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DNA Inc. Community Newsletter

October at DNA Inc.

Divergent. Neuro-affirming. Authentic.



Content note: this issue discusses burnout and mental health. Support details are at the end.

A note from the team

Welcome to the October edition.

This month we are looking at a simple idea with big consequences: Autistic experience is not fixed, it changes with the conditions around us.

We also mark World Menopause Day on Sunday 18 October by shining a light on something that rarely gets talked about: what perimenopause and menopause can mean for autistic and neurodivergent people.

If you read one thing this month, we hope it is the reminder that needing more rest, more quiet, or more support is information about the environment and the load, not a personal failing.

October has been another big month for disabled and Neurodivergent people in Australia. Some of the NDIS reforms we've been tracking since August have started to take effect, and some of the details we're still waiting on have moved closer to being decided.

We've also got a few things we want to say about our own capacity, and about World Menopause Day on 18 October, which doesn't get enough attention in our communities.

A note on how to read this. You don't have to read it all, or in order. This newsletter is built in sections so you can take what you need today and come back to the rest when you have the energy. Skip the heavy parts if you need to. The Bullshit Deflector will still be here.

In this edition

The map changes when the conditions change

Our weather-map way of thinking about Autism and capacity. It's a teaching metaphor and not a validated model, and we explain why it must never be used to erase high and constant support needs.

Autism, neurodivergence and perimenopause

For World Menopause Day, we look at what research says so far, what it can feel like, and why this isn't only a story of loss. We also share some practical ideas for getting good health care, credit some of the Neurodivergent people who built the frameworks we use, and offer some questions to sit with.

NDIS reforms: where things are up to

Some of the staged changes began on 1 October, and Thriving Kids started rolling out in every state and territory except Queensland. We explain what has started, what hasn't, and what you need to know right now.

We also look at what we're watching: how functional capacity will be assessed, what happens for children aged 9 and over who fall outside both Thriving Kids and the NDIS, how the new support coordination model will work, whether supports exist outside the cities, and whether mainstream systems get the funding to match their new responsibilities.

Bullshit Deflector: ACTIVATED

A brief intermission, because we've earned it.

Skeleton Crew update

An honest note about what we can and can't sustain right now.

Why we're doing it this way

DNA Inc. was founded because Neurodivergent people deserve information that is accurate, accessible and written by people who understand what's at stake.

That means a few things for how we write.

We try to separate what has been decided, what has started, what is proposed, and what we still don't know, because an announced program isn't yet an available service, and a

consultation isn't a final policy.

We try to credit the community that built the ideas we use. And we try to say when research is early, because most of it still is.

We also try to hold two things together. A sustainable, well-run scheme matters. So does a system that works for people who don't fit neatly into its categories. We'll keep asking who carries the load when support doesn't reach the people who need it.

A word on our capacity

We're a grassroots organisation running at reduced capacity, and we'd rather be honest about that than look busier than we are. Some groups, projects and timelines are paused or slower than we'd hoped.

That's a decision to protect people, including the volunteers who keep this going.

It isn't a lack of commitment. Capacity is information, not a moral failing.

Get involved

Our work, including Divergent Futures Studio, our social enterprise creating paid, flexible, neuro-affirming income opportunities, is shaped by the people who join us.

- **General Membership is free**, and keeps you connected and part of community life.
- **Paid Membership is a one-time contribution** that comes with governance eligibility and voting rights.

Membership isn't employment, and it doesn't require volunteering. To join, support our work, or just tell us what you'd like to see in this newsletter, get in touch:

 divergentnexusaus@gmail.com

 www.divergentnexusaus.com.au

Thank you for being part of the DNA Inc. community.

In solidarity.

Always.

The Collaborators @ DNA Inc. 

Connect with us:

Follow DNA Inc. through our social media channels for program updates, advocacy opportunities, new resources and community conversations.

Information in this newsletter is current as at 16 October 2026. It is general community information, not individual legal, financial, health or NDIS planning advice. For decisions about your own circumstances, please check current information from the NDIA and the Australian Government, or seek independent advice.

Take what you need. Leave what you don't. We'll be here.



The map changes when the conditions change

Autism, changing capacity and the experience of midlife

For years, autism has often been described through a “spiky profile”: a chart of strengths and support needs across areas such as sensory processing, communication and executive functioning. This can be useful, but it can also make a person's abilities appear fixed, as though they can be understood separately from the conditions in which they live.

A different picture may help: a weather map.

The same person may find a task manageable on one day and overwhelming on another. Sensory demands, competing responsibilities, uncertainty, sleep, physical health and the availability of support can all influence how much capacity is available at a particular time.

For some autistic people, perimenopause and menopause may add another layer of change. Strategies that once helped them manage daily life may become less effective, and the effort required to work, communicate, make decisions or maintain routines may increase.

This does not mean that autism has suddenly appeared, that a person's previous abilities were not real, or that their support needs are any less legitimate. It invites us to ask a different question:

What has changed in the conditions around this person, and what would help now?

Why the map shifts

Three ideas, developed or substantially shaped by Autistic researchers and advocates, can help us understand the relationship between people, demands and their environments.

Attention tunnels: monotropism

Dinah Murray, Wenn Lawson and Mike Lesser's work on monotropism describes a tendency for attention to be concentrated on a smaller number of interests or activities at a time. When attention is deeply engaged, interruptions and transitions can require substantial effort.

For example, switching from a focused work task to an unexpected phone call, then remembering several unrelated tasks, may involve more than simply changing activities. The transition itself can consume capacity.

When demands exceed available capacity: Autistic burnout

Raymaker and colleagues (2020) describe autistic burnout as a state associated with chronic exhaustion, loss of functioning and reduced tolerance to stimuli, often in the context of prolonged demands and insufficient support.

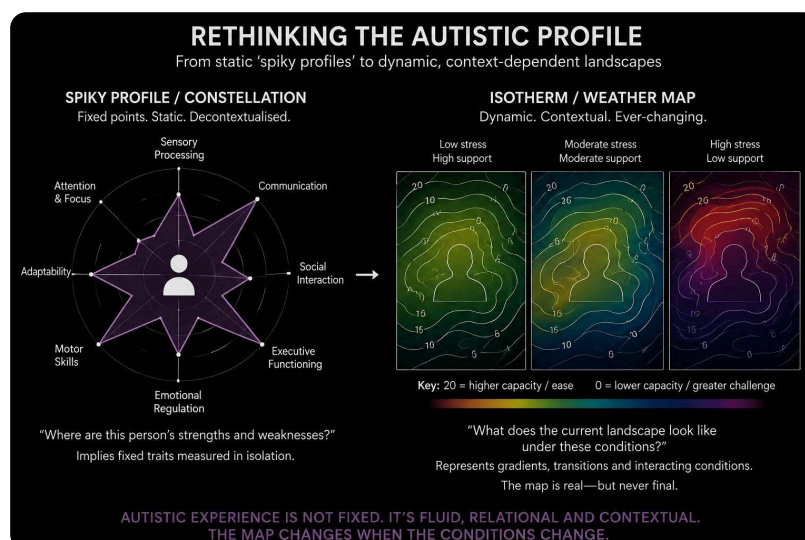
Burnout is not simply being tired after a busy day. It can affect everyday functioning over an extended period. Masking, or feeling compelled to suppress autistic traits to meet social expectations, may contribute to the strain for some Autistic people.

Mismatch, not simply deficit: the double empathy problem

Damian Milton's (2012) double empathy problem challenges the assumption that communication difficulties are located solely within the Autistic person. People with different ways of experiencing and interpreting the world may misunderstand one another.

Research by Crompton and colleagues (2020) found that information could be transmitted effectively between Autistic people, highlighting the importance of shared communication styles and context.

Together, these ideas encourage us to look beyond an individual's perceived deficits and examine the demands, expectations and relationships shaping their experience.



When the weather changes in midlife

Perimenopause and menopause can coincide with changes in sleep, mood, concentration, memory, energy and physical comfort. For some Autistic people, these changes may also affect sensory tolerance, emotional regulation, communication, executive functioning and the effort required to navigate everyday expectations.

Getting dressed, preparing a meal, replying to messages or attending an appointment may take more energy than it once did. Familiar routines may become harder to sustain, and the strategies that previously made work or social situations manageable may no longer be enough.

In weather-map terms, the conditions have changed. Capacity may be less available for some tasks, while the demands of daily life remain the same.

But there is no single midlife autistic experience. Some people notice substantial changes; others notice relatively little. Some find it difficult to distinguish hormonal changes from burnout, accumulated stress, sleep disruption or other health concerns.

These possibilities can overlap, and not every change should be attributed to menopause or autism. New, persistent or concerning symptoms deserve appropriate health assessment.

The important thing is to take changes seriously, listen to the person's own account and explore what support might help now, rather than assuming that previous functioning tells us everything about present capacity.

A note on limits

The weather map is a teaching metaphor, not a validated scientific model or a diagnostic tool. It helps us think about how conditions can affect functioning, but it cannot explain every autistic person's experience.

Some Autistic people have substantial, enduring or high support needs, including needs that remain significant across different environments. Others experience pronounced changes in their capacity over time. Many experience both stability and change in different areas of life.

Describing autism or disability as dynamic must never be used to minimise disability, withdraw support or assume that a person could manage independently if their environment were simply improved.

Lived-experience-led research, including work exploring the concept of dynamic disability, may offer further insights. Any specific project, including the Autistic AF project mentioned here, should be described according to its current published aims and findings rather than implying that a developing research question is already established fact.

The point is not that every difficulty is caused by the environment. It is that both individual support needs and environmental conditions matter.

Not only loss

Changes in midlife are not experienced only as decline or difficulty. Research and lived-experience accounts, including those summarised by Altogether Autism New Zealand, describe varied experiences. Some people welcome no longer having the energy or inclination to maintain a mask. Others begin setting firmer boundaries, prioritising rest or recognising and understanding their autistic identity for the first time.

For some, these changes bring relief, self-understanding or a greater sense of authenticity. For others, reduced capacity to mask can make social interactions, employment or relationships more difficult, particularly when environments continue to expect conformity.

Both experiences deserve recognition. Neither is the correct or inevitable response.

Not everyone who experiences perimenopause or menopause identifies as a woman, and not every autistic person experiences the transition in the same way. Inclusive language matters because it allows people to recognise themselves in the conversation without assuming that one account represents everyone.

Changing the conditions, not just the person

If capacity changes with the conditions, support cannot be limited to teaching individuals to cope with demands that remain unchanged.

A neuro-affirming approach asks what families, workplaces, health services and community organisations can do differently.

That might mean offering flexible work arrangements, making appointments less sensory-demanding, allowing additional processing time, communicating in more than one format, reducing unnecessary transitions or reviewing expectations when someone's circumstances change.

It also means not assuming that everyone has the same access to support, financial security, culturally safe services or the freedom to reduce their workload.

At DNA Inc., we see this as both an individual and a collective responsibility. People should be supported to understand their own needs and make decisions about their lives, while institutions take responsibility for identifying and removing unnecessary barriers.

The goal is not to make everyone fit the same map. It is to create conditions in which different people can participate, belong and access the support they need.

Questions to sit with

- What might change if the demands in your life were better matched to your capacity today?
- Where might the pathology paradigm shape the way autistic people are understood or treated in midlife health care?
- What could a workplace, health service or community organisation change to make participation easier?
- Whose experiences are missing from current research, and how can autistic people lead the next questions, studies and solutions?

Changing the conditions starts with listening to the people who experience them.

The map changes when the conditions change

Autism, changing capacity and the experience of midlife

World Menopause Day is **18 October**. For many autistic and neurodivergent people, perimenopause and menopause arrive with little information that speaks to their experience. Capacity can change — and that doesn't mean your previous abilities weren't real. It invites a different question:

What has changed in the conditions around this person, and what would help now?

Same person
Different conditions
Different days
Different capacity
Still me

18 October
World
Menopause
Day

Different
brains.
Every stage
of life.
A more
inclusive
future.

A different picture: a weather map

Autism has often been described as a "spiky profile", but a weather map may be more helpful. The same task can feel manageable one day and overwhelming on another. Sensory demands, responsibilities, uncertainty, sleep, physical health, hormonal changes and the availability of support all influence how much capacity is available at a particular time.



Why the map shifts

Three ideas, developed or substantially shaped by Autistic researchers and advocates, can help us understand the relationship between people, demands and their environments.

- 1 Attention tunnels: monotropism**
A tendency to focus deeply on fewer interests at a time. Interruptions and transitions can require substantial effort. (Murray, Lawson & Lesser)
- 2 Autistic burnout**
When demands exceed available capacity, it can lead to chronic exhaustion, loss of functioning and reduced tolerance to stimuli. (Raymaker et al., 2020)
- 3 The double empathy problem**
Communication difficulties are not only within the Autistic person. Different ways of experiencing the world can lead to mutual misunderstanding. (Milton, 2012)

What research says so far

- 2020** Moseley, Druce & Turner-Cobb — focus group (7 Autistic people). Menopause heightened existing difficulties and added new ones, with little professional knowledge or support.
- 2021** Moseley et al. — interviews (17 Autistic women). Many described feeling "more autistic" around menopause, and some described burnout.
- 2025** Cohort study — women with ADHD had more severe perimenopausal symptoms, at an earlier age (Piper & Charlton, 2025).
- 2026** Badgett et al. — differences in interoception may lead to symptoms being misread, which could amplify distress.
- 2026** Jenkins & Janse van Rensburg — life after menopause remains almost entirely unstudied for autistic people.

This evidence is early. Studies are small and mostly qualitative, so lived experience leads, and we should hold findings with evidence-informed research, especially where ND-led.



When the weather changes in midlife

Perimenopause and menopause can coincide with changes in sleep, mood, concentration, memory, energy and physical comfort. For some Autistic people, this may also affect sensory tolerance, emotional regulation, communication, executive functioning and the effort required to navigate everyday life.



What it can look like

- Sensory experiences feel more intense.
- Emotions are harder to settle.
- A bad night's sleep costs more.
- Changes to routine feel like one demand too many.
- Masking becomes harder to sustain.
- Socialising drains energy faster.
- More time alone and more shutdowns may be needed.
- Everyday tasks take more energy.

Not only loss

Changes in midlife are not only about decline. Some people feel relief, set firmer boundaries, prioritise self-care or first recognise themselves as autistic. Others find losing the mask isolating.

Both experiences are real. Neither is the correct or inevitable response.

Inclusive language matters — not everyone who experiences menopause identifies as a woman.

Changing the conditions, not just the person

If capacity changes with the conditions, support cannot be limited to teaching individuals to cope with the same demands.

A neuro-affirming approach asks what families, workplaces, health services and communities can do differently — such as flexible work, reduced sensory demands, additional processing time and clearer communication.

The goal is not to make everyone fit the same map. It is to create conditions in which different people can participate, belong and access the support they need.

Getting health care that works for you

- 1 Track changes in a way that works for you.
- 2 Describe the impact, not just the symptom.
- 3 Name your access needs.
- 4 Ask for practical adjustments.
- 5 Ask for written follow-up.
- 6 Seek menopause-informed and neuro-affirming practitioners.
- 7 Revisit what support looks like — it can change.

These are practical suggestions from the DNA Inc. team, not a substitute for individual medical advice.

Tools for reflection



The Wheel of Neuronormativity

(Sonny Jane Wise)

Invites reflection on how closely a person's ways of being align with dominant expectations. An intersectional lens (race, culture, gender, class, colonisation and more) helps us see how different identities are accepted or pathologised.



The Neurodiversity Smorgasbord

(Sonny Jane Wise)

Explore difference beyond diagnostic labels (sensory experiences, attention, time perception, memory and sleep). It is not an assessment, and what is on your plate can change.

These tools are for reflection, not to rank people or determine eligibility for support.

Questions to sit with

- 1 What might change if the demands in your life were better matched to your capacity today?
- 2 Where might the pathology paradigm shape the way autistic people are understood or treated in midlife health care?
- 3 What could a workplace, health service or community organisation change to make participation easier?
- 4 Whose experiences are missing from current research, and how can autistic people lead the next questions, studies and solutions?



If this all feels heavy

Talking about burnout and menopause can bring things up. Research reports increased mental health risk around menopause for autistic women, so please reach out early.



Lifeline: 13 11 14
Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636
Emergency: 000

You deserve to be heard.



Knowledge built by the community

The neurodiversity concept was developed collectively by neurodivergent people (Botha et al., 2024). Acknowledging this history is part of respecting lived experience and ensuring Autistic people help shape the research, services and policies that affect them.

UNDERSTAND • INCLUDE • SUPPORT • BELONG

Changing the conditions starts with listening.

This newsletter is educational and is not medical advice.

Tools for reflection

The Wheel of Neuronormativity — Sonny Jane Wise

This tool invites reflection on how closely a person's ways of being align with dominant social expectations, and how that alignment can influence acceptance, access and exclusion.

At DNA Inc., we also encourage an intersectional lens. Race, culture, gender, class, colonisation and other dimensions of identity and social position can shape which

differences are accepted, accommodated or pathologised. These influences interact; they do not affect everyone in the same way.

The Neurodiversity Smorgasbord — Sonny Jane Wise

This reflection tool offers a way to explore differences beyond diagnostic labels, including sensory experiences, attention, time perception, memory and sleep. It is not a diagnostic assessment or a measure of how autistic someone is. It can be a starting point for understanding personal preferences, support needs and changing experiences over time.

Neither tool should be used to rank people, determine eligibility for support or replace an individual's own account of their needs.

Getting health care that works for you

These are practical suggestions from the DNA Inc. team, informed by a neuro-affirming approach.

They are not a substitute for individual medical advice.

- **Track changes in whatever way works for you. Notes, a calendar, voice recordings or a simple checklist can help you describe changes in sleep, energy, sensory tolerance, mood, memory, menstrual patterns and daily functioning.**
- **Describe the impact, not just the symptom. Explain what has become harder, what has changed from your usual baseline and how this affects everyday life.**
- **Name your access needs. You might prefer written questions, direct language, additional processing time, reduced sensory stimulation or one topic at a time.**
- **Ask for practical adjustments. These might include a longer appointment, a quieter waiting area, written instructions, breaks or bringing a support person.**
- **Ask for written follow-up. A written summary of recommendations, next steps and medication changes can reduce the burden of remembering information after an appointment.**
- **Seek appropriate expertise. Where possible, look for practitioners who understand both menopause and neurodivergence. If symptoms persist or change, ask what further assessment may be appropriate rather than assuming there is only one explanation.**
- **Revisit what support looks like. Strategies that previously worked may need to change. You can ask for adjustments without having to prove that you are struggling enough.**

You deserve health care that takes your experiences seriously, respects your communication needs and works with you to understand what is happening.

Knowledge built by the community

The ideas in this article did not emerge in isolation from Autistic people's lives and experiences.

In their 2024 work, Botha and colleagues argued for recognising the collective contribution of neurodivergent people to the development of the neurodiversity concept, rather than attributing its development to a single individual.

Nick Walker's writing on the pathology and neurodiversity paradigms also challenges assumptions about which ways of thinking, communicating and experiencing the world are treated as normal.

For DNA Inc., acknowledging this history is more than a matter of citation. It is part of recognising lived experience as a source of knowledge, respecting community-led scholarship and ensuring Autistic people help shape the research, services and policies that affect them.

If this all feels heavy

Talking about burnout and menopause can bring things up. Research reports increased mental health risk around menopause for autistic women, so please reach out early to a GP or someone you trust.

- **Lifeline:** 13 11 14
- **Beyond Blue:** 1300 22 4636
- **Emergency:** 000

This newsletter is educational and is not medical advice.

Reading list

- Badgett, N. M. et al. (2026). Experiences of autistic women in menopause: brief review and recommendations for practice and research. *Frontiers in Reproductive Health*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frph.2026.1762773>
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<https://doi.org/10.1089/aut.2019.0079>

Adapted frameworks: the Wheel of Neuronormativity and Neurodiversity Smorgasbord by Sonny Jane Wise (@livedexperienceeducator), and perimenopause content by Blue Sky Learning (@blueskylearningto). All text has been rewritten for DNA Inc. Community Collective - Education.

Updates from What We're Watching - NDIS Chat

Not every part of the NDIS reforms is settled yet. Some changes have now started: funding changes began on 1 October 2026, but they apply as a plan is reassessed or renewed, and Thriving Kids began rolling out on 1 October. Other details are still being designed, consulted on or implemented. Several consultations closed on 2 October, and governments are now working through the feedback.

DNA Inc. will be watching:

Queensland and Thriving Kids

Queensland is the only state or territory that has not signed a Thriving Kids bilateral agreement with the Australian Government. The Queensland Government has called the arrangement a cost-shifting deal. The federal Minister says Queensland has not lived up to what its Premier agreed to earlier this year. Some national supports, including a Thriving Kids helpline and information hub, are reported to be available to Queensland families despite the dispute. We're watching what Queensland children can actually access, where, and when, so families aren't left in limbo while governments negotiate.

Functional capacity assessments

The legislation now defines functional capacity as a person's ability to do an activity without help from another person, assistive technology, equipment or modifications. The Technical Advisory Group met for the fourth time on 13 October. It is working on assessment tools, evidence requirements and thresholds, and has noted that people should have equitable access to assessment wherever they live. People applying from 1 January 2028 will go through the new assessment. We're watching how the definition becomes tools, thresholds and evidence rules in practice. PWDA has recommended that assessment tools be publicly validated and tested with disabled people, and that a transparent review and appeals pathway be created. We support both.

Foundational Supports beyond age eight

Thriving Kids covers children aged 8 and under. The federal government has not yet announced what supports it will offer children aged nine and over who are no longer eligible for Thriving Kids, or how they would be funded. Health department documents seen by The Guardian in July estimated that 151,240 people aged 18 or younger with developmental delay or autism would no longer be eligible for the NDIS. We're watching for a real, funded pathway for children and young people aged 9+ with disability-related needs who fall outside both systems.

Support Coordination and Connection

The new commissioned service starts on 1 July 2028. The consultation ran from 7 September to 2 October, and the final design is a decision for government. Early proposals reportedly include regional lead organisations and participants no longer holding support coordination funding in their plans. Nothing is locked in, and current arrangements continue until 2028. We're watching participant choice, independence, continuity of relationships, conflicts of interest, and access in thin markets.

Regional access

Thriving Kids services will vary between states and territories. Regional and rural communities already face allied health workforce shortages, long waitlists, limited provider choice and long travel distances. We're watching whether Thriving Kids and other Foundational Supports exist in practice outside metropolitan areas, rather than only as policy or a referral pathway.

Mainstream capacity

Some supports are being built into everyday settings, such as supported playgroups from October and a Medicare-funded health check for three-year-olds from November. We're watching whether health, education and community systems get real additional funding, workforce and expertise to take on greater responsibility for disability support.

Why this matters to us: an announced program is not yet an available service, a referral pathway is not necessarily support, and consultation is not a final policy design. As implementation continues, we'll keep separating what has been decided, what has commenced, what is proposed, and what we still don't know.



NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

“What does this mean for me right now?”

If you're a current participant, don't panic or change supports because you've seen a headline. Most reforms are staged.

Since 1 October, some budget changes can apply when you receive a new plan or your plan is reassessed. The reductions are being introduced over 12 months, and your plan did not change on 1 October. Keep using your current plan unless the NDIA tells you a change applies to you.

- **Know your dates.** Note your plan end date and whether a reassessment or renewal is coming.
- **Read any new plan carefully.** If your budget has changed, ask the NDIA how the new rules were applied, and seek independent advocacy support if something doesn't look right.
- **Keep records.** Document changes in your circumstances, support needs and barriers to participation.
- **If you need 24-hour support,** a plan-variation pathway exists if a funding decision puts essential supports at risk.
- **If you're a Queensland family with a child aged 8 or under,** check Queensland Government and NDIS information before changing any supports, as services here are less clear than in other states.
Seek individual advice where needed.

Important information

The NDIS reforms are being implemented progressively, and several important rules, assessment methods and service models are still being developed or consulted on.

This information is current as at 16 October 2026. It is general community information, not individual legal, financial or NDIS planning advice.
Because details will keep changing, please check current information from the NDIA and the Australian Government when making decisions about your individual circumstances.

DNA Inc. - Bullshit Deflector: ACTIVATED

Today's forecast: scattered nonsense with a high chance of "have you tried yoga?"

Okay. We've done a lot of serious policy and health talk.
Time for a brief intermission.

You know that moment when the conditions change? The stress is up, the support is down, and the spin, the jargon, the excuses and the performative concern all arrive in the same week.

On the weather map, that's a front moving in. Capacity narrows. Everyday things get heavier. Recovery takes longer.

 **BULLSHIT FRONT DETECTED** 
 **DEPLOY DEFLECTOR** 

This matters especially around perimenopause, which is why it fits **World Menopause Day (18 October)**. When your capacity is already narrowing, you have even less to spare on:

- "It's probably just stress."
- "You're too young for that."
- "You don't seem autistic."
- "Have you tried a bath?"
- The "trust us, this is for your own good" energy.

Because sometimes the answer isn't another mindfulness session, Autistic training course, or well-intentioned (though unsolicited) self-care suggestion.

Sometimes it's just:

Nope!

What the deflector is for:

Every demand you deflect is capacity you keep. When expectations outrun your abilities, something has to give, so protecting your energy can be the productive thing. You don't have to engage with every piece of nonsense that wanders into your day. You don't have to explain yourself to everyone. You don't have to attend every argument

you're invited to. And you definitely don't have to spend three hours crafting the perfect reply for someone who wasn't listening in the first place.

What the deflector is not for:

Your own signals. Tiredness, sensory overload, a body doing something new, a need for rest or support: that's not bullshit, that's information. Deflect the dismissal, not the need.

Ask, explore and get support, especially from menopause-informed, neuro-affirming people.

Deflect the bullshit. Protect your energy. Pick your battles.

🛡️🦨 Deploy raccoon or possum mode as required. 🦨🛡️

And if the deflector experiences a temporary systems failure...

Have you tried turning it off and on again?

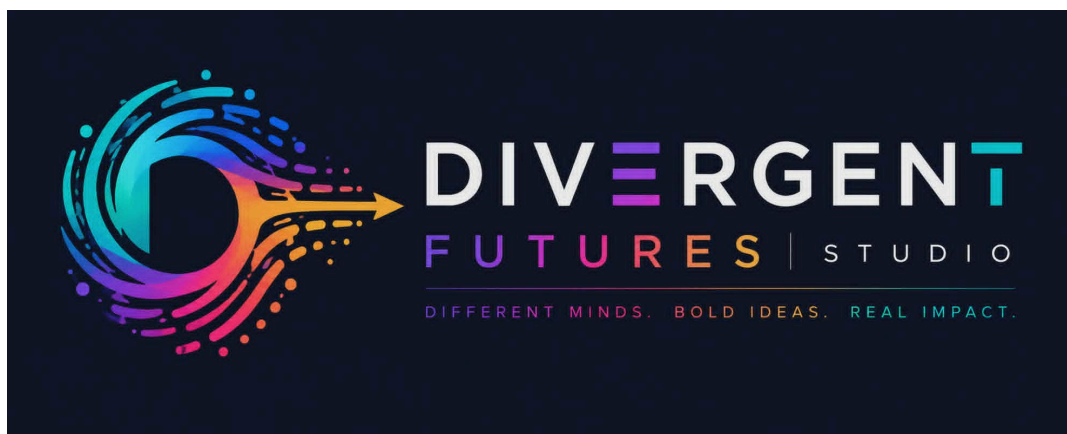
Failing that, there's always caffeine. ☕

Small print: the weather map is a metaphor, not a validated model. Some people have high and constant support needs, and a good forecast never erases them. The Bullshit Deflector is a joke, not a treatment, so please seek individual health advice where you need it.

We now return you to your regularly scheduled newsletter. 😊



Help Keep DNA Inc. Growing



Supporting Divergent Futures Studio

Building a social enterprise with purpose

One of the projects taking shape behind the scenes at DNA Inc. is ***Divergent Futures Studio*** - our emerging Neurodivergent-led social enterprise.

The idea is simple: create products, resources and creative initiatives that celebrate ***Neurodivergent identity, disability pride, creativity and community***, while generating sustainable income that can be reinvested into the work of DNA Inc. and future community projects.

For a small grassroots organisation, sustainability matters.

Grants and donations can make important work possible, but they can also be short-term, competitive and unpredictable. Divergent Futures Studio is about developing another pathway — one that allows us to generate income while creating things that reflect the communities we are part of.

Importantly, this isn't about turning community into a commodity.

It's about asking:

Can social enterprise help us resource community work without losing the values that made the work important in the first place?

That's what we're hoping to build.

What's coming?

Over time, we're planning a growing mix of products, resources and creative projects, including:

- thoughtfully curated **sensory boxes and sensory resources**
 - **metal pin badges** featuring fun, affirming and advocacy-focused designs
creative merchandise
 - Neurodivergent-led **community and educational resources**
 - raffles and fundraising activities
 - collaborations with community members and creatives
- and, as always, probably a few ideas we haven't thought of yet.

We want the Studio to evolve rather than arrive fully formed - with room for experimentation, collaboration and ideas from the community.

Our fundraiser is still coming - just a little later than planned

We had originally hoped to launch our online fundraiser sooner, but we've needed to push that timeline back because of capacity.

That's the reality of grassroots work sometimes.

Rather than rushing the launch, we're giving ourselves the time needed to build the foundations properly.

The fundraiser will help cover some of the practical costs involved in establishing Divergent Futures Studio, including administration and expanding our existing website so the Studio can have a proper online home.

Whether you eventually purchase something from the Studio, enter a raffle, contribute to the fundraiser, collaborate with us or simply share what we're doing, *every bit of support helps us move closer to something sustainable.*

Why sustainability matters

DNA Inc. remains a grassroots, Neurodivergent-led organisation working to create affirming spaces, resources, advocacy and opportunities with and alongside disabled and Neurodivergent people.

Like many grassroots organisations, much of that work happens where nobody sees it.

It's the emails.

The research.

The advocacy.

The planning.

The administration.

The conversations with community members.

The resources that take hours to develop.

The projects that never quite fit neatly into a grant application.

The emotional and relational labour.

And the countless hours required simply to keep a small community organisation moving.

Small organisations are often asked to hold extraordinary amounts of community need with very little structural support.

We continue because community matters.

And because we believe the work matters.

But sustainable community care also requires sustainable community infrastructure.

Divergent Futures Studio is one way we're trying to build some of that infrastructure ourselves.

There are lots of ways to support the work

Financial support helps, but community support isn't limited to money. You can support

DNA Inc. and Divergent Futures Studio by attending our activities, sharing our work, becoming a member, partnering or collaborating with us, offering mutual aid or in-kind support, sponsoring accessible community initiatives, supporting our fundraisers when they launch, or helping amplify *Neurodivergent-led ideas, projects and innovation.*

And, when Divergent Futures Studio opens its virtual doors, you can buy something delightfully divergent while helping fund the work behind it.
That's a pretty good transaction.

Building something different

Divergent Futures Studio is still taking shape.
We don't know exactly what every part of it will eventually look like - and that's okay.
What we do know is what we want it to be grounded in:

Neurodivergent leadership.

Disability pride.

Creativity.

Accessibility.

Community.

Fairness.

Sustainability.

We are not interested only in helping Neurodivergent and disabled people find better ways to fit into systems that were never designed with us in mind.
We are also interested in what happens when we have the space and resources to *create alternatives of our own.*
Different ways of working.
Different ways of creating.
Different ways of contributing.
And different ways of belonging.

Because belonging and inclusion should never depend on profitability.

Thank you for continuing to walk alongside us while we build what comes next.

Donate

Become a Member



Member Spotlight

Supporting Local, Supporting Community

One of the strengths of DNA Inc. is our network of values-aligned members who are committed to providing high-quality, person-centred support across our region. If you're looking for trusted professionals to help navigate the NDIS or provide everyday supports, we'd encourage you to check out these local organisations.

Nurture Learning Support Ambition (NLSA)



NLSA is a dedicated team providing **Support Coordination** and **Psychosocial Recovery Coaching** with a strong focus on empowerment, autonomy and genuine choice. Rather than expecting people to fit systems, NLSA works alongside participants to understand their goals, navigate the NDIS with confidence, and build supports that reflect the person's own values and aspirations. Their warm, relationship-based approach helps people feel informed, connected and in control of their journey. NLSA supports participants across Central Queensland, South East Queensland and remotely throughout Australia.

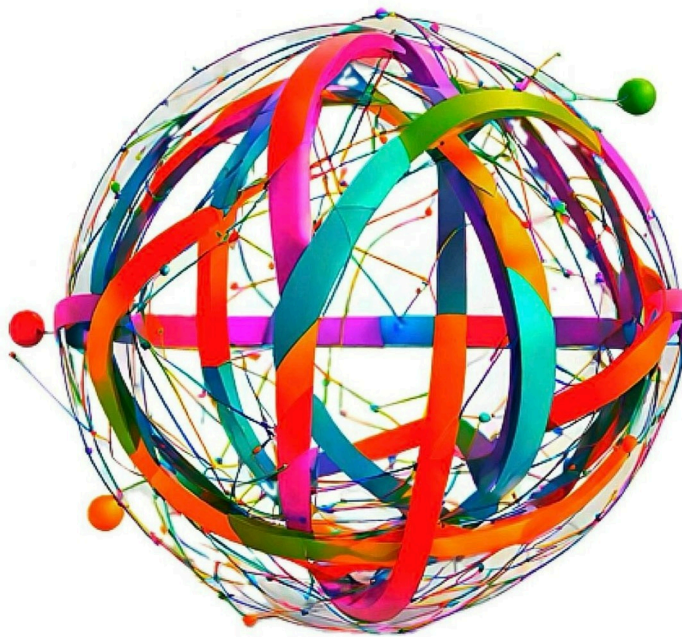
JRCP Support Services



JRCP Support Services is a family-owned, NDIS-registered provider delivering personalised disability support throughout the Gladstone region. Built on both professional expertise and lived experience, JRCP believes the best support starts with listening. Their team offers flexible, reliable assistance tailored to each person's goals, routines and preferences, whether that's support with daily living, community participation or building independence. With relationships, dignity and consistency at the heart of everything they do, JRCP is committed to providing "Just Right Care" that puts people before paperwork.

We are proud to have organisations like NLSA and JRCP Support Services as part of the DNA Inc. community. If you're looking for quality, person-centred support, we encourage you to connect with them and explore how they may be able to assist you or someone you care about.

This Is Me: NeuroKind Circles Neurodivergent-Led & Supported Sessions



Skeleton Crew Update

A reminder that we're running at reduced capacity, which means we're deliberately prioritising what we can sustain. Some groups, projects and timelines remain paused or slower than we'd hoped.

We're not going to manufacture urgency, overpromise, or burn out volunteers to make a grassroots organisation look more productive.

Capacity is information, not a moral failing.

We'll restart and expand activities when we have the people, resources and capacity to do them well.

This Is Me: NeuroKind Circles

Still want to connect? You can!

While our regular *This Is Me: NeuroKind Circles* program is taking a short pause, we haven't closed the door on connection.

Individual NeuroKind Circle Bookings

If you'd like to participate in a *This Is Me: NeuroKind Circle* on an individual basis, we can still offer individual bookings during the pause. These provide a more flexible, lower-pressure way to connect, explore creativity and engage with NeuroKind Circle activities at your own pace.

Body Doubling

Need someone alongside you while you tackle the thing?

Our Body Doubling sessions provide shared space and gentle accountability without requiring you to work with someone.

Bring the task you've been avoiding, the project you've been meaning to start, study, admin, creative work or absolutely anything else that benefits from another person being there.

Parallel Play

You don't have to be doing the same thing to be doing something together. Parallel Play provides space to spend time alongside others while each person does their own thing. *Read. Draw. Create. Game. Work. Study. Craft. Stim. Fidget. Organise. Rest. Or simply exist in the same space.*

There is no requirement to perform socialising.

No pressure to fill every silence.

No expectation that connection has to look a particular way.

Different ways of connecting. Same principle.

You don't have to change how you connect to belong here.

These gentle, low-pressure online creative and interest-based sessions are designed for Neurodivergent people, with a focus on connection, autonomy, sensory consideration, and community without obligation.

For information about individual bookings, Body Doubling and Parallel Play sessions, including costs and upcoming availability, contact DNA Inc. or follow our social media for session announcements.

DNA Inc. Body Doubling Sessions -2026

These sessions are Neurodivergent-led & supported and flexible.
Come as you are.
Find motivation & company whilst tackling your tasks.



Email GRANN at: divergentnexusaus@gmail.com
Visit: <http://www.divergentnexusaus.com.au>

DNA Inc. Parallel Play Sessions -2026

These sessions are Neurodivergent-led & supported, flexible, and low-demand.
Come as you are.
Find comfort in company whilst enjoying your interests.



Email GRANN at: divergentnexusaus@gmail.com
Visit: <http://www.divergentnexusaus.com.au>

Neurodivergent-led Organisations, Supports, & Resources



DNA Inc. Community Collective

RESOURCE COLLECTION

Supports Signpost

DNA Inc. Resources

Want to Get Involved? Volunteer with DNA Inc.

DNA Inc. is powered by community - and we're always grateful for kind, creative, Neurodivergent-led hands to help shape what we do. Whether you're looking to contribute your time, skills, ideas, or presence, we'd love to hear from you.

Volunteering with DNA Inc. can look like:

- 💻 Helping behind the scenes with admin or website content
- 🎨 Co-creating accessible resources or artwork
- 📣 Supporting events, workshops, or advocacy campaigns
- 🧸 Offering lived experience wisdom or gentle peer support

Lived experience needed and a willingness to show up in your own way.

Flexible, affirming, and low-demand roles available.
We'll always work with your access needs and capacity.

Register below or visit our website
[www.http://www.divergentnexusaus.com.au](http://www.divergentnexusaus.com.au)
and click "Volunteer" in the menu

You can also ✉ Email us at: divergentnexusaus@gmail.com

🌈 Thank you for helping us build something meaningful and proudly Neurodivergent led.

Volunteer EOI Form

Your Views Matters *We'd Love Your Feedback*

✨ Share what's working. Tell us what's not. Suggest something new.

At DNA Inc., everything we do is shaped by *you*, our community. Your experiences, insights, and ideas help us create spaces that feel safer, more supportive, and more *you-shaped*.

Whether you've joined one of our sessions, explored our website, or just want to share a thought, book idea, resource, or suggestion - we'd love to hear from you.

Your feedback doesn't have to be formal or polished. Honest, imperfect, and heartfelt is welcome.

Access the Feedback Form below
or visit us at <http://www.divergentnexusaus.com.au>
and click "Contact" in the menu.

Prefer to send a message directly or use voice, pictures, or dot points instead of a form?

That's okay too. Let us know how we can walk beside you.

 Email us at: divergentnexusaus@gmail.com

 Your views helps us build a place to belong, together.
Thank you for being part of it.

 Access our feedback form here:

Feedback Form



If something in this newsletter isn't accessible to you, or you'd prefer information in another format, please contact us and we'll do our best to help.

Divergent Nexus Australia Incorporated - DNA Inc.

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GRANN acknowledges the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng and Taribelang Bunda people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we reside and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

**Always Was. Always Will Be.
Sovereignty Was Never Ceded.**