



A Failure of Imagination: How the Healthcare System Fails Neurodivergent Patients—And What We’re Doing Instead

Melissa Marotta Houser, M.D.

<https://allbrainsbelong.org/book>

Notes

1. Attributed to Buckminster Fuller, as commonly paraphrased from *Synergetics: Explorations in the Geometry of Thinking*, 1975.
2. See the end of this section for a Note on Language that explains how terms like *neurodivergent*, *neurodiversity*, and *neuronormativity* are used throughout this book.
3. In 2025, 87 percent of ABB’s community identifies as neurodivergent, 55 percent as disabled or having a disability, and 43 percent as LGBTQIA2S+; 63 percent hold multiple marginalized identities.
4. See the work of Mia Mingus, who coined the term *pods*, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha on *care webs* and disability justice. We’ll explore this further in chapters 3, 4, and 5. Mingus defines a pod as “made up of the people that you would call on if violence, harm or abuse happened to you... or the people that you would call on if you wanted support in taking accountability for violence, harm or abuse that you’ve done.” (Mia Mingus[for the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective], “Pods and Pod Mapping Worksheet,” Transform Harm, June 13, 2016, https://transformharm.org/ca_resource/pods-and-pod-mapping-worksheet/.) Piepzna-Samarasinha’s collection of essays and reflections on disability justice, radical interdependence, and collective access offers insights into how care webs function as everyday survival strategies for multiply marginalized disabled people, especially queer and trans BIPOC (Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* [Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018]).
5. *Universal design* refers to the practice of designing environments, systems, and experiences to be usable by the widest range of people, without the need for adaptation or retrofitting. While it was originally developed in the fields of architecture and education, we’ll explore in this book how we apply universal design principles to healthcare (chapters 2 and 4), employment (chapters 5 and 7), and community gatherings (chapter 8).
6. Nick Walker, *Neuroqueer Heresies: Notes on the Neurodiversity Paradigm, Autistic Empowerment, and Postnormal Possibilities* (Autonomous Press, 2021). Dr. Walker defines the neurodiversity paradigm as “a perspective that recognizes neurodiversity as a naturally occurring form of human diversity, and regards the idea of a ‘normal’ or ‘healthy brain as a culturally constructed fiction.”
7. Walker, 2021; Sonny Jane Wise, *We’re All Neurodiverse: How to Build a Neurodiversity-Affirming Future and Challenge Neuronormativity* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2023).
8. Ayana Archie, “How ‘Neurodivergent’ Became a Word for Many Types of Minds,” *NPR*, October 29, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/10/29/nx-s1-5585292/word-of-week-neurodivergent>.
9. Wise, 2023. Wise further describes *neurodivergent* as naming “a social position—individuals who are marginalised, pathologised, oppressed, punished and labeled as mentally ill or disordered for functioning in a way that diverges from neuronormativity.” This framing is intentional: *Neurodivergent* is a sociopolitical identity term, not a clinical diagnosis.
10. Amanda Taboas, Karla Doepeke, and Corinne Zimmerman, “Preferences for identity-first versus person-first language in a US sample of autism stakeholders,” *Autism* 27, no. 2 (2023): 565–570.

11. If you're new to ableism as a concept, see: Talia Lewis, "Working Definition of Ableism – January 2022 Update," *TL's Blog*, January 1, 2022, <https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/working-definition-of-ableism-january-2022-update>. For a deeper dive into structural ableism in healthcare, see: Dielle J. Lundberg and Jessica A. Chen, "Structural ableism in public health and healthcare: a definition and conceptual framework," *Lancet Reg Health Am* 30 (February 2024): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38188095/>.
12. Post-concussive syndrome refers to a constellation of symptoms—including fatigue, cognitive slowing, light sensitivity, and difficulty concentrating—that can persist for weeks, months, even years following a concussion. Standard treatment includes careful cognitive and physical pacing, sometimes for extended periods, which runs directly counter to the "push through" culture of medical training.
13. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are community-based healthcare practices that serve underserved populations regardless of ability to pay, offering comprehensive primary care on a sliding fee scale and governed by a board made up mostly of patients. I believe that the FQHC model is one of the most important structures in American healthcare for reaching people the system otherwise ignores.
14. Dora Raymaker et al., "'Having All of Your Internal Resources Exhausted Beyond Measure and Being Left with No Clean-Up Crew': Defining Autistic Burnout," *Autism in Adulthood* 2, no. 2 (2020): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32851204/>.
15. The Community Advisory Board (CAB) is made up of neurodivergent community members, many of whom are also patients, who help shape All Brains Belong's programs and culture. Their role is described in more detail in chapter 4.
16. Medical gaslighting refers to the experience of having one's symptoms dismissed, minimized, or attributed to psychological causes by healthcare providers, often leaving patients doubting their own perceptions of their bodies. While not a formal clinical term, it describes a pattern that research consistently documents, particularly among people assigned female at birth, people of color, and neurodivergent people.
17. For a deeper examination of the historical roots of this mistrust—including the mutually constitutive relationship between racism and ableism, and the role of eugenics in shaping how medicine has defined, created, and weaponized disability—see: Talia A. Lewis, "Longmore Lecture: Context, Clarity & Grounding," *TL's Blog*, March 5, 2019, <https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/longmore-lecture-context-clarity-grounding>.
18. Rita Charon, "Narrative Medicine: A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession, and Trust." *JAMA* 286, no. 15 (2001): 1897–1902, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/194300>.
19. Tema Okun, "White supremacy culture characteristics," White Supremacy Culture, accessed June 27, 2025, <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/characteristics.html>
20. Jeremy Spiegel, *The Mindful Medical Student: A Psychiatrist's Guide to Staying Who You Are While Becoming Who You Want to Be* (Dartmouth College Press, 2009).
21. Anatole Broyard, *Intoxicated by My Illness and Other Writings on Life and Death* (Fawcett Columbine, 1992).
22. Meg Ferrell, host, *Two Sides of the Spectrum*, episode 18, "There's No Function About Fun: with Autism Level Up," February 3, 2021, 34 min., 57 sec., <https://open.spotify.com/episode/0te3AtDHqhhBBOKkLDp063?si=iU606FjeRDOMQ65qQsmzKQ>.
23. One of the most life-altering books I've ever read was *Uniquely Human* by Dr. Barry Prizant. This landmark, paradigm-shifting work reframes autism not as a set of deficits, but as a different way of being human—with communication, behavior, and sensory differences understood through the lens of meaning, not pathology. See: Barry M. Prizant, *Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism* (Simon & Schuster, 2015).
24. In "Self Reg," Dr. Stuart Shanker describes behavior as the body's way of communicating its underlying physiology. When I read this as the parent of a 24/7 dysregulated toddler, it was a huge paradigm shift. I had received no training in nervous system dysregulation in

medical school. See: Stuart Shanker, *Self-Reg: How to Help Your Child (and You) Break the Stress Cycle and Successfully Engage with Life* (Penguin Press, 2016).

25. Carol Gray, *The Original Social Story Book* (Future Horizons Inc, 1993).
26. By 2021, it was generally accepted in the scientific community that the SARS-CoV2 virus is predominantly transmitted through the air. See: World Health Organization, “Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): How is it Transmitted?” December 23, 2021, <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-how-is-it-transmitted>. Half of infections are spread by people who have no symptoms. This is why universal masking is so important. See: Michael A. Johnsson et al., “SARS-CoV-2 Transmission from People Without COVID-19 Symptoms,” *JAMA Netw Open* 4, no. 1. (January 7, 2021): <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2774707>.
27. PDA = Pathological Demand Avoidance, often reframed as *Persistent Drive for Autonomy*. A subprofile of autism, more often diagnosed in the UK or Australia than in the United States, characterized by exquisitely sensitive neuroception (threat detection) and response to threat.
28. Katie Paris, Alexandru “Zeph” Lodestone, Melissa Houser, and Laura Foran Lewis, “‘Shutdowns are like you’re stuck on the blue screen of death’: A Metaphor Analysis of Autistic Shutdowns,” *Autism in Adulthood*, accepted for publication.
29. Fifty to seventy percent of Autistic people have co-occurring ADHD. (See: Ying Rong, Chang-Jiang Yang, Ye Jin, and Yue Wang, “Prevalence of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in individuals with autism spectrum disorder: a meta-analysis,” *Res Autism Spectr Disord* 83 [May 2021]: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10983102/>.) Both are commonly missed in people assigned female at birth, reflective of gender stereotypes and clinical bias. When diagnosis does occur later in life, ADHD is often identified first, as delayed recognition of ADHD in adults is more widely accepted by healthcare providers than delayed recognition of autism.
30. See: <https://monotropism.org>.
31. Tatja Hirvikoski, Ellenor Mittendorfer-Rutz, Marcus Boman, Henrik Larsson, Paul Lichtenstein, and Sven Bölte, “Premature mortality in autism spectrum disorder,” *British Journal of Psychiatry* 208, no. 3 (March 2016): 232–8, <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.114.160192>.
32. Joseph Guan and Guohua Li, “Injury mortality in individuals with autism,” *American Journal of Public Health* 107, no. 5 (May 2017): 791–793, <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2017.303696>.
33. Leann Smith DaWalt, Jinkuk Hong, Jan S. Greenberg, and Marsha R. Mailick, “Mortality in individuals with autism spectrum disorder: Predictors over a 20-year period,” *Autism* 23, no. 7 (February 2019): 1732–1739, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30818975/>.
34. Elizabeth O’Nions et al., “Estimating life expectancy and years of life lost for autistic people in the UK: a matched cohort study,” *Lancet Reg Health* 36 (January 2024): [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpe/article/PIIS2666-7762\(23\)00195-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpe/article/PIIS2666-7762(23)00195-3/fulltext).
35. For a deeper exploration of the distinct AuDHD experience—the ways Autistic and ADHD neurotypes combine into something that is neither one nor the other, but something new—see this brilliant children’s book: Sandhya Menon, *The Rainbow Brain* (Context Press, 2023).
36. This experience has a name: *moral injury*—a term borrowed from military psychology and increasingly applied to healthcare—describing the damage done when clinicians are forced to act in ways that violate their own moral code or are prevented from acting in ways that would uphold it. It’s distinct from burnout, which is about exhaustion. Moral injury is about violation. The research suggests it is widespread among physicians, and that the conditions that produce it are structural, not personal. See: Simon G. Talbot and Wendy Dean, “Physicians aren’t ‘burning out.’ They’re suffering from moral injury,”

- STAT News, July 26, 2018, <https://www.statnews.com/2018/07/26/physicians-not-burning-out-they-are-suffering-moral-injury/>; and Anto Čartolovni, Minna Stolt, P. Anne Scott, and Riitta Suhonen, "Moral injury in healthcare professionals: A scoping review and discussion," *Nursing Ethics* 28, no. 5 (August 2021): 590–602, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33427020>.
37. Mary Doherty et al., "Barriers to healthcare and self-reported adverse outcomes for autistic adults: a cross-sectional study," *BMJ Open* 12, no. 2 (February 2022): <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/12/2/e056904>.
 38. Ousseney Zerbo et al., "Health Care Service Utilization and Cost Among Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders in a U.S. Integrated Health Care System," *Autism in Adulthood* 1, no. 1 (March 11, 2019): 27–36, <https://doi.org/10.1089/aut.2018.0004>.
 39. Mary Doherty et al., "Barriers to healthcare and self-reported adverse outcomes for autistic adults: a cross-sectional study," *BMJ Open* 12, no. 2 (February 2022): <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/12/2/e056904>; D. M. Raymaker et al., "Barriers to healthcare: Instrument development and comparison between autistic adults and adults with and without other disabilities," *Autism* 21, no. 8 (Nov. 2017): 972–984, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27663266/>.
 40. This idea is often called the "social model of disability"—the understanding that people are disabled more by barriers in society than by deficits in their bodies or minds. While some things may be hard, the amount of disability someone experiences depends on the barriers around them. A wheelchair user will experience more disability at a building without a ramp than a building with one. The same is true for invisible disabilities.
 41. For anyone interested in the deep dive on how I built my start-up budget and the types of calculations I did to figure out whether I could, in fact, quit my job and start a medical practice, check out chapter 9.
 42. For more on the financial access structures we eventually developed, including an exchange of services program, see chapter 6.
 43. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a collaborative approach that equitably involves all stakeholders—especially those most impacted—in every phase of identifying and addressing problems. CBPR is considered a gold standard in health equity for partnering with marginalized communities to understand needs and co-develop solutions. The literature that informed our early clinical program design drew from this model. See: B.A. Israel, A. J. Schulz, E. A. Parker, and A. B. Becker, "Review of community-based research: Assessing partnership approaches to improve public health," *Annual Review of Public Health* 19, no. 1 (1998): 173–202, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.19.1.173>.
 44. Autistic Doctors International (<https://autisticdoctorsinternational.com/>).
 45. AASPIRE Healthcare Toolkit (<https://researchautism.org/healthcaretoolkit>).
 46. At the beginning I didn't identify as disabled—that would change six weeks after ABB launched, when an acute condition turned chronic and I began to understand what it meant to move through the world as a chronically ill and disabled person.
 47. The work of Mingus and Piepzna-Samarasinha is discussed in chapter 3. Alice Wong (1974–2025) was a disability activist, writer, and founder of the Disability Visibility Project; see *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century* (Vintage, 2020).
 48. Dean Spade is a lawyer, activist, and author of *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next)* (Verso, 2020). See also <https://deanspade.net>.
 49. CAST (formerly the Center for Applied Special Technology) developed UDL in the 1980s. For more information, see: <https://www.cast.org/what-we-do/universal-design-for-learning>.
 50. We prefer the term "focus tools" over "fidgets" to elevate respect for their role as serious therapeutic tools.
 51. For a look at our full Universal Design for Healthcare menu, see the toolkit in chapter 9.
 52. Bodily autonomy as we use it here refers to the right of patients—particularly children—to have their consent meaningfully sought, their nervous systems respected, and their pace honored

during medical care. This is distinct from the way the term has been appropriated by anti-vaccination movements to justify refusal of evidence-based public health measures. Our clinics were explicitly pro-vaccination; bodily autonomy was the means by which we made vaccination accessible, not a reason to avoid it.

53. Healthcare providers reframe success: navigate kids' vaccine refusal so they feel safe to try again," December 19, 2021, posted January 16, 2022, by All Brains Are Awesome (by All Brains Belong VT), YouTube, 3:34, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXHDgBE11WE>.
54. Social penetration theory was developed in 1973 by psychologists Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor. For more information, see: Irwin Altman and Dalmas A. Taylor, *Social Penetration: The Development of Interpersonal Relationships* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973). See also this summary: "Social Penetration Theory: Bringing People Closer Together," *Communication Theory*, accessed June 22, 2025, <https://www.communicationtheory.org/social-penetration-theory-bringing-people-closer-together/>.
55. For more on epistemic justice, this lays out both the initial concept of epidemic justice as articulated by Miranda Fricker, and expands why this is important as a form of social justice: Morten Fibieger Byskov, "What Makes Epistemic Injustice an 'Injustice'?" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 52, no. 1 (May 18, 2020): 114–131, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/josp.12348>.
56. ABB's Professional Advisory Board (PAB) is made up of clinicians, researchers, and other professionals who advise on areas within their expertise. Some are also ABB patients or community members; others are not.
57. Kid Connections is free and open to the public, located anywhere in the world: <https://allbrainsbelong.org/kid-connections>.
58. Adapted from Sachin H. Jain, "Healthcare's Innovation Problem: We're Rebranding the Past and Calling It Progress," *Forbes*, May 5, 2025, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sachinjain/2025/05/05/healthcares-innovation-problem-were-rebranding-the-past-and-calling-it-progress/>.
59. Disability justice is a framework developed by disabled activists of color that centers intersectionality, leadership by those most impacted, collective access, sustainability, and interdependence. For an overview of the framework and its principles, see: Sins Invalid. *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement Is Our People* (Sins Invalid, 2016); and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018), 26–29.
60. Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Timothy B. Smith, and J. Bradley Layton, "Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-analytic Review," *PLOS Medicine* 7, no. 7 (July 27, 2010): <https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1000316>.
61. "Health Effects of Social Isolation and Loneliness," Centers for Disease Control, May 15, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/risk-factors/index.html>.
62. Stephen W. Porges, *The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-Regulation* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).
63. Rossana Gómez-Campos, et al., "Comparison of social isolation in autistic children and adolescents according to age, marital status and number of siblings," *Journal of Education and Health Promotion* 12, no. 316 (September 2023): https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp_1837_22.
64. Gavin R. Stewart, Emily Luedecke, William Mandy, Rebecca A. Charlton, and Francesca Happé, "Experiences of social isolation and loneliness in middle-aged and older autistic adults," *Neurodiversity* 2 (April 17, 2024): <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/27546330241245529>.
65. Sarah Cassidy, Louise Bradley, Rebecca Shaw, and Simon Baron-Cohen, "Risk markers for suicidality in autistic adults," *Molecular Autism* 9, no. 42 (July 31, 2018): <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-018-0226-4>.
66. Rorie Fulton, Emma Reardon, Kate Richardson, and Rachel Jones, *Sensory Trauma:*

Autism, Sensory Difference and the Daily Experience of Fear (Autism Wellbeing, 2020.)

67. See <https://monotropism.org> for more information.
68. For more information about PDA, see PDA North America: <https://pdanorthamerica.org>.
69. Dora Raymaker et al., “Having All of Your Internal Resources Exhausted Beyond Measure and Being Left with No Clean-Up Crew’: Defining Autistic Burnout,” *Autism in Adulthood* 2, no. 2 (2020): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32851204/>.
70. Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no.1 (1989): <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1052&context=uclf>.
71. Rachael K. Raw, Jon Rees, Amy Pearson, and David R. Chadwick, “Neurodivergence as a risk factor for Post-Covid-19 Syndrome,” *medRxiv* (preprint), June 12, 2023, <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2023.06.08.23291154v1>.
72. Hannah E. Davis et al., “Characterizing Long COVID in an International Cohort: 7 Months of Symptoms and Their Impact,” *EClinicalMedicine* (August 2021): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34308300/>.
73. Vivek H. Murthy, *Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General’s advisory on the healing effects of social connection and community* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2023), <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>.
74. Suicide is one of the leading causes of premature death among Autistic people, driven not by autism itself, but by chronic social isolation, camouflaging, unmet support needs, and systemic exclusion. See: Sarah Cassidy et al. “Suicidal ideation and suicide plans or attempts in adults with Asperger’s syn-drome attending a specialist diagnostic clinic: a clinical cohort study,” *Lancet Psychiatry* 10, no. 7 (July 2014): 512–523, [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2215-0366\(14\)70248-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2215-0366(14)70248-2).
75. In a Swedish psychiatric outpatient clinic, nearly 1 in 5 adults (18.9 percent) met diagnostic criteria for autism, with an additional 5–10 percent showing subthreshold traits—suggesting that autistic people are significantly overrepresented in mental health care settings (Johan Nyrenius, Jonas Eberhard, Mohammad Ghaziuddin, Christopher Gillberg, and Eva Billstedt, “Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Adult Outpatient Psychiatry,” *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 52, no. 9 [September 2022]: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34993724/>). A separate UK study found that approximately 10 percent of people who died by suicide had elevated autistic traits, compared to ~1 percent of the general population—indicating that they were ten times more likely to be represented among suicide decedents than expected by chance (Sarah Cassidy et al., “Autism and autistic traits in those who died by suicide in England,” *British Journal of Psychiatry* [2022]: <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2022.21>).
76. Christine Miserandino, “The Spoon Theory,” *You Don’t Look Sick*, 2023, <https://butyoudontlooksick.com/articles/written-by-christine/the-spoon-theory/>.
77. For historical context, see: Erica J. Benson, “The Neglected Early History of Codeswitching Research in the United States,” *Language & Communication* 29, no. 4 (2009): 373–385, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0271530900000124>.
78. Brené Brown discusses the distinction between *fitting in* and *belonging* in *Braving the Wilderness* (Random House, 2017), writing: “Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be in order to be accepted. Belonging ... doesn’t require us to change who we are; it requires us to be who we are.”
79. See Mia Mingus, “Access Intimacy: The Missing Link,” *Leaving Evidence*, May 5, 2011, <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/05/05/access-intimacy-the-missing-link/>.
80. Disability justice is a framework that recognizes all bodies as unique and whole, values interdependence, and calls for collective liberation across movements. First articulated by the *Skin, Tooth, and Bone* collective and expanded by thought leaders like Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, it rejects the medical model of disability and centers those most

- impacted. See: Sins Invalid. *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement Is Our People* (Sins Invalid, 2016); and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018).
81. Shery Mead, *Intentional Peer Support: An Alternative Approach* (2014). Also available at: <https://intentionalpeersupport.org>.
 82. The psychiatric survivor movement emerged in the 1970s as a civil rights movement led by people who had experienced harm through psychiatric institutionalization. It centers the voices and leadership of those with lived experience of the mental health system and has been foundational to the development of peer support as a practice.
 83. See: Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018).
 84. The U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee is one of the most well-known examples of institutional betrayal and medical racism. From 1932 to 1972, Black men with syphilis were deceived and denied treatment in order to study the progression of the disease—even after penicillin became the standard of care. See: James H. Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment* (Free Press, 1993).
 85. See: Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018).
 86. This framing draws from multiple sources rooted in Black feminist and disability justice traditions, including: Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018), which outlines the principles of care webs and collective access as resistance to institutional harm; Tricia Hersey's work in *Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto* (Little, Brown Spark, 2022) and The Nap Ministry, which critiques grind culture and centers rest as a form of radical care; and Sonya Renee Taylor's *The Body Is Not an Apology* (Berrett-Koehler, 2018), which explores radical self-love, collective healing, and dismantling systems of shame and oppression.
 87. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018).
 88. See: Dean Spade, *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next)* (Verso, 2020).
 89. Spade, *Mutual Aid*.
 90. For more on pods and community-based responses to harm, see Mia Mingus (for the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective), "Pods and Pod Mapping Worksheet," Transform Harm, June 13, 2016, https://transformharm.org/ca_resource/pods-and-pod-mapping-worksheet/.
 91. In a letter to the American Academy of Family Physicians, CMS confirmed: "under existing CPT codes and Medicare rules, a physician could furnish a medically necessary face-to-face E/M visit to a patient that is observed by other patients. From a payment perspective, there is no prohibition on group members observing while a physician provides a service to another beneficiary." Cited in: "Coding for Group Visits," American Academy of Family Physicians, <https://www.aafp.org/family-physician/practice-and-career/getting-paid/coding/group-visits.html>. See also: "Group Visit (Shared Medical Appointment) Guidelines," Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, December 2022, <https://www.bluecrossnc.com/providers/policies-guidelines-codes/commercial/reimbursement/updates/group-visit-shared-medical-appointment-guidelines>; and David L. Bronson and Richard A. Maxwell, "Shared medical appointments: increasing patient access without increasing physician hours," *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine* 71, no. 5 (May 2004): 369–377, <https://www.ccjm.org/content/71/5/369>.
 92. Because Discord is not HIPAA compliant, we keep a clear boundary: It's a space for peer connection, not medical advice. Clinical questions get directed to a scheduled appointment.
 93. Atul Gawande, *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right* (Metropolitan Books,

2009).

94. Michael Bungay Stanier, host, *The Change Signal*, episode 35, “Wayfinding and Leadership with Larissa Conte,” September 23, 2025, <https://thechangesignal.com/podcast/35-larissa-conte>.
95. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018).
96. Ilana Yurkiewicz’s *Fragmented: A Doctor’s Quest to Piece Together American Health Care* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2023) documents how the fragmentation of medical records and siloed specialties forces patients and clinicians alike to bridge impossible gaps—often at great cost to both.
97. “Everything is Connected to Everything: Improving the Healthcare of Autistic and ADHD Adults – Clinician Guide,” All Brains Belong VT, 2023, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/clinician-resources>.
98. Lawrence B. Afrin, Joseph H. Butterfield, Martin Raithel, and Gerhard J. Molderings, “Often seen, rarely recognized: mast cell activation disease—a guide to diagnosis and therapeutic options,” *Ann Med.* 48, no. 3 (2016): 190-201, <https://doi.org/10.3109/07853890.2016.1161231>; and Lawrence B. Afrin et al., “Diagnosis of mast cell activation syndrome: a global ‘consensus-2,’” *Diagnosis* 8, no. 2 (2021): 137–152, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32324159/>.
99. Svetlana Blitshteyn, “Dysautonomia: a common comorbidity of systemic disease,” *Immunologic Research* 73, no. 1 (July 8, 2025): 105, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12026-025-09661-2>.
100. For more information, see: “Everything is Connected to Everything: Improving the Healthcare of Autistic and ADHD Adults – Main Page,” All Brains Belong VT, 2023, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/all-the-things>.
101. “Everything is Connected to Everything: Improving the Healthcare of Autistic and ADHD Adults – Clinician Guide,” All Brains Belong VT, 2023, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/clinician-resources>.
102. CAST: <https://www.cast.org/what-we-do/universal-design-for-learning/>
103. See: Lindsay Braman, “Understanding How Attunement & Containment Help Form Attachments,” Lindsay Braman, last updated June 17, 2025, <https://lindsaybraman.com/attunement-containment-attachment/>.
104. Inspired by universal design principles from “*Universal Design for Learning Guidelines*” (CAST, 2022, <https://www.cast.org/what-we-do/universal-design-for-learning/>), participatory research methods and accessibility frameworks from AASPIRE (Christina Nicolaidis et al., “Respect the way I need to communicate with you’: Healthcare experiences of adults on the autism spectrum,” *Autism* 19, no. 7 [October 2015]: 824–31, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4841263/>), emerging models of neurodivergent-informed care (Mary Doherty et al., “Barriers to healthcare for autistic adults: Consequences & policy implications. A cross-sectional study,” *medRxiv* [preprint], November 27, 2020, <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/medrxiv/early/2020/04/06/2020.04.01.20050336.full.pdf>), and foundational ideas from the health justice movement. Healing justice is a framework developed by Black and brown disabled organizers to center collective care, resilience, and the leadership of those most impacted by trauma and oppression. For more, see: Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018).
105. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018).
106. See chapter 2 for further discussion, as well as: B.A. Israel, A. J. Schulz, E. A. Parker, and A. B. Becker, “Review of community-based research: Assessing partnership approaches to improve public health,” *Annual Review of Public Health* 19, no. 1 (1998): 173–202, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9611617/>.

107. Elizabeth O’Nions, Essi Viding, Corina U. Greven, Angelica Ronald, and Francesca Happé, “Pathological demand avoidance: exploring the behavioural profile,” *Autism* 18, no. 5 (July 2014): 538–44, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24104509/>.
108. See: M. Daniel Brannock et al., “Incidence of Long COVID Following Reinfection with COVID-19,” medRxiv (August 13, 2025): <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.08.12.25333155>; and Bingyu Zhang et al., “Long COVID associated with SARS-CoV-2 reinfection among children and adolescents in the omicron era (RECOVER-EHR): a retrospective cohort study,” *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* 26, no. 2 (February 2026): 127–138, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(25\)00476-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(25)00476-1/fulltext).
109. Dan Shan, Yudi Xu, Chuang Yang, Trevor J. Crawford, and Carol Holland, “COVID-19 Infection Associated with Increased Risk of New-Onset Vascular Dementia in Adults >50 Years,” *npj Dementia* 1 (October 1, 2025): <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44400-025-00034-y>.
110. For those interested in learning more, I gave a public webinar that walks through these five principles in practice, sponsored by the Organization for Autism Research. See: Melissa Houser, “Practical strategies for neuroinclusive health-care,” webinar, June 10, 2024, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/healthcare-webinar>.
111. For more on this, see: Chari Smith, *Nonprofit Program Evaluation Made Simple: Get Your Data. Show Your Impact. Improve Your Programs* (self-published, 2021).
112. *Mouth words* is a term used in some neurodivergent communities to refer to spoken language. I use it here as a reminder that all communication matters—verbal and nonverbal alike—and that verbal communication includes both speech and text, neither of which is superior or the default.
113. Named for its sponsor, LimeLite Restoration Services, a business recognized in 2024 through our Neuroinclusive Employer Brightspotting Program: <https://allbrainsbelong.org/>
114. As discussed in chapter 3, many in the disability and chronic illness community use Christine Miserandino’s “spoon theory” metaphor to discuss energy conservation. See Christine Miserandino, “The Spoon Theory,” *But You Don’t Look Sick*, 2023, <https://butyoudontlooksick.com/articles/written-by-christine/the-spoon-theory/>.
115. ARFID: Avoidant restrictive food intake disorder is a common neurodivergent experience that also has its own stereotypes, and is a missing lens for understanding and supporting folks of all ages with accessing nutrition. For many folks with ARFID, certain food(s) are avoided as a trauma response—whether a sensory experience or a prior “All the Things” response (e.g., nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, nonspecifically “feeling bad”). Some of the greatest harms from the healthcare system come from not understanding, misdiagnosing, and coercing feeding compliance in the setting of ARFID. For more information, see: Shira Collings, “Applying the Neurodiversity Paradigm to ARFID,” *RDs for Neurodiversity*, accessed June 21, 2025, <https://www.rdsforneurodiversity.com/blog/applying-the-neurodiversity-paradigm-to-arfid>
116. “Where in the world are kids still being treated this way?” *Lives in the Balance*, 2021, https://litb.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/LITB-State-Mailers_6.2.21_Vermont.pdf
117. Jay Diaz, *Kicked Out! Unfair and Unequal Student Discipline in Vermont’s Public Schools* (Vermont Legal Aid, 2015), <https://www.vtlegalaid.org/sites/vtlegalaid/files/publications/Kicked-Out-Unfair-Unequal-Student-Discipline-Vermont-Public-Schools-%28limited-accessibility%29.pdf>.
118. For more information on this, visit <https://allbrainsbelong.org/end-the-trauma> for data, an educational one-pager, and a powerful documentary created by Dr. Ross Greene and *Lives in the Balance* made from interviews with ABB community members.
119. *Out of the Shadows: Informal Removal of Children with Disabilities from Public Schools*, National Disability Rights Network, January 2022, <https://www.ndrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Out-from-The-Shadows-1.pdf>.

120. Casey Eggleston and Jason Fields, "Homeschooling on the rise during COVID-19 pandemic," U.S. Census Bureau, March 22, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/03/homeschooling-on-the-rise-during-covid-19-pandemic.html>; Brian Ray, "Research facts on homeschooling," National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI), last updated March 2, 2026, <https://www.nheri.org/research-facts-on-homeschooling/>; "2019 Homeschooling and Full-Time Virtual Education Rates" U.S. Department of Education, accessed March 21, 2026, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2023/2023101.pdf>.
121. Debbie Schwarzer, "Pulling Your Child with Special Needs Out of School," Homeschool Association of California, accessed May 1, 2026, <https://www.hsc.org/pulling-your-child-out-of-school>.
122. Anonymous, "The White Room," 2022. Shared with author's permission.
123. Susanna Baldwin, Debra Costley, and Anthony Warren, "Employment activities and experiences of adults with high-functioning autism and Asperger's disorder," *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 44, no. 10 (April 9, 2014):2440–2449, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-014-2112-z>.
124. Anselm B. M. Fuermaier et al., "ADHD at the workplace: ADHD symptoms, diagnostic status, and work-related functioning," *Journal of Neural Transmission* 128 (February 2, 2021): 1021–31, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8295111/>.
125. Berivan Yildiz, Alex Burdorf, and Merel Schuring, "The influence of chronic diseases and multimorbidity on entering paid employment among unemployed persons - a longitudinal register-based study," *Scand J Work Environ Health* 47, no. 3 (April 1, 2021): 208-216, <https://doi.org/10.5271/sjweh.3942>.
126. Robyn A. Cree, Catherine A. Okoro, Matthew M. Zack, and Eric Carbone, "Frequent Mental Distress Among Adults, by Disability Status, Disability Type, and Selected Characteristics - United States, 2018," *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 69 no. 36 (September 11, 2020): 1238-1243, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32914770/>.
127. P. F. Hewlin, "And the award for best actor goes to...: Facades of conformity in organizational settings," *Academy of Management Review* 28, no. 4 (2003), 633–642. Discussed in: Brené Brown and Adam Grant, *The Curiosity Shop*, "Brené and Adam on What They Will Never Agree On," Vox Media Podcast Network, March 23, 2026, 59 min., <https://podcasts.voxmedia.com/show/the-curiosity-shop>.
128. Tema Okun, "White supremacy culture characteristics," White Supremacy Culture, accessed June 27, 2025, <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/characteristics.html>.
129. See: <https://offersandneeds.com/>.
130. Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work*. See especially page 202 for the discussion of transformative justice as creating new conditions to prevent harm and support healing outside punitive systems.
131. For more information about neurodiversity training, visit <https://allbrainsbelong.org/education>.
132. Lydia X. Z. Brown, "Ableist Words and Terms to Avoid," *Autistic Hoya*, accessed June 27, 2025. <https://www.autistichoya.com/p/ableist-words-and-terms-to-avoid.html>. A practical reference for commonly used words and phrases that carry ableist history or connotation, many of which remain in widespread use.
133. For a definition and framework of structural ableism in healthcare, see: Dielle J. Lundberg and Jessica A. Chen, "Structural ableism in public health and healthcare: a definition and conceptual framework," *Lancet Reg Health Am* 30 (February 2024): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38188095/>. See also: Kara M. Mannor and Belinda L. Needham, "The study of ableism in population health: a critical review," *Front Public Health* (April 2024): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38694970/>.
134. "Hearing voices" is the term used by many in the psychiatric survivor and Mad Pride movements to describe auditory experiences that psychiatry has traditionally pathologized and treated as symptoms to be eliminated. Many voice-hearers do not experience their

voices as unwanted, and the assumption that they should want to be “cured” is itself a form of ableism. The Hearing Voices Network offers community and resources for those who want them.

135. See: Patrick Dwyer, Jacalyn G. Ryan, Zachary J. Williams, and Dena L. Gassner, “First Do No Harm: Suggestions Regarding Respectful Autism Language,” *Pediatrics* 149, suppl. 4 (April 1, 2022): <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9066426/>.
136. Lydia X. Z. Brown, “Ableist Words and Terms to Avoid,” *Autistic Hoya*, accessed June 27, 2025. <https://www.autistichoya.com/p/ableist-words-and-terms-to-avoid.html>.
137. Also see: Kristen Bottema-Beutel, Steven K. Kapp, Jessica Nina Lester, Noah J. Sasson, and Brittany N. Hand, “Avoiding Ableist Language: Suggestions for Autism Researchers,” *Autism in Adulthood* 3, no. 1 (March 18, 2021): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36601265>.
138. Melissa Houser, *Shifting the Autism Narrative: The Impact of Stigma on Health*, 4th Annual Webinar, April 8, 2025. This webinar is offered annually; for recordings of past sessions or to register for the next live event, visit <https://allbrainsbelong.org/autistic-stigma>.
139. See: <https://allbrainsbelong.org/help-our-patients>.
140. Mia Mingus (for the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective), “Pods and Pod Mapping Worksheet,” Transform Harm, June 13, 2016, https://transformharm.org/ca_resource/pods-and-pod-mapping-worksheet/.
141. Internalized ableism—the belief, often subconscious, that disability makes someone lesser—can shape how neurodivergent people see themselves, even when they consciously reject ableist ideas. See: Lydia X. Z. Brown, “Hello, Internalized Ableism,” *Autistic Hoya*, April 12, 2016, <https://www.autistichoya.com/2016/04/hello-internalized-ableism.html>; and Devon Price, *Unlearning Shame: How We Can Reject Self-Blame Culture and Reclaim Our Power* (Harmony, 2024).
142. Fransiska Malfait et al., “The 2017 international classification of the Ehlers-Danlos syndromes,” *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part C: Seminars in Medical Genetics* 175, no. 1 (March 2017): 8-26. Diagnostic checklist available at: <https://www.ehlers-danlos.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/hEDS-Dx-Criteria-checklist-1.pdf>.
143. For support around diagnosing and managing hEDS and other related conditions, see: “Everything is Connected to Everything: Improving the Healthcare of Autistic and ADHD Adults – Clinician Guide,” All Brains Belong VT, 2023, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/clinician-resources>.
144. Jihyun Lee et al., “Hemodynamics during the 10-minute NASA Lean Test: evidence of circulatory decompensation in a subset of ME/CFS patients,” *Journal of Translational Medicine* 18, no. 1 (August 15, 2020): 314, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12967-020-02481-y>. For clinician instructions, see also: “10-Minute NASA Lean Test: Clinician Instructions,” Bateman Horne Center, June 12, 2022, https://batemanhornecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/filebase/providers/mecfs/10-Minute-NASA-Lean-Test-Clinician-Instructions-06_12_2022.pdf.
145. For support around diagnosing and managing POTS/ dysautonomia and other related conditions, see: “Everything is Connected to Everything: Improving the Healthcare of Autistic and ADHD Adults – Clinician Guide,” All Brains Belong VT, 2023, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/clinician-resources>.
146. “Everything is Connected to Everything: Improving the Healthcare of Autistic and ADHD Adults – Clinician Guide,” All Brains Belong VT, 2023, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/clinician-resources>.
147. “Everything is Connected to Everything: Improving the Healthcare of Autistic and ADHD Adults – Clinician Guide,” All Brains Belong VT, 2023, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/clinician-resources>.
148. Femke Christina Ching-Chuan van Rhijn-Brouwer et al., “Graded exercise therapy should not be recommended for patients with post-exertional malaise,” *Nature Reviews Cardiology* 21, no. 6 (June 2024): 430–431,

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41569-024-00992-5>.

149. Mark Vink and Friso Vink-Niese, "Using Exercise Therapy for Long COVID Without Screening for Post-Exertional Symptom Exacerbation Potentially Increases the Risks for Patients Who Suffer from It: A Reanalysis of Three Systematic Reviews," *Res Inves Sports Med.* 10, no. 5 (October 23, 2024): <http://dx.doi.org/10.31031/rism.2024.10.000748>.
150. Miriam E. Tucker, "No evidence supports using graded exercise for myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome," *Medscape Medical News*, October 31, 2025, <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/no-evidence-supports-using-graded-exercise-myalgi-c-2025a1000tuf>.
151. Mark Vink and Alexandra Vink-Niese, "CBT and graded exercise therapy studies have proven that ME/CFS and long COVID are physical diseases, yet no one is aware of that," *Front. Hum. Neurosci.* 19 (2025): <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/human-neuroscience/articles/10.3389/fnhum.2025.1495050/full>.
152. "Long COVID Basics," Centers for Disease Control, accessed July 11, 2025, <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/long-term-effects>.
153. "Everything is Connected to Everything: Improving the Healthcare of Autistic and ADHD Adults – Clinician Guide," All Brains Belong VT, 2023, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/clinician-resources>.
154. Data trends: In 2024, 23 percent of Vermonters are covered by Medicare; 19 percent are covered by Medicaid. See: *2025 Household Health Insurance Survey Report*, Vermont Department of Health, 2025, <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/document/hsi-hhis-2025-report.pdf>. Nationally, in 2023, 19 percent of Americans are covered by both Medicare and Medicaid. See: Katherine Keisler-Starkey and Lisa N. Bunch, *Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2023*, United States Census Bureau, September 10, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2024/demo/p60-284.html>.
155. Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir, *Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much* (Times Books, 2013). The authors argue that scarcity—of money, time, or resources—creates a cognitive "bandwidth tax" that shapes decision-making in ways that often perpetuate the very scarcity they stem from.
156. "Hospital Price Transparency Pages," Office of the Vermont State Auditor, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://auditor.vermont.gov/content/hospital-price-transparency-pages>.
157. Katie Shonk, "Servant Leadership Theory," Harvard Law School Program on Negotiation, February 4, 2026, <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/leadership-skills-daily/servant-leadership-theory/>.
158. See chapter 9 for our Brain Club® Community Agreement (2024).
159. Lotte N. Dyrbye et al., "Burnout among healthcare professionals: A call to explore and address this underrecognized threat to safe, high-quality care" (discussion paper), *National Academy of Medicine*, July 5, 2017, <https://nam.edu/perspectives/burnout-among-health-care-professionals-a-call-to-explore-and-address-this-underrecognized-threat-to-safe-high-quality-care/>.
160. Masking here refers to the effortful concealment of neurodivergent traits in order to meet neuronormative expectations. See chapter 3.
161. Maren Hauptmann et al., "Belonging: From comfort to connection to contribution," Deloitte Insights, May 15, 2020, <https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/human-capital-trends/2020/creating-a-culture-of-belonging.html>.
162. Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Melinda Marshall, and Laura Sherbin, "How Diversity Can Drive Innovation," *Harvard Business Review*, December 2013, <https://hbr.org/2013/12/how-diversity-can-drive-innovation>.
163. Bersin by Deloitte, Deloitte Consulting LLP, "New Deloitte Research Identifies Keys to Creating Fair and Inclusive Organizations" (press release), May 10, 2017, <https://www>.

prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-deloitte-research-identifies-keys-to-creating-fair-and-inclusive-organizations-300455164.html.

164. Almuth McDowall, Nancy Doyle, and Meg Kiseleva. *Neurodiversity at Work 2023: Demand, Supply and a Gap Analysis*, Neurodiversity in Business & Birkbeck Centre for Neurodiversity Research at Work, 2023, https://www.neurodiversityinbusiness.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Neurodiversity-in-Business-report_June-2023_Digital.pdf.
165. “Universal design in the workplace,” U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, accessed June 23, 2025, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employment-supports/universal-design>
166. Tema Okun, “White supremacy culture characteristics,” White Supremacy Culture, accessed June 27, 2025, <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/characteristics.html>.
167. Aaron Dignan and Rodney Evans, hosts, *Brave New Work*, season 4, episode 22, “Self-Management Is Harder Than You Think with Michael Y. Lee,” The Ready, July 5, 2021, <https://www.theready.com/brave-new-work>
168. “Foot on the gas” refers to one flavor of dopamine-deficient inertia—the difficulty stopping an activity once started, whether that’s talking, writing, or thinking through a problem. Its counterpart is “foot on the brake”: difficulty initiating. Both are common experiences for Autistic and ADHD brains.
169. Christine Miserandino, “The Spoon Theory,” *But You Don’t Look Sick*, 2023, <https://butyoudontlooksick.com/articles/written-by-christine/the-spoon-theory/>.
170. Gay Hendricks, *The Big Leap: Conquer Your Hidden Fear and Take Life to the Next Level* (HarperOne, 2009).
171. “Dopamine: The pathway to pleasure,” Harvard Medical School, accessed March 23, 2026, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/dopamine-the-pathway-to-pleasure>
172. Daniel H. Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (Riverhead Books, 2009).
173. Lawrence E. Miller, *Barbarians to Bureaucrats: Corporate Life Cycle Strategies* (Fawcett Columbine, 1989).
174. Sam Spurlin and Rodney Evans, Hosts, *At Work with The Ready*, <https://theready.com/podcast>. See also: <https://www.theready.com/>.
175. Greg McKeown, *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less* (Crown Business, 2014).
176. David Ehrlichman, *Impact Networks: Creating Connection, Sparking Collaboration, and Catalyzing Systemic Change* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2021).
177. “The Goal of UDL: Learner Agency,” CAST, accessed March 24, 2026, <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/more/udl-goal/>.
178. Shane McFeely and Ben Wigert, “This Fixable Problem Costs U.S. Businesses \$1 Trillion,” Gallup, March 13, 2019, <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/247391/real-cost-disengaged-employees.aspx>.
179. Heather Boushey and Sarah Jane Glynn, “There are significant business costs to replacing employees,” Center for American Progress, November 16, 2012, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/there-are-significant-business-costs-to-replacing-employees/>.
180. “Costs and benefits of accommodations: Low cost, high impact report,” Job Accommodation Network, updated September 17, 2025, <https://askjan.org/topics/costs.cfm>.
181. Greg McKeown, “The most important hour of your life,” Greg McKeown, November 6, 2014, <https://gregmckeown.com/important-hour-life/>.
182. See: Tricia Hersey, *Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto* (Little, Brown Spark, 2022).
183. <https://monotropism.org>
184. Motor planning, or praxis, refers to the neurological process of planning and executing a physical action—in this case, the act of producing spoken language. For many neurodivergent people, this is a distinct and effortful step that precedes speech itself.

185. Dora Raymaker et al., “‘Having All of Your Internal Resources Exhausted Beyond Measure and Being Left with No Clean-Up Crew’: Defining Autistic Burnout,” *Autism in Adulthood* 2, no. 2 (2020): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32851204/>.
186. “Running a code” refers to leading an emergency medical response team in the setting of a cardiac or respiratory emergency.
187. The idea of radical hospitality has deep roots in religious and philosophical traditions, where it has been described as offering welcome in ways that challenge norms of exclusion and prioritize access and dignity for those on the margins—going beyond simple friendliness toward a practice of intentional inclusion and structural welcome.
188. “Internal conflicting access needs” and resultant relative contraindications are covered at length in “Everything Is Connected to Everything: Improving the Healthcare of Autistic & ADHD Adults” at <https://allbrainsbelong.org/clinician-resources>.
189. See: <https://batemanhornecenter.org/providers/mecfs/criteria-specific-guidance/#post-exertional-malaise>
190. Melissa Houser, “Hybrid Meetings Done Well,” *All Brains Belong*, October 15, 2024, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/blog-employment-7/>.
191. For more on discussing access needs with your workplace team, see: Melissa Houser, “Normalizing Access Needs in the Workplace,” LinkedIn, 2024, <https://allbrainsbelong.org/access-needs-workplace>. All Brains Belong also offers consultations to organizations seeking to develop customized access need menus for their organization.
192. For a contemporary application of radical hospitality in service settings, see: Will Guidara, *Unreasonable Hospitality: The Remarkable Power of Giving People More Than They Expect* (Optimism Press, 2022).
193. The Understood Team, “What Is Dyscalculia?” Understood, accessed March 26, 2026, <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-is-dyscalculia>.
194. See “Get an employer identification number,” IRS, last updated March 26, 2026, <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>.
195. For HIPAA compliance requirements specific to your practice type, start with HHS’s guidance materials: “HIPAA Guidance Materials,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, last updated April 7, 2026, <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/privacy/guidance/index.html>.
196. A fiscal sponsor is an existing nonprofit that receives tax-deductible donations on behalf of a project or emerging organization. For more information, see the National Council of Nonprofits: <https://councilofnonprofits.org/running-nonprofit/administration-and-financial-management/fiscal-sponsorship-nonprofits>.
197. <https://commongoodvt.org/>
198. <https://nonprofitleadershiplab.com/>
199. Hendricks, *The Big Leap: Conquer Your Hidden Fear and Take Life to the Next Level* (HarperOne, 2009).
200. David Ehrlichman, *Impact Networks: Creating Connection, Sparking Collaboration, and Catalyzing Systemic Change* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2021). Ehrlichman describes emergence as the way that complex systems produce outcomes that no single actor planned or controlled—a core principle of network-based approaches to social change.