



Dismantling dominant disability discourse*: Exploring liberatory language for neurodivergent experience

by Dana Kabaila



Dana Kabaila is a neurodivergent counsellor in Naarm (Melbourne, Australia). She holds a Master of Narrative Therapy and Community Work (2025) and has a background in speech pathology and Jungian coaching. Dana is endlessly fascinated by the diversity of brains, bodies and beings in the world. She welcomes any questions, thoughts or ideas at dana@undertheoaktraining.com

 ORCID ID: <https://0009-0009-6226-8356>

Abstract

Narrative therapy offers powerful approaches for honouring neurodivergent insider knowledge to resist thin, pathologising conclusions. To explore and extend these approaches, I interviewed loved ones as neurodivergent co-researchers using narrative principles to re-dignify their living experience. These interviews led to therapeutic letters, peer outsider witnessing and engagement with a therapist listening group. I used the terms “neuro-wild” to explore freedoms, “neuro-wild cultivators” for re-memembering supporters, “neuro-taming” for survival skills and “neuro-rewilding” for reclaiming preferred ways of thinking, being, knowing and doing. I hope this paper offers new possibilities to neurodivergent folk seeking support and to neurodivergent providers, authors and researchers.

Key words: *neurodivergent, co-research, therapeutic letter, outsider witness, therapist listening group, narrative therapy, narrative practice*

*While embracing alliteration

Kabaila, D. (2026). Dismantling dominant disability discourse: Exploring liberatory language for neurodivergent experience. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (2), 15–25. <https://doi.org/10.4320/ZJJL1915>

Author pronouns: she/her

Academic literature about neurodivergence is often housed in pathologising professional discourse that does not resonate with the researched (Bertilsson Rosqvist et al., 2023). Some of this research correlates difference with suffering and focuses on eradicating or assimilating ways of thinking, being, knowing and doing (Bovell, 2015).

External observers applying a deficit- and abnormality-based lens bypass a vibrant neurodivergent community with its own cultural practices (Bovell, 2015). For example, viewing sensory sensitivities in terms of suffering, or as the cause of unusual behaviours requiring remediation, misses lived-experience accounts of bodily refusals and reclamations that support regulation, release, fascination, euphoria and connections with the divine (Bovell, 2015; Milton, 2012; Ureña & Varma, 2025).

While our brains are deeply personal, psychiatric knowledge often objectifies neurodivergent people as silent “others” (Byers & Newman, 2019). The myth of a singular neurotypical brain as natural, universal and correct sets an impossible standard (Rosqvist & Jackson-Perry, 2024). While nobody can fully meet neuro-perfect criteria, this disproportionately marginalises people furthest from these ideals (Madigan, 2011).

Neurodivergent representation in both research and popular media is often limited and stereotyped, centring folk who are white and male. An egregious lack of diverse representation contributes to diagnostic biases, disregard of personal and cultural knowledge, and failure to address the heightened risks of incarceration and deportation experienced by neurodivergent people of colour (Nair et al., 2026). Even within the neurodiversity movement, the rich disability and relational ethics traditions and philosophies from the Global South are largely overlooked (Nair et al., 2026). This renders many experiences of neurodivergence invisible, is intellectually unsound, and constitutes testimonial, hermeneutic and epistemic injustice (Baretta et al., 2010; Gopal, 2021).

Liberatory language

Drawing on mutually informative depathologising ideas from the Neurodiversity, Disability and Mad Pride social justice movements, I use the umbrella term “neurodivergent” to welcome all folks whose internal experience and/or external presentation do not fit “the norm” (Redikopp, 2018; Smart, 2024). “Neurodivergence” is offered as a launching point for expansive enquiry beyond single, thin, imposed, proof- and consensus-driven descriptions.

The suffix “neuro”, typically used in medical contexts, has been transformed in a range of playful ways, like neuro-spicy, neuro-heretical and neuro-whimsical. I have developed some additional terms to guide narrative conversations and invite new possibilities and connections (see Baretta et al., 2010). These include “neuro-wild”¹ to describe the freedom and expansiveness of preferred identity, and “neuro-taming” to describe skilful responses to neuro-normative demands. I intend for the term neuro-taming to be multi-storied: both celebrating agency in developing skilled bilingualism (with neuro-normative communication as an additional language) and dignifying suffering associated with neuro-normative pressures. The concept of “neuro-rewilding” can be used to guide double story development by focusing on resistance to neuro-normativity and reclamation of neurodivergent freedom (see Grieve-Williams, 2019). “Neuro-rewilding” carries the assertion that neuro-wildness cannot be erased by neuro-taming, though it might take time and care to recover. Neuro-rewilding lights up current and possible future actions and identity conclusions that hold local resonance and meaning. There is reasonable hope for small or partial victories that are not trivial and generate ripples of change (Morgan et al., 2019).

This language draws on nature images as the more-than-human world is often treasured by neurodivergent folk and contributes to their wellbeing and feeling of reciprocal belonging (Hayden, 2022; Miller, 2020). Nature metaphors abound in neurodivergent communities. For example, autistic Aboriginal-European artist

Sara Kian-Judge (2024) has compared autistic folk to bats, if bats were perceived as “strange, featherless Birds condemned to the night, surely longing for the light of day” rather than creatures with their own unique ways of being.

My use of language also draws on histories of innovation in narrative practice, including First Nations narrative practitioners telling stories in ways that make them stronger and seeing themselves in ways that are “hopeful and prideful” (Wingard & Lester, 2001). This leadership gives me courage to unpick what has been said about the neurodivergent community and feel grounded in a known sense of belonging.

Queer theory invites fluid movement from the fixed and certain to the confused, unstable and transformative (Reynolds, 2014). This offers reprieve for many neurodivergent people who tie themselves in knots trying to get a “conclusive answer” about their neurotype. Similar to what queer theory validates for nonbinary folk, neurodivergent folk can explore their experiences as complex and dynamic (Smart, 2024; Sostar & Maeder, 2019). The queer justice movement resists the forced choice of invisibility by camouflage or hyper-visibility through being identified as different (MacIntyre-Harrison, 2023).

Articles in this journal have often featured neurodivergent people seeking therapy; however, there has been a recent expansion to include openly neurodivergent narrative therapists, community workers, authors and thought leaders including Sandra Coral (2025), Emily Salja (2022), Tiffany Sostar (2024), Emma Van der Klift (2019) and KJ Wiseheart (2025). Every single neurodivergent author (and, in fact, person) inspires me to speak up and look out for other folks relegated to the margins.

Narrative therapy commits to liberation, no matter where the oppressed are found. As a neurodivergent narrative therapist, I am eager to join with the call from Reynolds, Dupuis-Rossi and Heath (2011) to “not throw up our hands, but roll up our sleeves”. Voices from the margins carry the power to dismantle normalising ideas, treat

professional alienation and help create a home for all of us (Newman, 2024; Reynolds, 2012).

Co-researcher connections

To further explore the liberatory possibilities of narrative conversations about neurodivergence, I invited co-researchers who I already regularly spoke with about neurodivergence and resisting power. My cousin Rasa and I exchange daily voice memos. She is a mental health nurse practitioner who has authored a book and many articles speaking from her own living experiences. My dear friend Nat is someone I enter flow state chats with where we talk deeply about understanding and responding to life’s complexities. Christina is a collaborator and friend whose multicultural neuro-affirming approach I greatly admire. Recruiting co-researchers from my family, friends and colleagues allowed me to try out different ideas and lent itself to more equal power relations. Still, it needs to be noted that my position was largely one-directional as interviewer, letter writer and coordinator of outsider-witness responses (Reynolds, 2011). Communicating across emails, text messages, voice memos and in-person meetings (with audio recording) helped “cross the imagined boundaries between personal, professional, and scholarly spheres” (Nobe-Ghelani & Barnhart, 2024, p. 139). These modes of communication proved flexible, practical and relational.

Where conversations around neurotype often start with diagnostic criteria, I started by asking my co-researchers to reflect on neuro-wild memories. This evoked recollections of enjoyable moments in life that were unfiltered, unquestioned or minimally interfered with. My co-researchers insightfully positioned memories in relationship to family members, friends and teachers. The need for a term for re-memembering important people became apparent, and “neuro-wild cultivators” was agreed on. I also once misread “lived experience” as “loved experience” and thought that could be useful for future re-memembering conversations about the lived experience of loving someone and/or being loved by someone and the potential for that love to be

revolutionary (Reynolds, 2012). The term “lived experience” suggests previous experiences. While this may be fitting for recovery or remission, I used the term “living experience” in our discussions as I felt it better captured the dynamic nature of disability, day to day and across the lifespan.

Interviews, letters and witnessing with Nat and Rasa

My dear friend Nat has walked alongside me as we both explored self-identifying our neurodivergence. The added step of interviewing and recording her stories deepened my appreciation of her journey. I developed questions that I hoped would be “failure-proof” (Newman, 2016) as entry points for multi-story development about her experiences of neurodivergence, like this interview excerpt:

Dana: Where did you feel like your neuro-wildness could flourish? Where else did you feel free and uninhibited? What activities, what setting, which people?

Nat: Lots of outside time. Train excursions, gardening and footy with my father. Thankfully gender norms were not pushed at that stage. My best friend at kinder[garten] was a boy and we ran wild, which was great.

It was exciting and surprising to hear Nat’s responses. I knew her childhood had been incredibly hard in many ways, so it was lovely to draw out, linger on and thicken a second story of childhood times. With stories gathered in audio transcripts, I generated a therapeutic letter with rescued experience-near words (Newman, 2008), joining them in a way that I hoped would allow her story to breathe. By taking the role of narrator, I wanted Nat’s wisdom to be carried in her own voice, with my responsibility being to craft a story into an experience for the reader or listener (Miller, 2020; Reynolds, 2014; Russell & Carey, 2004). There is power inherent in the position of curating stories and a responsibility to aim for resonant local impact (Lainson et al., 2019), as with the letter excerpt below:

When Nat left home, she met new neuro-wild cultivators who had found their own ways to escape normality: “I felt a kinship with my housemate – we cared for each other. I met people so far from what I knew: drag performers, queer folk, sex workers – outcasts and trailblazers, out and proud, just being.”

I read my letter back to Nat as both my interviewee and a co-researcher reflecting on the process (Lainson et al., 2019). She remarked:

I feel really moved. Like, I think about my life and my past a lot. I’m almost constantly reflecting. But this was different. Tracing the neuro-wild, neuro-taming stuff made everything feel more connected, instead of random events. Yeah, it felt validating.

My cousin Rasa Kabaila lives interstate, and when she visits Naarm/Melbourne, Nat and I try to go out surfing with her. Nat was keen for me to share her letter with Rasa and Rasa was excited to receive it. To support Rasa to situate her responses in her own living experience, I added prompts at the end of Nat’s letter including the below example and her response:

Dana: What struck a chord with you or captured your imagination while reading this letter?

Rasa: I found it emotional and, I guess in some ways, confronting as it was so real, and it brought up a lot for me. That’s not a bad thing – it’s demonstrative of its rawness and beauty. I felt happy when I could hear about Nat and her dad playing together and Nat being able to express herself in ways that she does as an adult (e.g. being active and trying new things). I felt like I was brought back to that moment. I could sense these times were protective for Nat. It has me thinking about beautiful moments you have on your own and with people around you as a child – and my dad taking us down the rapids at the dam on lilos!²

Nat's stories supported Rasa to share her own related experiences in a double storied way highlighting the potential for narrative documents and witnessing to be antidotes to isolation and individualism (Denborough, 2008; Newman, 2016).

I interviewed Nat about what it was like to have Rasa witness and respond to her letter and her response included:

I wasn't necessarily expecting her emotional connection to my journey and her appreciation and validation, and I easily forget how other people might perceive me, and what they would think of me, and maybe it's because I'm stuck in my head so much of the time that I forget that other people would see me in a particular way. And when I say, "see me in a particular [way]", I mean, see me in a positive way, like, admire you and totally, that's validating.

This seemed to capture the notion that "Being heard is not enough – a person's words must matter" (Reynolds, 2013, p. 56).

In a form of synchronous narrative practice, I followed interviewing Rasa as outsider witness with interviewing her about her own experiences, including via voice memos:

Dana: With neuro-rewilding, I'm thinking of bringing back things that we lost or misplaced or got taken from us. So, as an adult, what have you brought back into your life or protected in your life, despite it not fitting ideas about the norm?

Rasa: I think now as an adult, I'm going back to those things that feel a lot more natural to me, that I really enjoy, without feeling like I have to hide them. The moment people walk into my house, they see my brain. My boyfriend accepts me wholeheartedly. He put rubber duckies in our Jacuzzi and tucks my teddy, Oliver, into bed in the morning after I get up. Being physically active is the one thing that forces my mind to focus on just one thing. I have

found ways to get the intense tactile sensory input I need. I went from netball to basketball to mixed martial arts.

I think this offers such a rich description of ways of prioritising what is important while drawing on community and disregarding unhelpful restrictions. Following the interview and outsider-witness processes, I asked Rasa a metalinguistic question:

Dana: How did you find using the terms "neuro-wild", "neuro-taming" and "neuro-re-wilding?"

Rasa: I love all the questions that are coming up! I think it's been so fascinating and therapeutic to be a part of. I think the describing phrases are short, powerful and easily understood by a wide readership. As a co-researcher, I know what you are asking me and how I can answer it.

As a mental health worker, they might compartmentalise neurotypical and neurodivergent people, stressing their differences rather than their similarities and maybe suggesting neurotypical people have harmful intent towards neurodivergent people.

I think you navigated it in such an educational and honest and healing way for the people involved. I can see this being something you could use in your practice. You don't talk around stuff but still have sensitivity – that's a hard thing to do.

Here, Rasa moved with ease between multiple positions. She has a central role in my life and demonstrated the moral courage to lean in, critique and invite generative accountability (Reynolds et al., 2021). As a co-researcher, Rasa encouraged me in my practice and examined it with a hopeful scepticism (Reynolds, 2014). By raising the potential unintended outcomes of "othering" more neuro-normative folk, Rasa invited me into a messy reflexivity. My thinking can expand to include questions about neuro-wild ways of being that fit into mainstream contexts

and resonances across neurotypes that value all forms of humanness (Lainson et al., 2019; Reynolds, 2014). Zena Cumpston (2022, p. 42) described how “Our stories will be richer when we find ways of telling them in true partnership, no matter how messy or complicated”.

Adding a therapist listening group with my companion and colleagues

Over a single recorded and transcribed video call, I interviewed my companion Christina as someone who is passionate about neuro-affirming expression. She offered rich symbols of neuro-rewilding from her own life including:

I exchanged my prom dress for a longboard.³ I was like, “Screw it, I’m not going to the prom. I just don’t see myself there. I don’t want to go”. I was doing it because my mom and sister were like, “It’s just the thing you do in high school”. They came with me to find a dress and do the fittings. Then I was like, “I’m just not feeling it”. So, I returned the dress and bought a longboard. And that longboard got me around so much at college.

In this example, Christina defied neuro-normative and gendered dominant discourse, demonstrating “special knowledge about sidestepping normality and honouring diverse ways of living” (Denborough, 2014, p. 162). Riding her longboard through college is such a liberatory image that upholds what Wiseheart (2025) described as “the dignity, wisdom and beauty inherent in people’s lives, even in the midst of struggle”.

At the end of the interview Christina reflected:

It’s been nice to reflect and go through this timespan thinking of it from the angle as well of, you know, being neurodivergent and finding the things that reconnect me with my childhood and brings through my inner child. Like, little Christina loved this, so I want to find it again. I want to do that again for her and do it with her.

This highlights some of the ways children’s culture leaves the door open for play, originality and meeting our bodies where they are. It can be a tightrope walk as a neurodivergent person to defy age-related norms while resisting being infantilised by the dominant culture. As children have limited autonomy and control, and are less listened to and believed than adults, the language of “neuro-rewilding” could be a way to redignify the skills, knowledges and values children possess (White, 2000; Yuen, 2007).

Using reflexive questions (rather than scripting questions in advance, see Lainson et al., 2019), I kept a focus on multi-storied descriptions of neuro-taming.

Dana: Did you feel empowered that you were able to give up sucking your fingers, that you were able to take it into control and say that, or did you feel a grief around it, or both?

Christina: I was acting under my own volition. Like, I was deciding it. So, I think it was probably more empowering than anything. I didn’t feel pressured by anyone. To this day, I will find myself putting one of the fingers I used to suck on my philtrum and pushing there does release happy brain chemicals. Same hand. And my parents noticed, like, even as I got a bit older. I would do this for comfort and self-soothing. That’s the crazy thing to me – a six- or seven-year-old to just give something up that they’ve been doing since being in utero.

Christina’s response highlights her agency in the micro-politics of everyday life. I created a therapeutic letter which Christina edited. I offered to read excerpts of the letter to a therapist listening group from my practice so they might witness her preferred identity claims (see Myerhoff, 1982). Christina enthusiastically accepted. I invited the therapists to bring their art and writing supplies to support open, iterative and emergent responses to Christina’s letter (Miller, 2020). To support the listening group to situate their comments with curiosity towards their own

experiences rather than a more distant analysis (Russell & Carey, 2004) I asked questions like, “Did this bring up memories from your own life?”

I sucked my thumb until I was 12 and stroked my nose. I hadn't thought about that in a long time, and there was a point where I realised it wasn't appropriate. So, I would only do it home, and at 12, I would sometimes wake up in the night and my thumb would be wet and I would just know I had been soothing. But the idea that you have to give it up.

Smell. You don't know the things you do that are okay ever, and then hearing this is like oh my god yeah, I was such a weird little kid and there were such weird little kids everywhere but none of us could talk to each other about how weird we were.

The listeners expressed comfort in shared memories, even if they had felt alone at the time. This supported new energy to be channelled when remembering challenging times (Morgan et al., 2019). I also read excerpts in which Christina described neuro-wild cultivators in her life:

Finally, my parents were like, “It’s been a week, and, like, mmm, let’s take you to the doctor”. The paediatrician said, “I think she’s depressed – you need to take her to see a psychologist”. I remember I said, “I’m not crazy. I don’t need to go to a psychologist”. You know, I was 15. I didn’t want to go.

It ended up being a social worker and she asked, "How do you keep track of things you need to do?" I was like, "Oh, I keep it in my head". And she was like, "Yeah, that's not working. That's a lot that you're having to remember and think about it. What about we use a planner?" She met with my parents and my teachers, and we put together a plan to help me with going back into school and pretty much being, like, yeah, you don't need to do this or that. Ugh, that was a big relief, simplifying it, and I had an attack plan and my GPA was not going to be ruined. I could

still have my straight As. Like, I knew I was in this rat race, if I wanted to get anywhere ... because things didn't always come so easy to me and I don't wanna get lost.

Christina's re-membering highlights dominant discourses in educational institutions that are upheld through verbal feedback and scoring metrics. While this places all young people under significant pressure, the neuro-taming demands added an additional layer of oppression for Christina. There is also the second story of Christina's social worker, family and teachers all pulling together to support her as a solidarity team of neuro-wild cultivators. The below image and accompanying words are from the therapist listening group:



The digging into academics, the camouflage. There's a lot of feeling sad but it sounded like Christina had this person who saw her, and I don't know if I did at all. Even her parents letting her stay home a week and then taking her to the doctor. People listen? And then to get the word "depressed" felt quite bitter-sweet.

For me, the visual representations added another layer of meaning to the witnessing. The experience of colour, shape, movement, pressure, composition and writing left the door open for experience and reflection contained beyond spoken or written words (Tamasese & Denborough, 2024). With the consent of the therapists, I shared their responses with Christina, who then left a voice memo including:

I'm so in love with the responses. I felt it in my belly at times, such an impactful "I've been seen and heard and understood by people". Like, my story has been received and, in turn, that affirmed for me that other people have experienced similar ... or bringing up memories from their own lives.

This unprompted response from Christina highlights how personal listener accounts ground outsider-witness responses in everyday life (Denborough, 2008). In the acts of reading, listening, writing and drawing, phenomenological inquiry adds new layers to how memories may be recalled in future (Miller, 2020). The outsider witnessing of the therapist listening group differed from the experience with Nat and Rasa in a number of ways. Christina and the therapists were not known to each other, and Christina was receiving the responses from a group rather than an individual. I was curious about the experience for Christina:

I feel like it's a lovely little gift to be seen in that way and especially not directly where I was sharing that story and getting feedback but a secondary way where you read my story and [I waited] some time to hear back.

Christina highlighted the impact of my role in collecting her stories and providing the feedback from others. I also received an email from one of the therapists from the listening group:

I love how you take themes and words that jump out at you, and how you then offer them back to us. It feels like a mirror. Deeply fascinating. It's like our stories create a bridge to each other in the context of a very crazy and inhospitable social world. People and stories connecting. I am very interested to hear more of your work. Please thank Christina for me. In sharing her world, it feels she also gifts me an insight into my own world and helps me make meaning. Thank you!

An unanticipated outcome of the listening group was their role as an incidental reflecting team on my practice – a solidarity that helped me to sustain ethical and spirited justice doing (Reynolds et al., 2021).

I sent a draft of this paper to my co-researchers. Rasa asked me to clarify one sentence, add her surname (which we share as our fathers are brothers) and started planning to feature the paper on her website and LinkedIn (assuming it would be published before it had even been reviewed). Nat gave me a thumbs up to proceed with my submission over brunch. Christina left me eight consecutive considered and generous voice memos that illustrated how reading my draft paper differed from reading her therapeutic letter or the outsider-witness responses in isolation. Christina described our work together as:

An ever-evolving bridge ... completing another circuit ... an energy that is alive and its continuing.

The new article-like arrangement of her words warranted further review and processing. I could hear Christina move from skilful caution to assertion as my co-researcher:

I'll leave it to you if you want to add it in ... No, it's a draft and you asked me.

Reading not just her own replies but the questions I originally posed, Christina felt something was missing in the captured response about giving up sucking her fingers:

I wonder if I realised you also asked me if there was grief involved. Because there was. I was embarrassed. I was having a moment of "Oh shit, did anyone see me? I don't want to be made fun of". A pivotal moment of "I'm not going to be accepted". A secretive thing. Being comfortable to meet my needs at home reflects the Black autistic experience that goes back to colonisation. At six or seven, the impression from society was that I was not to be accepted for who I was, needing to hide those things about myself.

This reminded me again, I had reviewed the transcripts, highlighted phrases, studied exchanges but I had not shared my recorded questions with my co-researchers until this step. This was also the first time Christina had read excerpts from Rasa and Nat (and vice versa). After seeing her words alongside those of other neurodivergent interviewees, Christina concluded:

I just thought I got to share my story and have it put out there, and what you offered to do [sharing with the therapist listening group]. Now I see from the other side of it, the collective words – this is such a therapeutic experience.

Christina also encouraged me as a peer and collaborator:

I was feeling so much pride for you reading this. The reference list that fits your brain – I love that you brought yourself in.

It was heartening for me to hear positive impacts that challenge the notion of a distant and neutral therapist or researcher being the ideal (Everett et al., 2013).

The impact of this project (that became this paper) continues to unfold in my work and life. It has better equipped me to identify and call out neuro-normative discourse and affirm neuro-wild memories and neuro-rewilding possibilities, opportunities and lenses. I feel bolstered in sharing neurodivergent experiences of neuro-taming skills and exhaustion while resisting this as evidence of being “too disabled” and/or

“not disabled enough”. When people visit me for therapy, I hope to extend the dignity afforded to me in my narrative therapy training – a space of neuro-wild cultivators who welcome rebellious re-authoring of subjugated stories. I hope this paper can be a resource to folks beyond my local context and welcome and celebrate local adaptations and translations. I see the neurodivergent therapist community growing stronger (and softer) together and that is a cause for great excitement.

Acknowledgments

My cousin/soul sister Rasa Kabaila – caring professional, storyteller, MMA coach, kitten foster parent and universal feeder. My bestie Nat – visually gifted artist and mountain and ocean fanatic. My companion Christina – advocate, educator, mystic and DJ. The therapist listening group – Gill, Fiona and Ange – who brought their art and their hearts to the session. My partner, Marek, who read every master’s assignment. My son, Flori, and cat, Cashew, for all the cuddles. My parents and brother for babysitting rescue. My bestie Gemma and all my dear friends whose words I hope to rescue and share in future.

Notes

¹ The term “NeuroWild” has also been used by Em Hammond (2026) <https://www.neurowild.com.au/>

² A lilo is an inflatable mattress.

³ A longboard is a skateboard inspired by surfing.

References*

- Baretta, A., Grandesso, M., Denborough, D., & White, C. (2010). Community therapy: A participatory response to psychic misery. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (4), 33–41.
- Bertilsdotter Rosqvist, H., Botha, M., Hens, K., O'Donoghue, S., Pearson, A., & Stenning, A. (2023). Cutting our own keys: New possibilities of neurodivergent storytelling in research. *Autism*, 27(5), 1235–1244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613221132107>
- Bovell, V. (2015). *Is the prevention and/or cure of autism a morally legitimate quest?* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Oxford]. Oxford University Research Archive. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5287/ora-ke7gdydk8>
- Byers, B., & Newman, D. (2019). A first person principle: Philosophical reflections on narrative practice within a mainstream psychiatric service for young people. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work* (1), 19–28.
- Coral, S. (2025). “Pockets of freedom”: Creating therapeutic spaces as refuges for Black experiences of neurodivergence. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (2), 61–72. <https://doi.org/10.4320/EJDR6304>
- Cumpston, Z. (2022). Looking back, moving forward. In M. Neale (Ed.), *First Nations Knowledges Plants: Past, present and future* (pp. 30–42). Thames & Hudson.
- Denborough, D. (2008). *Collective narrative practice: Responding to individuals, groups, and communities who have experienced trauma*. Dulwich Centre Publications.
- Denborough, D. (2014). Retelling the stories of our lives: Everyday narrative therapy to draw inspiration and transform experience. Norton.
- Everett, B., MacFarlane, D. A., Reynolds, V. A., & Anderson, H. D. (2013). Not on our backs: Supporting counsellors in navigating the ethics of multiple relationships within queer, two spirit, and/or trans communities. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 47(1), 14–28.
- Gopal, P. (2021). On decolonisation and the university. *Textual Practice*, 35(6), 873–899.
- Grieve-Williams, V. (2019, September 5). *Discussing Aboriginal philosophies and healing with Professor Victoria Grieve-Williams* [Audio podcast]. NITV Radio. <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/nitv-radio/en/podcast-episode/discussing-aboriginal-philosophies-and-healing-with-professor-victoria-grieve-williams-part-1/v7we5tb09>
- Hammond, E. (2026). *Being Eve: A graphic novel*. Penguin.
- Hayden, C. (2022). *Different, not less: A neurodivergent's guide to embracing your true self and finding your happily ever after*. Murdoch Books.
- Kian-Judge, S. (2024, August 3). Pteropus diagnosis. *Upside-down stuff blog*. <https://www.upsidedownstuff.com/post/pteropus-diagnosis>
- Lainson, K., Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Being both narrative practitioner and academic researcher: A reflection on what thematic analysis has to offer narratively informed research. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (4), 86–98.
- MacIntyre-Harrison, J. (2023). *“This dance between hope and hopelessness”: Queer and/or trans clinical psychologists’ experiences of bringing their lived identities into their practice* [Doctoral dissertation, University College London]. UCL Discovery. <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10179301>
- Madigan, S. (2011). *Narrative therapy*. American Psychological Association.
- Miller, F. C. (2020). *Becoming ethical: The making of ethical practice in dialogical processes*. [Doctoral thesis, University of Bedfordshire]. <https://uobrep.openrepository.com/handle/10547/625764>
- Milton, D. (2012). On the ontological status of autism: The “double empathy problem”. *Disability and Society*, 27(6), 883–887. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2012.710008>
- Morgan, H. C., Randall, J., Lyons, A. J., Oliver, S., Saffer, J., Scott, J. M., & Nolte, L. (2019). Pebbles in palms: Counter-practices against despair. *Psychotherapy and Politics International*, 17(1), e1481. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ppi.1481>
- Myerhoff, B. (1982). Rites of passage: Process and paradox. *Celebration: Studies in festivity and ritual*, 109, 35.
- Nair, V. K., Farah, W., & Boveda, M. (2026). Is neurodiversity a global northern white paradigm? *Autism*, 30(2), 544–551. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613241280835>
- Newman, D. (2008). Rescuing the said from the saying of It: Living documentation in narrative therapy. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work* (3), 24–34.
- Newman, D. (2016). Explorations with the written word in an inpatient mental health unit. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (4), 45–58.
- Newman, D. (2024). The effort and intricacies of generating experience-near language. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (1), 70–83. <https://doi.org/10.4320/VAQL3165>
- Nobe-Ghelani, C., & Barnhart, M. (2024). Care as experiential pedagogy: Soil building in social work education. *Access*, 12(1), 126–142. <https://doi.org/10.32920/27733854>
- Redikopp, S. (2018). Borderline knowing: (Re) valuing borderline personality disorder as (counter) knowledge. *Word and Text*, 8(1), 77–92.
- Reynolds, V. (2011). Resisting burnout with justice doing. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work* (4), 27–45.

* Length of reference list consistent with my kind of neurodivergence.

- Reynolds, V. (2012). An ethical stance for justice-doing in community work and therapy. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 31(4), 18–33. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jsyt.2012.31.4.18>
- Reynolds, V. (2013). “Leaning in” as imperfect allies in community work. *Narrative and Conflict*, 1(1), 53–75.
- Reynolds, V. (2014). A solidarity approach: The rhizome and messy inquiry. *Systemic inquiry*, 127–154.
- Reynolds, V., Dupuis-Rossi, R., & Heath, T. (2021). Inspiring believed-in-hope as an ethical position: Vicarious resistance and justice-doing. *Journal of Contemporary Narrative Therapy*, 1(1), 2–18.
- Rosqvist, H. B., & Jackson-Perry, D. (Eds.). (2024). *The Palgrave handbook of research methods and ethics in neurodiversity studies*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Russell, S., & Carey, M. (2004). Outsider-witness practices: Some answers to commonly asked questions. In *Narrative therapy: Responding to your questions* (pp. 64–90). Dulwich Centre Publications.
- Salja, E. (2022). Landscapes of possibility: An introduction to fantasy in 2SLGBTQIA+ and disabled therapeutic contexts. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (1), 17–25.
- Smart, G. L. (2024). Madness, neurodiversity, and disability: The complex relationship. In G. Bennett & E. Goodall (Eds.), *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Disability* (pp. 3167–3179). Springer.
- Sostar, T. (2024). Response to “Re-authoring identity conclusions in borderline personality disorder” by Alicia Bruzek. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (2), 104–109, <https://doi.org/10.4320/UNTA7973>
- Sostar, T., & Maeder, R. (2019). Non-binary superpowers! A collaborative conversation between non-binary youth in Adelaide, South Australia, and non-binary youth in Calgary, Alberta. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (2), 24–35.
- Tamasese, T., & Denborough, D. (2024). Research as seeking help: Searching for liberative knowledge—An Interview with Taimalieutu Kiwi Tamasese. *The Qualitative Report*, 29(12), 219–231. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2024.7871>
- Ureña, C., & Varma, S. (2025). *Decolonizing bodies: Stories of embodied resistance, healing and liberation*. Bloomsbury.
- Van der Klift, E. (2019). A reflection on self-regulation and neuro-conceal. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (3), 68–72.
- White, M. (2000). Children, children’s culture, and therapy. In M. White (Ed.), *Reflections on narrative practice: Essays and interviews* (pp. 3–24). Dulwich Centre Publications.
- Wingard, B., & Lester, J. (2001). *Telling our stories in ways that make us stronger*. Dulwich Centre Publications.
- Wiseheart, K. J. (2025). Full Circle: Documenting hard-won knowledges and celebrating “bits of brilliance”. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (1). <https://doi.org/10.4320/IHRJ7258>
- Yuen, A. (2007). Discovering children’s responses to trauma: A response-based narrative practice. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (4), 3–18.