

Beyond the Label: Embracing Neurodiversity as a New Norm

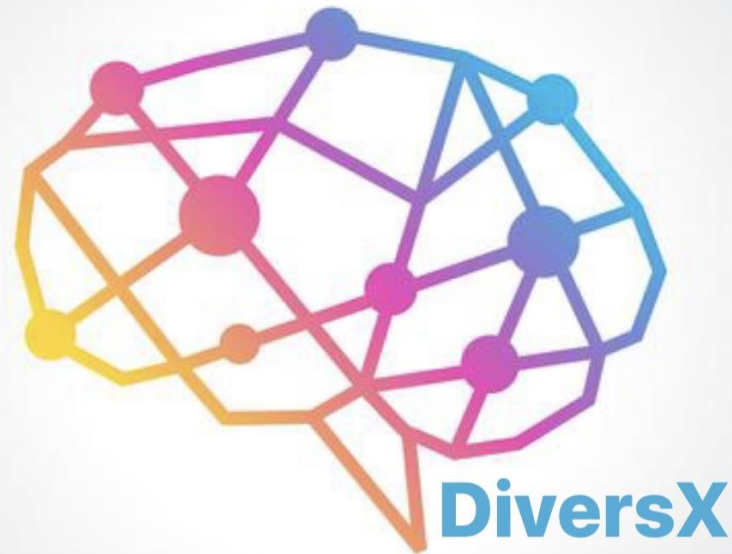
Rebecca Rafuse and Kate Stacey – Limestone
Psychotherapy/ DiversX

What is DiversX

Where differences are celebrated, inclusivity is nurtured, and neurodiverse journeys find support.

Our Mission

Build a supportive and understanding community that champions diversity. We strive to create spaces where neurodivergent individuals, trauma survivors, and those seeking empowerment can find resources, understanding, and a sense of belonging. Through education, advocacy, and practical tools, we aim to foster a world that appreciates and celebrates the richness of neurocognitive differences.



Our team...
Our stories...
Our voices.

Rebecca Rafuse, RP – Founder of Limestone Psychotherapy & DiversX

- Rebecca is a neurodivergent Registered Psychotherapist, speaker, and educator with a background in behavioural psychology and trauma-informed care. Diagnosed with ADHD as an adult, she brings both lived experience and clinical expertise to her work. Rebecca founded DiversX and Limestone Psychotherapy to shift the narrative around neurodiversity from deficit to difference—empowering individuals to thrive through connection, education, and inclusive practices.

Kate Stacey – Peer Support Facilitator: Family and Women

- Kate is a passionate mother of five neurodivergent children, diagnosed with ADHD herself later in life. She brings warmth and firsthand knowledge to her work supporting families navigating diagnosis, advocacy, and access to care. Kate offers workshops and peer support that resonate deeply with those walking similar paths.

Matthew Bell – Peer Support Facilitator: Youth and Young Adults

- Matthew is an autistic advocate, peer mentor, and storyteller. His work centers on supporting neurodivergent youth and young adults in navigating transitions, social life, and employment. Matthew brings a strengths-based perspective that helps others see the beauty in thinking differently.

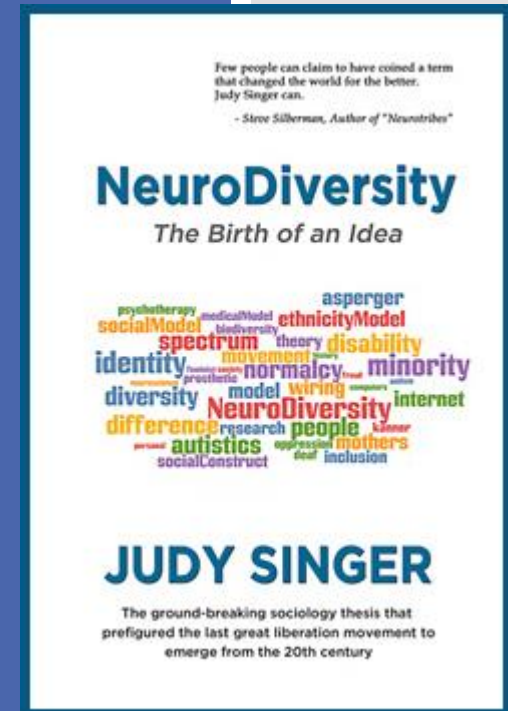
Kathy-Ann Laman – Registered Psychotherapist (Qualifying)

- Kathy-Ann is a trauma-informed psychotherapist with a focus on grief and recovery, particularly in the context of domestic violence. With a background in victimology and a deep sense of empathy, she walks alongside those on complex healing journeys, offering insight, support, and empowerment.

Neurodiversity is a concept that recognizes and respects the natural variations in how human brains work and process information.

It acknowledges that individuals with neurodivergent conditions, such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and others, have unique strengths and perspectives that can contribute to society and should be embraced rather than pathologized or stigmatized.

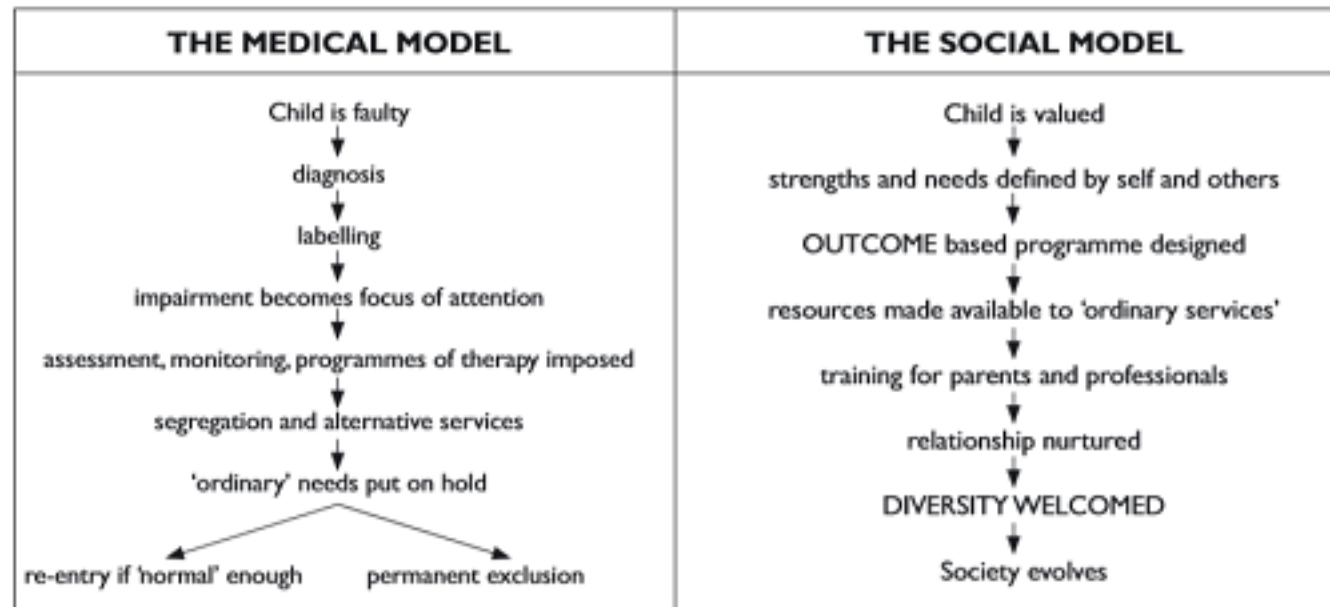
Neurodiversity also emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive and accommodating environments that allow individuals with neurodivergent conditions to thrive.



Not a
disorder... It's
a difference!

A different
perspective
on disability.

People Do Well IF THEY CAN...
they just don't know how yet



Why It Matters for Municipal Committees

You are part of this social model. You CAN BE the change makers!

- Public health and wellness initiatives must reflect diverse cognitive and physical needs.
- Barriers in access, transportation, fitness, and community life still exist.
- Neurodivergent folks are often excluded or unsupported in public spaces.

Neurodiversity and Wellness

- Stress, stigma, and sensory overload are major health concerns.
- Supportive design and inclusive practices foster well-being.
- Movement, mindfulness, and nature are therapeutic—and must be accessible.

“Building on Our Success: What’s Next for Inclusive Active Living?”

Let’s keep leading by example and go from good to ground-breaking.




📌 Universal Design Suggestions for an Inclusive Municipality

- **1. Sensory Mapping of Public Spaces**
Invite community members (especially neurodivergent folks) to help **map sensory hotspots**—places that are too loud, bright, or chaotic. This informs future design, signage, or mitigation strategies.
- **2. Co-Design with Neurodivergent Residents**
Go beyond consultation—**invite neurodivergent people to co-create** spaces, transit policies, or signage. Lived experience brings insights no checklist can.
- **3. Flexible & Multi-Use Spaces**
Design areas that serve different needs throughout the day (e.g., quiet rest areas by day, community events by evening). Flexibility = accessibility.
- **4. Visual Schedules & Predictability Tools**
Like in schools, transit and public spaces can offer **visual guides** that explain what to expect and when (e.g., busier times, quiet hours, or sensory-friendly zones).
- **5. Inclusive Communication**
Ensure all wayfinding, public info, and announcements use **clear language, visual supports, and multiple formats** (text, audio, images).
- **6. Neurodiversity Training for Staff & Planners**
Offer municipal employees training on **neuro-affirming practices** and **how to engage diverse sensory experiences** in planning and programming.

Beyond the Label Conference: From Inclusion to Integration

2nd Annual Beyond The Label Conference

Saturday, May 24th, 2025 (8:30AM – 4PM)

- Purpose: Shift the narrative around neurodiversity from deficit to strength.
- We're calling on **educators, employers, leaders, neurodivergent professionals, and community members** to help reimagine schools, workplaces, and communities to work **for all minds**, not just the majority.
- Let's come together to create spaces that are:
 - **Inclusive**
 - **Accessible**
 - **Neuro-affirming**
- **Get Involved:**
 -  **Speak or lead a session** on universal design or accessibility
 -  **Volunteer** to support event accessibility and engagement
 -  **Showcase** your neurodivergent-led business at our vendor market
- If you're passionate about equity and rethinking how we design systems—**we want to hear from you.**

Let's Build a Village That Works for Everyone

“Something is wrong with our village—let's collectively change it.”

Together, we can make our communities places where everyone belongs.

Thank You

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