Page 2: Personal Experience

Q6

What does being neurodivergent mean to you?

It means that I am made in the image of God (the Lord Jesus Christ, with a unique set of abilities I can bless many people with, despite my unique set of challenges and limitations..

Q7

How does your neurodivergence impact or intersect with other aspects of your identity? E.g. your gender, sexuality, race, location, experience as a parent etc.

My neurodivergence impacts my experience as a migrant who has experienced coercive control mental, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and financial abuse as well as sexual and physical abuse. It has also very negatively impacted me as a stepparent and stepgrandparent because they did not believe me that I told the truth of my abuser's abuse.

Q8

What's something you wish more people understood about your experience?

I wish that members of my family would understand, as well as others, that just because I am neurodivergent, it does not mean I do not have faith in Christ. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Why? I believe that He allowed me to be autistic and have ADHD so that I could most effectively and creatively advocate and support others in my own unique way I believe I was created by Christ to do, and I am so very thankful for wonderful blessing of being autistic and the fantastic advocate and VPU skills He has given me with my neurodivergence.

Q9

What is your favourite thing about being neurodivergent?

I LOVE working the VPU slides for the worship team at church. Whenever I work it, it is like an amazing massage for my brain.

Page 3: The Broader Enviroment

Q10

What challenges have you faced in accessing support? What supports have been most helpful?

It took me over 2 years to get NDIS help for my autism, as well as for me to start receiving disability payments. It also took me 6 years to get NDIS approval for the specific help I needed with my low vision issues, which was extremely frustrating and I am so grateful and thankful to the Lord I have that much needed help now. The supports that have been most helpful have been my occupational therapists, my support workers and my counsellors. CTST has been really helpful too in driving me to and from doctor's appointments and events. However, when I was working 3 hours, one day a week a few years ago, the government apparently decided to cut off CTST's ability/funding to drive people like me, with disabilities, who couldn't drive and who were on a disability payment, which meant that instead of being charged the subsidised rate for being driven to and from my work, which was 56km from my home, I was told I would have to pay the Home and Community Care Program rate of $1.55km, even though I was and am the exact same person who has disabilities, cannot drive and is on a disability payment, who is also an NDIS participant. This was very frustrating and the only explanation given to me for having to pay the $1.55km to and from work, which I could NOT afford was that since I was working now (again, only 3 hours, one day a week), they apparently felt I was earning enough part-time money to pay the full, unsubstidised rate, which I felt was extremely unfair and it could have very easily cost me my job. So, I had to ask my NDIS carers to drive me, which was way more expensive than taking a taxi to my job would have been, but I could pay it out of my NDIS funds, which I should not have had to do because of being a person with disabilities, who cannot drive and who is on a disability payment. Substidised disability transportation should be readily available to all people with disabilities, who cannot drive and who are on a disability payment to and from work and training, to and from the airports, as well as for getting rides to and from doctor appointments and events AND affordable subsidised disability transportation should be available nights, weekends and public holidays, NOT just 9-5pm, so that people with disabilities, who cannot drive and who are on a disability payment can get to where they need or want to go and have more independence, just like someone who does not have disabilities, who can drive and who is not on a disability payment.

Q11

How have political changes (e.g., Autism Tasmania closing, NDIS reforms) affected you or made you feel?

Autism Tasmania should have never been allowed to shut down. It was the one place where I could go where I felt my autism was totally understood and supported and where I was given the privilege and wonderful opportunities to advocate for other people who have autism by being part of the National Autism Strategy and National Autism Strategy Economic Inclusion working group. It was amazing and I have stated numerous times to the local and state government, they need to permanently reinstate and fully fund Autism Tasmania, regardless of who is in power, no excuses. Also, subsidised disability transportation via CTST for people like me who have autism and other disabilities, who cannot drive and are on a disability payment needs to be fully reinstated and fully funded to give CTST the ability to drive people to and from work and training AND to and from the airports on subsidised rates only because disability transportation is a HUGE need throughout Tasmania. Furthermore, subsidised disability transportation, again for people like me who have autism and other disabilities, who cannot drive and who are on a disability payment, needs to be extended to nights, weekends and public holidays so that we can affordably get around as independently as possible.

Page 4: Looking Ahead

Q12

What would an ideal Tasmania look like for neurodivergent people?

Autism Tasmania would be permanently reinstated and fully funded, regardless of who is in power, with apologies from both the Liberal and Labor government for refusing to fund a NEEDED ESSENCIAL SERVICE and disability transportation via CTST would be fully reinstated and funded to accommodate people with disabilities (including people with autism), who couldn't drive and who would be on a disability payment evenings, weekends and public holidays, not just 9-5pm during the week. In addition, there would be further supports in place for people with autism, including children, like St. Giles, which should have NEVER been allowed to close either on Liberal and Labor's watch.

Q13

How should we be included in decision-making?

We should be included in each and every part of decision-making, including decisions that are being made for us in parliament.

Q14

What is one thing you would like to see happen in the next month?

I would like to see the Liberal and Labor government stop funding Marinus Link, wind turbines and the 240km of dangerous and potentially extremely flammable high voltage transmission lines that could cause another Black Saturday fire like the one in 2009 that killed 173 people and did untold damage throughout Victoria, along with the stadium which we do NOT need and cannot afford and for the Liberal and Labor government to actually start focusing on taking care of Tasmanian's essential needs like the ones I have outlined in my story and many more needs that have been brought to both Liberal and Labor governments to no avail.

Q15

What is one thing you would like to see happen in the next year?

I would like to see Autism Tasmania permanently reinstated and fully funded, regardless of who is in power with public apologies from both the Liberal and Labor governments for choosing to stop funding it for no reason and cutting off an ESSENCIAL SERVICE.