Keith Mckenzie

My lived experiences & suggestions my projects against prejudice and hatred

For West Midlands Combined Authority
Transport for West Midlands Health & Safety Training
(West Midlands Safer Travel partnership)

Keith Mckenzie

With Some Extracts from

Plus Value Awareness

By Keith Mckenzie

My lived experiences & my projects against prejudice and hatred

About me
My experiences
My suggestions
My Awareness project against prejudice & hatred
Plus Value Awareness (Summary)
QR Codes & links

About me

I live with Asperger Syndrome
A Neurodiversity & awareness campaigner, created designer (Graphic designer, digital art) and Salsa Dancing Participant

Awareness campaigner for over 20 years
In late 2007 Google nominated me for the Thrive Mental health Award as my awareness website help supported one of their staff with ADHD

Salsa dancing participant
Including a volunteer at a salsa dancing convention in birmingham & a dancing assistant at community based classes every weekend

In 2022 I was featured on video campaign for Birmingham City Council as a community participant to showcase our city since hosting the commonwealth games. In February 2023 I was featured in “The Voice” newspaper



My Difficulties & how it can affect my presence in society

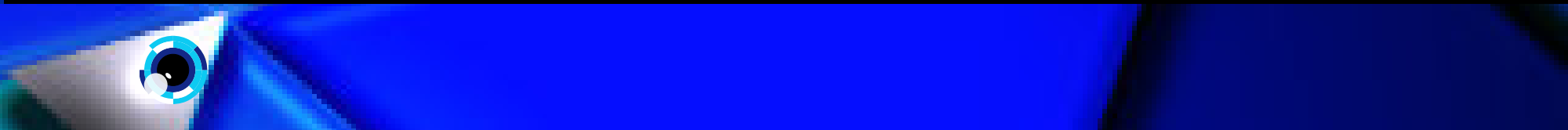
My Difficulties summary
Short-term memory, Manage certain multiple items,
Fast pace situation challenging, takes long to understanding lengthy information and with complexed language
My speech can cause obstacles with certain background noises environment physical clumsiness sensitive to hearing and the ability to cope within high crowded and pressurising environments.

I face many pressures to mask my difficulties and make adjustments to prevent displaying my difficulties and made a series to prevent facing discrimination or to draw attention to myself badly.

I share is to emphasise this the importance in show I do not define myself related to the difficulties I live with

My Experiences

Detailed records of prejudiced are available to access on request via email



Challenges, obstacles & Mistreatments

Trains & environments

(Booking office) New Street: Hostile attitudes over understanding ticketing products
(Information) lack help & updated information since the majority of Public Transport travel information centres closed two years ago.
(Platform crowd control staff) Birmingham International - Lack of discretion and very hostile and antagonising procedures
(Other Passengers)
* Getting off a train Suddenly pushed & shoved into, tugged and blocked
* Continuous heckling, mocking and derogatory insults for 35 minutes
* On a train, Two women were deliberately rude and offensive heckling verbally and not verbally when with a friend having a conversation

Detailed records of prejudiced are available to access on request via email

Challenges, obstacles & Mistreatments

Trains & environments Continued

(Other Passengers)
* Bournville station: I face harassment & hacked with verbal insults of "Mr Bean" labels
* Bournville station: I was continuously heckled by a group of young men including high pitch animal noises and "Sp*****" comments against me
* New Street station: two mistaken identity offences including:
A group of male football fans on a match day kept staring and shouting false homophobic allegations and non-verbal offence
Also constantly stared at and shouted at "Karma" regularly and several times

Detailed records of prejudiced are available to access on request via email

Challenges, obstacles & Mistreatments

Trains & environments Continued

(Other Passengers)
* Bournville station: Man & his cycle aggressively cut in front of me when trying to get on the train. This following was continuously heckled and shouted at a laugh at by a group of young black men. Then was demolished by the train operator and customer reception.
* Late night Train towards New Street set up to face disruptive effect to sudden shout to close up my dear followed by face antagonising & threatening behaviour

Detailed records of prejudiced are available to access on request via email

Challenges, obstacles & Mistreatments

Buses & environments Continued

(Driver) started to drive in patiently while trying to find my travel pass
(Other Passengers)
* I was kicked down behind me when I was moving to the front and attempted to get off the next stop. Then I was aggressively threatened against my personal safety when I challenge the woman's behaviour towards me.
* I was physically assaulted by a white pensioner who I mention politely I need to get off after he blocked the gangway while chatting to the bus driver



Detailed records of prejudiced are available to access on request via email

Challenges, obstacles & Mistreatments

Buses & environments Continued

* Roadside interchange: I was threatened against my personal safety when challenging a woman who rudely jumped to the front of the queue to get onto the bus ahead of me and also ask her boyfriend to physically assault me where they had to quickly run to the panicky to get off the bus

* Roadside interchange: I was aggressively tugged shoved and blocked when attempted to get on the bus. It was a very packed environment
* Transport event: I face controlling intimidation by two school boys that were forcing me to switch sides at short notice when there was plenty of space the other way. This lead to receiving hatred threat against my safety



Detailed records of prejudiced are available to access on request via email

Observations

Metro

No negative experiences

However, there is a potential danger related to an exploitative incident when a youngster ran into open doors in the same carriage.

What does this mean

The situation

There is no space to make adjustments with stop displaying my difficulties other wise I will feel wrongly punished

If appear physically and mentally slower due to my difficulties along with stress of tired make myself and easy a target to face physical intimidation

The offender and bystander make assumptions due to my difficulties is to blame. Also made to feel I'm not entitled to speak up and challenge any mistreatment and would not only take accountability. Some have trivialise my existence, disrespect my intelligence by denying it and in some cases think they have the right to threaten me.

What does this mean

Sadly I feel the prejudice and hatred has been normalised, as no one have every supported me or be on my side when the mistreatment occur.

If I'm trying to use my mobile for evidence to the police others would draw attention to me which risk my safety

Judgement

I have been seen as a visual nuisance that others think they can punish me by to be pushed around and or judging that I’m in everyone's way. Because of the visual differences in my physical appearance wrongly accused of being homosexual when I am not gay, also I have been made to feel like a visual joke or clown. Because Im black & autistic I face a double stigma with remarks that I should be locked up for not coming across as normal. Overall I'm constantly reminded that I was seen as unaccepted in society

How the mistreatments affect my transport confidence

I have to now stay away from public transport during very busy occasions when using public transport. This includes when school children, and college and university students are commuting during afternoons and early evenings. Not use public transport at late night and have to use taxis going homes.
During weekends I stay away way from midday & early afternoons & early evening.

Also when football fans are likely to appear around home games and many hours after the away games.

I also stay away from transport during major busy occasions such as the massive protest March and major occasion as Birmingham Weekender, Christmas markets and pride

This also applies when I'm seen in public places

The effects on my life

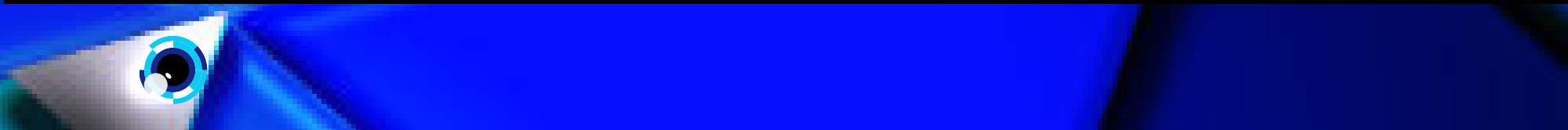
This affects my friendships, relations with family and social life.
I have harmed my projects in the communities, and opportunities.
I have lost opportunities (employment & education)
It had affected volunteering
It forced me to be less physically active for my own safety.
It has affected my health face constant breathing and heartburn issues
I have to face loneliness not completely but other gives up on me
I have to use more taxi journeys not by choice but for my own safety and stability.
I feel less safe on transport during peak busy times and late hours
It has affected my mental & self-worth

Next: Suggestions

Suggestions

A number of suggestions based on my experiences

Later: Additional Suggestions from my awareness project Against bullying, discrimination & hatred, regardless of difficulties or disabilities



Suggestions

Front row staff
Buses: Bus driver needs to be a little patient and don't assume if a person takes longer to produce a pass is a nuisance or when carrying heavy & delicate items.

Acknowledge a passenger if they mention “Thank you” when getting of a bus just like train and metro staff does

Trains: Platform staff to manage crowds need to use their discretion and someone needs to needs to go down the platform when there is no train arriving at the time and if there is no space due to packed standing passengers.
Also to modify how they communicate and become more polite and not to be hostile. For example, starting with “A reminder to all passengers can you please..”. Also, modify the siren volume to the loud speaker should not be used too loud to make people jump or to intimidate.

Suggestions

Front row staff
All Public Transport: If a victim is reporting discrimination and hatred should never blame the victim especially if they are emotionally upset. Disbelieving their voice can be very offensive and insulting and can make a person feel punished for the wrong reasons.

If a victim is emotionally upset do not assume they are the troublemakers. They have feelings just like everyone else.

Any approach related to prejudice and hatred is not the same as a school playground. It is very important to move away from old-fashion “Ignore it” suggestions through my experiences the offender is usually very persistent until the person is hurt , harmed unless there are challenged or intervened. When its safe to do so the offender needs to either be challenged or report to police and security team

Suggestions

Front row staff

All Public Transport: If a person struggles with any complications or adjusts to changes (such as mobile ticketing) related to services products and guidelines needs to be patient. If necessary see assistance to other team members.

All operators & authorities of public transport
Like today other key team members and managers of transport organisations gain more awareness of lived experiences on transport and knowledge beyond traditional training
Including the challenges, obstacles, issues hurdles using the network (including to feel safe). This also applies to passenger information & consultation

Later: Suggestion for passengers

Suggestions

I feel there need to be minimal standards across different operators based on lived experiences, insight and context. However because there is a variation of abilities and difficulties it must be a broad brush or sweeping generalisations.

Safety travel partnership
improve inclusivity on existing hate poster
The existing poster does not feature include any disabilities at all
* Specific hate campaign is needed towards all disabilities (visible and invisible)

Operators, transport authorities and partnerships
* Along with operators find ways to support and assist towards invisible related difficulties without causing stigma. (some people see the sunflower lanyard as very stigmatising).

Next: My project against prejudice & hatred

Projects

Though my awareness initiative “Plus Value Awareness”, an information project is developed against prejudice, bullying, discrimination. Harassment and bullying.

Titled “ Zero Toxic” with different aspects, tips and guidance with emphasis that everyone is responsible against prejudice and hatred regardless of disabilities and difficulties

It was developed as a reaction in late 2022 after new article of disability hate crime have doubled in the past five years.

The disability support charity Remedi uses the “Zero Toxic” project as a resource for other victims as the find suggestions useful

Suggestions for passengers from the Zero Toxic project

WITNESS

If you witness any sort of bullying, discrimination & hatred towards a person with difficulties or a disability report it to the police and any available officials.

Never blame the person with specific difficulties. If you can, offer some help or support but don't be offended if they reject your offer to help.

IF YOU NOTICE THE VICTIM STANDING FOR THEMSELVES

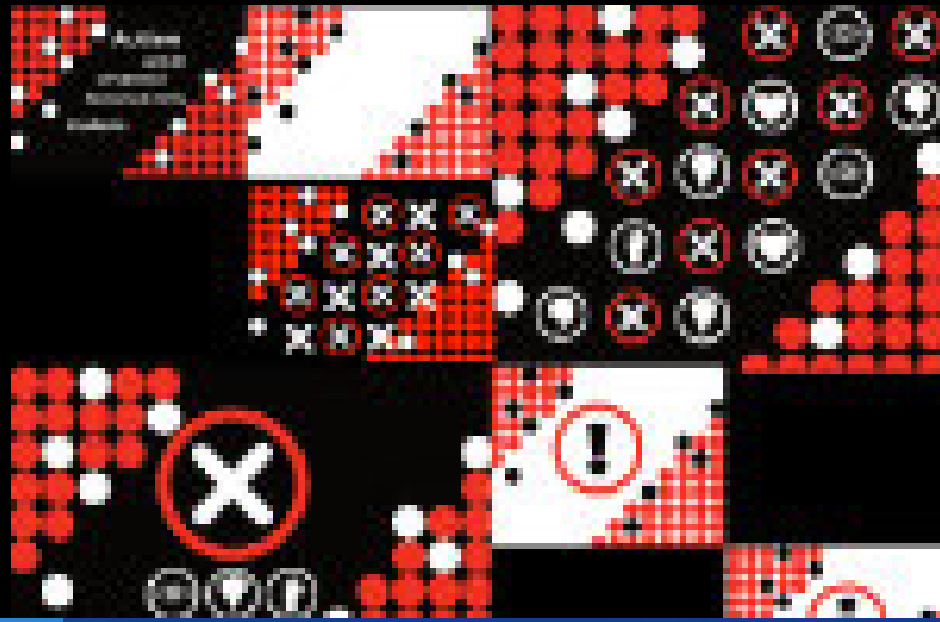
Do not rudely interrupt their conversation, also never heckle and rudely speak over them. Your reaction will not only offend the victim you can cause them to be upset further. It is also unacceptable to laugh or create a hilarious reaction, even if they appear slightly different. It is wrong to make fun of them, the situation the victim is experiencing is not a joke. Instead, show your support for what is required and speak to an official but do not blame the victim for being seen as upset.

The “Zero Toxic” project

Examples

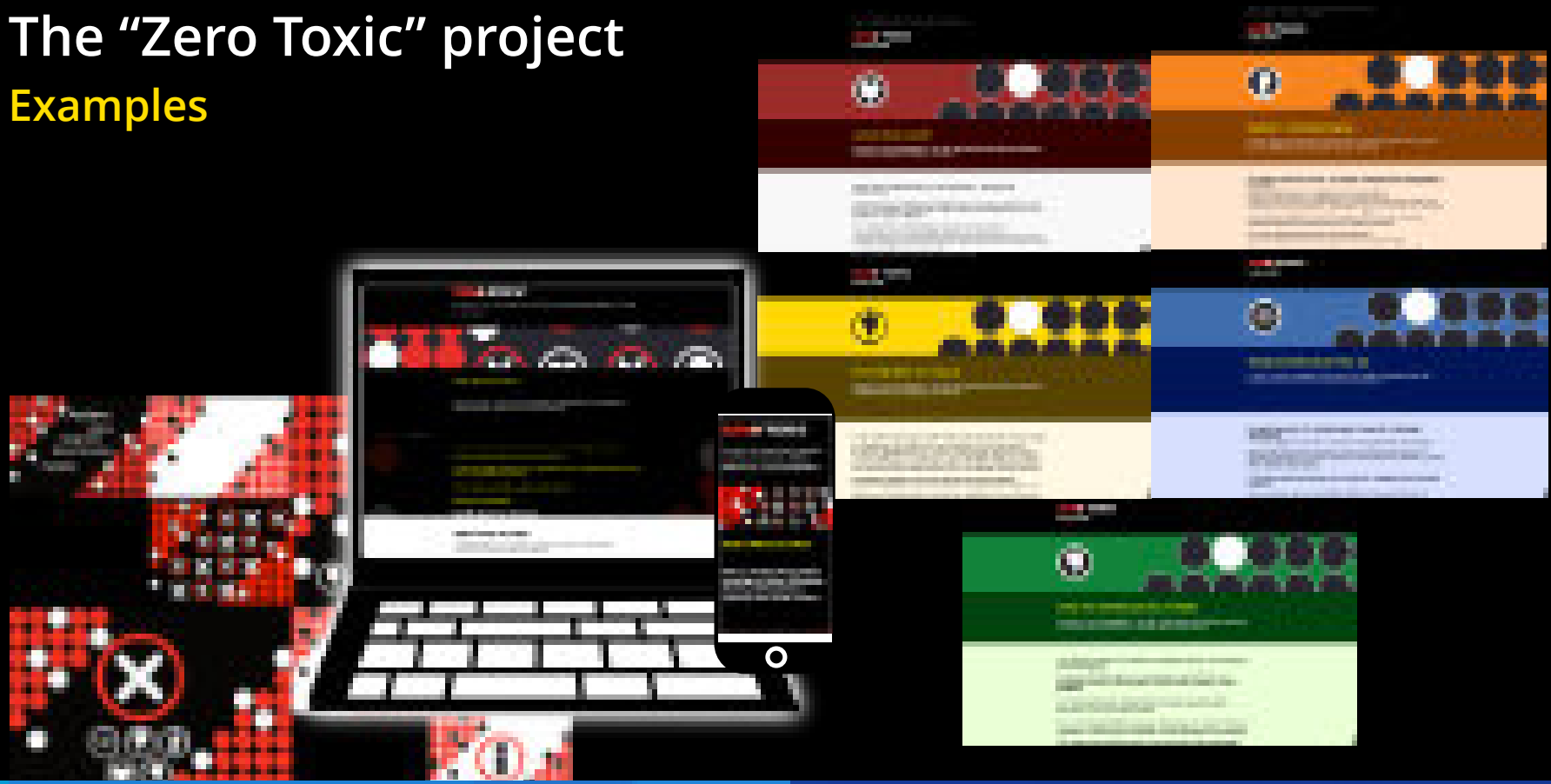
Pledge
Toxic Examples
Factors
Difficulties & mistreatments
Time to act & speak up

Scan the QR Code to access
The “Zero Toxic” project online



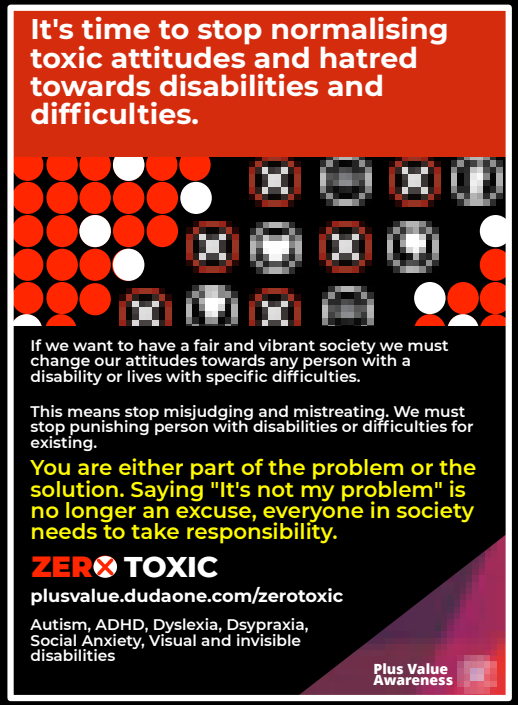
The “Zero Toxic” project

Examples



The “Zero Toxic” project

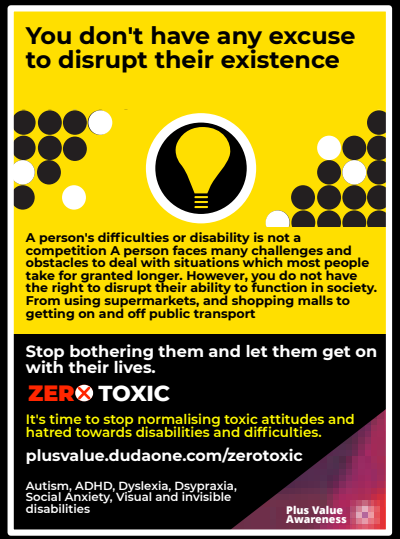
Poster ideas

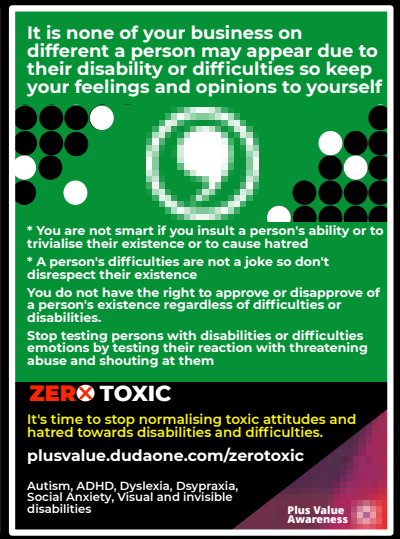




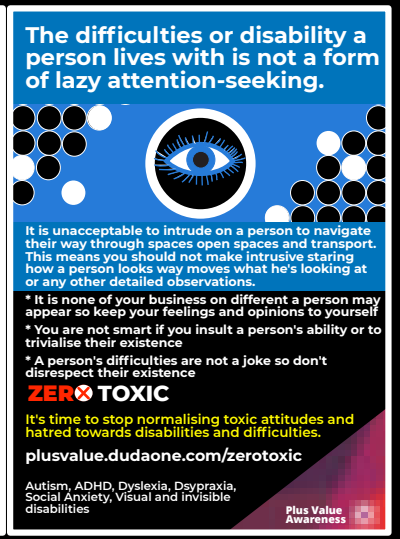
The “Zero Toxic” project

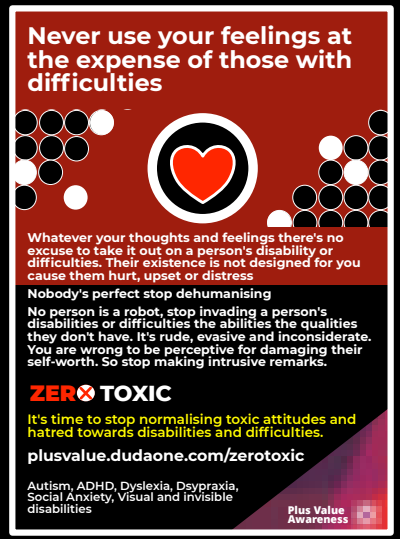
Poster ideas



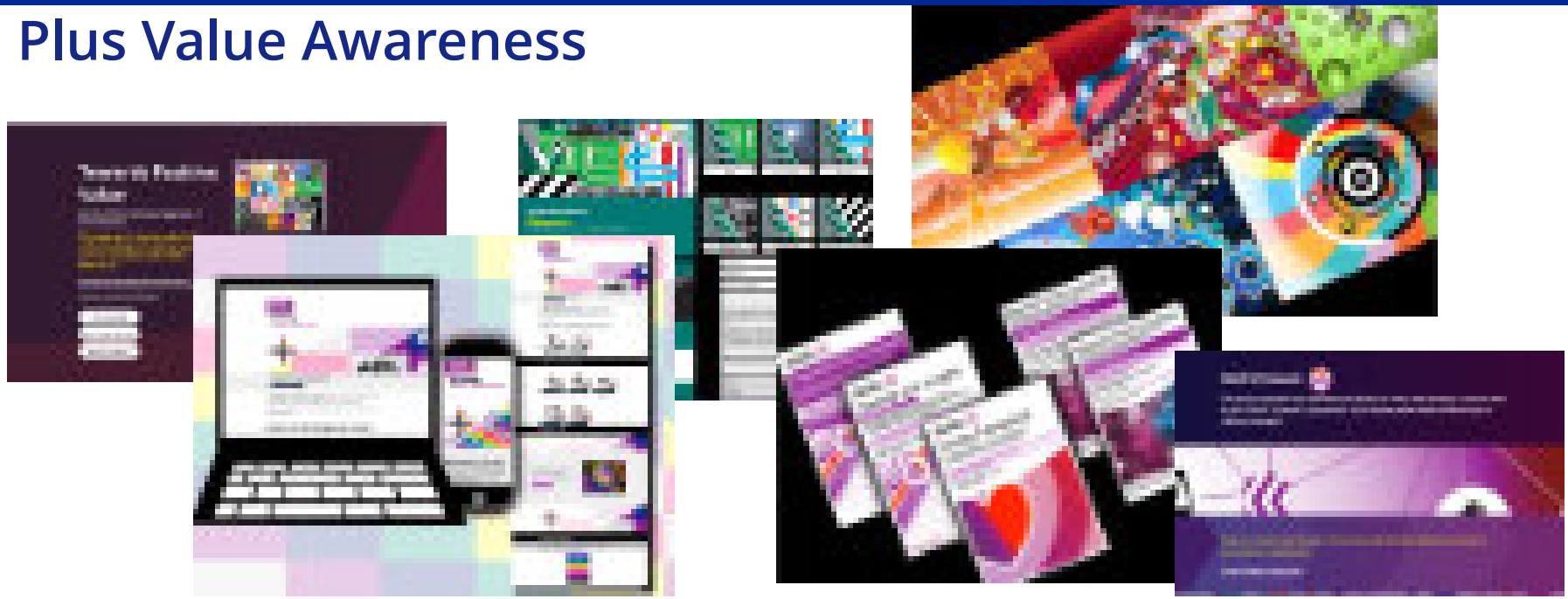








Plus Value Awareness



The online awareness initiative, focusing on the human aspects of understanding and valuing Autism (mild or high function level, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Social Anxiety

Keith Mckenzie

Personal & portfolio website
Graphic Design, Selected Photography & visual art. Along with other developments including participation, awareness and many more
keithmckenzie.dudaone.com

Plus Value Awareness

The Awareness project website.
Focusing on a positive sense of value For Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Social Anxiety with Hidden Differences
plusvalue.dudaone.com

© Copyright Keith Mckenzie

Thank you for reading

Linkedin
Follow & connect me

Keithmckenzie.dudaone.com

Keith Mckenzie
KMC

© Copyright Keith Mckenzie
For West Midlands Combined Authority