# Glossary

**attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD):** a neurodevelopmental disorder that causes children, youth and adults to have challenges with regulating their attention. They may also struggle with restlessness and impulsiveness.

**autism spectrum disorder (also referred to as *autism*):** a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects a person's social skills, communication and behaviour. Autism is referred to as a spectrum because each person's experience is unique, and their symptoms can range from mild to severe.

**circle of support:** a group of people (e.g., relatives, caregivers, friends, Elders, and/or other cultural and community members) who come together to provide encouragement, advice and support.

**co-regulation:** an interactive process in which a parent or caregiver promotes self-regulation in a child through modelling, coaching and feedback.

**developmental milestones:** a set of age-specific tasks that most children and adolescents can do within a certain age range. Early developmental milestones include learning how to roll over, sit, crawl, make eye contact and smile.

**emotional dysregulation:** difficulty in responding to and managing big feelings or emotions, which can result in intense or prolonged emotional reactions. A child or youth with emotional dysregulation may react to situations in an exaggerated manner, such as through outbursts of anger, crying, passive-aggressive behaviour, or conflict.

**functional behavioural assessment (FBA):** analyzing what happens before and after a particular behaviour, and the environment in which it happens, to identify causes and find ways to address the behaviour.

**hypersensitivity:** heightened sensitivity to stimuli, like loud noises, bright lights, labels in clothing, and strong smells and tastes, that may cause a child or youth to have strong responses, including anxiety, distress, irritability or anger.

**hyposensitivity:** reduced sensitivity to stimuli that may lead a child or youth to seek more intense stimulation through behaviours like fidgeting or head-banging.

**intellectual disability:** a neurodevelopmental condition that affects cognitive processes (such as learning and problem-solving) and adaptive skills (such as the activities of daily life, including communication and self-care).

Source: healthymindsbc.gov.bc.ca

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**mental health:** a state of well-being in which people live and work meaningfully, their relationships are healthy, and they can adapt to and cope with the normal stresses of life.

**neurodevelopmental disorders:** conditions that affect brain development and can cause delays in development and impairment in physical, social, cognitive and emotional functioning, which are often noticed in early childhood. Examples of neurodevelopmental disorders are intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, learning disorders, communication disorders, motor disorders, tic disorders, seizure disorders, cerebral palsy, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, genetic disorders such as Down syndrome. The challenges people with these conditions face can be greater when there are physical, social or communication barriers in their environment.

**neurodivergence:** divergence from social norms around the way people's brains work and their related behaviours.

**neurodivergent**: processing information and behaving in ways that differ from social norms. Identifying as neurodivergent does not require a formal diagnosis.

**neurodiversity:** the wide range of ways in which people's brains work and how they perceive and respond to the world.

**neurotype:** a particular type of brain wiring, out of the many ways in which human brains can be wired.

**neurotypical:** having a brain that functions in ways that society expects or considers usual; in children and youth, reaching developmental milestones at a similar time to their peers.

**peer support network:** a supportive community of people with similar interests, such as parents or caregivers of children with neurodevelopmental disorders, who come together to share their experiences, support each other, and find answers to their questions.

**respite:** care provided by others to give parents or caregivers a break for a short period of time.

**self-injurious behaviour (SIB):** self-directed injury that is non-suicidal in nature and causes physical trauma. Repetitive and rhythmic behaviours (such as head-banging, head-hitting, self-biting, eye-poking, tooth-pulling, hand-mouthing, skin-picking or puncturing, slapping, self-pinching and/or scratching) may affect individuals with intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder and other neurodevelopmental conditions.

**sensory:** of or related to the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) or physical sensation.

**sensory input:** stimulation of a sense organ (eyes, ears, nose, tongue or skin) by something in the environment, causing a signal to travel to the brain or spinal cord.

**sensory processing sensitivities:** increased sensitivity of the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord), causing greater sensitivity in experiencing and responding to physical, social, and emotional stimuli.

**sensory stimulation:** activation of one or more of the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch).

**sleep disorders (also known as sleep-wake disorders):** problems with quality, timing and amount of sleep, which can result in daytime distress and difficulties in functioning. Sleep disorders often occur along with medical and mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety or neurodevelopmental disorders.

**stimuli (singular: stimulus):** any change in the environment that triggers a response in the senses.