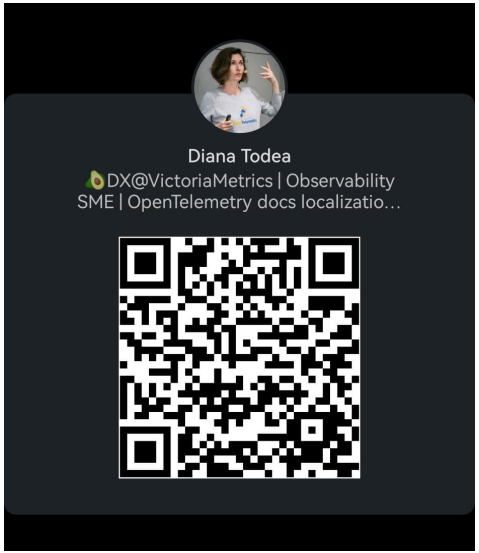
Neurodiversity in tech: how to build, mentor and motivate every mind

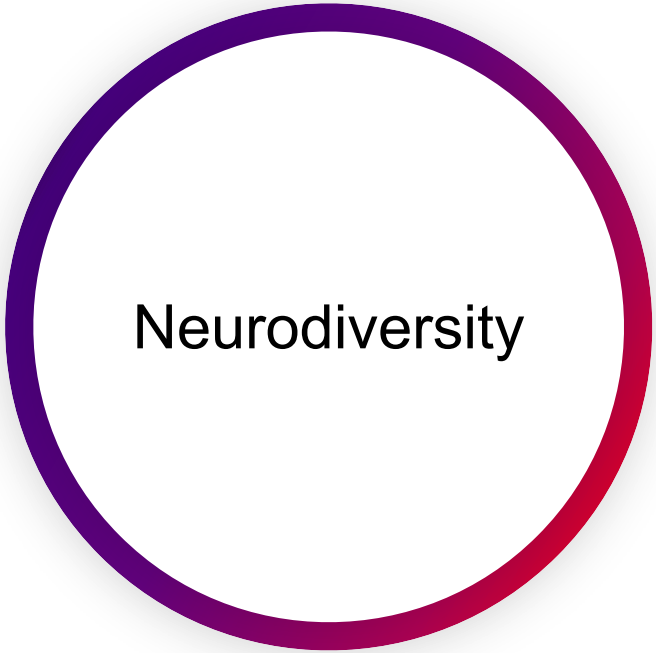
FOSDEM - 1st of February 2026

Diana Todea - DevEx Engineer

MERGE FORWARD

- OpenTelemetry member and contributor
- Cloud Native Days Romania organizer
- Co-lead CNCF Merge-Forward Neurodiversity



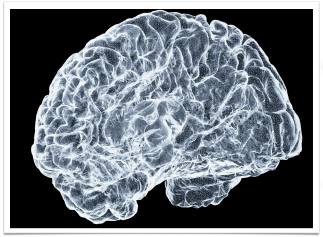

Neurodiversity

“Neurodiversity is a way of saying that human brains are different to each other. This is a biological fact. No two brains (or nervous systems) are the same.”

“Neurodiversity includes every single human being. Like biodiversity describes all life on Earth, neurodiversity describes the diversity of all human brains.”

Source: National Autistic Society (UK)

Neurodiversity → Neurodivergent



strengths: e.g. better memory,
being able to mentally picture three-dimensional (3D) objects easily,
the ability to solve complex mathematical calculations in their head

challenges: e.g. medical disorders,
learning disabilities and other conditions

Neurodivergent vs. Neurotypical

TOURETTE

AUTISM

DYSLEXIA

DEPRESSION

ADHD

ASPERGER'S

BIPOLAR

DOWN SYNDROME

SOCIAL ANXIETY

Is neurodiversity a disability?

NEURO
DIVERSITY

Neurodiversity in tech → Neurotalent

Acknowledge neurodiversity

Accommodate for neurodiversity

Support neurotalent

MERGE FORWARD

Learn more

community.cncf.io/merge-forward

Creating diverse, supportive communities and ally networks for shared learning, mentorship, friendship, and collaborative idea exchange.

#merge-forward on the CNCF Slack!

CLOUD NATIVE COMPUTING FOUNDATION

MERGE FORWARD

Neurodiversity

Our goals:

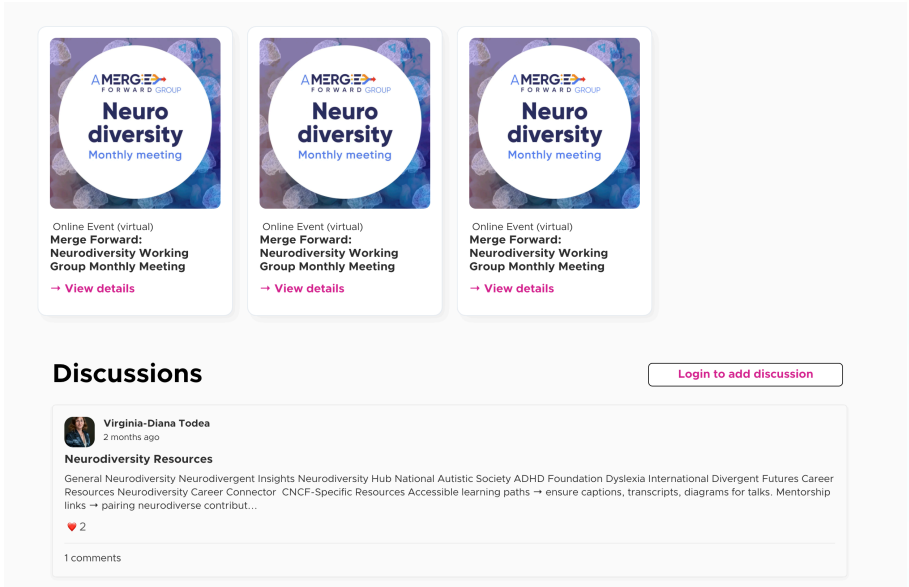
- Create pathways for neurodivergent individuals into cloud native and open source
- Empower them to become more visible members within the cloud native community
- Build a community of neurodivergent individuals to network with, learn from, and support each other

CLOUD NATIVE COMPUTING FOUNDATION

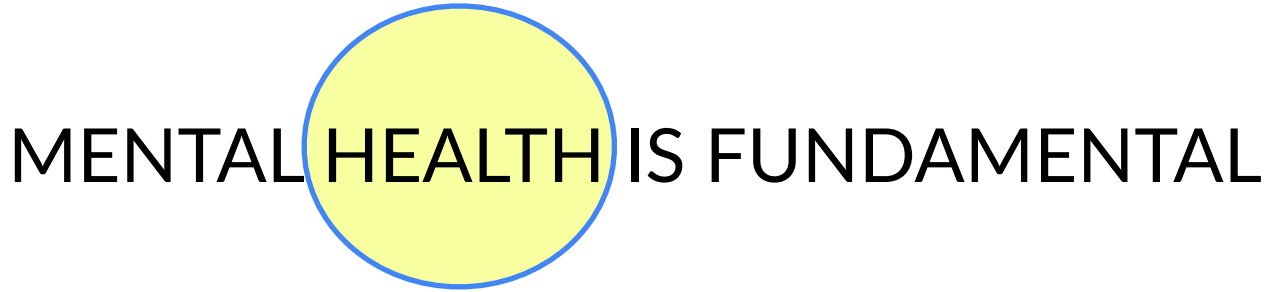
MERGE FORWARD
Merge & Meet: Kickoff Gathering for Underrepresented Groups and Allies
Tuesday, November 11th, 5:00-6:00pm
CLOUD NATIVE COMPUTING FOUNDATION

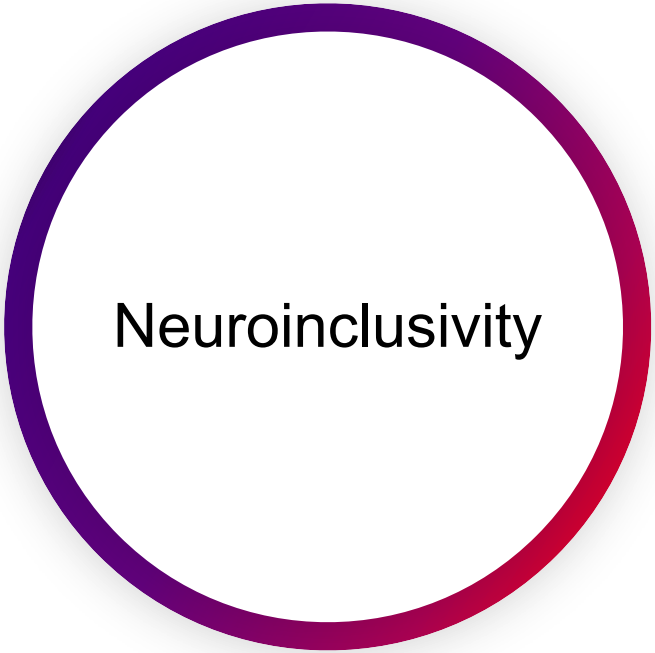
MERGE FORWARD
Neurodiversity
The cloud native Community for neurodivergent members
Join us!
#neurodiversity on the CNCF Slack
CLOUD NATIVE COMPUTING FOUNDATION

WHAT IS NEUROINCLUSIVITY?
ADHD
AUTISM
WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?



- 🤝 Spread the word and welcome new allies
- 📚 Identify and gather neurodiversity specific resources
- 📄 Create neurodiversity best practices: for interviews, for employers, for conferences
- 👥 Mentoring: create safe spaces for neurodivergent mentors and mentees


MENTAL HEALTH IS FUNDAMENTAL


Neuroinclusivity

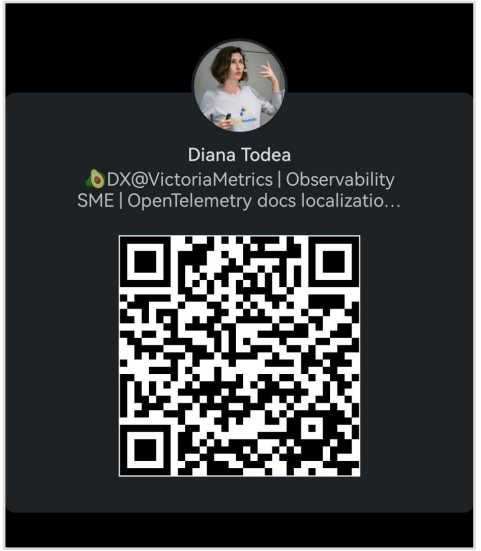
Come and say hi to KubeCon EU Amsterdam!

Resources

https://community.cncf.io/merge-forward/

https://community.cncf.io/neurodiversity/

CNCF Slack: #neurodiversity, #merge-forward

Thank you!

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X: @dianavtodea
Github: @didiViking/Conferences_Talks
LinkedIn: @diana-todea-b2a79968