

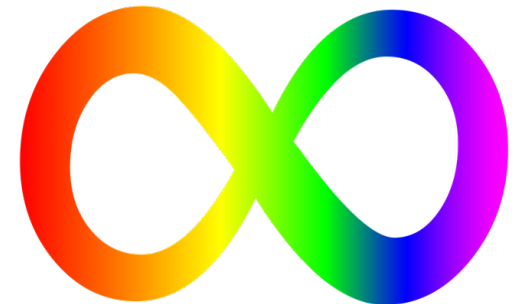
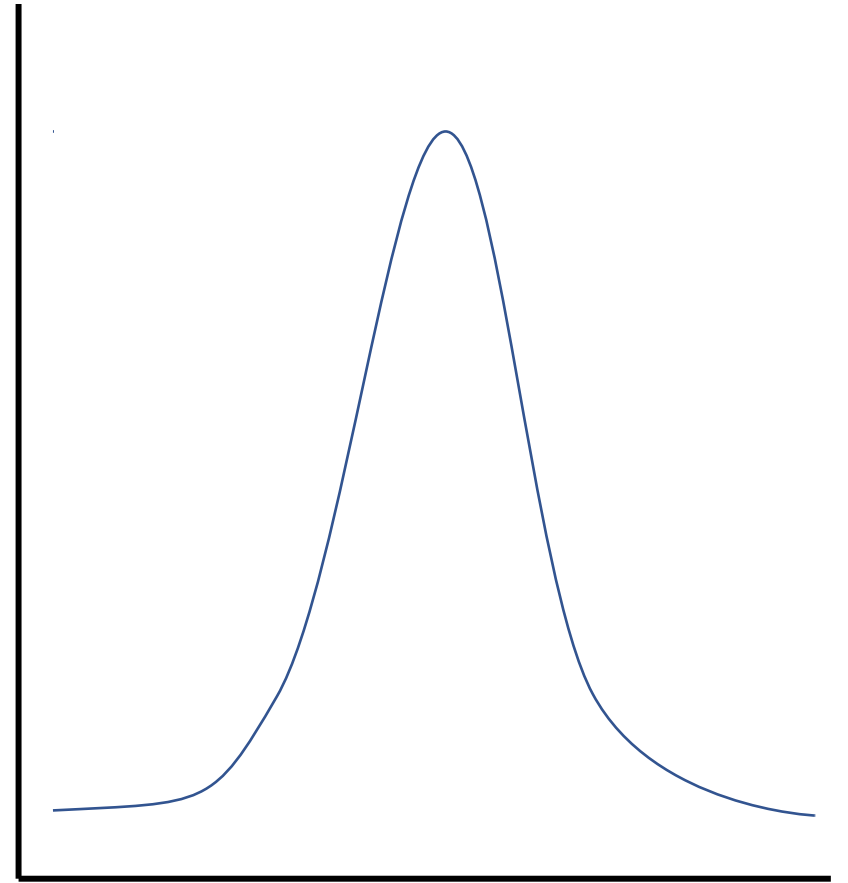


# Strategies for Teaching Neurodiverse Classes

- Jonathan Berliner
- King's College London
- [jonathan.berliner@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:jonathan.berliner@kcl.ac.uk)

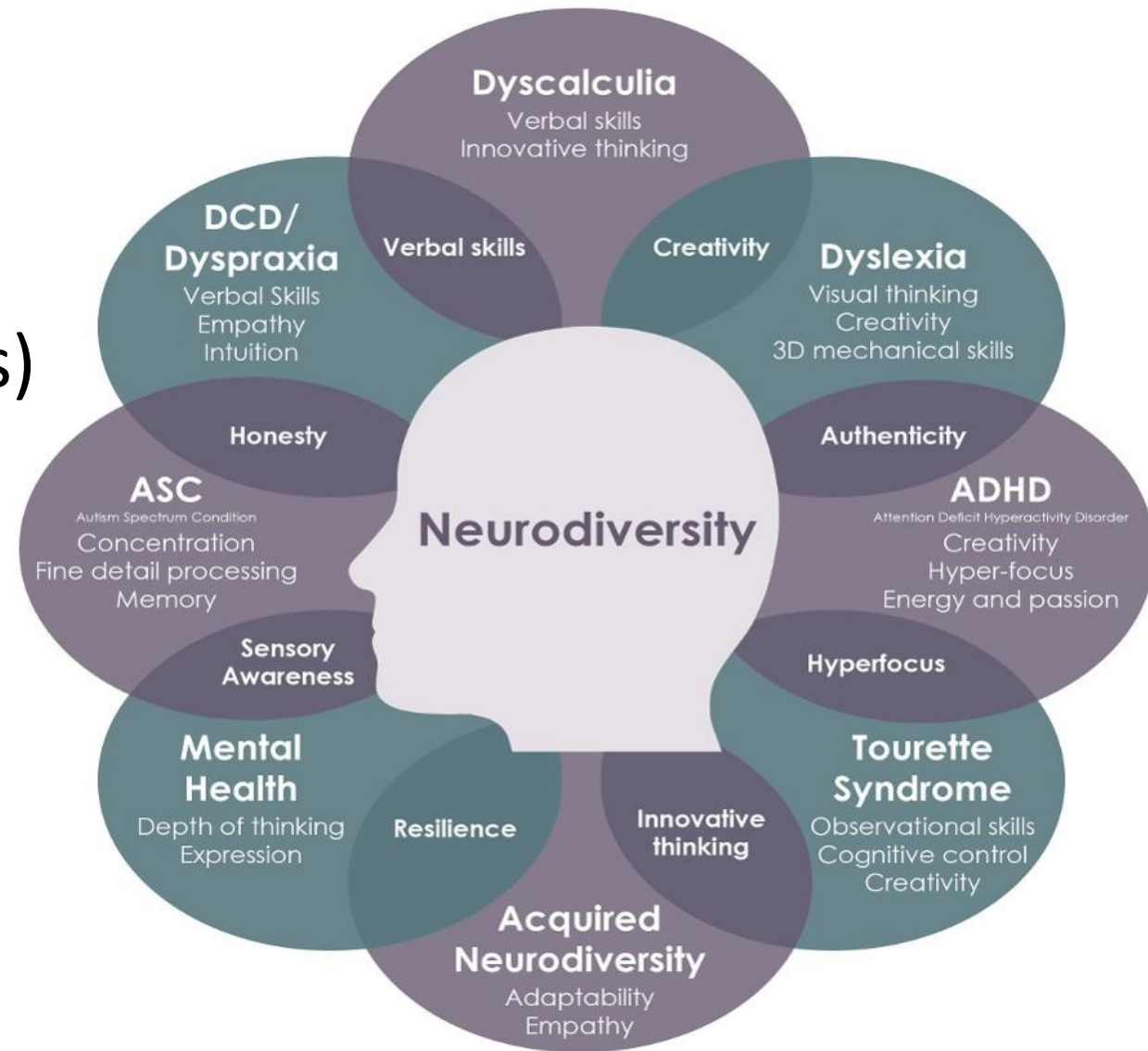
# What is neurodiversity?

- Natural human neurological differences
- Neurodivergent people have a social disadvantage
- Neurodivergences can be advantageous
- Provides identity for minoritized group



# Diagnosis

- Helpful for:
  - Access to services
  - Self-understanding
  - Reducing blame (self and others)
- Problematic because:
  - Focus on deficits (medical)
  - Most people don't fit well
  - Costly and difficult



# Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

**EHC plan** – 4% of students in England

Most common type of need is **ASD**

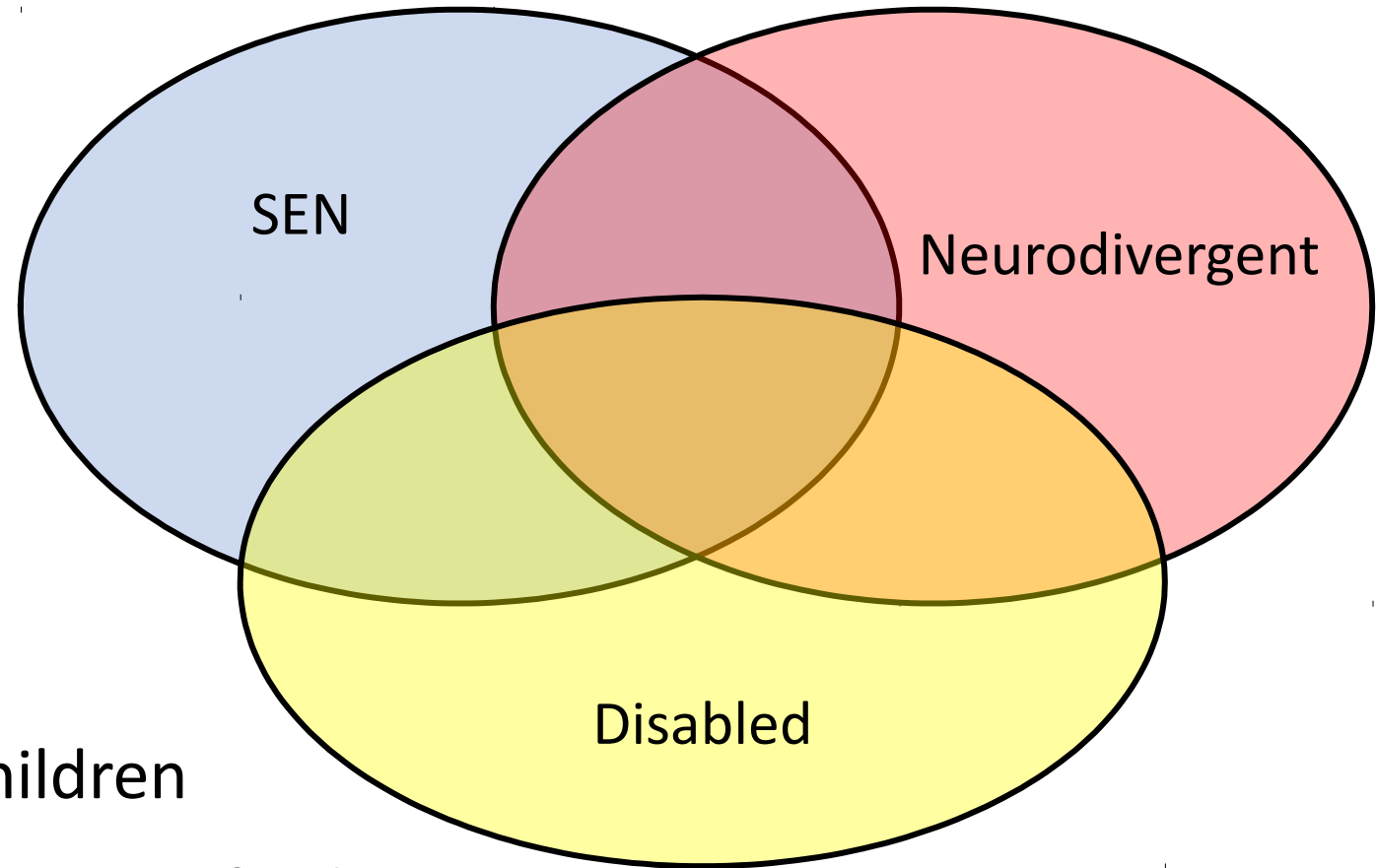
**SEN support** – 12.6%

Most common type of need is **speech, language and communication needs**

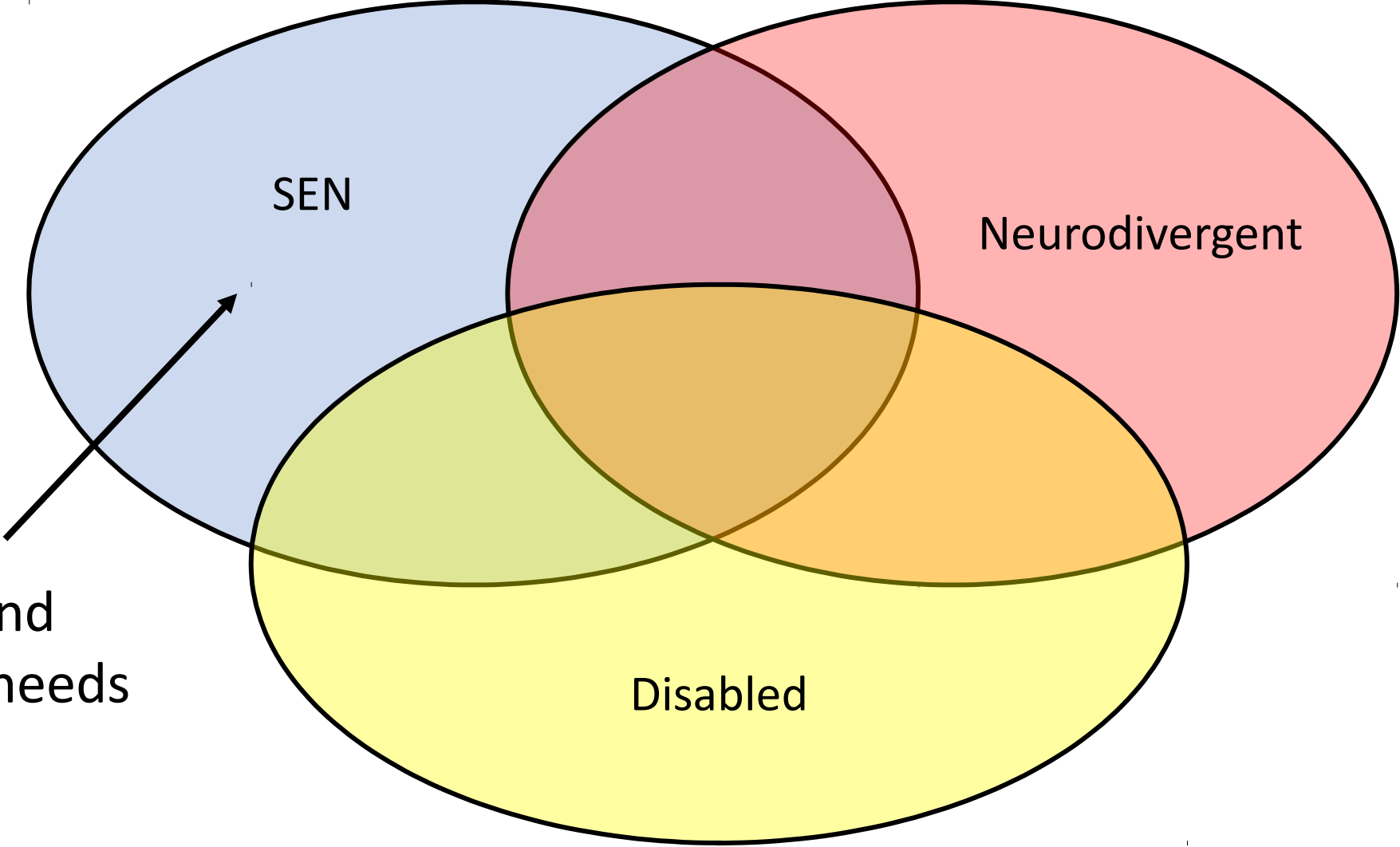
# SEND support

SEN support that schools are expected to provide:

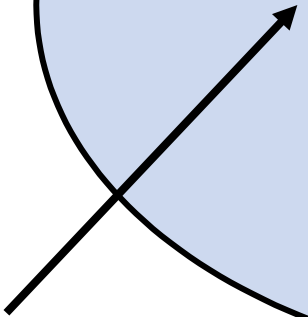
- special learning programmes
- extra help from teacher or TA
- work in a smaller group
- observation in class or at break
- help taking part in class activities
- extra encouragement
- help communicating with other children
- support with physical or personal care difficulties, eg. eating, getting around, using the toilet



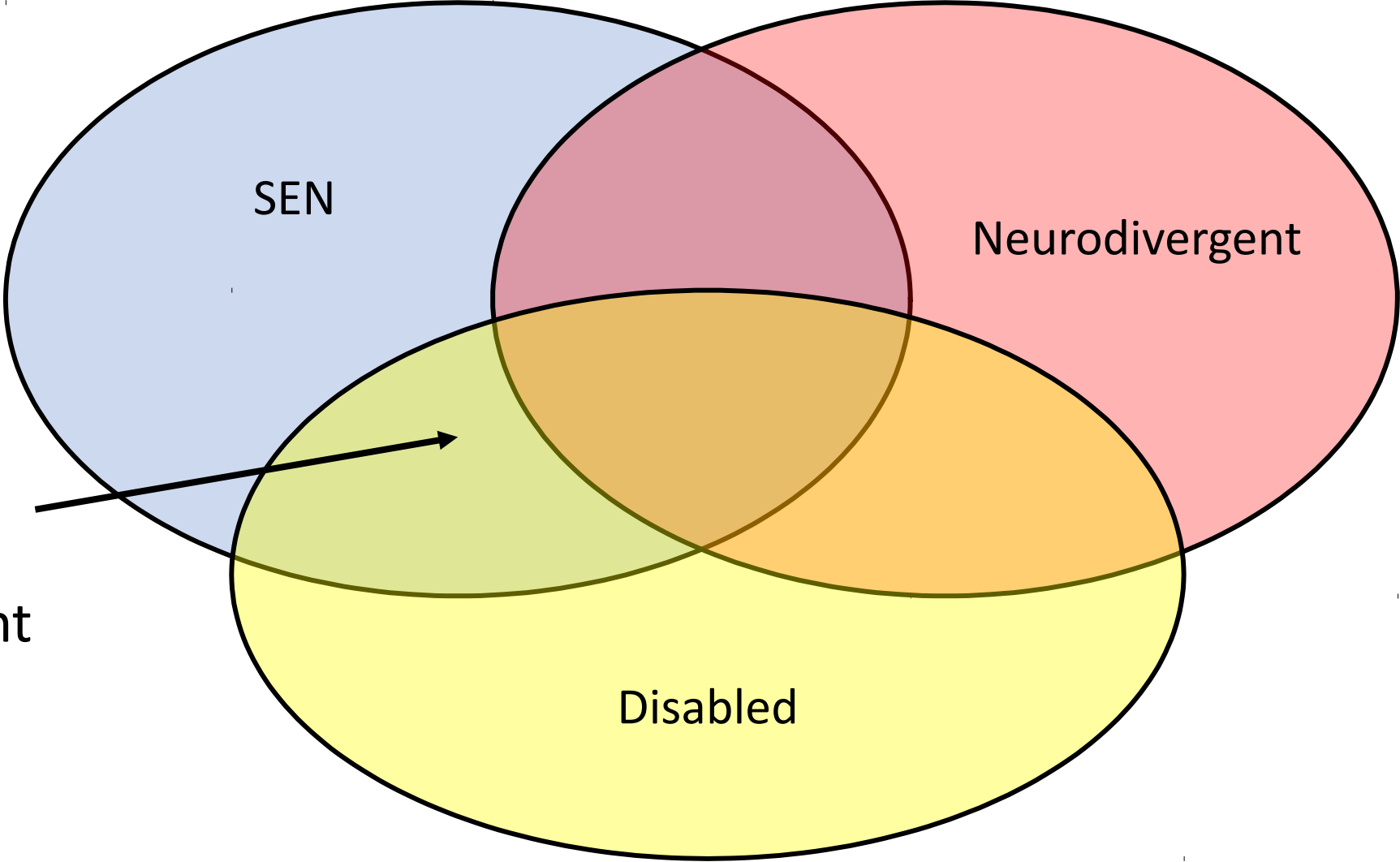
# SEN, Disability and Neurodiversity



Eg. Social and emotional needs

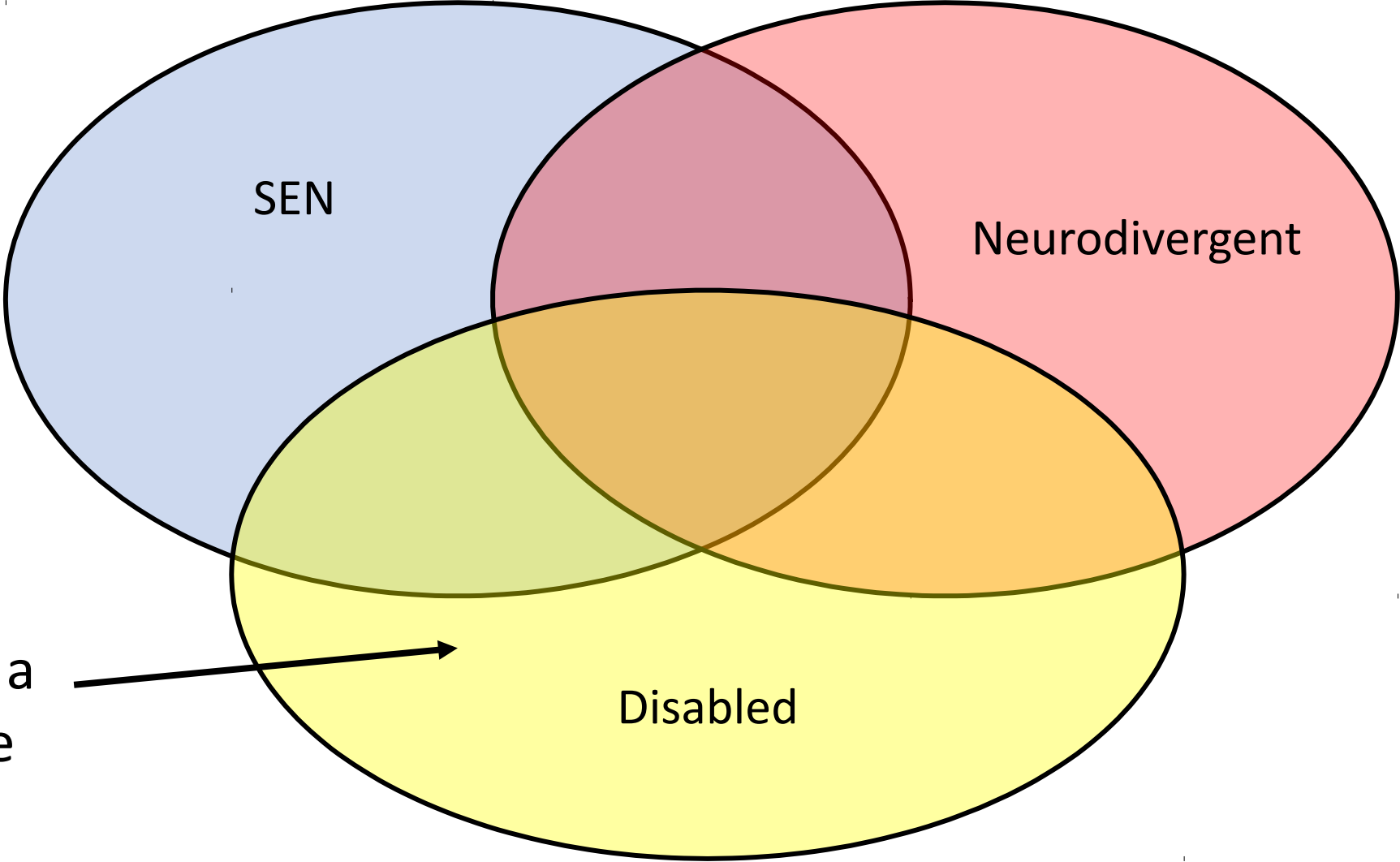


# SEN, Disability and Neurodiversity



Eg. Visual  
impairment

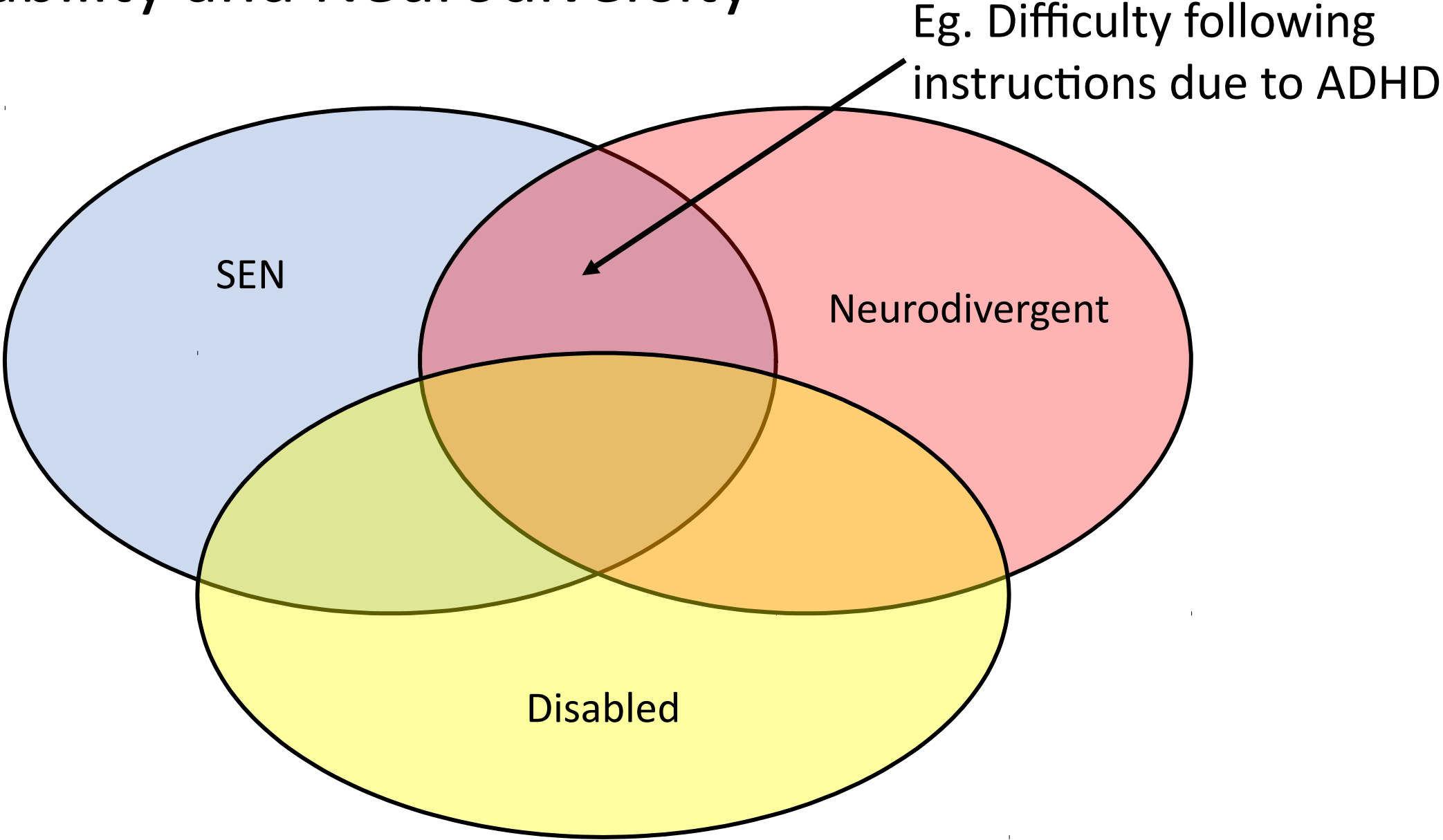
# SEN, Disability and Neurodiversity



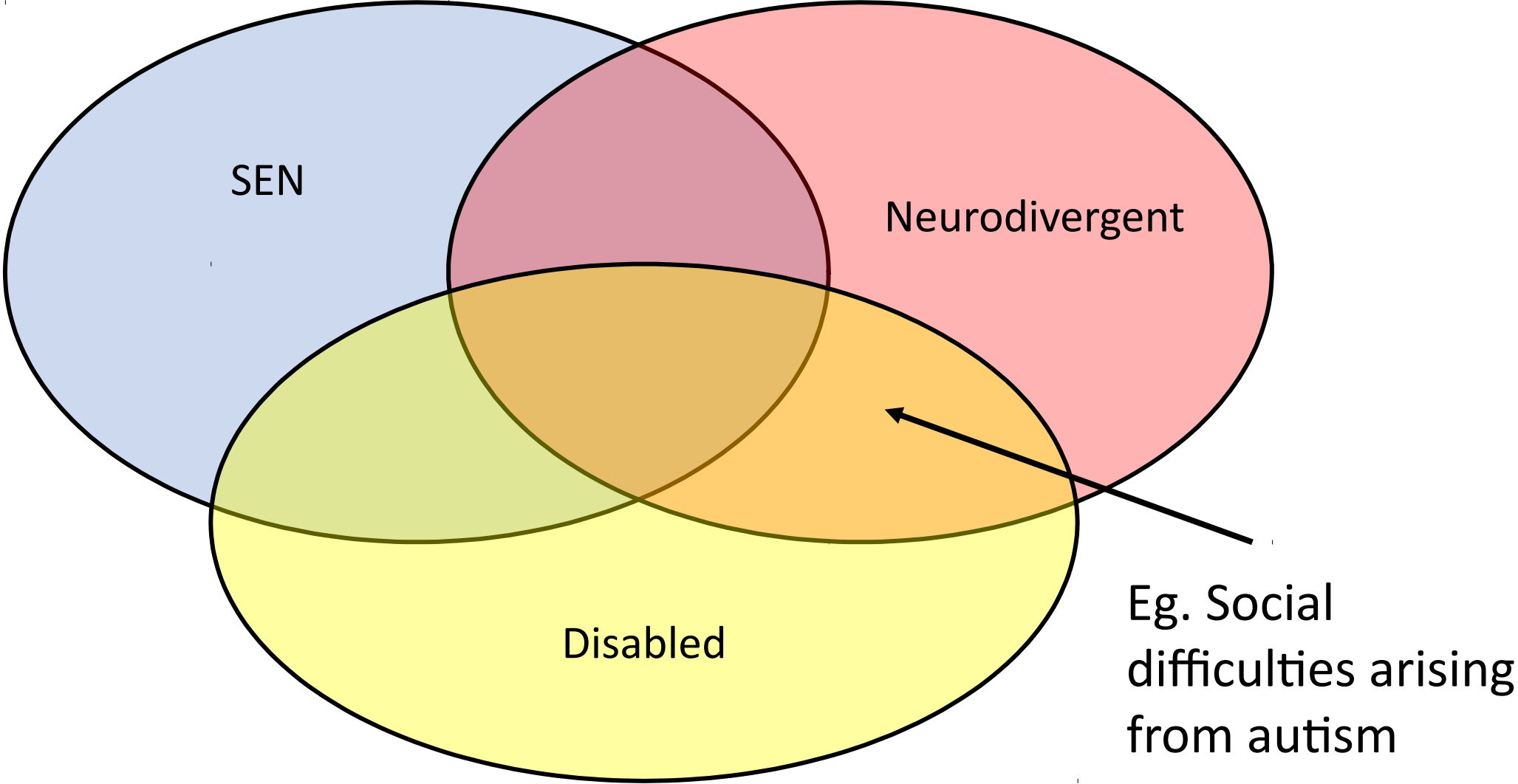
Eg. Needs a  
back brace



# SEN, Disability and Neurodiversity

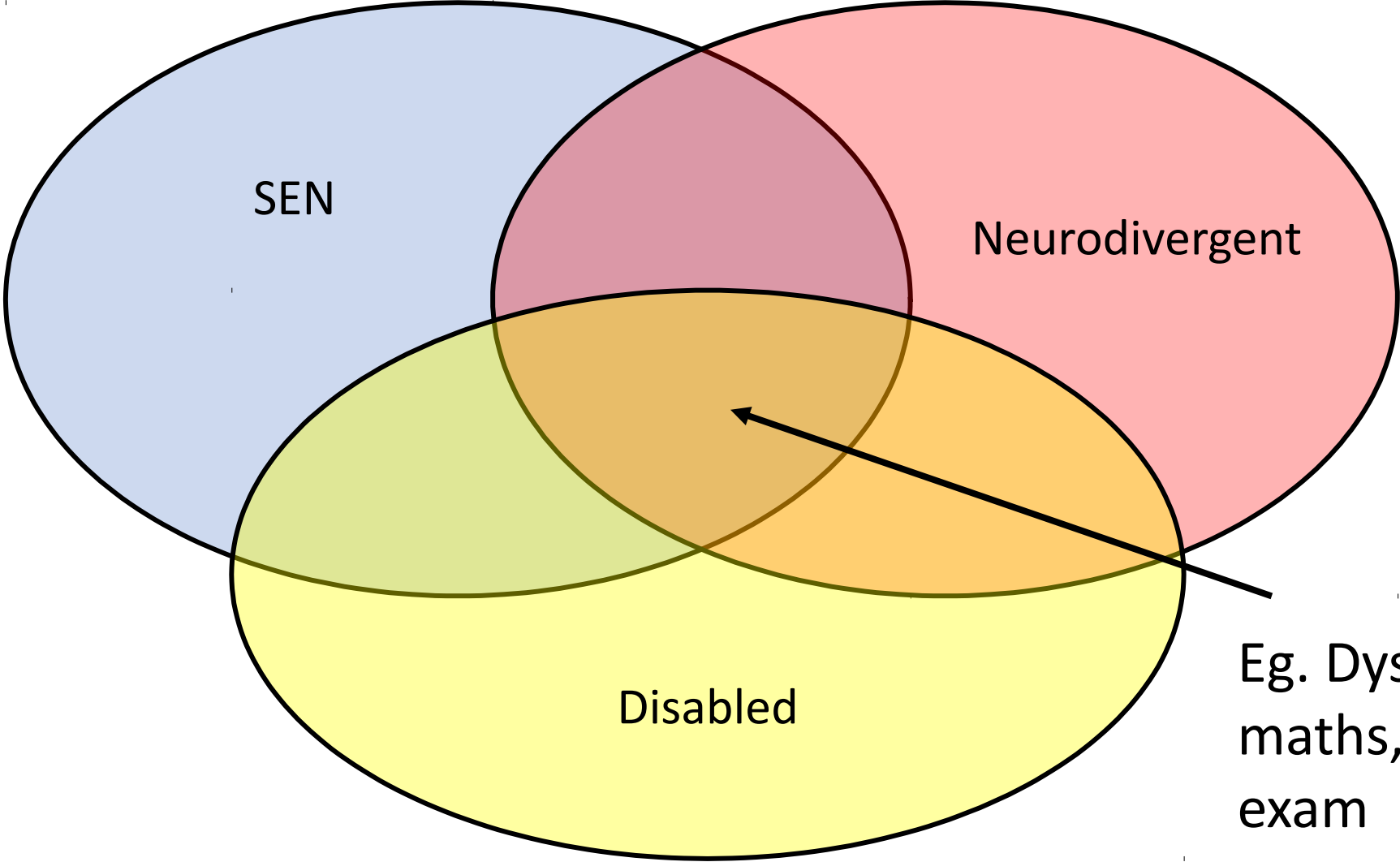


# SEN, Disability and Neurodiversity



Eg. Social difficulties arising from autism

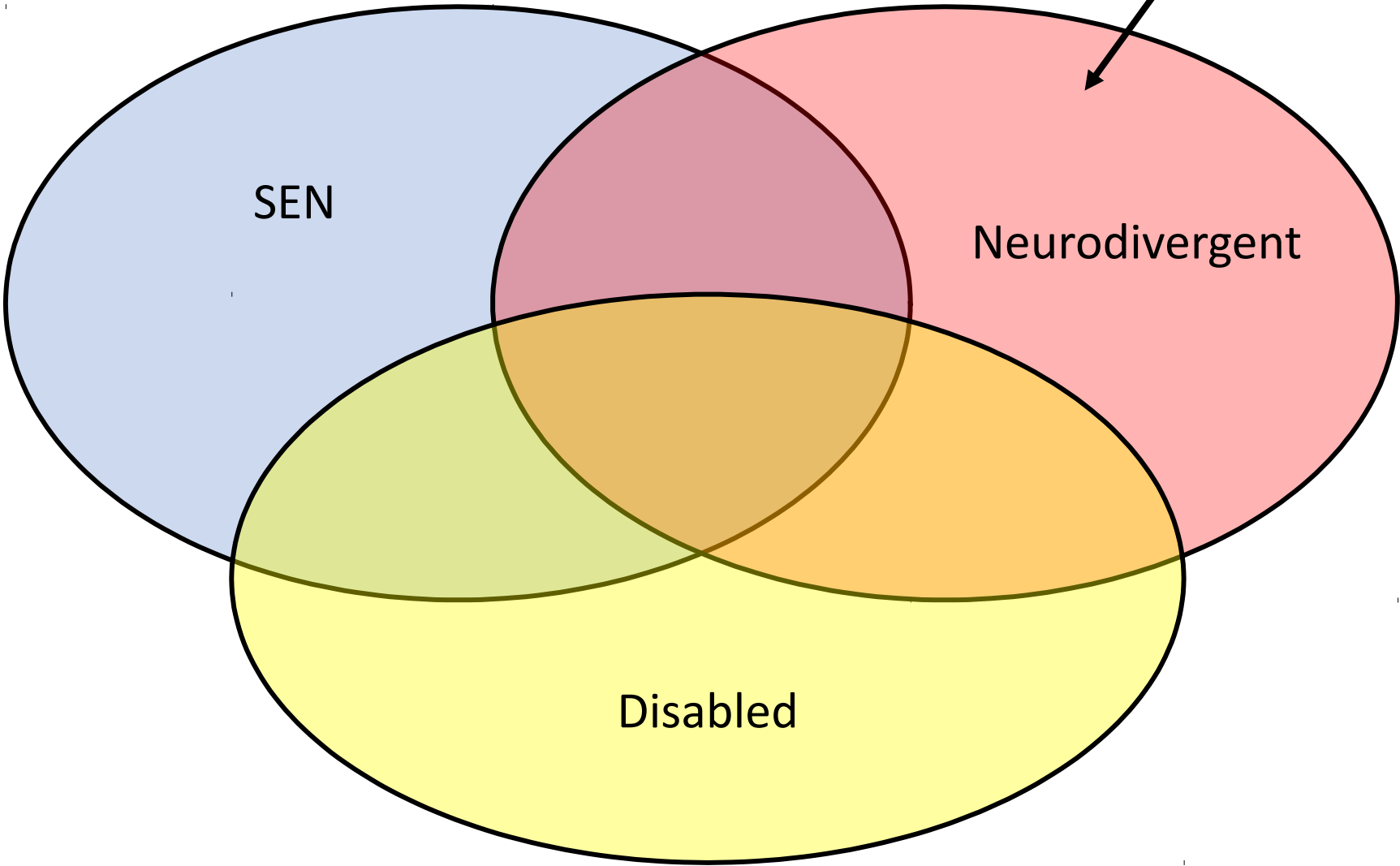
# SEN, Disability and Neurodiversity



Eg. Dyscalculic in maths, ADHD in an exam

# SEN, Disability and Neurodiversity

Eg. ADHD and masking  
need to move around



# The school environment

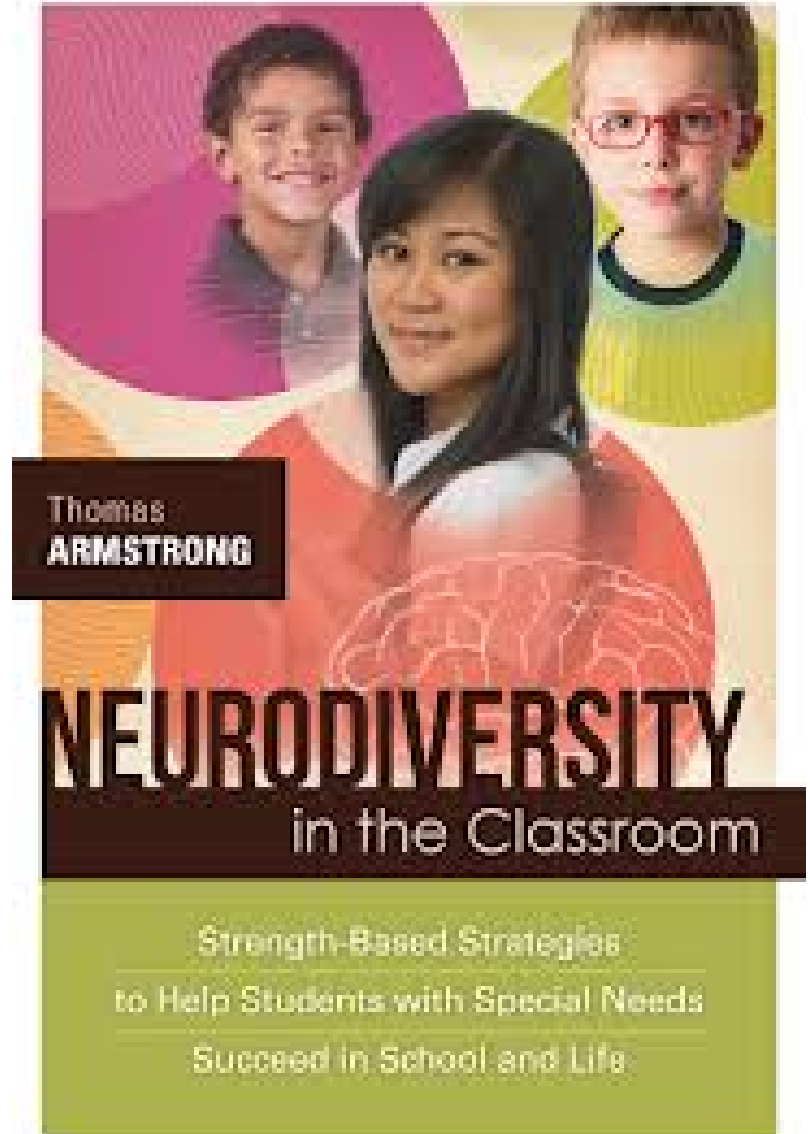
- Noise or silence and lighting in the classroom
- Unattainable rule following eg. sitting still.
- Reading, writing, talking
- The social gaze of teenagers
- Tests – lots of tests
- Teachers who do not understand your needs
- Stigma and poor planning of streaming



# Positive niche construction

(Neurodiversity in the Classroom, Thomas Armstrong)

- Strength awareness
- Role models
- Assistive technologies
- Enhanced human resources
- Strength-based learning strategies
- Affirmative career aspirations
- Environmental modifications



# Strategies

- Start by making a list of their strengths
- Empower them to communicate their needs
- Flexible assessment
- Don't race through the curriculum
- Multiple senses employed
- Praise, praise, praise, praise, praise, and more praise.
- Try to avoid sanctions for minor stuff

# Strategies

- Plenty of time indicators and task reminders.
- Paced instructions
- Short tasks, or long tasks broken up
- Hands-on learning
- One thing at a time
- Allow fidgets and music in headphones if it improves learning
- Have a nice time – these strategies are how everyone should learn!



# Examples of what worked well for me

- Catapults, solar oven
- Storytelling over 6 months
- Pictorial reminders as a plenary that go on a massive poster
- Gardening