

# **ADHD and Me: How neurodivergence serves my testing**

*By Karen Todd  
Presented for Automation Advocates - AskUI*

# Karen Todd



Creator  
of *Karen Tests Stuff*

Cat Mom  
*to Liliana of the Dark  
Realms*

Chooser of Joy  
*in any situation*

# Listen, I love y'all...SO

*The following content is personal to my own experience exploring ideas that can be unsettling to some people. Themes covered may include:*

Abuse  
ADHD  
Anxiety  
Depression  
Emotional trauma  
Hospitalization

Mental health/illness  
Physical trauma  
Self harm  
Self image  
Weight changes

**You know yourself best** ❤️ **Take care**

“I don’t need it, and  
you should know.

No, I don’t need a  
cure for me.”

*Aurora  
(Cure for Me)*



The Thin Line Between  
*Definitions*

# Neurodiverse or Neurodivergent?



# My Collection of Labels

## ADHD



# Anxiety



# Depression



# Let's Meet...ADHD

*Diagnosis - Adult female*

*Type - Inattentive*

*The Dark Side:*

Isolation in chaos

To-do list paralysis

High ratio of inception vs completion of ideas



# Let's Meet...Anxiety

*Diagnosis* - Young adult

*Type* - Social and Situational

*The Dark Side:*

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria

Obsession with past  
performance

Over-engineering of the future



# Let's Meet...Depression

*Diagnosis* - Teenager

*Type* - Major Clinical

*The Dark Side:*

Chronic exhaustion

Self-inflicted harm

Emotional isolation





Let's take a break...

*(You're doing great)*

Repurposing my labels  
*for GOOD*

# **ADHD - *Redefined***



# *Into*



# **ADHD - *Redefined***

Living in chaos

Prioritization

Constant stream of questions



Curiosity

Obsessive pattern recognition

Eye for detail

# Anxiety - *Redefined*



*Into*



# Anxiety - *Redefined*

Personal Trauma

Empathy for Others

Invented Scenarios



Exploring Edge Cases

Worst Case

Risk Assessment

# Depression - *Redefined*



Into



# Depression - *Redefined*

Energy Cycles

Managing Time

Asking for help



Community

Therapy

Language Skills

Same ***LABELS***,  
*new **LOOK!***

# My New Views

ADHD



Anxiety



Depression



# Working with ADHD

## Scenario

Exploring a familiar system in a new way to find existing defects

## Skills

Personas + Exploratory Testing

## Outcome

Even legacy systems have new opportunities for testing



# Working with Anxiety

## Scenario

Updated feature includes branding with color coding

## Skills

Empathy + Accessibility Testing

## Outcome

Intense empathy to promote peer engagement and the (*hopeful*) prioritization of accessibility in the software



# Working with Depression

## Scenario

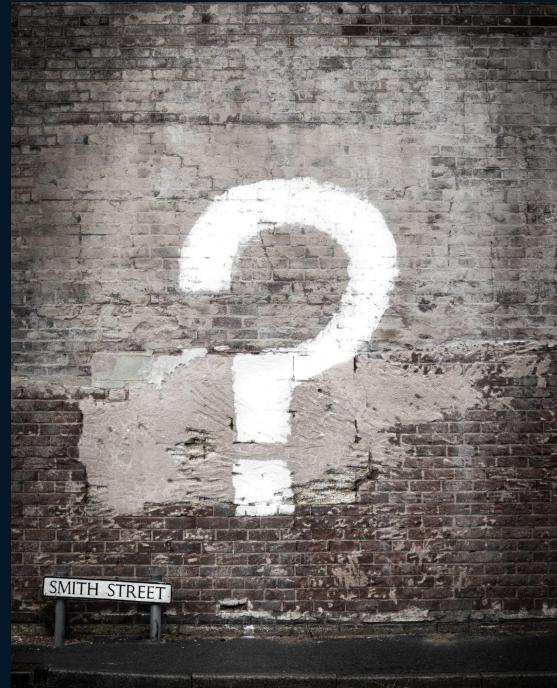
Too much to test, looming deadline

## Skill

Time/Energy Management

## Outcome

Better control over what I feel empowered to accomplish



# What have we learned?

ADHD fuels **Curiosity**

Anxiety drives **User Empathy**

Depression teaches **Energy Management**

With great **POWER**, comes great  
**RESPONSIBILITY**