

# “About Me” Workshop



Creating an neurodiversity affirmative personal profile to share with your child's school team.

Jenn Scharf, August 25, 2022  
[jennscharf.com](https://jennscharf.com)

# Workshop Goals:

- Create (or begin creating) a one-page “About Me” document to share with the school team using an ND affirmative lens
- Develop a sense of the “About Me” page as an advocacy & IEP meeting preparation tool

# Workshop Process:

- Intro (10 mins)
- Focus on each of the 6 templates quadrants one at a time (40 mins)
- Summary (10 mins)
- Q&A - unrecorded after the call so stick around if you have specific questions

# Resources:

- Blank template
  - Link is in your email inbox
  - Link is in the Zoom call chat
  - Link is [HERE](#)
- Recommendations from assessments
  - If applicable and appropriate, you can pull from these for specific quadrants
- Slide deck & links will be emailed to you in a follow-up

# What is an “About Me” page?

- At its simplest, a point form list of the most important information for school team members to know about your child
- A way to ensure your child’s voice is included in communications
- An unobtrusive way to influence your classroom teacher’s planning
- A proactive approach to your advocacy for the school year
- An opportunity to introduce your lens and priorities as parent/caregiver
- A precursor to how you plan to engage in the IEP process & for developing proposed IEP goals (but that is another workshop!)

# The “About Me” Template

<b>1. My Interests:</b>	<b>2. My Identities:</b>	<b>3. My Strengths:</b>
<b>4. My Stressors &amp; Sensory Experience:</b>	<b>5. My Challenges:</b>	<b>6. My Support Needs:</b>

# Quadrant 1: My Interests

- Hobbies
- Activities
- Topics

Link to a guided exercise with your child [HERE](#) (may or may not be useful in engaging your child)

## **My Interests:**

- Camping
- SUP
- Dogs
- Psychology
- Adventure travel
- DIY home projects

# Quadrant 2: My Identities

## Social Identity

- Examples: Cultural Identity, Gender Identity, Religious Identity, Disability Identity

## Personal Identity

- Examples: Family role, personality, beliefs, values, aspirations, birth order, languages spoken, habits, sporting skills

**This is an excellent place to insert your child's and your family's preferred language (identity first vs person first for example) and pronouns.**

### My Identities:

- Mom/Sister/Daughter
- Woman (she/her)
- Autistic person
- Educator
- Whole foods enthusiast
- Skier



# Box 3: My Strengths

- Personal Strengths
- Social Strengths
- Learning Strengths

\* For those in BC, strengths can be sourced from the Core Competencies list. This process is more in depth and part of 1:1 support but if you are familiar with the Core Competencies, you can work on connecting them here.

## **My Strengths:**

- Processing new information & making connections between ideas
- Project planning, organizing and logistics
- Bringing people together around shared interests

# Quadrant 4: My Stressors & Sensory Experiences

## The 8 Senses

- Sight
- Auditory/Sound
- Tactile/Touch
- Gustatory/Taste
- Olfactory/Smell
- Proprioception/Body Awareness
- Interoception
- Vestibular/Balance & Posture

## The 5 Self-Reg Domains

- Biological, Emotional, Cognitive, Social, Prosocial (Stressors List [HERE](#))

### My Stressors & Sensory Experience:

- Difficulty processing words/instructions when there is background noise
- Difficulty being in spaces with strong perfume scents
- Difficulty being in spaces that are crowded, especially if they are so crowded that I am being touched
- Easily stressed by requests with not enough information or when being rushed or feeling unwelcome

# Quadrant 5: My Challenges

Can be framed as lagging skills and/or opportunities for growth. Sometimes called “Stretches” in BC IEP language.

Be mindful in this category to remain affirmative.

Ask yourself if there are ableist or neurotypical expectations arising here and take time to reflect, reframe and reword as needed.

Ross Greene’s list of lagging skills can be helpful as a starting point. Find them [HERE](#).

These statements are sources for IEP goals. They turn from “difficulty” statements to “I can” statements.

## My Challenges:

- Difficulty recognizing when my capacity is at maximum and saying “no” to new projects
- Difficulty putting creative ideas into action and/or focusing on one idea at a time
- Difficulty asking for help; difficulty trusting that if I ask for help that someone will be willing to help.

# Quadrant 6: My Support Needs

## Proactive: Accessibility

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

## Retroactive: Accommodations

- Human Rights

Big list of UDL ideas and essential supports accommodations [HERE](#).

**The more PROACTIVE action teachers take they better. Choose this list wisely to encourage your teacher to design more accessible learning approaches.**

### My Support Needs:

- Autonomy to design and implement my own projects
- Strong 1:1 connections with trusted friends and mentors
- Accountability buddy to check in with me on my daily goals
- Information or instructions in written format
- Autonomy to design my own schedule; lots of flexibility

# My “About Me”

## About Me: Jenn Scharf

Fall 2022

<p><b>My Interests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Camping</li><li>● SUP</li><li>● Dogs</li><li>● Psychology</li><li>● Adventure travel</li><li>● DIY home projects</li></ul>	<p><b>My Identities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Mom/Sister/Daughter</li><li>● Woman (she/her)</li><li>● Autistic person</li><li>● Educator</li><li>● Whole foods enthusiast</li><li>● Skier</li></ul>	<p><b>My Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Processing new information &amp; making connections between ideas</li><li>● Project planning, organizing and logistics</li><li>● Bringing people together around shared interests</li></ul>
<p><b>My Stressors &amp; Sensory Experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Difficulty processing words/instructions when there is background noise</li><li>● Difficulty being in spaces with strong perfume scents</li><li>● Difficulty being in spaces that are crowded, especially if they are so crowded that I am being touched</li><li>● Easily stressed by requests with not enough information or when being rushed or feeling unwelcome</li></ul>	<p><b>My Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Difficulty recognizing when my capacity is at maximum and saying “no” to new projects</li><li>● Difficulty putting creative ideas into action and/or focusing on one idea at a time</li><li>● Difficulty asking for help; difficulty trusting that if I ask for help that someone will be willing to help.</li></ul>	<p><b>My Support Needs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Autonomy to design and implement my own projects</li><li>● Strong 1:1 connections with trusted friends and mentors</li><li>● Accountability buddy to check in with me on my daily goals</li><li>● Information or instructions in written format</li><li>● Autonomy to design my own schedule; lots of flexibility</li></ul>

## Summary:

- Keep it simple & specific
- Prioritize
- Include your child in the process in whatever ways work for your family
- Send an email copy to your school team in the weeks before school starts
- Bring a hard copy for your classroom teacher
- Keep a digital version on hand; update and tweak as needed - this is a living document that will age well with ongoing refinement
- Use the “About Me” as a source for generation proposed IEP goals (stay tuned for an upcoming short workshop on writing goals your team will receive well!)
- If you'd like some 1:1 support to take this concept to the next level, you can book in with me for a consultation [HERE](#)

**Thank you!**

Stick around for live Q&A (not recorded!)

[jennscharf.com](https://jennscharf.com)