

# The impact of COVID-19 on disabled and neurodivergent students; *Implications for inclusive education*

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## Background

- No literature when starting project (Sept 2020)
- Since, themes emerged on removal of support, technological limitation and worsening mental health (Disabled Students Commission, 2022)

## COVID-19 impacted:

Online learning = students needing alternative methods of *accessible* support/content. Found most support from **individual tutors** or peers (if had, but low feeling of **community or belonging**), found processes and policy for getting support inaccessible.

*"not having access to that Community um definitely affected like productivity motivation and caused low mood"* — Ellie

*"I didn't have any service support and my essays were due in. And Luckily my lectures looked my essay and said 'No, this is showing your dyslexia and your neurological problems more than your knowledge. We're not willing to accept this off you'. So I went into extenuating circumstances"* — Kristian

If support/accommodation not **received/accessible** students had to **self advocate** & increase resilience, causing **burnout** and **poor mental health**, increased independent learning and lessening academic satisfaction, which predict academic success.

*"...wasn't necessarily easy to get your accommodations and you did still feel like you had to kind of advocate for yourself [...] I was just... Really. I was struggling. I wasn't in a position where I **could** advocate for myself"* — Katie

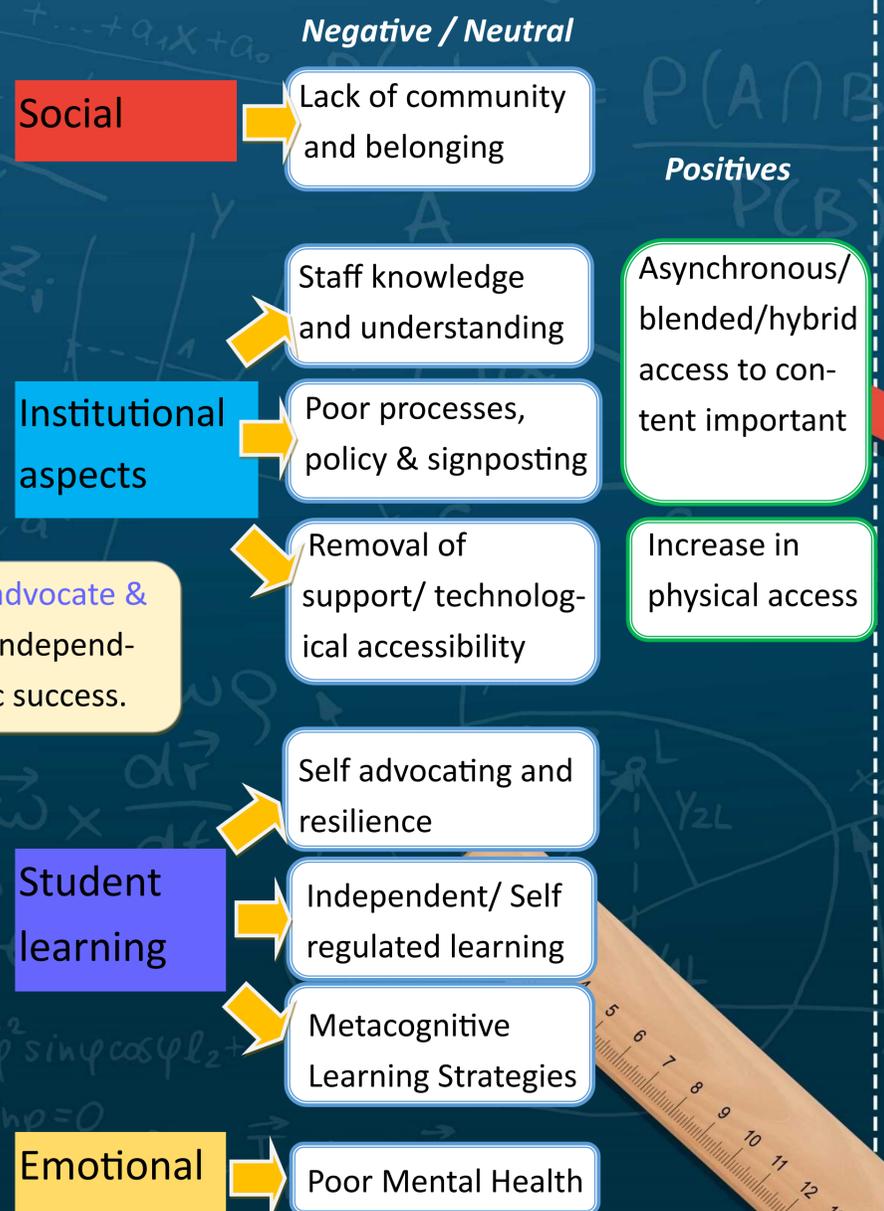
*"It's just a long process. I know people who just give up [...] you need to contact the department for problems with your course or problems with your education, and it's really hard to contact them... it's not super helpful."* — Theo

**Recommend:** Accessible content (recording, transcripts, captions), asynchronous material, blended/ hybrid/ flexible learning, increase in support, staff training in accessible practice, better accessible processes, policy & signposting.

## Methodology

- \* Constructivist Grounded Theory
- \* Unstructured in-depth interviews
- \* 22 Disabled and/or Neurodivergent HE students (approx. 38 hours)
- \* April 2022– November 2022

## Overall Themes:



**Next:** Questionnaires based on this and follow up of experiences

But not all disabilities were impacted in the same ways, or for the same reasons  
 ---- **Ask me about it!** [Enderbyj@uni.coventry.ac.uk](mailto:Enderbyj@uni.coventry.ac.uk)