



Uni∞ Diversity

Support, Consultation, and Education for Diverse Needs

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Founder and Owner

WHO AM I?

LAURIE MITCHELL



I am a graduate of the Special Care Counselling program at Vanier College in Québec, and the Developmental Services Worker program at Georgian College in Ontario.

I have worked in many areas in my 24 year career, including group homes and day programs for adults with disabilities, specialized and regular elementary school settings in the school system, daycares, summer camps, as well as clinic-based and in-home therapy. I am the mother of three children, and also the caregiver for my father who has Alzheimer's.

ABOUT UNI-DIVERSITY

My mission at Uni-Diversity is to provide needs based and solution oriented services that support, accept and include all people as they are, through an approach focused on individualized independence, success and belonging.

My services are available to those who are in the role of parenting, caring, educating or supporting children, adolescents, adults or seniors, whether that be as a parent, caregiver, or professional.

While a *diagnosis is not required* to benefit from my services, they may be of particular interest to those supporting someone with one of more of the following:

- behavioural challenge
- neurodevelopmental disorder (autism, ADHD etc.)
- neurocognitive disorder (Alzheimer's etc.)
- language or communication delay/disorder
- physical or intellectual disability
- medical condition
- loss of autonomy
- other specific special need, condition or diagnosis



BACKGROUND

Having been in the same career for over 24 years, and now having the experience of being a caregiver for my father who has Alzheimer's, has allowed me to see common denominators and recurring issues that arise within the special needs, education and human services fields.

Many services do not necessarily consider the basic humanity and diversity of people, including neurodiversity, which is fundamental for identifying and meeting needs. This affects how the individuality and the dignity of the person requiring support is addressed.

Oftentimes, the recommended services function within given structures that:

- are restricted to predetermined hours
- have insufficient resources
- use traditional systems and teaching methods that do not necessarily apply to neurodiverse minds
- require production of performance based results, rather than functional ability and personal gain for the individual receiving services
- use generalized application of tools, strategies and techniques
- uphold strict roles and responsibilities of support providers and/or educators
- focus on alleviating the immediate solution, without considering the long term impact
- offer sheltered environments rather than natural environments in which to learn
- lack effective services for older age groups and some categories of needs, such as non-speaking individuals
- hinder the building of functional real life skills and actual independence.

Furthermore, across all domains and environments, many people providing support (including parents, caregivers, as well as many professionals) have not had the opportunity to gain necessary skills that ensure the effective application of distinct techniques. Through no fault of their own, they lack the knowledge of what to expect in certain situations or of specific diagnoses and are therefore unequipped to address the needs of the individual requiring support effectively and/or without an impact to their own well-being.

INTENTION

I have therefore created Uni-Diversity using my personal experiences of supporting individuals with diverse needs in different environments at the core of my approach and services. My intention is to offer options for those parenting, supporting and educating others, that genuinely address the difficulties outlined above.

My approach is intended to be different and meant to have a direct impact on people's daily life by finding solutions. In an effort to enhance and ensure the use of effective strategies and techniques, all of my services are aimed to be a change-inducing process that builds understanding as well as skills, for both the supporter(s) and the individual(s) requiring support.

Through my ability to relate to, empathize and listen to people, I tap into existing knowledge, provide missing information, and supply hands-on learning in the area(s) that are required.

I aim to:

- foster learning and growth
- build on strengths
- facilitate and increase the effectiveness of supports
- promote empowered and active participants and advocates
- ensure that each person feels that they belong

My intention is to support the people seeking my services to reach praxis; that is to empower them to engage, apply, exercise, realize, and practice the ideas that are presented to them, effectively and realistically.