Loving a *different brain.*

For family, partners and friends of neurodivergent people — small, everyday shifts that help the people you love feel understood.

AN OPEN LETTER

If someone you love is neurodivergent, you may have noticed their brain works a little differently from yours. That's not something to fix. It's something to learn — the way you'd learn a new language spoken by someone who matters to you.

You don't have to get it perfect. Being curious, asking, and adjusting when you can goes a long way.

— with care, SOLA

SMALL SWAPS, BIG DIFFERENCE

What helps, and what to let go of

TRY THIS	INSTEAD OF
✓ **Ask what helps.** They're the expert on their own brain.	Assuming you already know what they need
✓ **Give notice of plans.** Time to adjust saves a lot of energy.	Surprise changes and last-minute plans
✓ **Take words literally.** They usually mean exactly what they say.	Hunting for a hidden meaning or "tone"
✓ **Respect stims.** Rocking, tapping or humming helps them regulate.	Asking them to stop or sit still
✓ **Say what you mean.** Clear and kind beats hints.	Sarcasm, hints or unspoken expectations
✓ **Make room to recharge.** Needing quiet after a big day isn't rejection.	Taking a need for space personally
✓ **Accept love their way.** Info-dumps, memes and side-by-side time count.	Measuring care only by eye contact or hugs

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START A CONVERSATION

Questions worth asking

Ask at a calm time. Let them answer in writing or later if that's easier.

1 *"What helps you feel calm when things get loud or busy?"*

2 *"How would you like to hear about changes to our plans?"*

3 *"What does it look like when you're running low — and what should I do?"*

4 *"Is there something I do that's harder on you than I realize?"*

5 *"How do you like to show care — and how do you like to receive it?"*

6 *"When you go quiet, how can I tell you're okay?"*

MELTDOWN OR SHUTDOWN

In a hard moment

An overloaded nervous system isn't a choice or a tactic. Your job is to make things feel safer, not to solve it right now.

DO	DON'T	AFTER
Lower demands. Pause questions, tasks and plans.	**Argue or reason.** Logic can't land mid-overload.	**Reconnect later,** when they're ready.
Use fewer words. Short, calm, quiet.	**Touch without asking.** Even a hug can add to the overload.	**No blame.** Talk about what happened, not who was wrong.
Give space. Stay nearby if they want you there.	**Take words to heart** that come out in the storm.	**Ask together:** what could help next time?

A NOTE FOR YOU

Take care of *you too.*

You show up best when you're rested and supported. Lean on your own people, take breaks, and reach out for help when you need it.

YOUR TURN

Things my person has told me help: