

Housing Harmonies #4

Neuroinclusive design takes centre stage

Spotlight on taking action

Jayde describes how she started in the field of accessibility and the origins of her accessibility consulting business, Beautifully Inclusive.

She offers many services such as workshops teaching about accessibility and disabilities, accessibility reviews, and advising on systems and processes around the built environment.

Jayde:

So I have multiple disabilities. I'm also neurodivergent. So I think early on, I recognized that the differences that people without disabilities, and people with disabilities and the way that we experience the world can be quite extreme. And it's often little things that jump out right? So for example, you go to a restaurant, you call ahead right? Because I don't know about other people, but for me I'm super careful to call ahead, ask if they're accessible. And what I've learned through that in my life is that the term accessible is very wiggly. So, you show up to a restaurant that claims are accessible, and maybe the bathroom is on another floor. Maybe the door is wide enough, but they have a table immediately inside of it that you can't get around. Maybe they don't have any braille anywhere. Maybe they don't have good lighting. Maybe it's an overwhelming environment. And so even with specific questions, you know, do you have an accessible washroom? Well, yes, we do. It has grab bars in it. Great, you have to then say, but is it on the same floor? And how do you get to it? Are there stairs? Is there an elevator? So you kind of learn these tricks when you're a person with disabilities that maybe somebody who doesn't have a disability doesn't even think about, right? It doesn't even register for them. They choose a place that they think looks interesting, or fun or nice, and they show up, but the experience is different for people with disabilities. And so I became more and more passionate about that. And then I spent a couple of years working in an architecture firm where I was able to kind of see more and more kind of choices made for beauty, not inclusion, not accessibility, and it was frustrating to watch and know that even when I spoke up my voice wasn't heard. And so I just wanted to change that. So I decided to take my advocacy more seriously and launch it into beautifully inclusive.