



Monthly Newsletter

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

We are thrilled to extend a warm welcome to you as we launch the Unmasked Neurodiversity Network!

In these early days of our journey, we are excited to share our vision and mission with you.

Unmasked Neurodiversity Network is a newly registered Community Interest Company (CIC) dedicated to supporting and empowering the Neurodivergent community.

As trained counsellors and advocates, our founders, Toni and Sarah, recognised a crucial need for comprehensive support, resources, and understanding for individuals navigating neurodiversity.

Our aim is simple yet profound: to provide a safe and inclusive space where individuals of all neurodivergent profiles can find the support they need, whether it's pre and post-diagnosis guidance, access to educational workshops, or affordable counseling services.

We believe that every individual deserves to have their voice heard, their needs understood, and their potential unlocked.

As we embark on this journey, we acknowledge that we are in the early stages of development.

However, our passion and commitment to making a difference drive us forward.

We have just taken the first step by registering with Companies House, and we are eager to build momentum and expand our impact.

We invite you to join us on this journey of growth, collaboration, and empowerment.

Together, we can create a community where neurodiversity is celebrated, supported, and embraced.

Thank you for your support and belief in our mission. We look forward to sharing updates and progress with you as we move forward.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Community Updates

Staff Spotlight

Event News

Toni & Sarah
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Community News

Recently, we conducted a survey to better understand the challenges faced by Neurodivergent individuals in accessing support services. The results are eye-opening, revealing a significant lack of resources and assistance at every stage of the journey.

Before diagnosis, individuals often struggle in silence, facing uncertainty and confusion without access to guidance or support networks. After diagnosis, the challenges persist, with limited options for tailored assistance and a profound lack of understanding from the broader community. Even parents and family members find themselves navigating uncharted waters, feeling unheard and unsupported in their efforts to understand and support their Neurodivergent loved ones. One glaring issue highlighted by the survey is the absence of neurodiversity education in schools. Without proper awareness and understanding, Neurodivergent students are left to navigate an educational system that does not cater to their unique needs, leading to frustration and disengagement.

These survey results reinforce our mission at Unmasked Neurodiversity Network. We are committed to bridging the gap in support services, offering guidance and resources for individuals before and after diagnosis, and providing educational programs to empower parents, families, and communities to better understand Neurodiversity.

As we continue to analyze the survey data and work towards actionable solutions, we invite you to join us in our efforts to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for Neurodivergent individuals and their families.

Stay tuned for further updates and opportunities to get involved as we strive to make a meaningful difference together.

Volunteer Spotlight

We wanted to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to the incredible community that has reached out to offer support and assistance to Unmasked Neurodiversity Network. Your encouragement and willingness to stand with us in our mission mean the world to us.

Your offers of help and support do not go unnoticed. We deeply appreciate your generosity and are committed to keeping you informed of any opportunities that arise as we move forward. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of Neurodivergent individuals and their families.

We are also excited to share that we have the backing of our local MP, James Gibbons. In discussions with Mr. Gibbons, we are exploring options for premises and potential funding opportunities to further our cause. With his support, we are optimistic about the positive impact we can achieve for the Neurodivergent community in our area.

As we continue to progress and navigate this journey, we promise to keep you updated on our developments and any ways you can contribute. Your continued support and encouragement are invaluable to us, and we are immensely grateful for each and every one of you.

Thank you for believing in us and our mission. Together, we will create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all.

Event News

As we continue to lay the groundwork for our initiatives to support the Neurodivergent community, we believe that collaboration and community involvement are key. That's why we're hosting this meeting: to come together, share our vision, and discuss how we can work together to make it a reality.

During the meeting, we'll have the opportunity to introduce ourselves, present our plans and goals, and hear your valuable insights and ideas. Together, we can brainstorm solutions, explore potential partnerships, and lay the foundation for a more inclusive and supportive community for Neurodivergent individuals and their families.

We're currently finalizing the details for the meeting, including the date, time, and location, and we'll be sure to keep you informed as soon as everything is confirmed. In the meantime, please save the date and consider joining us for what promises to be an inspiring and productive gathering.

Your presence and input are invaluable as we embark on this journey together. We look forward to meeting you and working hand in hand to create positive change in East Leeds and beyond.

Our Month...

Toni Denton

Hi everyone in the Unmasked Neurodiversity Network community!

It's Toni here, and I wanted to take a moment to share a little glimpse into my world over the past month.

As a parent, a counsellor, and someone navigating life with ADHD, I've been kept on my toes, to say the least! Balancing the needs of my clients, my family, and myself can be quite the juggling act. But amidst the chaos, I've made a conscious effort to prioritize self-care.

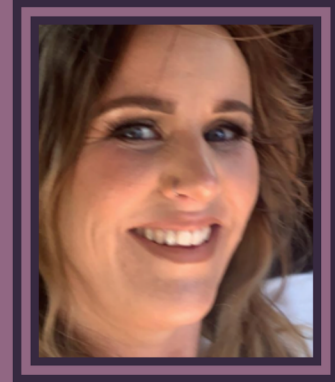
You see, self-care isn't just a luxury for me – it's a necessity. It's what keeps me going when life gets hectic. Whether it's diving into a good book, picking up my crochet hook, or letting my creativity flow through painting, these little moments of self-care recharge my batteries and help me stay grounded.

I've learned that taking care of myself isn't selfish; it's essential. It allows me to show up fully for those who rely on me, both professionally and personally. And while it's not always easy to carve out time for myself, I've come to realize that it's absolutely worth it.

So, to all my fellow busy bees out there, remember to make self-care a priority, even when life gets crazy. It's not always about grand gestures – sometimes, it's the little things that make all the difference.

Thank you for being a part of this journey with me. Your support means the world. Here's to embracing the chaos and finding moments of peace within it.

Lots of Love
Toni x



Sarah McKimm

Welcome to the Unmasked Neurodiversity Network!

I'm excited to be connecting with you all as we embark on this journey together. Let's start with a bit about myself. I'm a counsellor, a parent, and someone who, like many of you, has been navigating the complexities of life with ADHD. The decision to seek a diagnosis as an adult was not an easy one.

For a long time, I carried an unexplainable feeling of unrest, a sense that there was more to my struggles than met the eye. Finally, I sought a private diagnosis because I just had to know.

I remember the fear leading up to that moment—the worry that they might say it wasn't ADHD, the dread of facing yet another dead-end in my search for answers. But when the diagnosis finally came, there was an overwhelming sense of relief. It was as if I had been handed the missing puzzle piece to my own life. Yet, with this newfound clarity came a whole new set of challenges—how to share this part of myself with friends and family. I encountered statements like "everyone's a bit on the spectrum" or "why does everyone feel they need a diagnosis?"—well-meaning perhaps, but deeply invalidating. Few could truly grasp the weight of what I carried—the years of masking and diluting myself to fit into a neurotypical world.

But here's what I've learned: I am not too much. I deserve to be authentically me. And I no longer have to go through life feeling isolated or misunderstood. It's a process, of course. I'm learning to ask for help, to believe that I am deserving of all that life has to offer.

One aspect I'm currently exploring is the possibility of medication. My inner child protests, insisting that we can do this on our own, but the adult in me is beginning to consider the potential benefits. It's a new and somewhat daunting path, but it also opens up a world of possibilities that I hadn't previously considered.

If any of this resonates with you, I invite you to reach out. Whether you want to share your experiences, introduce yourself, or simply connect with others who understand, please don't hesitate to send us a message on our Instagram @unmasked_neurodiversitynetwork or email us directly info@unmaskednn.org.

At the Unmasked Neurodiversity Network, we are building a community where authenticity is celebrated, and support is always available. I can't wait to start interacting with all of you.

Now I'm going to offer myself a touch of self-care in the form of pastel drawing something that's new, exciting and fascinating (for now) and I look forward to sharing with you my developments!

Lots of love,
Sarah

As we embark on this journey together with Unmasked Neurodiversity Network, we wanted to take a moment to share some notes to remember, especially as we navigate these early days.

- **Patience and Persistence:** Building something meaningful takes time. please be patient with us and the process, we remain persistent in our pursuit of our goals, no matter the obstacles.
- **Prioritise and Delegate:** With our own counselling practices alongside setting up the CIC, it's crucial we prioritise tasks and delegate responsibilities where possible. This will help us manage our time and energy effectively.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** Each step forward, no matter how small, is progress worth celebrating. Let's acknowledge and celebrate the small victories along the way.
- **Stay Connected to Our Why:** we remind ourselves daily of the reason we embarked on this journey in the first place. Keeping the mission and vision of Unmasked Neurodiversity Network at the forefront of our minds will guide us forward.
- **Self-Care is Non-Negotiable:** Amidst the busyness, we will prioritise self-care. Taking breaks, practising self-compassion, and nurturing our own well-being is essential for sustained success.
- **Flexibility is Key:** We are prepared to adapt and pivot as needed. The journey may not always go as planned, and that's okay. We aim to remain flexible and open-minded to new possibilities.
- **Celebrate Each Other's Strengths:** We recognise and celebrate each other's strengths and contributions. We both bring unique skills and perspectives to the table, which will be invaluable in building Unmasked Neurodiversity Network.
- **Trust the Process:** Lastly, we trust that we're exactly where we need to be. With dedication, resilience, and a shared vision, we'll make a profound impact on the Neurodivergent community.

Toni & Sarah
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CONTACT US:



<https://unmaskednn.co.uk>



UNMASKED Neurodiversity network CIC



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