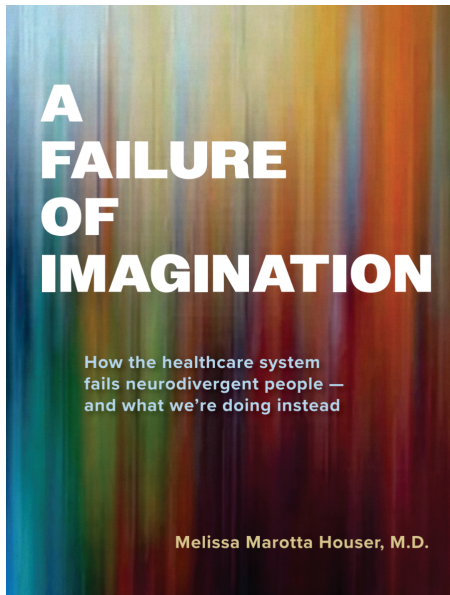




A Failure of Imagination: How the Healthcare System Fails Neurodivergent People—and What We're Doing Instead

By Melissa Marotta Houser, M.D.
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The healthcare system doesn't work for a lot of people. For neurodivergent people — who struggle to access care, experience higher rates of chronic illness, and die prematurely — it fails most consistently. Most people working inside the system know something is wrong. And yet the day keeps marching on.

A Failure of Imagination is the story of what happened when one physician and her community decided to build something different instead.

All Brains Belong VT launched in November 2021 with a simple premise: that healthcare is more than medical care, that access comes first, and that the people closest to the problem should shape the solutions. The book traces the first four years of that experiment — what it took to build it, what the community learned together along the way, and what it looks like when it works. One in five people is neurodivergent, yet most healthcare environments are designed in ways that make access difficult or impossible. All Brains Belong was built to remove those barriers entirely. This is a story about what accessible healthcare actually looks like in practice.

WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR

- Clinicians and healthcare leaders looking for a replicable model
- Employers building neuroinclusive workplaces
- Educators and school leaders rethinking accessibility
- Community organizers designing programs that work for everyone

This book is written for anyone who has felt like the system wasn't built for them, and for clinicians, employers, and leaders who want to do better but don't know where to start.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Mel Houser (she/they) is a board-certified family physician, Founder and Executive Director of All Brains Belong VT, and the author of *A Failure of Imagination: How the Healthcare System Fails Neurodivergent People—and What We're Doing Instead* (Beaver's Pond Press, 2026).

At age 37, Dr. Houser learned she is Autistic, ADHD, dyspraxic, dyslexic, and dyscalculic. They are also the parent of a multiply neurodivergent child. In addition to providing medical care for neurodivergent patients with chronic complex illness, Dr. Houser provides neurodiversity training to healthcare organizations and workplaces around the country.