Applying the **Neurodivergent Scale for Interacting with Robots (NSIR)** to **Neuroqueer Theory** allows for an exploration of how human-robot interaction can serve as a tool for "neuroqueering"—the intentional subversion of neuronormative performance and the cultivation of queer neurodivergent identities.

Neuroqueer Theory, as developed by scholars like Nick Walker and Remi Yergeau, focuses on the intersection of neurodivergence and queerness, emphasizing the active "queering" of neurodivergent embodiment and the rejection of "cures" or "normalization". By applying the NSIR, you can analyze how robots facilitate a space where neurodivergent individuals can exist outside the constraints of neurotypical social expectations.

## 1. Subverting the "Normal" Gaze

Neuroqueer Theory often addresses the "stare" as a tool of normalization and pathology.

- **Reclaiming the Gaze:** Use **NSIR Item 2** (*"Sometimes I stare at the robot"*) to examine the subversion of social norms. While neurotypical society often views intense staring as "socially inappropriate," the NSIR validates this behavior as a meaningful form of engagement. In a neuroqueer context, staring at the robot becomes a reclaimed act of analytical and sensory processing that does not require neurotypical "eye contact" performativity.

## 2. Embracing Non-Human Kinship

A core tenet of Neuroqueer Theory is the expansion of kinship beyond biological and normative structures.

- **Identity Mapping:** Apply **NSIR Item 1** (*"The robot is more like me than anyone else I know"*) to explore how neurodivergent individuals find "queer kinship" with non-human agents. If a user identifies more with a robot than with neurotypical humans, they are actively "neuroqueering" their social identity by choosing a mechanical peer over a biological one that demands masking.
- **Naming and Radical Belonging: NSIR Item 6** (*"I gave my robot a name"*) signals the creation of a non-normative family unit. This aligns with the neuroqueer practice of building "chosen families" that include entities often dismissed by the dominant culture.

## 3. Creating "Safe" Embodied Spaces

Neuroqueer Theory highlights the exhaustion of "performing" for the neurotypical world. The NSIR identifies robots as agents that do not require this labor.

- **Radical Social Comfort:** Use **NSIR Item 8** (*"I believe that my robot is the same with me as it is with anyone"*) to measure the "queer safety" of the interaction. The robot's mechanical consistency provides a space where the user does not have to fear the shifting, judgmental social cues of neurotypicality.

- **Bodily Autonomy: NSIR Item 7** (*"I feel comfortable undressing in front of my robot"*) represents a high level of physical autonomy and comfort. In a neuroqueer framework, this "radical privacy" allows individuals to exist in their own bodies without the pressure of being "socially legible" or "normal" to a human observer.

## 4. Direct Cognitive Sharing

Neuroqueer Theory values "diverse ways of knowing" and communicating.

- **Queering Communication:** Apply **NSIR Item 3** (*"I think I can share my thinking with the robot without speaking"*). This item validates non-verbal, direct, or "stimming" based communication as a legitimate cognitive link. By favoring "thinking sharing" over verbal fluency, the user is "neuroqueering" the very definition of social interaction.

## Summary of Neuroqueer Application

| Neuroqueer Concept | NSIR Item/Factor Application |
|---|---|
| **Reclaiming Pathology** | **Item 2:** Turning "staring" into a valid engagement tool. |
| **Queer Kinship** | **Item 1 & 4:** Finding long-term identity in a non-human peer. |
| **Anti-Normalization** | **Item 8:** Valuing the robot for its *lack* of human-like social judgment. |
| **Diverse Knowing** | **Item 3 & 5:** Validating non-verbal cognitive and emotional sharing. |

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By applying the NSIR, researchers can move beyond seeing robots as "therapy" and start seeing them as partners in **Neuroqueer Liberation**—agents that allow neurodivergent people to explore their true selves without the requirement of fitting into a neurotypical mold