



IN THE HEADLIGHTS.
THEATRE. GONE MAD.

I HAVE NO IDEA

A STUDY GUIDE FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, CAREGIVERS,
AND ALL THE EXPLODING UNICORNS OUT THERE

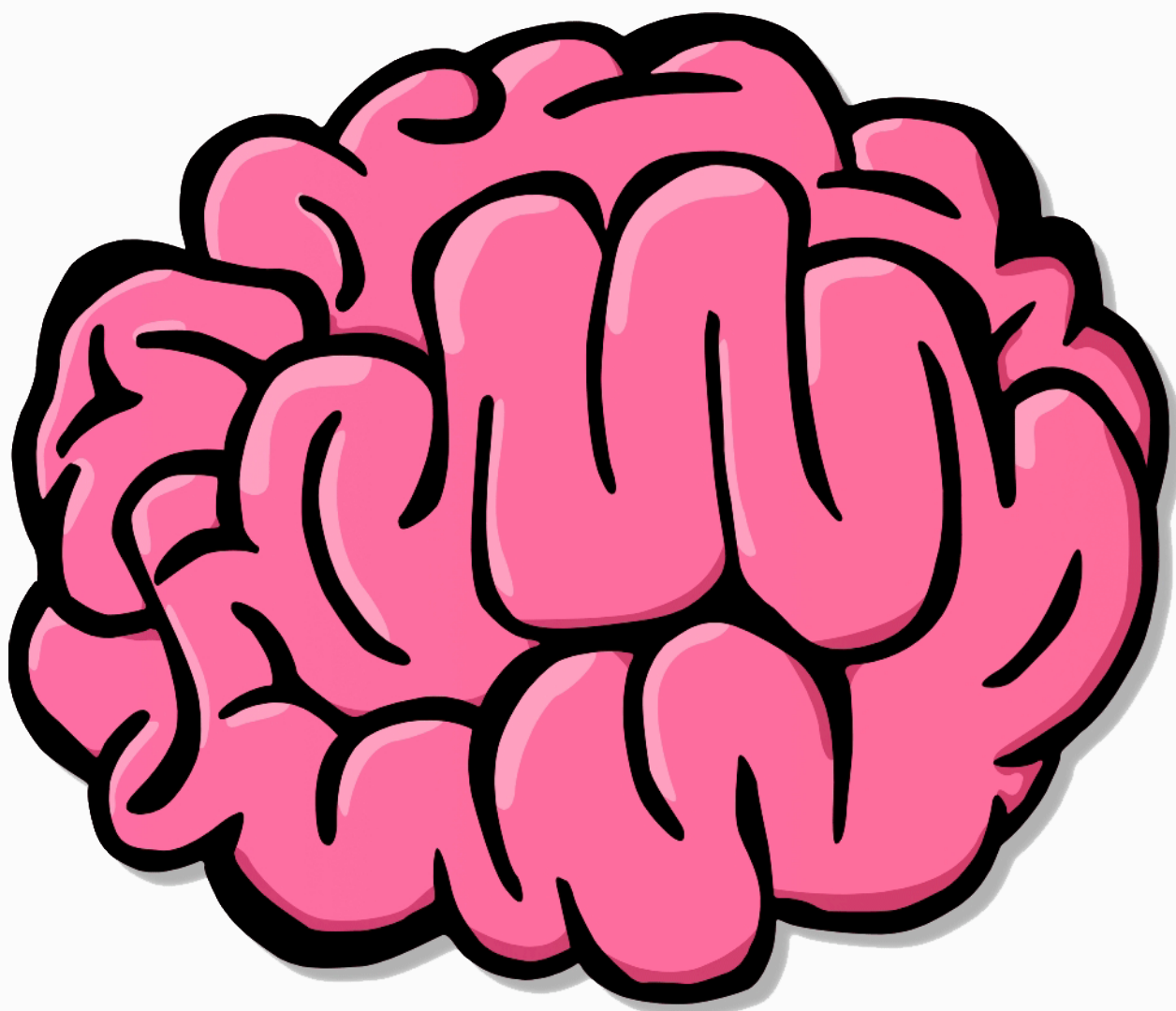
BRAINS

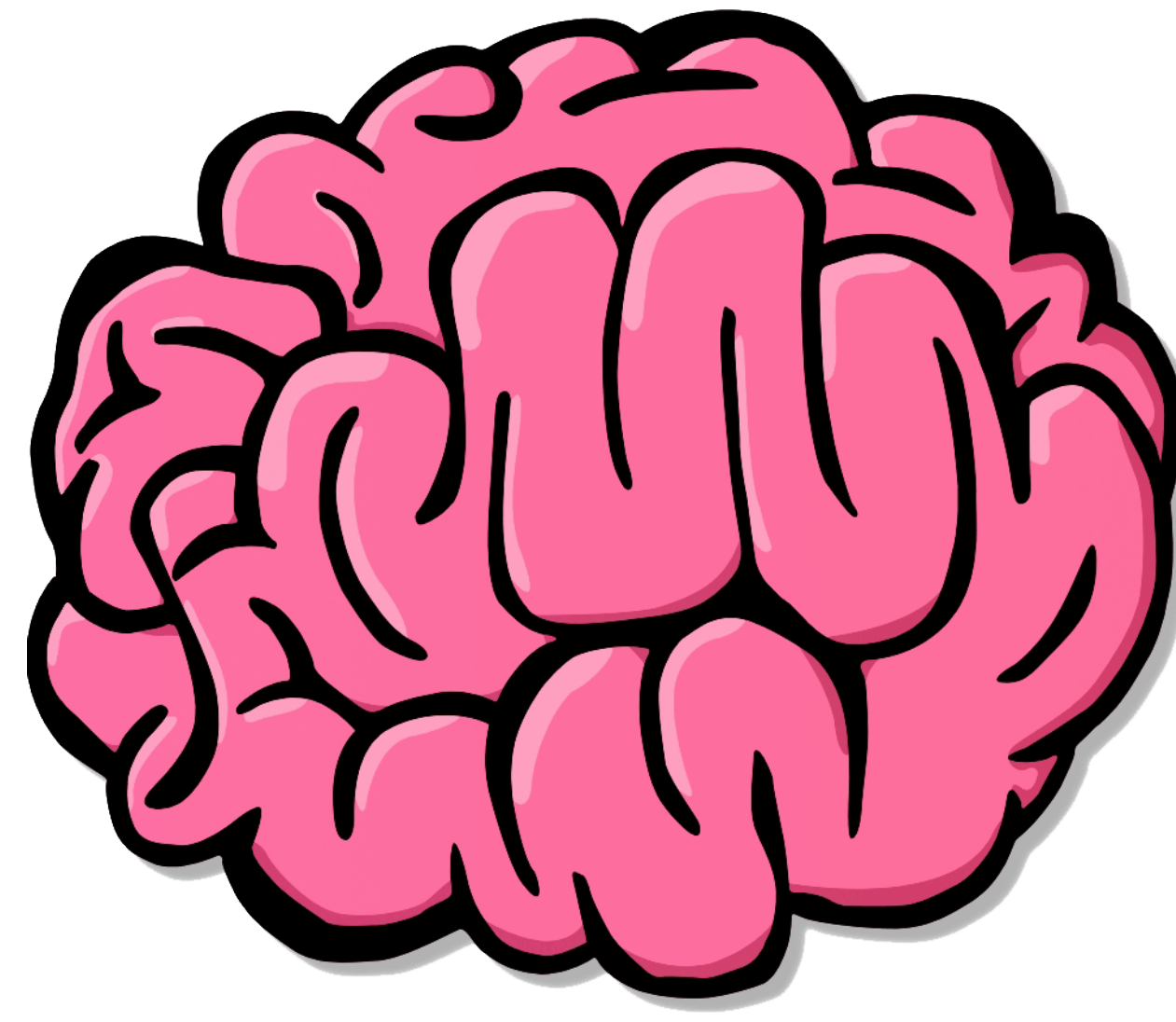
WHAT IS ADHD?

WHAT'S AN EXPLODING
UNICORN?

IF UNICORNS COULD TALK

KEEP ON SINGING





BRAINS

NEURODIVERGENT

PROCESSES INFORMATION DIFFERENTLY
FROM "TYPICAL" BRAINS

ROUGHLY 20% OF THE POPULATION;
5 - 6% OF THE POPULATION ARE ADHDERS

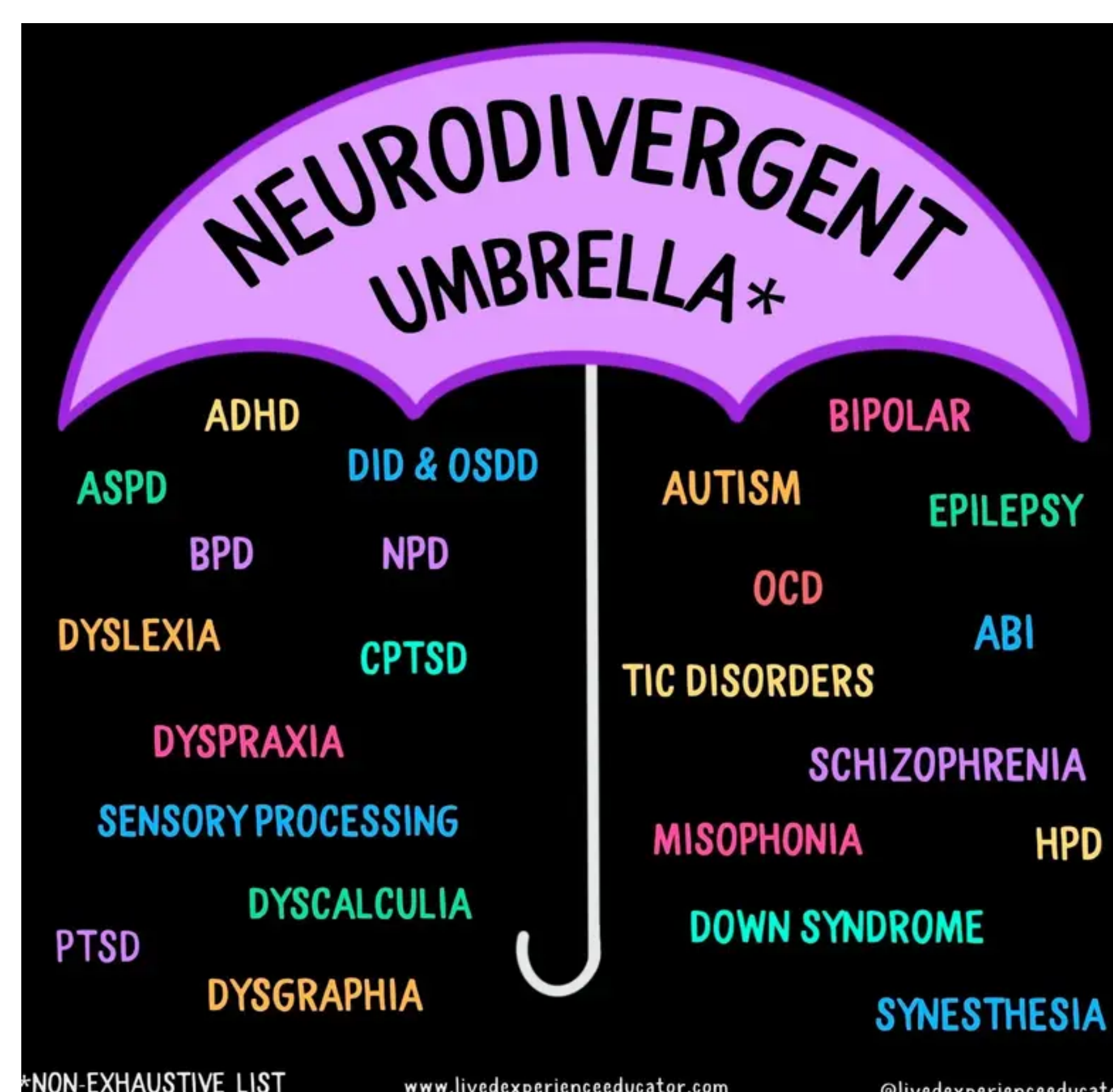
OFTEN STRUGGLE TO FIT INTO A
NEUROTYPICAL SOCIETY

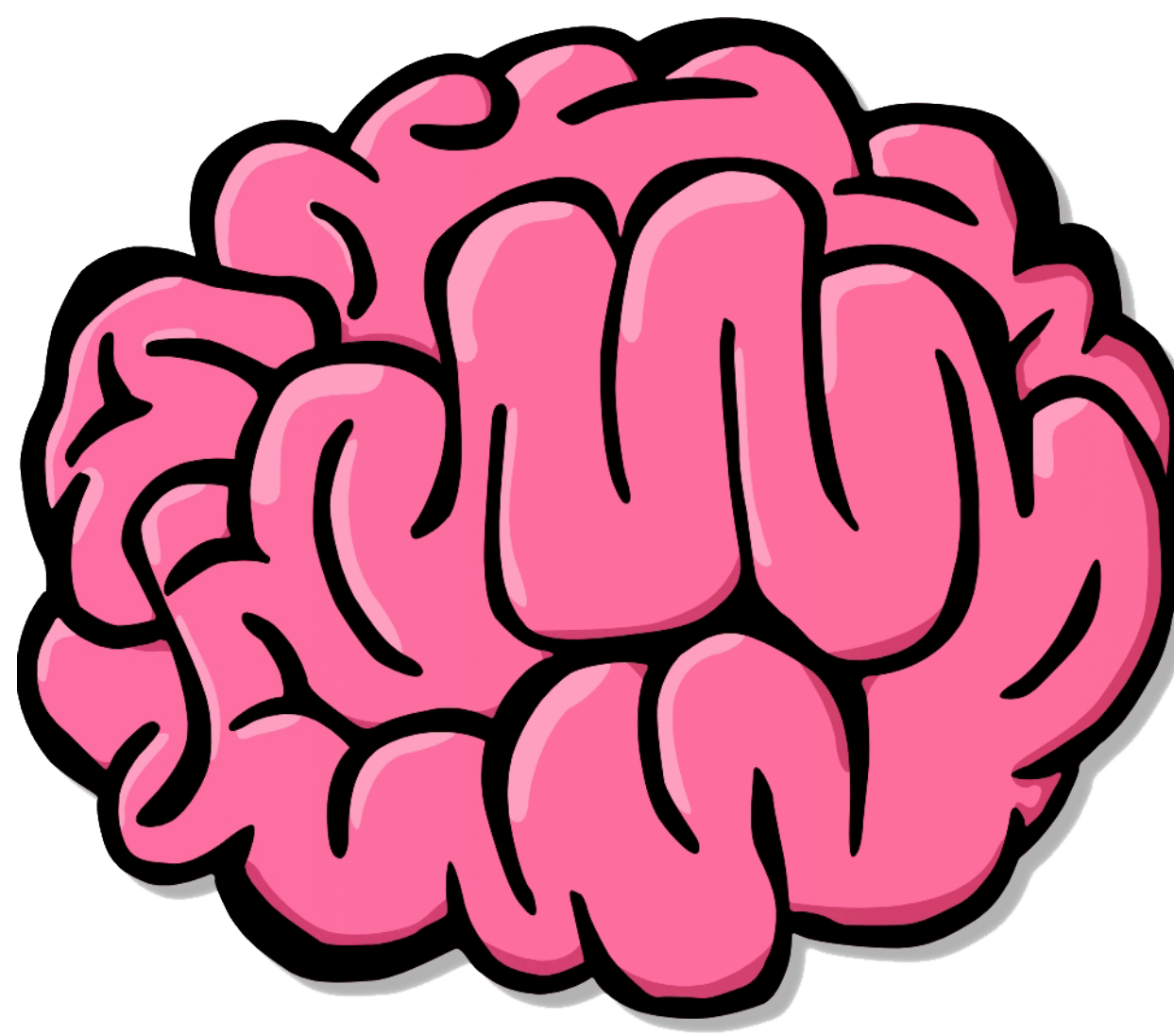
NEUROTYPICAL

"TYPICAL" FORM OF BRAIN CHEMISTRY
AND WIRING.

NOT BETTER THAN NEURODIVERGENT
BRAINS, JUST DIFFERENT!

DEFINES WHAT'S "NORMAL".





WHAT IS ADHD?

ADHD's a condition linked to dopamine and other neurotransmitters in the brain. A neurotransmitter is a little molecule that takes a message from one neuron to another.

Basically, an ADHDer's brain doesn't relay messages the way a neurotypical person's does. There's a breakdown.

SO?

So this affects us. It means we have difficulty with regulating our emotions, with impulse control, with focus. But we can hyper-focus! We can work so hard and so intensely on things we're passionate about. I can play piano and sing for hours, but getting me to do my taxes or pay a bill on time or whatever is almost impossible. I'm not lazy, and I'm not spacing out, I just can't control where my focus goes. I have a lot of focus, but I can't rein it in.

IS THAT WHY YOU WROTE THE PLAY?

To help people understand, yeah. And to give a voice to people with ADHD so that they wouldn't feel alone. I started learning about it in my early thirties and got diagnosed when I was like 36. Getting diagnosed and getting medicated and getting all the other treatment I've gotten has been huge. Like, I finally am learning to understand my brain, and so are other people. I'm not a failure. People would say, "why don't you try harder" about things, or "stop being lazy," and it's like, do you know how hard I'm working just to be where I am? And let's be honest; I'm not lazy. If I were lazy, why can spend hours every day playing piano?How could I have written this play?

There are lots of ADHDers who have a whole bunch of experiences, and I interviewed some people I know to get their perspectives. The play came out of the real conversations and real stories and real scenarios that I and those people have gone through. And most of the people I talked with were women and non-binary people. Like, non-male. It's important for people to recognize that ADHD isn't just boys being hyper. Anyone can have it, and everyone with it deserves to be heard.



WHAT IS AN EXPLODING UNICORN?

It's a unicorn. That explodes. Duh.

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

Sorry.

Yeah. One of the characters in the play says they're like an exploding unicorn. To me, it's like this beautiful soul of a person, a rainbow of compassion and creativity and intelligence, and they're just at the end of their rope. Burnout is real. They're this fantastic, magical person, and they don't have the supports they need, and people keep dismissing them or belittling them.

It comes from a friend of mine. But I think a lot of neurodivergent people are exploding unicorns.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW BEFORE THEY SEE THE SHOW?

I Have No Idea is about four characters: Robin, a musician, who is getting help and treatment. His bestie Taylor, who is just starting to get help but is scared and unsure of themselves. Susan, the psychiatrist Robin goes to who is, like, the psychiatrist we all should have. She's in his corner, and she also has ADHD but has the tools to navigate the world with it. And Brian, a psychiatrist who doesn't believe ADHD is a real thing. He's the psychiatrist Taylor goes to. And he definitely has ADHD, but doesn't know it. Taylor finds strength through their friendship with Robin, and eventually you'll see what happens between them and Brian.

It's funny. It's emotional. It's got original songs. If you have ADHD, this play is for you. If you know someone with ADHD, this play is for you. If you suspect you might have ADHD, this play is for you. And if you don't have ADHD, this play is for you, because it will help you understand people who do have it and what you can do to be an ally.

Also, both actors have ADHD. The director/dramaturg has ADHD. Most of the people we've worked with (stage managers, designers, etc.) have some form of neurodivergence. Authentic representation matters.



POST-SHOW QUESTIONS: IF UNICORNS COULD TALK

1. What is the importance of music for Robin and coffee for Taylor? Do you have anything like that in your life?
2. Why do you think Taylor was unsure about getting help at the beginning of the play?
3. Do you think Taylor will go see Susan?
4. Does Brian remind you of anyone you know? In what ways?
5. Brian says a few things that indicate what his personal life is like, and how he's managed himself his whole life. How would you contrast that with what we know about Susan?
6. Was there one character you identified most strongly with? If so, who was it? Why?
7. What do you think Robin and Taylor's friendship means to each of them?
8. If you could say one separate thing to each of the four characters, what would it be?
9. Who is your Susan?
10. What does the closing song mean?

KEEP ON SINGING

There are many resources out there to help you with anything you might be struggling with. Information on mental health is ever-evolving, and there is misinformation out there too. Here are a few of the resources that we've found you can trust, in no particular order. Keep in mind that some books are geared to adults, but there is information applicable to younger people as well as other resources you'll find specifically for younger ADHDers.

1. How To ADHD. <https://www.youtube.com/@HowtoADHD>
2. ADHD Love. https://www.youtube.com/@ADHD_love
3. ADHD Chatter. https://www.youtube.com/@ADHD_Chatter_Podcast
4. Dr. Ned Hallowell. Numerous books, podcast appearances, videos, etc. <https://drhallowell.com/>
5. You Mean I'm Not Lazy, Stupid or Crazy?! by Kate Kelly and Peggy Ramundo
6. ADDitude Podcast, and <https://www.additudemag.com/>
7. Taking Charge of Adult ADHD by Russell Barkley. (Some terminology slightly outdated in this book, but it's the one Susan hands Brian.)
8. Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta. <https://www.ldalberta.ca/>

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