

Hyatt collaborates with KultureCity for a survey of more than 1,000 neurodivergent individuals and caregivers to drive research-supported action

CHICAGO (April 25, 2024) – One in every four individuals in the U.S. has a sensory need or an invisible disability according to [KultureCity](#), including those with autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia and attention-deficit disorder. With more than 90% of neurodivergent individuals and caregivers of neurodivergent individuals in the U.S. planning to travel at least one night this year, a new survey* led by [Hyatt](#) finds hotels can make their travel journeys, from pre-arrival to check-out, more seamless and inclusive.

The survey was done in collaboration with KultureCity, a leading nonprofit on sensory accessibility and acceptance for those with invisible disabilities, and external consultants Professors Dr. Recep “Richie” Karaburun and Dr. Vanja Bogicevic from New York University’s Jonathan M. Tisch Center of Hospitality. Designed to listen to the key challenges of neurodivergent individuals, the survey is the first step in generating awareness for this growing demographic and how the hospitality industry can better serve them.

Stress-Free Hotel Stays Start at the Research and Booking Stage

- **Self-identify neurodiversity during booking to receive customized care:** Nearly 70% of caregivers and more than half of neurodivergent travelers said they would disclose their neurodiversity during the booking process for a hotel to better serve them. The sentiment was even higher (more than 75%) for neurodivergent business travelers.

What hotels can do: With the option of self-disclosure comes the responsibility to train on-property teams. Hyatt promotes skills training and offers courses for colleagues designed to increase understanding and inclusion of neurodivergent individuals and is dedicated to expanding to more properties this year. As a designated Certified Autism Center™ (CAC), [Hyatt Regency Aqaba Ayla](#) in Jordan is a leading example of equipping colleagues to serve individuals with sensory sensitivities and improve the guest experience, including at the hotel’s kids club, Camp Hyatt. Other hotels with KultureCity’s Sensory Inclusive™ Certification, which is designed to ensure accessibility through training property teams and offering sensory aids (i.e., headphones, fidget tools, etc.), include [Hyatt House Seattle/Bellevue](#), [Hyatt House Seattle/Redmond](#), [Hyatt Place Salt Lake City/Downtown/The Gateway](#), [Hyatt Place New York/Yonkers](#), [Hyatt House Philadelphia/King of Prussia](#), [Hyatt Place St. Paul/Downtown](#) and [Hyatt Place Arlington/Courthouse Plaza](#).

- **Accurate visuals help prepare for what to expect upon arrival:** More than 50% of neurodivergent respondents would like more property visual layouts (3D virtual tours, floorplans, etc.) to make the travel experience easier.

What hotels can do: Preparing for arrival starts with visuals featured on property websites. Hyatt goes beyond the industry standard of providing common space and room images by providing 3D room tours on hotel websites, such as [Thompson Central Park New York](#) and [Grand Hyatt Vail](#), to help neurodivergent travelers prepare for upcoming stays. More Hyatt properties are exploring adding this capability.

- **Accommodating room location and type is important, but staying flexible is key:** More than 60% of caregivers believe that pre-assigned rooms could make the check-in experience better. Being able to select rooms that fit individual needs, such as rooms with less potential noise (i.e., at the end of a hall, top floor, away from elevators, not facing a busy street, etc.), is one of the key areas both neurodivergent travelers and caregivers agree on. Many also noted they would like hotels to stay flexible as travel could be new to them and their needs may change upon arrival given the shift of environment.

What hotels can do: Giving travelers the flexibility to choose a room type, amenities and even the location of the room, as well as clearly listing hotel amenities on websites, can make a significant difference in the travel experience. When booking on [Hyatt.com](#) or the World of Hyatt app, guests and members can make a request for room location and more. Hyatt is also committed to enhancing its digital products, such as the mobile app and website, with accessibility and user-centered design. As Hyatt continues to refresh digital products in 2024, design and development decisions are guided by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and user-tested to ensure a seamless digital experience.

- **Personalized and frequent pre-arrival communications instill a sense of comfort** While email is the most preferred method of communication among both groups, there is also a significant desire for personalized communications for neurodivergent travelers. 30 percent of neurodivergent travelers want to receive a phone call about an upcoming hotel stay. This preference is greater for neurodivergent business travelers with more than half indicating a phone call would be preferred over a standard email confirmation. Nearly 30% of caregivers prefer the “more communication the better” to prepare for their arrival.

What hotels can do: Train on-property concierge services and reservations staff to offer personalized pre-arrival communications for neurodivergent travelers and caregivers. Hyatt offers phone, chat or social media platform assistance, extending the flexibility for travelers to communicate how they prefer. For online inquiries, Hyatt guests and members can launch a live chat on the website for “Accessible Travel Assistance.” Hyatt’s Global Property & Guest Services (GPGS) team keeps care and empathy at the forefront of guest relations to seamlessly guide and anticipate guest needs, aiming to foster more personal relationships to enhance their stay. Hyatt hotels remain committed to offering appropriate colleague training opportunities to better serve the needs of neurodivergent travelers and caregivers.

“When someone walks through our doors, as a colleague, guest or customer, we want them to feel cared for so that they can be their best; this is our purpose as a company, and our work with KultureCity and the NYU professors is a realization of that care,” said Mark Vondrasek, Chief Commercial Officer, Hyatt. “By starting with listening and empathy, and taking meaningful action, we believe we can fundamentally change the experience for neurodivergent guests, who are expecting more from their travel experiences and the hospitality brands they choose to stay with. As we are learning more, we will work closely with the Hyatt disABILITIES Diversity Business Resource Group and our expert collaborators to advise us on how to make improvements throughout the guest journey to be more inclusive.”

On-Property Accommodations and Amenities Make a Difference

- **Digital check-in/check-out experiences help limit on-property interactions:** More than half of neurodivergent travelers want to limit communications with front desk staff upon arrival and both groups are in favor of self-check in, which can streamline the time spent in the lobby. While all travelers believe that self/mobile checkout would greatly improve their experience, it is particularly favored by neurodivergent business travelers.

What hotels can do: Offer digital check-in/check-out services to limit in-person interactions upon arrival. Many Hyatt hotels offer digital key and [room key in Apple Wallet](#) on iPhone and Apple Watch and a streamlined check-out experience through the World of Hyatt app.

- **In-room sleep offerings and wellbeing spaces increase comfort:** Approximately 60% of Millennials and Gen Z neurodivergent travelers and caregivers said they would welcome sleep gadgets (pillow menu, sleep mask, noise canceling headphones, meditation/sound machine etc.) to make their hotel stays more comfortable. More than half of neurodivergent travelers also noted they were highly likely to take advantage of wellbeing activities during their typical stays, emphasizing the importance of offering spaces and options to practice self-care while away from home.

What hotels can do: Hyatt recognizes wellbeing looks different for everyone and takes a personal, tailored approach to help guests make the most of each stay. Hyatt recently [expanded its collaboration with Headspace](#), which includes colored noise content, including white noise and brown noise, to help guests and members rest better. Additionally, hotels, like [Park Hyatt New York](#) and [Hotel Figueroa](#), which is part of The Unbound Collection by Hyatt, offer rooms designed to optimize rest such as the [Sleep Suite by Bryte](#) and [Rest & Recovery Suite](#), respectively, featuring amenities like sleeping masks, personalized pillows, an AI-powered bed and more to help guests fall asleep more quickly.

The [Hyatt Has It](#) program offers a variety of everyday essentials guests can borrow or buy, such as headphones, humidifiers, yoga mats, etc. and is available at a selection of Hyatt properties. Additional hotels within the U.S., including [Hyatt Regency Bellevue on Seattle's Eastside](#), [Grand Hyatt Seattle](#), [Grand Hyatt San Francisco](#), [Hyatt Regency Santa Clara](#) recently expanded their Hyatt Has It program offerings with sensory aids, weighted blankets and more to better accommodate neurodivergent travelers.

“Individuals with invisible disabilities are often misunderstood and our collaboration with Hyatt aims to change that by directly listening to the community,” said Sean Culkin, KultureCity team member, autism self-advocate, member of the neurodivergent community. “With KultureCity carving the path for inclusion and awareness and Hyatt leading the way to have an open conversation to uncover areas of improvement, we can provide the tools and resources for the hospitality industry to encourage neurodivergent travelers, so they too can immerse themselves in the transformative powers of travel.”

Caring for People so They Can Be Their Best

Aligned with World of Care and grounded in Hyatt’s purpose of care, Hyatt prioritizes inclusion at all levels of the organization. Many disabilities go unnoticed and are visually unrecognizable. Hyatt recognizes that there is room to drive awareness on invisible disabilities within the hospitality industry and is committed to listening to colleagues, guests, members and customers to continue creating more inclusive spaces. Hyatt advances allyship and inclusion for the neurodivergent community and beyond while helping enact change across the organization through the dedication of Hyatt colleagues, including its disABILITIES Diversity Business Resource Group.

The term “Hyatt” is used in this release for convenience to refer to Hyatt Hotels Corporation and/or one or more of its affiliates.

For further information:

About Hyatt Hotels Corporation

Hyatt Hotels Corporation, headquartered in Chicago, is a leading global hospitality company guided by its purpose – to care for people so they can be their best. As of December 31, 2023, the Company's portfolio included more than 1,300 hotels and all-inclusive properties in 77 countries across six continents. The Company's offering includes brands in the *Timeless Collection*, including **Park Hyatt®**, **Grand Hyatt®**, **Hyatt Regency®**, **Hyatt®**, **Hyatt Vacation Club®**, **Hyatt Place®**, **Hyatt House®**, **Hyatt Studios**, and **UrCove**; the *Boundless Collection*, including **Miraval®**, **Alila®**, **Andaz®**, **Thompson Hotels®**, **Dream® Hotels**, **Hyatt Centric®**, and **Caption by Hyatt®**; the *Independent Collection*, including **The Unbound Collection by Hyatt®**, **Destination by Hyatt®**, and **JdV by Hyatt®**; and the *Inclusive Collection*, including **Impression by Secrets**, **Hyatt Ziva®**, **Hyatt Zilara®**, **Zoëtry® Wellness & Spa Resorts**, **Secrets® Resorts & Spas**, **Breathless Resorts & Spas®**, **Dreams® Resorts & Spas**, **Hyatt Vivid Hotels & Resorts**, **Alua Hotels & Resorts®**, and **Sunscape® Resorts & Spas**. Subsidiaries of the Company operate the World of Hyatt® loyalty program, ALG Vacations®, Mr & Mrs Smith™, Unlimited Vacation Club®, Amstar DMC destination management services, and Trisept Solutions® technology services. For more information, please visit www.hyatt.com.

***Sample Description:** *The survey collected responses from 1,020 participants, representing a balanced cross-section of the population in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and income levels. The composition of the sample was carefully curated to include neurodivergent individuals and caregivers of neurodivergent individuals to gain insights from both perspectives.*

Survey Design: *The survey was designed by external researchers and fielded in collaboration with KultureCity between Jan 25 - Feb 27, 2024. The structured questionnaire was devised to uncover detailed information about travel behaviors and preferences among neurodivergent individuals and caregivers of neurodivergent individuals.*

Recruitment and Participation: *Participants were recruited through multiple channels, including online platforms, neurodiversity advocacy groups, and social media campaigns, to ensure a diverse participant pool. Before starting the survey, participants were screened with qualifying questions to establish whether they were neurodivergent themselves or caregivers of neurodivergent individuals. Only those who met the criteria were invited to proceed with the survey. All completed response info was entered into a randomizer and three participants were chosen for an iPad as an incentive to fill out the survey.*


Data Collection and Analysis: *The survey was administered electronically, using an accessible online platform that ensured ease of use for all participants. The data collected were anonymized and analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify patterns and trends. Contingency tables were generated to understand differences among various demographic groups.*

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