

## Page 2: Personal Experience

Q6

What does being neurodivergent mean to you?

I am autistic with sensory processing disorder, C-PTSD and literacy challenges. Being neurodivergent shapes who I am completely. Although there are challenges I love who I am and a large part of that is being neurodivergent.

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.

I am a non binary bisexual who is married to a cis man who is also neurodivergent (ADHD) and bisexual. Together we have four children: our two teens do not want to label their sexuality yet but they have expressed that they are not straight. Two of our children are AuDHD (autistic with ADHD) and our youngest is on a wait list for an autism assessment and too young to be assessed for ADHD. I feel that having a fairly ND family with LGBTQIA+ is an interesting intersection and makes our experiences unique.

Q8

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

I wish people understood how varied the neurodivergent community is. Not only our vast experiences are culturally divergent people but also within neurodivergence there are many differences as 'neurodivergent' is an umbrella term for many neurological and psychological disorders and conditions. Even people with the same diagnosis will be very different; even family members with the same or similar diagnosis will have differences. I have a very different sensory profile and capacity to my family members.

Q9

What is your favourite thing about being neurodivergent?

My favourite thing is that I have a lot of empathy for others who have also had challenges in life.

## Page 3: The Broader Environment

Q10

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

The biggest challenge I faced was being heard when I sought a formal diagnosis. Through my eldest child's diagnosis I had a 'lightbulb moment' around my difficulties

with social anxiety, feeling alien with my peers, sensory seeking and avoiding and repetitive and rigid behaviour and patterns. A GP encouraged me to seek formal diagnosis again when I was struggling with burnout. I had a very bad experience trying to have a diagnosis review previously and it left me so anxious to try again. I was then referred to a psychologist who specialised in autism in women (though I am non binary seeing someone who was more aware of autism outside the stereotype was very important).

Q11

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

I feel that the political changes make me feel uncertain. That uncertainty is difficult for me but I have an amazing allied health team as well as formal and informal supports which helps me to navigate that uncertainty.

Page 4: Looking Ahead

Q12

What would an ideal Tasmania look like for neurodivergent people?

My ideal would not be the ideal of my neurodivergent kids or partner so I feel the best thing is to have options where possible and to listen to individuals and make accommodations where possible. I really value intersectional inclusion: inclusion that takes into account people's race, culture, religion, sexuality, gender, disability. We cannot make the world perfect but I think we can treat individuals with respect and value their unique experience and the richness that we all bring to the world.

Q13

How should we be included in decision-making?

When possible I like to participate in focus groups and advisory groups. I have also participated in a podcast that was on gender diversity in natal care, in which I also spoke about the complexity of being part of the double rainbow (being LGBTQIA+ and autistic) which aimed to educate health care workers on inclusive practice.

Q14

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

I would love to see autistic people sharing their stories proudly. It can be very difficult especially in online spaces to be vulnerable and share personal stories as the reception is not always supportive and positive.

Q15

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

I have wanted to participate more in Pride events but the sensory aspect is a real hurdle for me. I would love to see that Pride Tas has made a real effort to provide sensory safe spaces that are easy to access and clearly stated as to how to access sensory safe spaces during events.