Hunter and Hunter in this volume.

Job Design

There are numerous ways organizations can approach job design differently to produce diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates that support neurodiversity. To strengthen diversity climates in this regard, job design needs to rely heavily on the accommodation process. So many researchers and practitioners have emphasized that accommodations are not as expensive or disruptive as many organizational decision-makers assume them to be (Ovaska-Few, 2018). For example, finding quiet workspaces or low-traffic locations for employees who are neurodivergent are accommodations that researchers (Association for Talent Development, 2018; Austin & Pisano, 2017; Hensel, 2017; Johnson & Joshi, 2016; Wright, 2016) and organizations such as EY suggests as impactful accommodations that do not cost anything (Schur et al., 2014; von Schrader, Xu, et al., 2014). Table 2.1 also lists similar accommodations such as allowing the use of

headphones and flexible start times that cost little, if anything at all (Patton, 2019 and see also Patton and Doyle in this volume). It should be noted that many employees who are in the neurominority have attended schools, especially universities, where accommodations are part of the climate (Sumner & Brown, 2015). As such, they may be accustomed to certain provisions and even expect them (and be entitled to them). Thus, considering the role of accommodations in maintaining a strong diversity climate for the workforce, including employees in the neurominority, is imperative.

Organizations should follow these practices related to accommodation, as they also bolster inclusion climates in addition to diversity climates. Specifically, providing accommodations is truly inclusive of neurodiversity overall. Von Schrader and colleagues have done research that show how accommodations can become part of a culture that helps everyone – it does not have to create a situation wherein those not receiving accommodations are resentful or those requesting accommodations are scared to do so (von Schrader, Malzer, et al., 2014; von Schrader, Xu, et al., 2014). If anyone in the workforce can request accommodations around scheduling, policy changes, lighting, workspace, and other environmental factors (within reason), it bolsters an inclusion climate for everyone (Patton, 2019; Schur et al., 2014). Everyone can thrive through strong inclusion climates that are accepting of those that request simple environment modifications (Armstrong, 2010), including employees who belong to the neurominority.

The neurodiversity paradigm states that societal institutions such as schools and organizations should be set up to have accommodations as part of their operating procedures. On an ethical level, employees should be allowed to deviate from established practices to follow these principles from the neurodiversity paradigm. Acknowledging that society (including most organizations) is organized for neurotypical people strengthens an organization's ethical climate, especially when they establish norms in policies and procedures that accommodate neurodivergence. A different way of thinking about this is captured in the following quote by human–computer interaction specialist Steve Krug (2014, p. 163):

> The one argument for accessibility that doesn't get made nearly enough is how extraordinarily better it makes some people's lives. How many opportunities do we have to dramatically improve people's lives just by doing our job a little better?

This is truly an ethical approach to accommodations and to job design overall that fully embraces the neurodiversity paradigm. Overall, reconceptualizing how we approach accommodations to improve job design can have positive implications for organizations by strengthening their diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates so that they are more friendly for all employees.

Retention

Finally, there are considerations around retention procedures that can be restructured to enhance climates. To make diversity climates more supportive of neurodivergent employees, organizations should work to eliminate tokenism (only employing a small number of employees from the neurominority) around neurodiversity. Much of the stigma and stereotypes that neurodivergent employees experience in the workplace comes from neurotypical employees. Indeed, social interactions between neurotypical and neurodivergent individuals can be a source of stress due to the social demands that neurotypical employees may unknowingly place on colleagues who are neurodivergent (Chown, 2014; Dekker, 1999; Heasman & Gillespie, 2019). The more neurodivergent employees that are employed in the organization, the more that employees who are neurodivergent can have resources from others that understand their experience as someone in the neurominority (i.e., a critical mass). Moreover, a greater presence of neurodivergent employees could help facilitate better understanding of neurodiversity among those in the neuromajority.

You may be thinking, if neurodivergent individuals sometimes have trouble with social interactions, why would having additional neurodivergent employees to interact with help? As an example, Kapp et al. (2019) point out that autistic adults may understand one another better than nonautistic people understand a person with autism (Gernsbacher et al., 2017; Gillespie-Lynch et al., 2017; Komeda, 2015; Milton, 2014). In a study of autistic boys, researchers noted that the boys bonded with each other and recognized the similarities that existed amongst them (i.e., their similar experiences and traits) (Muskat, 2017). Moving beyond tokenism can mean that employees who are neurodivergent can have others they can share their experiences with, in a social context that does not place social demands on them, such as those found in most social spaces in workplaces (Runswick-Cole, 2014).

Next, to strengthen inclusion climates to be more supportive of neurodivergent employees around retention, many organizations have found success creating inclusive and supportive 'ecosystems' for employees. Companies like SAP have created support circles that include people in the workplace (i.e., a manager, a team buddy, a job coach, a mentor, and someone from HR) and also people in the employee's nonwork life (Austin & Pisano, 2017). HPE uses a 'pod' system in which neurodivergent employees work with four other employees overseen by a manager and neurodiversity consultant (Austin & Pisano, 2017; materials available online at https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/dandelionprogram/). Moreover, supportive systems can come from outside the organization as well. A number of communities exist online as a source of support for neurodivergent individuals, especially those that prefer nonverbal communication (Haney, 2018; Jaarsma & Welin, 2012; Runswick-Cole, 2014). Perhaps companies could be inclusive of the need for that support and allow outside websites to be accessed at work. This

could also be inclusive for other groups of employees (e.g., employees who are breastfeeding) who do not want to discuss their experiences with their colleagues due to stigma around the topic but can easily find the support they need online.

To strengthen ethics climates to be more supportive of neurodivergent employees around retention, it is suggested that organizations encourage neurodivergent employees to claim, feel pride in, and celebrate their identity(ies). This is central to the neurodiversity paradigm (Bagatell, 2010; Baker, 2011; Jaarsma & Welin, 2012; Jordan, 2010; Kapp et al., 2012, 2013; Ortega, 2009; Strauss, 2013), and it is ethical to support employees bringing their full selves to work. In practice, this entails organizations supporting employees as they participate in identity and community-building events (e.g., Autistic Pride Day), join identity and community-building organizations (e.g., Autism Network International), sport identity and community-building artifacts (T-shirts, stimming toys,), and use vocabulary that is identity and community- building (e.g., Aspie) (Angulo-Jiménez & DeThorne, 2019; Bagatell, 2010; Davidson, 2008; Donaldson et al., 2017). Ethical climates not only tolerate the existence or even inclusion of neurodivergent employees but also embrace neurodivergent culture; this has been compared to the celebration of Deaf culture within the Deaf community (Bagatell, 2010; Kermit, 2010; Sparrow, 2005). It is tempting to assume that organizations that accept neurodivergent employees would also allow the pride related to their neurodivergent culture to be a part of what they bring into the workplace. However, that is not always true. As a case in point, we recently saw that organizations that claimed to support the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement banned BLM shirts (artifacts) (Segran, 2020). Accepting the employee and accepting the pride related to that identity are different conversations that require an ethical lens to understand the difference and be accepting of both.

We note that the seemingly opposing set-ups suggested in the diversity and inclusion climate sections of this discussion on retention (i.e., surround employees who are neurodivergent with more employees that are neurodivergent; surround employees who are neurodivergent with more employees that are neurotypical) further highlights the need for multiple climates to work together simultaneously for organizations to be able to truly embrace and support neurodiversity. Indeed, employees who are neurodivergent should have access to *both* employees who are neurodivergent and employees who are neurotypical to have successful careers that leverage their strengths in organizations. These climates (and suggestions associated with each) work together to provide a full experience that supports employees in the workplace in multiple ways, leading to their overall success if diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates simultaneously support neurodiversity.

Suggestions for Future Research

Next, we suggest future directions to guide scholars in addressing the many important issues, gaps, and challenges around ways to optimize organizational climates

in ways that better support neurodiversity. Because the topic of neurodiversity is emergent, it is understandably understudied in academic scholarship (Haney, 2018); this is the case within the management literature as well. Promoting future research on the topic of neurodiversity is necessary, as the current lack of research on neurodiversity follows a trend in management research to study visible conditions as compared to nonvisible types of diversity (Santuzzi et al., 2014). As the topic of neurodiversity continues to gain attention, several areas of management research will benefit from the many available opportunities (Richards et al., 2019). Nevertheless, given our focus on the importance of strong climates for organizations, in this section of the chapter, we focus on climate-related topics that are in particular need of further research inquiry given the current state of the literature on neurodiversity in the management field.

Construct Definitions

As organizations create and strengthen climates to be more supportive of neurodiversity, it is important that researchers work to better understand the implications of defining neurodiversity in certain ways on their diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates. For example, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, organizations need definitions of diversity that include neurodiversity as separate from disability. Doing so should enhance the diversity climate in the organization, but future research should confirm this notion. However, we elaborate on this idea here in an effort to discuss some of the barriers to investigating definitions of diversity. Overall, becoming aware – as scholars and practitioners – of the terms we are using (e.g., neurodiversity, neurodivergent, disability) and making sure we are applying them correctly will guide diversity climate efforts in all areas of HRM. The goal is that organizations can reconceptualize what is normal rather than adding neurodiversity to a long list of other diversities (e.g., sex, race, age) that the organization claims to support and accept.

When considering how defining diversity would strengthen the diversity climate in an organization, it is important to consider that many applicants and employees who identify as neurodivergent also may have identities that are considered disabilities (Baron-Cohen, 2019; den Houting, 2019). As an example of this, more than 95% of autistic children have at least one condition in addition to autism; some of these conditions may be considered disabilities, while others are not disabilities (Baron-Cohen, 2019; den Houting, 2019). For disability compliance purposes, organizations need working definitions that identify what is a disability and what is not. Yet, this can get in the way of inclusion efforts, because the language and connotation around the term 'disability' brings the medical model and related language into the conversation (Baron-Cohen, 2017). Overall, disability and neurodiversity have different connotations (Brown & Leigh, 2018), so when both terms are applicable, it can produce confusion for practitioners and employees' perceptions of the sincerity of organizations' diversity and inclusion

efforts. Future research on the use of the terms 'disability' and 'neurodiversity' would be useful, especially in cases where employees have both a disability (or disabilities) and belong to the neurominority.[5]

Then, to improve the inclusiveness of organizational climates, future research should attempt to study all of the neurodivergent conditions under the neurodiversity umbrella. The current state of research on neurodiversity is that most research has focused on a single condition: autism (and by extension, Asperger's). Similarly, most corporate programs around neurodiversity also have focused on hiring and retaining people with autism (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Due to the range of types of conditions that fall under the neurodiversity umbrella, it would be useless to try and generalize the impact on organizational climate that one type of condition has to other types of neurodiversity. In an effort to have work in this area be generalizable and more useful to practitioners as well, future research should attempt to study autism but also the other neurodivergent conditions covered by the term 'neurodiversity.'

Further, scholars would benefit from studying the implications of how neurodiversity definitions adopted by organizations impact the ethical climates of those companies by researching how opportunities afforded to employees who are neurodivergent may range as a function of where they fall on the spectrums within their condition(s). Specifically, most conditions that fall within the neurodiversity umbrella (e.g., autism, ADHD, dyslexia, depression) exist on a spectrum (Chu, 2015; Patton, 2019; Rothstein, 2012). To present this more realistically with an example, even if employees are at the same place on a spectrum of ADHD, one employee's ADHD can present as inattention while another employee's ADHD presents as hyperactivity (Hendrickx, 2010; Rothstein, 2012). In an effort to simplify the possibility of ranges and presentations of many neurodivergent conditions, many simplify the descriptions of neurodiverse conditions using the classifications of 'high functioning' and 'low functioning' (Lorenz et al., 2017).

These simplistic dichotomies contribute to stereotypes, stigma, and misinformation about neurodiversity. If organizations are not accounting for the nuances of employees' experiences across the spectrum or ignoring the 'low-functioning' end of the spectrum altogether, their ethical climate could weaken. For instance, organizations with good intentions around strengthening their diversity and inclusion climates may applaud themselves for hiring employees who are neurodivergent and making their HRM procedures more inclusive. But if the efforts are only targeted at those they consider 'high functioning,' how ethical is that? To have strong climates that support neurodiversity, organizations need definitions of neurodiversity that support all ranges of behavior associated with neurodivergent conditions, even if some may term certain behaviors low-functioning. Overall, future research aimed at finding construct definitions precise enough to include a wide range of neurodiverse conditions yet inclusive of the range of behaviors we expect in neurodivergent applicants and employees will contribute to research

on neurodiversity in a way that strengthens diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates simultaneously.

New Theoretical Perspectives

As we mentioned previously, much research in this area started from a medical model. Thus, outside of management, theories (from psychiatrists and psychologists) on neurodivergent conditions have focused on neurobiological perspectives. Due to this medical model approach that focuses on individuals' deficiencies, theories since the 1980s to explain neurodiversity have tended to focus on cognitive deficits (e.g., weak central coherence; Frith & Happé, 1994).

As management scholars have started to apply our own theories to the topic of neurodiversity, scholars have most commonly applied stigma, disability-related, or person–environment fit theories (e.g., Johnson & Joshi, 2016; Santuzzi et al., 2014). We have already discussed the limitations (but also some strengths) stemming from taking a disability focus when researching the topic of neurodiversity. The neurodiversity literature that applies person–environment fit theories suggests there are industries and organizational environments that are particularly conducive to those who think differently. On the one hand, some have gone as far to say that Silicon Valley was built by individuals that are neurodivergent (Faragher, 2018). Creating cultures in which people can be themselves, even if their behavior is typically thought of as odd or nerdy (Austin & Pisano, 2017), can mean that employees who are neurodivergent will find better fit in these more diverse, inclusive, and ethical organizations. On the other hand, fit theories are somewhat limited, because organizations can apply the idea of 'fit' incorrectly in that they try and 'fix' deficits (e.g., communication differences or workstyle preferences) by having the person who is neurodivergent fit the organizational environment (assimilation) instead of changing the organizational climates so that they can leverage employees' strengths (accommodation). This suggests that future research in this area would benefit from novel theories and frameworks to understand the experiences of employees that are neurodivergent and the experiences of neurotypical employees around having increased support for neurodiversity in their workplaces. We present some ideas for future research that explores employee experiences around neurodiversity next.

Identity Theories

Incorporating theories that bring in an identity perspective to the study of neurodiversity will be fruitful for future research. Examining identity theories would be in line with a neurodiversity paradigm because self-advocates for neurodiversity often claim and celebrate their neurodivergent condition as something that is inseparable from their identity (Baker, 2011; Bagatell, 2010; Jaarsma & Welin, 2012; Jordan, 2010; Kapp et al., 2013; Ortega, 2009; Strauss, 2013). That is, to an

employee who identifies as neurodivergent, identity is a key part of how they view themselves. This is behind statements such as "If I could snap my fingers and become non-autistic I would not do so. Autism is part of who I am" (Grandin, 1996, p. 16). As such, research would benefit from exploring how the identities of employees who are neurodivergent play a role in their experiences at work. These findings can help organizations understand how to build climates that are more supportive of neurodiversity.

Just as it is important to have future research explore the role of identity for those that do identify as neurodivergent, it is also important to have future research that explores the experiences of employees who do not claim an identity consistent with the neurodiversity paradigm. Some individuals may reject any category, as more and more employees find that existing categories of identities (e.g., male and female for sex) are limited and, instead, embrace a fluid approach in thinking about their identities (Clair et al., 2019). Moreover, some employees with diagnoses of autism, Asperger's, or other neurological conditions that fall under the neurodiversity umbrella may not identify with the label of neurodiversity (Baron-Cohen, 2019; Mitchell, 2015). For example, some employees may identify their neurodivergent condition as a disability and not a type of neurodiversity (O'Dell et al., 2016). Research has described how some people view their neurodivergent condition as synonymous with loneliness, stigma, being different, and exclusion (e.g., Humphrey & Lewis, 2008; Huws & Jones, 2008; Portway & Johnson, 2005; Ruiz Calzada et al., 2012). As such, they may find a sense of community with groups that support employees who identify as disabled. Along these lines, the employee may be focused on treatments and cures rather than embracing and celebrating their identities as defined by the neurodiversity movement (Bagatell, 2010; Ortega, 2009; Punshon et al., 2009).

To further advocate for identity theories in future scholarship that explores ways to enhance organizational climates to support neurodiversity, it is important to consider how identity-related statements were expressed recently by those in the neurominority when the new version of the DSM came out. In the DSM-V, definitions of autism, for example, were drastically changed as compared to previous versions of the published manual. Because categories of autism are being removed in the new version (e.g., terms like 'Asperger syndrome' that have been used for decades), some found the elimination of terms they identified with as confusing and hurtful to their identities (Krcek, 2013).

Intersectional Frameworks

As scholars move to advance work on neurodiversity, there is a pressing need to consider intersectional frameworks. Future research that includes intersectional frameworks can help scholars in discovering new ways to strengthen diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates so that they are more supportive of neurodiversity. Though a focus on intersectionality represents in general a recent push across

diversity and identity research to incorporate this framework into management theory and research (Creary et al., 2015; Hall et al., 2019; Rosette et al., 2018; Rosette et al., 2016), there is a true need to consider intersectional frameworks due to the nature of many neurodivergent conditions.

First, we will consider the example of how neurodivergent conditions can be understood differently when considering an employee's sex as well. To elaborate, with autism, in the U.S., the prevalence rates vary widely by gender (diagnoses are 1 in 42 among boys as compared to 1 in 189 among girls; Fombonne, 2005; Krcek, 2013), meaning that some neurodivergent conditions exist within other identities (in this case, sex). Second, we will consider the example of gender identity. The term 'double helix rainbow kids' is used by researchers (Ehrensaft, 2018) to describe the high rates (eight times as high; DeVries et al., 2010) of individuals with autism that simultaneously exist along the gender spectrum (i.e., are gender nonconforming in their gender identities and/or gender expressions) and the autism spectrum. That is, research has demonstrated a significant correlation between autism and gender nonconformity, at least in children (Jacobs et al., 2014; Janssen et al., 2016; Shumer et al., 2015; Strang et al., 2014). These findings reinforce the application of an intersectional framework to better understand this type of diversity, as it demonstrates how an individual who is neurodiverse has a lived experience of existing differently – even outside of highly structured social norms around established identities like sex (Ehrensaft, 2018; Strang et al., 2018).

Third, we can also consider the example of race to establish the importance of future research using an intersectional framework to better understand the experiences of employees who are neurodivergent. Recent evidence suggests that additional research on the intersection of race and neurodiversity may be fruitful, as researchers are starting to establish differences in prevalence among different racial groups in key neurodivergent conditions (e.g., autism). Historically, the prototypical representation of autism was a depiction of a White child with a high socioeconomic background. However, the most recent research has indicated an increase (i.e., at 1.8%) in Black individuals having the highest rates among any racial or ethnic group (CU Boulder Today, 2020).

Other Climates

Though we highlighted that organizations should strengthen their diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates to be more supportive of neurodiversity, subsequent scholarship should examine elements of other types of climates within the organization that could influence employees' perceptions that the organization is supportive of neurodiversity. For example, justice climate may be pertinent to account for in future research on the topic of climate and neurodiversity. Previous research shows that organizational justice climate has a relationship with indicators of diversity, inclusion, and ethics, as it has been shown to deter sexual

harassment (Rubino et al., 2018). Understandably, justice concerns could develop and may need to be addressed when making changes in the workplace to support neurodiversity. Consider the following example: An employee receives noise-cancelling headphones while stationed with colleagues in cubicles in an open space (example adapted from Sumner and Brown, 2015). The headphones are a reasonable accommodation for an employee that works better when overstimulation from noise makes work impossible. However, if accommodations are being given to some employees and not everyone, justice concerns could develop. Luckily, there are simple solutions around open communication (that respect employee rights to privacy) with all employees about the organization's values, priorities, and explanations for their decisions that can balance these concerns. Nevertheless, it could be argued that a strong justice climate needs to be supported by strong diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates for organizations to support neurodiversity in their workplaces. Therefore, future research should examine the role of justice climate, and perhaps other types of climates, in addition to diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates as they investigate the role of organizational climate in supporting neurodiversity in workplaces.

Research That Includes Neurotypicals

To improve climates, multiple stakeholders need to buy in to the way the organization is doing business for a climate to be diverse and feel truly inclusive and ethical. As such, it is necessary that future research on neurodiversity incorporates the role that others (other than the neurodivergent employee) have in creating and maintaining organizational climates supportive of neurodiversity (Jepsen et al., 2012).[6] For instance, individuals that are influential in an employee's life may see their neurodivergent condition(s) differently than the organization and/or the employee does. Research shows that families – in particular caretakers – often have viewpoints that focus on cures, treatments, and other medical-model lenses and that this focus can differ from the viewpoint of the neurodivergent individual (Baker, 2011; Haney, 2018). In addition to families and caretakers, job coaches are another example of individuals who are important stakeholders in the workplace experiences of many employees with neurodivergent conditions. How do organizations work with these stakeholders if their viewpoints on neurodiversity are different from the employees and their own? This is a research question that would be fruitful as organizations build and maintain climates to be more supportive of neurodiversity.

Moreover, knowing more about the experiences of neurotypicals as they interact with neurodivergent employees may help identify barriers in enhancing climates – areas where managers could intervene with training, for example. This is similar to any groups of employees who may be coming to the organization with different backgrounds and life experiences – they may not understand the

other's experiences and perspectives, thus not listening or understanding, dampening communication and acceptance (Awbrey, 2007; Haney, 2018). Both parties (neurotypicals and neurodivergent employees) should have expectations to grow in this area. Training can help strengthen inclusion, as neurotypicals can understand the experiences of neurodivergent employees, some common barriers, their role as neurotypical employees in leveraging and breaking down those barriers (Ovaska-Few, 2018).

Research suggests that nonautistic people often misunderstand the behavior of employees from the neurominority (Faso et al., 2015; Sheppard et al., 2016). An example of something that could be covered in this training are common behaviors that might be experienced that some have not been exposed to before. Specifically, many neurodivergent conditions can exhibit behaviorally with stimming, "repetitive, usually rhythmic behavior that was commonly expressed through body movements (variously described as hand flapping, finger flicking, hair pulling or pinching, feet flexing, spinning, necklace playing) but also vocalizations (e.g. muttering, grunting, stuttering, whistling, singing)" (Kapp et al., 2019, p. 1785). Kapp et al. (2019) suggest that understanding these as a soothing coping mechanism can help others be supportive and points to research suggesting that all humans use these types of behaviors as coping behaviors (e.g. Jaswal & Akhtar, 2018; Lindsmith, 2014). Training that highlights these similarities enhances climates around neurodiversity while increasing understanding and providing skills to enhance interactions in the workplace, therefore strengthening organizational climates. It should be noted that for training to be truly impactful, it has to be more than awareness training (Kalev et al., 2006), should include real-life examples (Patton, 2019), and should be inclusive of neurodivergent voices rather than being based on stereotypes or definitions of conditions provided by medical professionals.

Discussion

In this chapter, we aimed to show the role that psychological climates have in supporting neurodiversity in organizations. Through a focus on diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates, we demonstrated ways to bolster climates across each of the eight primary functions of HRM in an effort to highlight ways that organizations make changes in their workplaces to be more supportive of neurodiversity. We also presented future research directions to guide management scholars as they continue their exploration of neurodiversity as a type of diversity important to organizations. Our hope is that presenting research focused on the importance of studying organizational climates from both practical and research lenses to support neurodiversity in workplaces will contribute to workplaces with altered environments so that all employees – including those who are neurodivergent – could easily apply their strengths at work.

Overall, we showed that creating and maintaining climates that support neurodiversity involves recreating policies and practices, and that can be complex. As Golden from EY noted:

> [A] lot of investment goes into setting these programs up because we are sourcing differently . . . We are screening and interviewing differently outside of our usual recruitment process, training and assessment process, and then we make offers. Then they go through a customized onboarding process, and they're managed by hiring managers that are specifically trained, and they have office buddies who support them and they have coaches who support them. It's a fairly intensive endeavor.
>
> (Cohn, 2017)

However, the investment is worth it in so many ways. As one woman with ADHD described,

> Having ADHD has been an advantage. I work well to deadlines and can get a lot done in a short time, so a two-hour visit to a potential customer's home is perfect. I can produce plans in a few minutes, while it can take my colleagues all day . . . I can't work with distractions, so would rather be in a cupboard than an open-plan office, but my sales conversion rate is 40% higher than the rest of my team, so it's worth them making allowances.
>
> (Faragher, 2018)

In the remainder of the discussion, we will summarize why the investment in strengthening climates to be more supportive of neurodiversity can truly pay off for organizations.

The business case for neurodiversity has been established. Research has shown that neurodiverse workforces bring new perspectives to their companies and approach complex issues in different (creative) ways (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Eden, 2019; Nyhan, 2018; Ovaska-Few, 2018). Further, research demonstrated that more neurodiverse software testing teams were 30% more productive than less neurodiverse testing teams (Austin & Pisano, 2017). To provide additional examples, both SAP and HPE report that by having neurodiverse employees on teams, those teams generated significant innovations (at SAP, one of these innovations helped the company develop a technical fix worth an estimated $40 million in savings; Austin & Pisano, 2017). Indeed, employees in the neurominority have broken stereotypes and exceeded expectations in many instances. As such, some companies started neurodiversity programs with limitations on the types of roles (quality-testing roles, work with repetitive tasks), but they are now expanding those self-imposed limitations (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Faragher, 2018).

Given these expected and unexpected business benefits for employees and organizations, we would like to state that strengthening diversity, inclusion, and ethical climates to be more supportive of neurodiversity not only has benefits for organizations and for employees in the neurominority – but it actually strengthens workplace climates for *all* employees. For example, many of the accommodations made for neurodivergent employees, such as clearer communication, enhanced task structure for projects, and an enhanced working environment (such as augmenting the climates discussed in this chapter), can be of benefit to all employees (Burnett & Trerise, 2019; Faragher, 2018). As an example, Austin and Pisano (2017) in their *Harvard Business Review* article about neurodiversity spoke with an executive who explained how efforts to make corporate communications more direct improved communication across the organization. Others have commented "accommodations we made for individuals for the spectrum actually helped the whole team" (Association for Talent Development, 2018).

Overall, SAP, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Microsoft, Willis Towers Watson, and EY have discussed publicly how reforming HR practices to capitalize on the talents of neurodiverse people have unlocked their ability to better leverage the skills of *all* workers (Austin & Pisano, 2017). These improvements across the workforce have motivated many organizations with neurodiversity programs to make broader changes to mainstream their neurodiversity programs. Specifically, SAP and Microsoft have goals to make their talent processes so mainstream that they can close the neurodiversity programs (Austin & Pisano, 2017).

Further evidence of how strengthening climates to support neurodiversity improves the workplace for *all* employees comes from the gains in skill sets of neurotypical employees. Research has shown that when neurotypical employees are taught about neurodiversity, they do not see 'ability' and 'disability' as distinct terms that are mutually exclusive (Robertson, 2010). Moreover, managers involved in neurodiversity programs gain skills relating to their team members as individuals, and these skills make them better managers overall (Faragher, 2018); some have stated that after being involved in neurodiversity programs, they are more compassionate (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Elliott, 2018). Moreover, neurotypical employees also report gains in their workplace when they work with employees that are neurodivergent; these gains include an increased appreciation of different perspectives, the ability to challenge groupthink tendencies, experiencing higher morale, and viewing their work as more meaningful (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Faragher, 2018).

The logic that strengthening climates to support neurodiversity supports organizations in their overall business efforts extends even further. Given the prevalence of neurodivergence in the general population (Appiah, 2018) and the assumption that there are a lot of people who are misdiagnosed or undiagnosed (Butterworth & Kovas, 2013), the likelihood is high that many organizations are already encountering inefficiencies in their existing HRM practices. This is because the likelihood is high that leaders and managers are already involved with

managing applicants and employees that are in the neurominority. Given this high likelihood, organizations should embrace the idea of strengthening their climates to support neurodiversity, as the need already exists. Indeed, it is estimated that around 10% of the population is neurodivergent, so employers that do not adapt their climates to support neurodiversity by changing their HRM practices to strengthen their diversity, inclusion, and ethics climates are missing out on the talent that research shows increases the creativity, innovation, productivity, and resilience of their workforce (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Faragher, 2018).

Notes

1. Admittedly, some character portrayals in the media are beginning to explore neurodiversity beyond the savant stereotype (e.g., the film *Neurotypical,* the Netflix show *Atypical*), though many of these portrayals do not specifically speak to the role of neurodiversity for employees or organizations.
2. Disability in this chapter is defined as when a person falls below an average level of functioning in one or more psychological or physical functions (Baron-Cohen, 2019).
3. The neurodiversity movement is defined in this chapter as a perspective that supports the notion that there is no one 'normal' brain type; this is in contrast to the medical model that views neurodivergent conditions as disorders (Baron-Cohen, 2019).
4. We note that employees with disabilities are not the same population as neurodivergent (though they can, and often do, overlap; Baron-Cohen, 2019), hence our pull on a tangential literature for inspiration, as research on neurodiversity specifically is not as developed yet.
5. To complicate the practicality of this, the medical community and other authorities that have traditionally defined terms adapted in society around neurodiversity-related topics are currently reconceptualizing how they define individual conditions that fall under the neurodiversity umbrella. For example, in the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), autism was defined with details about subcategories. But then, in the fifth edition of the DSM, this approach changed in favor of a more concise definition without subcategories (Hensel, 2017). While these changes can signal more inclusion if organizations choose similar changes in their definitions, they can also signal less inclusion to others who identify with the terms used in the previous, more detailed definition.
6. We suggest this focus on neurotypical individuals while acknowledging fully that the neurodiversity movement would not exist without the voice of individuals with neurodivergent conditions themselves discussing their own experiences of using their strengths to benefit their work (den Houting, 2019; Haney, 2018). Our suggestion to focus on the role of neurotypicals does not imply a shift in focus from the voices and perspectives of employees who have neurodivergent conditions.

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