



What is Foundations for Divergent Minds (FDM)?

Foundations for Divergent Minds (FDM) is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization that strives to ensure equity, access, and fulfilled lives for neurodivergent people through inclusive, practical, and affirming neurodiversity-based programming and education. Our flagship program is a specialized series of training courses based on the unique FDM educational model that can be used by parents and professionals working with autistic and [neurodivergent](#) children, adolescents, and adults. FDM's model consists of five foundations: sensory regulation, emotional regulation, communication, socialization and executive function. The model uses the concept of *foundations* to create a systematic approach to designing accommodations and supports in external environments (i.e. school, work, therapy, in the community, etc.) and/or at home that create a supportive base from which growth can occur. Caregivers and practitioners will learn to adapt environments and supports in these five areas in order to provide meaningful accommodations that are transferable to other situations and can be carried through their lives.

How is FDM different?

Many existing teaching models for neurodivergent individuals function using a *deficit model*. A deficit model presumes that society is fine and that neurological differences are problems that need fixing; therefore “interventions” are designed by assessing the child’s development, compared to their neurotypical peers, and teaching skills that are “missing.” Goals often focus on deficits first, only using accommodation when everything else has “failed.” In contrast, as FDM was designed by neurodivergent people, our model presumes something different entirely: that when we and/or our kids struggle, it’s because the surroundings need to be adjusted. Thus, any assessment should start with evaluating what is missing from the environment, *not* missing from the person. We presume that accommodations are primary in all other goals. We start by supporting a person's needs and then building up a solid foundation of acceptance and support.

What does FDM look like in practice?

FDM provides training, coaching, and consulting to parents and practitioners as well as resources and community for like-minded people. We aim to be a hub for providers, educators, the neurodiversity community and parents alike and broadly promote acceptance and support. FDM hosts online and in-person training, curriculum development, and outreach that can be applied in therapy practices, schools, Early Intervention, childcare facilities, at home, etc.

How can I get more information and/or get involved?

Please contact us!

- Email: info@DivergentMinds.org
- Website: <http://divergentminds.org>
- Like and follow us on FB: <https://www.facebook.com/FoundationsforDivergentMinds/>