



# **Late diagnosis, masking & recovery: An ADHD PhD Narrative**

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## **At Odds with the world:**

- **Rulebook lost in the post**
- **Difference without language**
- **Imposter to belonging**

# **Late diagnosis:**

- **Relief**
- **Mourning**
- **Reframing a life...**

# **Masking as survival strategy:**

- **Safety & structure**
- **Exhaustion**
- **Cost of visibility**

## **Conditional inclusion:**

- **Performative tolerance**
- **Expectation to conform**
- **Ongoing necessity to mask**

## **Different needs:**

- **Internalised judgement**
- **Diagnosis & empathy**
- **Seeing myself (and not liking it)**

# **The stalled PhD:**

- **Fear & exposure**
- **Executive dysfunction**
- **Misread as incapable**

# **Reframing failure:**

- **Executive dysfunction ≠ inability**
- **Rejection sensitivity dysmorphia**
- **The power of anger**

# **Liberation through writing:**

- **Success against the odds**
- **‘Write what you know’**
- **Reclamation of self through creativity**

## **Sideways – fiction as safety:**

- **Distance & control**
- **Refocus away from perpetrator**
- **Recovery narrative**

# **Accidental neurodivergent protagonist:**

- **Embodied joy**
- **Domestic alchemy *not* ‘trad-wife’**
- **Acceptance through fiction**

# **Life, support and tech:**

- **Life spanners**
- **Human support matters most**
- **Tech as scaffold**

## **Where I am now:**

- **Supportive supervisors**
- **Striving towards my goal**
- **More understanding, less masking**



**Thank You!**

**I'm happy to  
take questions**