



GROVE's Practice Foundations

This document aims to help you understand how we work at GROVE both in terms of being 'neuro-affirming' and with regards to how we treat one another.

GROVE's Neuro-affirming Foundations:

- Our approaches are grounded in the principles of Neurodiversity Paradigm*.
- We recognise the pervasive role of ableism within society, including the influence of internalised ableism. We aim to challenge ableist narratives about neurodivergent people.
- We are committed to being anti-racist.
- We are committed to being LGBTQIA+ affirming.
- We recognise and respect each individual's intersectional identity and are committed to unpacking one's own privilege.
- We aspire to work in a way that is trauma informed.
- We respect all forms of communication and presume competence.

Our Foundations enable us to aspire, wherever possible, to create an accessible and emotionally, psychologically, sensorially, relationally safe space for GROVE's young people, their families and those with whom we work.

These foundations create the potential for **authentic connection**, **community** and **growth** in a way that is meaningful for each individual – for instance, developing meaningful relationships, a sense of belonging, possibly developing self-understanding, positive self-esteem and neurodivergent identity.

We are also committed to being humble, reflective and participating in continual further learning.

How we treat one another at GROVE:



There are three key principles we hold with regards how we treat one another at GROVE. These are:

Clarity

Curiosity

Compassion

Each of these are rooted in our **Neuro-affirming Foundations** and is a rejection of behaviourism**.

Clarity:

- We clearly communicate *what* is needed to create spaces that are as safe as we can realistically achieve, that are happy and where everyone feels included as their authentic selves. We also communicate *why* these things are needed.
- These things are:
 1. **Being accepting of people as they are;**
 2. **Treating ourselves and others with kindness;**
 3. **Adhering to necessary boundaries:**
 - a. No aggressive and abusive behaviour of all kinds including bullying, racism, homophobia and transphobia;
 - b. No DMs to other young people in group;
 - c. No screen shots, recording or photographing any aspect of the sessions;
- This will be sent via various written formats and video ahead of a first session, with parents/carers requested to discuss it with their young person.
- Each person will have the opportunity to add their thoughts to the list above so they may express specific things they are / are not comfortable with (e.g. swearing). Contribution will be sought through different means with the aim of enabling everyone to express their thoughts and feelings if they want to.
- We seek clarity of understanding young people's access, support, and communication needs ahead of the first session. We then proactively design our approach to allow for needs to be met where possible and we are honest if something is not possible.
- We keep communication open about access, support and communication needs in order that the young person and/or their parents/carers can provide us with additional information at any stage.

Curiosity:



- Sometimes people do things that cause difficulties for themselves or others. We acknowledge and accept that such actions are the result of dysregulation, distress and/or unmet need.
- We always want to understand *why* individuals are struggling. Where possible we aim to work with them using collaborative problem solving.

Compassion:

- We aim to be consistent, predictable and calm in our manner.
- We support in ways that are non-shaming, non-punitive and without judgement.
- We support those who are affected by others' distress behaviour whilst preserving dignity and modelling compassion.
 - *Remember: We recognise how essential it is that an individual's privacy is respected and we do not share any information we are not given explicit consent to share. E.g. 'they are having a tough time today because of ...'*
- There may be times when a young person's level of stress, trauma and/or distress makes group or individual mentoring participation too difficult, especially if their behaviour significantly impacts the safety or wellbeing of others. In such cases, we will speak with parents to come up with a plan, ensuring the young person's dignity and minimising any feelings of shame.



Glossary:

**The Neurodiversity Paradigm is a specific perspective on neurodiversity – a perspective or approach that boils down to these fundamental principles:*

1.) Neurodiversity is a natural and valuable form of human diversity.

2.) The idea that there is one “normal” or “healthy” type of brain or mind, or one “right” style of neurocognitive functioning, is a culturally constructed fiction, no more valid (and no more conducive to a healthy society or to the overall well-being of humanity) than the idea that there is one “normal” or “right” ethnicity, gender, or culture.

3.) The social dynamics that manifest in regard to neurodiversity are similar to the social dynamics that manifest in regard to other forms of human diversity (e.g., diversity of ethnicity, gender, or culture). These dynamics include the dynamics of social power inequalities, and also the dynamics by which diversity, when embraced, acts as a source of creative potential”. [NEURODIVERSITY: SOME BASIC TERMS & DEFINITIONS • NEUROQUEER](#)

*****Behaviourism:***

- *In short, behaviourism focuses on observing and controlling behaviour through rewards and punishments and often reduces complex human experiences to "stimulus and response", overlooking the complex inner world. Additionally, authentic Autistic behaviour is often misinterpreted and inappropriately targeted due to a neuro-normative gaze;*
- *We reject behaviourist approaches, programmes and so called ‘therapies’ including Applied Behaviour Analysis and Positive Behaviour Support.*