



[\[click here for an audio recording of this document and then scroll to the bottom of this page for the submission link\]](#)

Call for Stories

The [It Takes All Kinds Of Minds](#) (ITAKOM, for short) conference is looking for stories from real life to be shared during the conference. You can submit a story, as a video, by uploading it on our online form.

Please read through this entire document first, to understand more about why we're doing this and what sort of stories we are looking for.

The Short & Sweet Version

- ITAKOM is a two day meeting about neurodiversity
- Neurodiversity means “the fact that we are all different in how our brains work”
- Researchers have sent in ideas for what they want to talk about at the conference. Lots of them are neurodivergent, but they are talking about their research, not their own lives.
- We want to hear about people’s everyday lives as well.
- We think stories from real people’s lives are an important part of understanding neurodiversity.
- If you want to tell a story from your life, you can read down the page to find out more.
- This page will tell you:
 - What kinds of stories we are looking for
 - How to record your story
 - How to send us your story

You need to upload your story by **Tuesday 31st January 2023, at midnight (GMT)** to be considered for the conference

Why are we doing this?

Conferences often have a way for researchers to submit their work, and request the opportunity to share it at the conference. We wanted to create a similar opportunity for

sharing lived experience – stories from real people’s lives. This will help us achieve the conference remit, to share a range of perspectives on neurodiversity.

What kinds of stories are we looking for?

We are looking for stories that focus in on a specific experience. This could be a major life event such as:

- getting your first job
- a wedding
- moving out of your parents’ home for the first time
- starting a business
- becoming a parent
- coming out as LGBTQIA+
- retirement

We’re also interested in stories about more day-to-day things as well, like:

- going to school
- visiting your GP
- taking a holiday
- meeting a new support worker
- using AAC
- volunteering in your community
- managing your personal finances
- things that bring you joy

Or you might want to talk about a personal achievement, such as

- passing an exam
- learning to drive
- getting a promotion at work
- running a marathon
- starting at a new school
- fulfilling a dream (e.g., going to Disneyland)
- overcoming a challenge in daily life

Some stories might talk about getting a diagnosis, but we would like to avoid too many stories on this theme. Do think about whether there’s another life event you could talk about.

We especially want to hear hopeful stories about success and joy. Of course, some of these things might be happening in the context of overcoming challenges and you don’t need to pretend that your life has been “a bed of roses”. But please do try to give a message that can inspire and uplift our audience, including in a small way.

In particular, we will not present stories which could distress our audience so please try to avoid content relating to self-harm, suicide or suicidal thoughts etc. We realise these can be part of the neurodivergent experience, sadly, and you may feel your hopeful story has to include something about less happy times in your life. We would ask you to use phrases like “feeling low” or “hitting rock bottom” or “not caring for myself well” so as to avoid detailed information that could trigger or distress our audience.

Who do we want to hear from?

We are interested to hear from any neurodivergent person who has a story to tell. We want to get an insight into what it feels like for you, as a neurodivergent person navigating a world that isn't always set up for you and people like you.

We especially want to hear from people whose voices are typically unheard. For example:

- people with diagnoses that are less prominent on social and mainstream media, such as Developmental Language Disorder or Tourette syndrome
- people with rare syndromes such as fragile x syndrome or Smith-Magenis syndrome
- neurodivergent people of colour
- neurodivergent people from traveller or gypsy communities
- older neurodivergent people
- people who are not masking or have an outwardly presenting disability
- users of augmented and assistive communication
- trans and non-binary people
- people with an intellectual disability

You can work with a friend, family member, or carer to tell your story if you want to.

How do I record my story?

First, work out what you want to say, or do. You might want to write a script, or just some notes to remind you what you want to say.

Decide if you want to be anonymous or not: you can tell your story through a friend or sit off-camera if you don't want to be identified.

Your story could be

- you talking to the camera
- you having a conversation with, or being interviewed by, a friend
- you filming something that you like, while talking off-camera (so people can't see your face)
- a friend reading something you have written, or something they wrote with your guidance
- you doing a dance, reading a poem, singing a song or drawing a picture, ideally with an explanation of what this means in terms of your story

Set yourself up to film in a space with good lighting (outside in daylight works best).

We recommended that you record the film in a place that doesn't reveal too much about you – e.g. not right outside your front door.

Use the highest quality camera you can. A phone camera will normally be fine, ideally using the camera on the back of the phone, not on the front.

Remember to record in landscape format – turn your phone on its side before recording.

Practice what you want to say once or twice before you record.

Your story should be:

- more than one minute, and less than six minutes long
- a video file (even if you are not shown on screen)

How do I send in my story?

You can fill in a bit of personal information and upload your story via the link at the end of this document. You need to read through all the info before you get to the upload link.

The form will ask you to fill in your name, contact details, and how you want your story to be described in the conference programme. That means a short title and a slightly longer description as well.

You will also be asked to confirm that you give permission for your story to be shared at the conference, both in-person and online, and directly shared with other storytellers.

Will all the stories submitted be shown at the conference?

We expect to show nearly all the stories at the conference.

However we will screen the stories and not show them, if:

- they include hate speech
- they include mis-information or pseudoscience
- they contain information likely to distress our audience
- they contain confidential information about anyone other than the storyteller
- they contain claims of abuse or information about criminal activity
- they contain promotional material that advertises a product or paid service
- sharing them at the conference seems likely to cause harm to someone

If your story fails one of these criteria we will contact you to offer you the chance to re-record your story.

The stories will be shown on a loop, during the conference, with an introduction slide at the start of each one to give the title.

In addition, we will put a copy of the storyteller film, containing everyone's stories, on a private link online. This will be accessed with a link and password we will circulate to storytellers only. This will allow all the storytellers to see all the stories, and to be able to show their story to friends and family.

Will you edit the stories?

We will add an introduction slide (giving the title you chose) and subtitles to all the stories.

If your story is over our maximum length, or we think we can improve the video quality (e.g. by cropping or brightening the image) we may get in touch to talk about editing it. We would only make this kind of edit with your permission.

What if I change my mind?

You might decide that you don't want your story to be shared at the conference after all. If this happens you will need to notify us by emailing Reesha Zahir on reesha.zahir@ed.ac.uk by **Wednesday 1st March**.

If you email after this date we will do what we can, but we can't guarantee that we'll be able to remove your story.

Will I be paid for submitting my story?

No, we don't have money to pay our storytellers - this was the same for the researchers who submitted their work to ITAKOM.

If you want to be paid for sharing your story, this is not the right forum for you.

Lots of people have got in touch with us to say they really want to be a part of the conference, and this option is designed for those people.

We are trying to make it as easy as possible to make and submit a story, and to make sure (subject to the limits described already) that everyone's story would be included. This means there is very little chance that you put in effort and don't get your story shared.

Will I be able to attend the conference for free?

Storytellers do not *automatically* get a free place at the conference. This is because:

- we are worried about people who would otherwise pay to attend, submitting a story simply as a way of getting in for free, and not as an authentic contribution
- we have no idea how many stories we will get submitted. Each delegate costs money for their catering and the admin time needed to process their registration etc, so we can't offer free places to everyone up front.

However, every storyteller can request a bursary place. At the time of writing we have given out 39 bursaries, which are free places for community members who can't otherwise afford to attend. We have 53 more bursaries available and our team are working tirelessly to increase that number so we can offer more and more bursaries. So we do encourage you to apply for a bursary by emailing ITAKOM@integrity-events.com and letting us know you are requesting a bursary.

We really hope our that lots of our storytellers will be able to join us, and all of them will be able to watch their story and everyone else's, via the online link we will share.

What will you do with my information?

We will keep your personal details securely at the University of Edinburgh and add you to the conference mailing list. We will use your contact details for three things

1. to share general news about the ITAKOM conference
2. notify you when the stories are posted online for you to watch

3. contact you if we have any questions about your story

You can request to be unsubscribed from the conference mailing list at any time, but we will still keep your details for purposes 2 and 3 unless you also withdraw your story.

What if I get stuck?

You can ask for help by emailing Reesha Zahir on reesha.zahir@ed.ac.uk
Please note we cannot offer technical support with recording, internet issues etc.

[**If you're ready to proceed, please complete our storytelling submission form here.**](#)