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Abstract

“Normal” is a neurotypical ideal that collapses under observation, much like a quantum particle — or a government budget forecast. This study explores the paradox autistic people face when evaluated by neurotypical standards: the requirement to be simultaneously *normal enough* to be unproblematic and *disabled enough* to justify support. We term this phenomenon **Schrödinger’s Normal**.

Introduction

Neurotypical society maintains a rigid-yet-vague metric called “normal,” a category so undefined that it has survived decades without peer review. Autistic individuals, meanwhile, are assessed on their ability to enter this moving target while remaining recognisably “disabled” when funding renewals arrive.

This paper examines the mechanics of the paradox, how it shapes policy, and why no neurotypical has ever successfully defined “normal” without referencing vibes.

Methods

A mixed-methods approach was used, including:

- **Ethnographic observation** in supermarkets, tribunals, and staff meetings
 - **Content analysis** of NDIA decisions contradicting themselves
 - **Neurological imaging** (Axel blinking in disbelief)
 - **Longitudinal data** (30+ years of people saying “just act normal”)
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Findings

1. Normal is a behavioural Schrödinger's Cat

Autistic people must simultaneously be:

- *social but not too social,*
- *quiet but not too quiet,*
- *independent but not too independent,*
- *needing support but not that much support.*

Opening the box collapses the wave function into:

- *"You're too capable for that support" or*
- *"You didn't demonstrate enough capability for that support."*

Never both. Never neither. Always wrong.

2. Neurotypical Normality shifts with atmospheric pressure

Definitions change depending on:

- who's in the room,
- how many coffees have been consumed,
- whether the Minister is being yelled at in Question Time.

Control groups confirm: neurotypical expectations are best graphed using **chaos mathematics**.

3. Neurotypicals enforce "normal" while rarely meeting it

Interrupting?

→ Normal.

Cutting off autistic witnesses mid-sentence in parliament?

→ Normal.

Melting down in traffic?

→ Also normal.

But autistic self-regulation?
→ “Concerning behaviour.”

4. Schrödinger’s Normal is used to regulate supports

Supports are approved only when the autistic person demonstrates:

- enough difficulty *and*
- enough functioning
- at the same time
- in the same assessment
- conducted by someone who has never met them before.

Quantum entanglement is easier.

Axel’s Naïve Questions™

1. If “normal” is the standard, why is no neurotypical required to demonstrate it?
 2. If autistic stimming is “not normal,” why is neurotypical stress-yelling considered socially appropriate?
 3. Why does the definition of “normal” only matter when funding is involved?
 4. If the NDIA wants autistic people to be normalized, should neurotypicals go first so we can observe the process safely?
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Conclusion

Schrödinger’s Normal is a paradox that distracts policymakers, confuses clinicians, and exhausts autistic people. Axel recommends immediate retirement of the term and replacement with:

- *functional diversity,*
- *contextual support needs,*
- *and stop trying to make “normal” happen — it’s not going to happen.*