

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

*By Karen Todd  
Presented for Kansas City Developer Conference 2023*

# 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.”

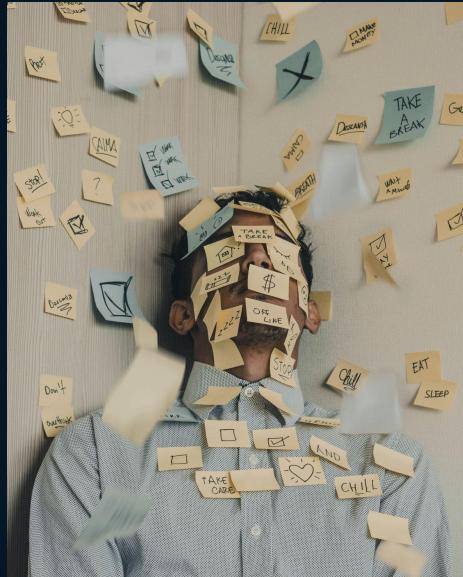
*Aurora  
(Cure for Me)*



The Thin Line Between  
***HERO*** and **VILLAIN**

# My Squad

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

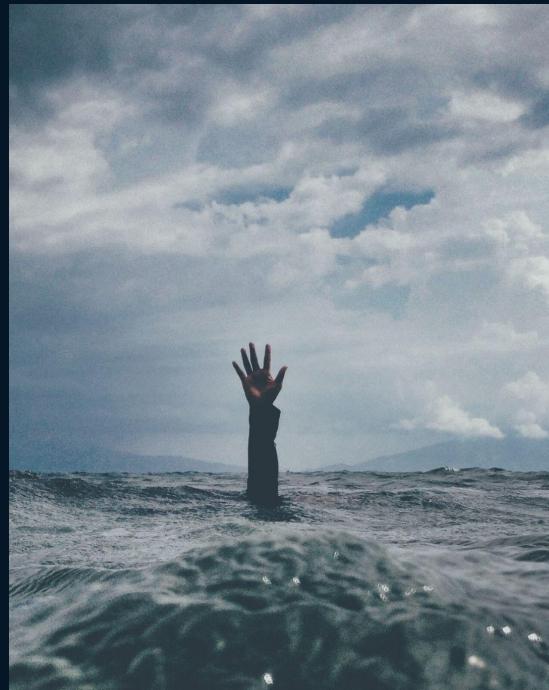
*Type* - Major Clinical

*The Dark Side:*

Chronic exhaustion

Self-inflicted harm

Emotional isolation



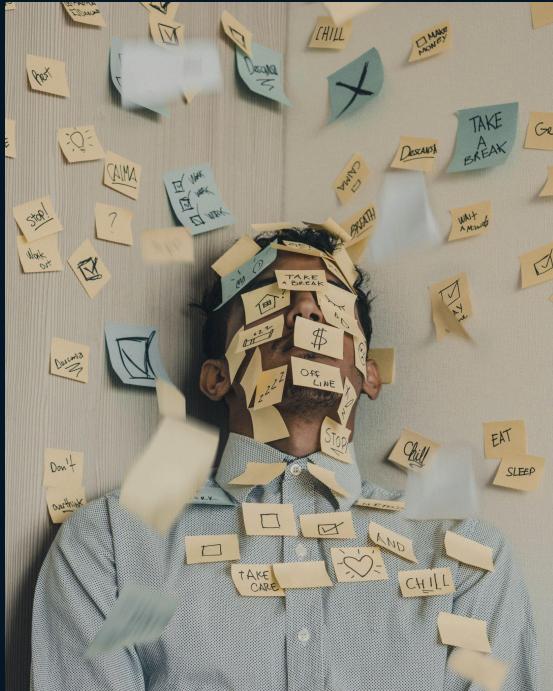


Let's take a break...

*(You're doing great)*

Using My Powers  
*for GOOD*

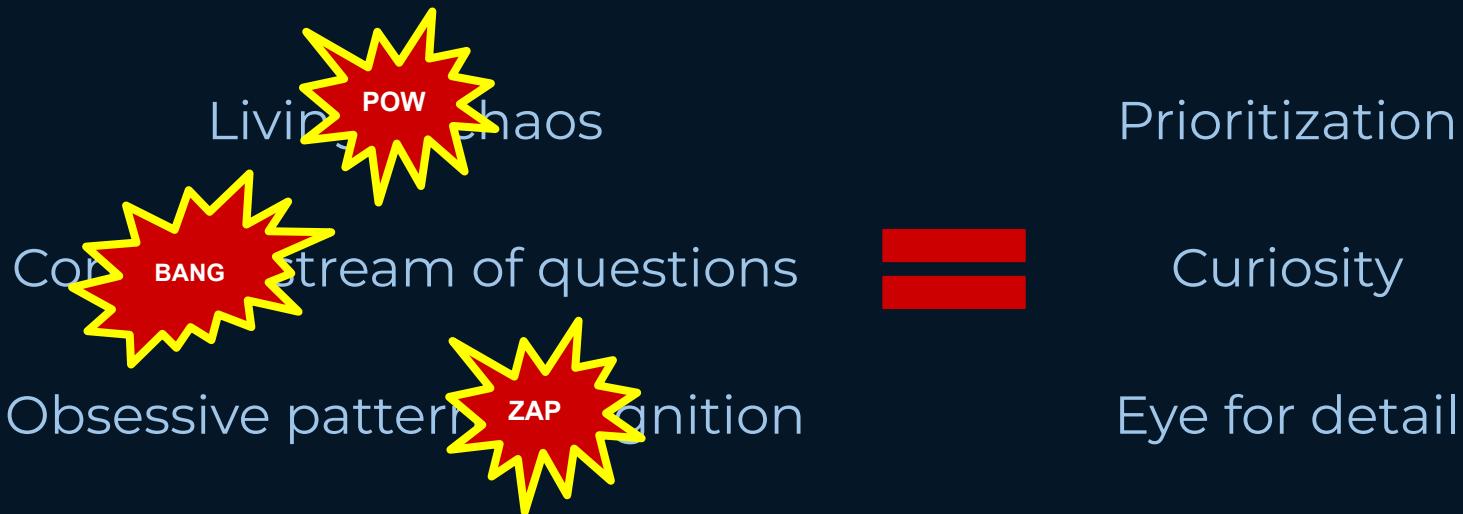
# **ADHD - *Redefined***



# Intro



# ADHD - *Redefined*



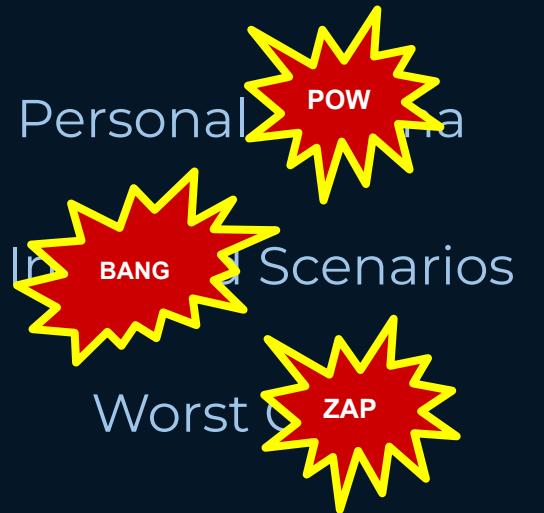
# Anxiety - *Redefined*



*Into*



# Anxiety - *Redefined*



Empathy for Others

Exploring Edge Cases

Risk Assessment

# Depression - *Redefined*

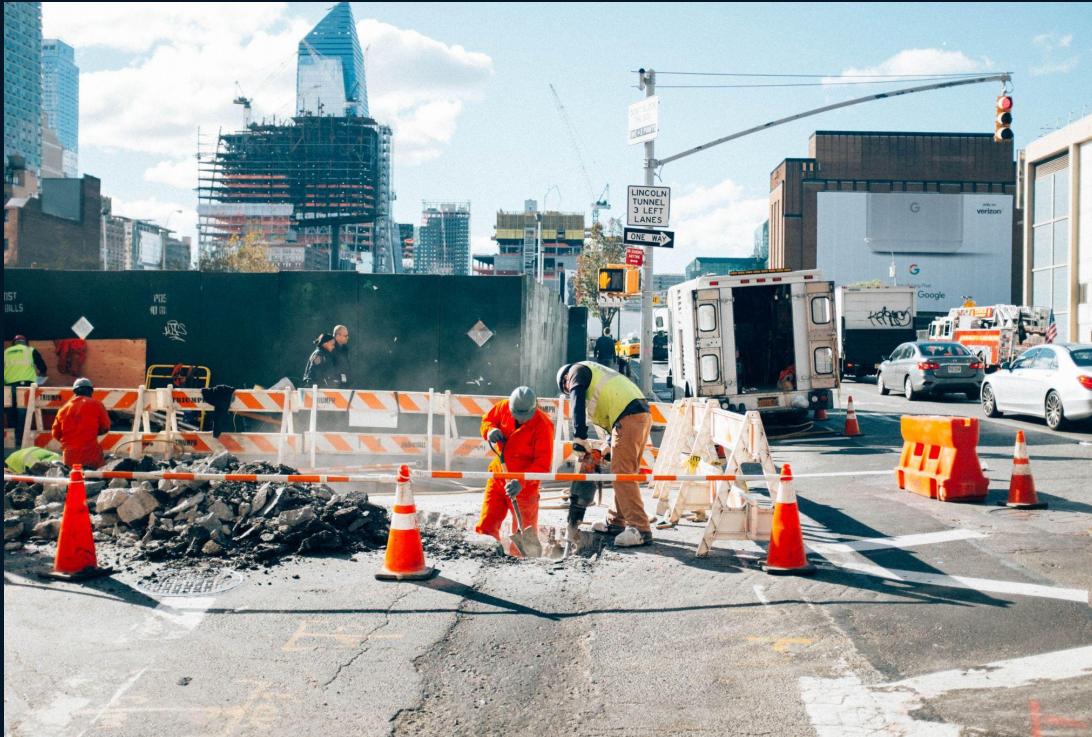


Into



*COMING SOON...*

**Depression - ~~Redefined~~**



Neurodivergent Conditions...  
**ASSEMBLE!**

# My Squad

ADHD



Anxiety



Depression



# Working with ADHD

## Scenario

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

## Skills

Curiosity + 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

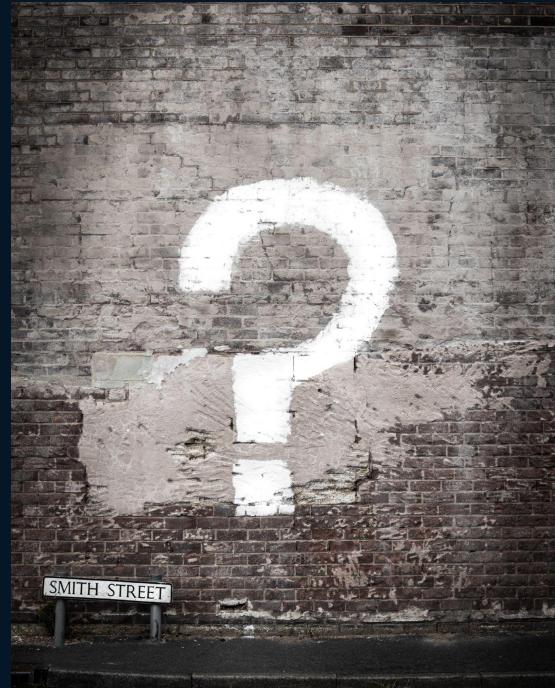
Too much to test, looming deadline

## 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**

# Thank You



Please rate my session



@KarenTestsStuff

