

Design for EVERY MIND

Neuroinclusive design helped these homeowners feel at ease in their spaces. Find out how they did it—and how to make the approach work for you.

by SHELBY DEERING

Paola Camacho-Bansal prioritizes natural light in her bathroom (shown) along with warm, soft features that are grounding.

Lucero Creative, designed by Rachel Jackson.

Lucero Creative (Camacho-Bansal); Kelly Bach (@retrobakelly) (Bach); Brittney-Elizabeth Williams (Williams); Nino Muñoz (Hilton).

Our homes are

meant to be sanctuaries— places where we can escape the hustle of daily life and recharge. But experts say the way we shape our spaces goes beyond aesthetics: It can support our mental health and help ease challenges associated with neurodivergent conditions like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), autism, and dyslexia. Neuroinclusive design, sometimes called sensory-inclusive or neurodiversity-affirming design, is quickly moving into the main-

stream, focusing on adjustable lighting, intentional organization, sensory-friendly materials, and more. At its core, neuroinclusive design “is the practice of creating environments that support the full range of human nervous systems,” says Anita Yokota, a licensed therapist turned interior designer and the author of *Grounded Living*. My introduction to the concept came when YouTube recommended a video to me of Paris Hilton, who has ADHD, designing a neuroinclusive home office. The video series, with more than 6 million

views, makes it clear that many people are curious about how their homes might better support the way their brains work. So what does this look like in practice, and how can these principles work in any home? We tapped a group of neurodivergent homeowners—including Paris herself—for ideas to reduce overwhelm, boost creativity, increase focus, and appeal to the senses. Of course, what works for one person may not be universal. The takeaway: What makes a space feel best is about more than a diagnosis.

1 in 5 Americans identifies as neurodivergent.

MEET OUR EXPERTS



Paola Camacho-Bansal
Homeowner and cofounder of OverCoffee Consulting



Kelly Bach
Pattern designer



Alisa H. Bell
Special educator and creator



Kristine Palmer
Homeowner



Brittney-Elizabeth Williams
Professional photographer



Paris Hilton
Entrepreneur, media personality, advocate, and CEO of 11:11 Media

Boost CREATIVITY



The Power of Color

How one designer balances the blissful and the bold to create a home that feels just right

“As someone with ADHD, I design my home to support both stimulation and calm,” says Kelly Bach, a pattern designer and the owner of RetroBabeCo, a clothing and accessories brand known for its playful

approach. For Kelly, home design is all about finding the middle ground. “I’m energized by bold colors and patterns, which help keep me engaged and inspired,” she says, “but I rarely use overhead lights and instead rely on

layered lighting, so I can control how a space feels depending on my energy level.” She’s strategic about organization too: Throughout her home, a mix of open and hidden storage keeps things “visible without feeling chaotic.”

Mindful Design

Simple ideas for common neurodiversity challenges

Reduce clutter.

Keep counters clear and set up organization zones.

Add color.

Use hues in areas where focus or energy is needed, such as reading nooks and homework desks.

Adjust lighting.

Bright light supports daytime focus; warm light at night signals the body to relax.

Layer textures.

Use soft blankets, nubby pillows, or textured wall hangings for soothing sensory input.

Limit noise.

Install sound-dampening elements such as rugs, drapes, or insulation to soften distracting sounds.

Bring in nature.

Add plants, branches, or other natural materials to create a calming, earthy atmosphere.

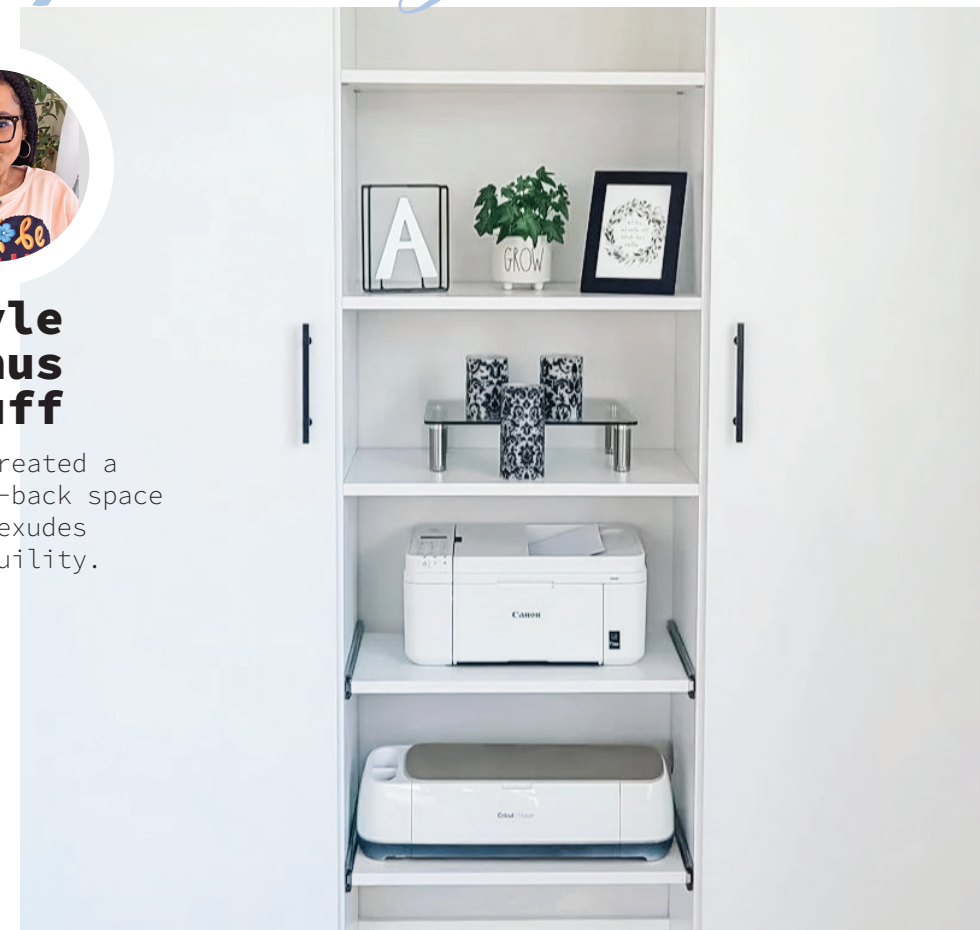
Kelly Bach/@retrobabekelly. Artwork at left by Rhiannon James.

Optimize ORDER



Style Minus Stuff

She created a pared-back space that exudes tranquility.



Anxiety and ADHD haven’t stopped Alisa Bell from creating a welcoming family home designed around a minimalist aesthetic. Her craft room (shown) is the perfect example. “I like spaces to be clean, clear, and calming,” says Alisa, the mother of two neurodivergent children and a special educator. She also relies on a neutral color palette and thoughtful lighting choices (such as candles and uplighting) to put her family at ease.

Design Without Labels

A neuroinclusive approach helps break stereotypes.

It’s a common misconception that people with OCD are always ultra-tidy or that those with ADHD naturally thrive in messy spaces. In reality, **neurodivergent experiences vary widely—and design needs to as well.** Neuroinclusive design moves beyond one-size-fits-all assumptions,

focusing instead on what actually helps individuals feel calm, focused, and supported in their own environments. “I encourage people—especially those whose brains work a little differently—to see design as a powerful tool for joy, accessibility, and self-expression,” says Kelly Bach.

Custom cabinetry by fantasyclosets.com.

Create CALMNESS



Sensory Sanctuary

A bedroom makeover focused on soft layers and gentle textures

Kristine Palmer had her daughter's sensory-processing disorder and auto-immune condition in mind when it was time to redesign her child's sleeping quarters. "During a flare, she becomes so physically uncomfortable that the sensation of anything

touching her skin becomes intolerable," Kristine says. Interior designer Rachel Jackson worked with Kristine and her daughter to outfit the bedroom with soft fabrics and weighted items that provide grounding pressure when needed. She also

added a comfortable rug and draperies to help dampen sound (heightened auditory sensitivity is often part of Kristine's daughter's condition). "I'm thrilled that my daughter has a bedroom that feels grown-up and supportive," Kristine says.

Spaces That Soothe

Photographer Brittney-Elizabeth Williams reveals the sights and sounds she uses to produce a serene, grounding home.



Sound bowls

The instruments are placed throughout her living space so she can play them whenever the mood strikes.



Fireplace

"The color and sound are deeply regulating and grounding," she says.



Water

"I always choose homes that are high up and overlooking water," she says. "Looking out at it is very regulating."

Brendan Maloney; Miguel Rivera/AI (illustrations).

Ashley Osborne (Hilton); Getty Images (6).

Work SMARTER

The Office of Her Dreams

Paris Hilton's ADHD diagnosis led to her creation of a dynamic and thoughtfully designed workspace.

Recently Paris Hilton, who rose to fame during the 2000s and is now the CEO of 11:11 Media, has taken on a new role: mental health advocate. She was diagnosed with ADHD in her 20s, and since then she has gained new understanding about "environments that weren't designed for the way my brain works," she says. When she moved into a new home last fall, she partnered with Understood.org, a national nonprofit committed to empowering neurodivergent

individuals, to highlight the benefits of neuroinclusive design by leveling up her office, the headquarters for her company.

The office includes standing desks, "quiet zones," and what Paris calls "an ADHD sanctuary" that's filled with natural light, fidget tools, and "a chair that moves in multiple directions so you can sit however feels comfortable."

"Neuroinclusive design is just another way to magnify my strengths," says Paris.



BRAIN BOOSTERS

Ideas that can help stoke creativity and productivity



TRY A STANDING DESK
to support movement and comfort while working.



DESIGNATE QUIET/CALM ZONES
to minimize distractions and let your mind reset.



ADD PLANTS
and wood for greater restfulness.



LABEL AND COLOR-CODE ITEMS
so they'll be easy to find.



USE HANDS-ON TOOLS
such as magnetic blocks for focus.



LET IN NATURAL LIGHT
for increased energy and team morale.