



**“SQUARE PEG
ROUND HOLE”**

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Member Story

In my professional life, it's important to me everybody feels valued and a sense of belonging. That's something I've never felt in this industry.

I've always been a square peg being shoved into a round hole.

Like many in my generation, I was diagnosed late in life with ADHD. My life experience has been people saying to me, "Why can't you be like so-and-so?" or "Why won't you do this thing this way?" Whenever I hear those questions, I feel devalued.

People have an idea of how a "good" employee thinks and acts. Instead of the workplace adjusting to slightly different ways of viewing the world, it grinds away the edges of people who think or act differently until that square peg can be forcefully shoved into a round hole.

During an evaluation once in my career, I was told that I was a superstar performer. Then there was a long pause before my boss told me there were people in the office who didn't like my personality. I was devastated.

Instead of giving up, I decided to become the person everyone liked. It was exhausting and I hated my job.

Beverli Marshall, General Manager, Valley Sanitary District

20%
of adults are
neurodiverse

“Square Pegs, Round Holes”

When the next evaluation came, I was told I wasn't meeting performance standards. Huh?

I realized when I muted those qualities considered unpopular, I also muted the qualities that added value.

As Shrek proclaimed: “Onions have layers. People have layers.”

That's another way of describing the concept of *neurodiversity*: the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them differently.

Basically, there is no one “right” way of thinking, learning, and behaving. Differences are not deficits; they can benefit the team and the employer.

I'm wired differently. I'm neurodivergent. I was born this way. I'm Beverli. Fortunately, I found a boss who listened to me, respected me, and valued me for who I am.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Are there advantages to neurodiversity in the workplace?
- Does your agency and management support neurodiversity?
- Do you feel ready and willing to accommodate someone who is neurodiverse?



80%

of neurodiverse
adults are
unemployed



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Beverli Marshall
General Manager
Valley Sanitary District

Thank you Beverli for sharing your story!
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