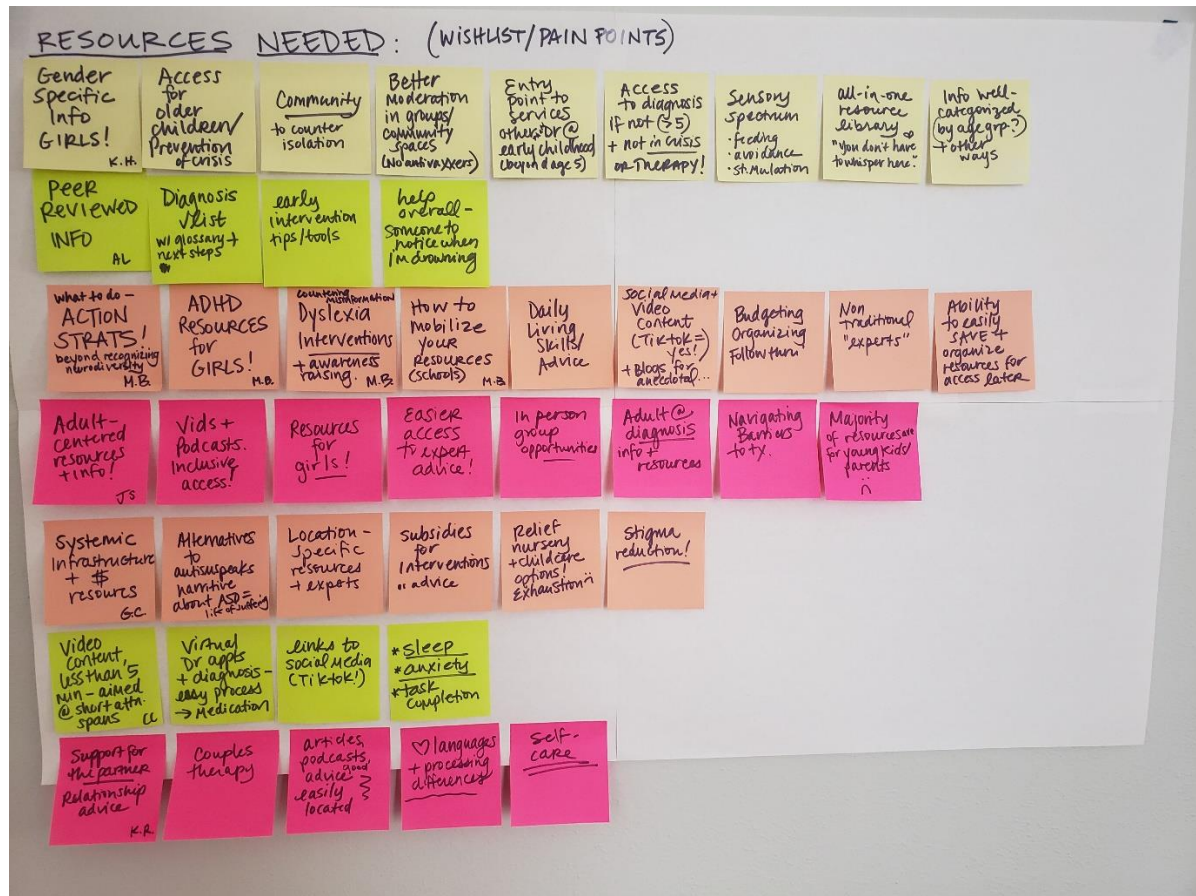


User Research Analysis

I began the synthesis process by jotting down the big concepts that came out of my interviews on sticky notes, sorted by interview participant (differentiated by color but due to limited supply added participant initials for quick reference). I put these up on one piece of paper with a general heading of “resources needed (Wishlist/pain points)”. These are the themes that will influence the design of my app, especially in terms of features and informational needs of users. It hangs directly behind my workspace.

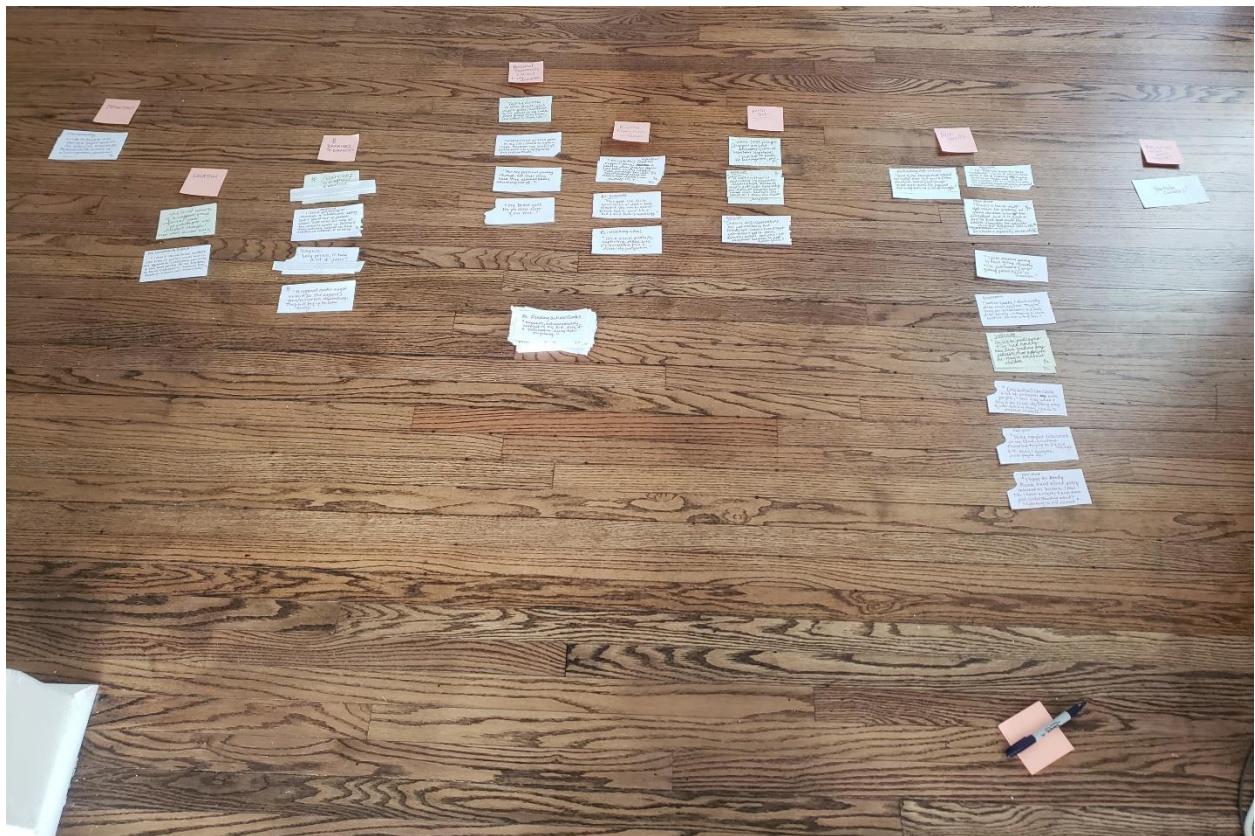
Here is a photo:



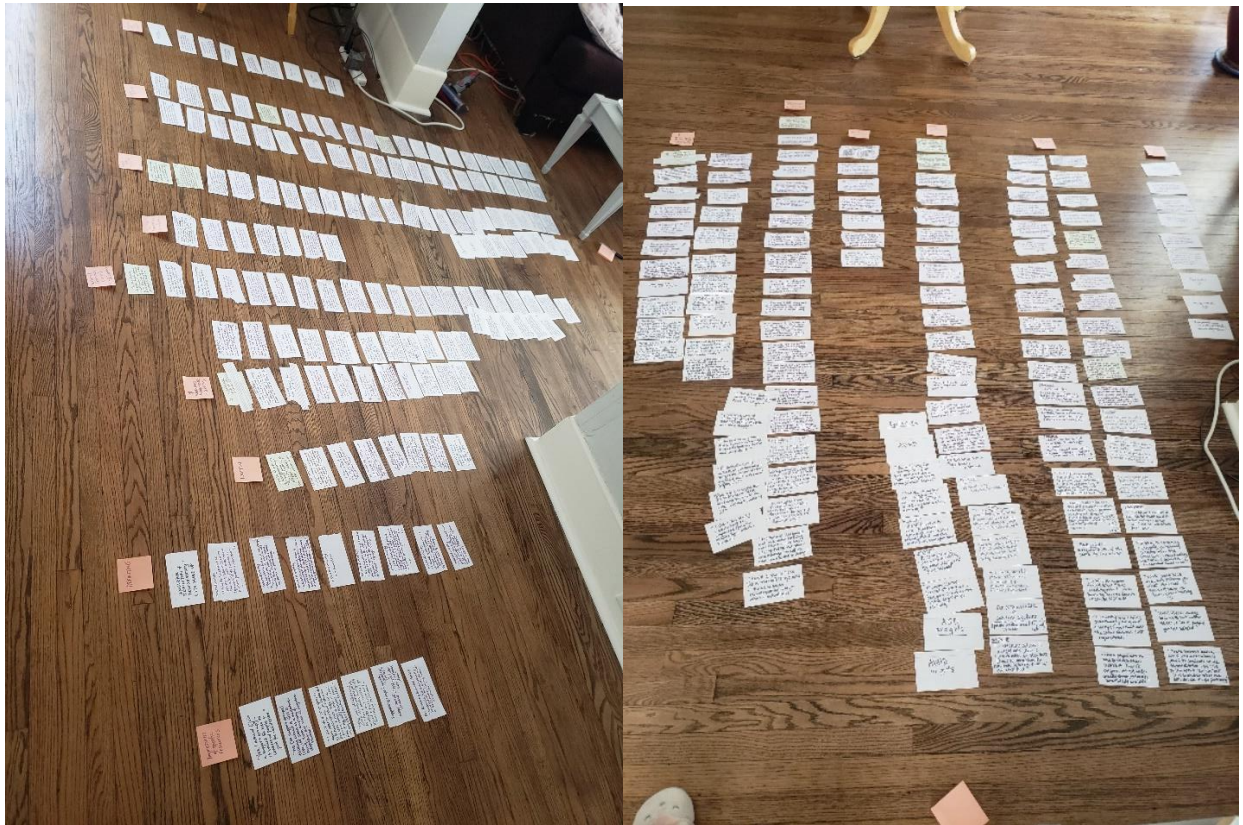
The next step of the analysis process involved directly transferring the information collected in the survey and interview processes onto individual notecards. I needed to pull out “informative quotes, facts, opinions, and more”, creating a notecard for each piece of information. With three target audience groups reflected among the survey and interview participants, there is a LOT of data! This portion of the exercise spanned two days and took approximately ten hours to complete. (Photos below of the notecard creation process.)



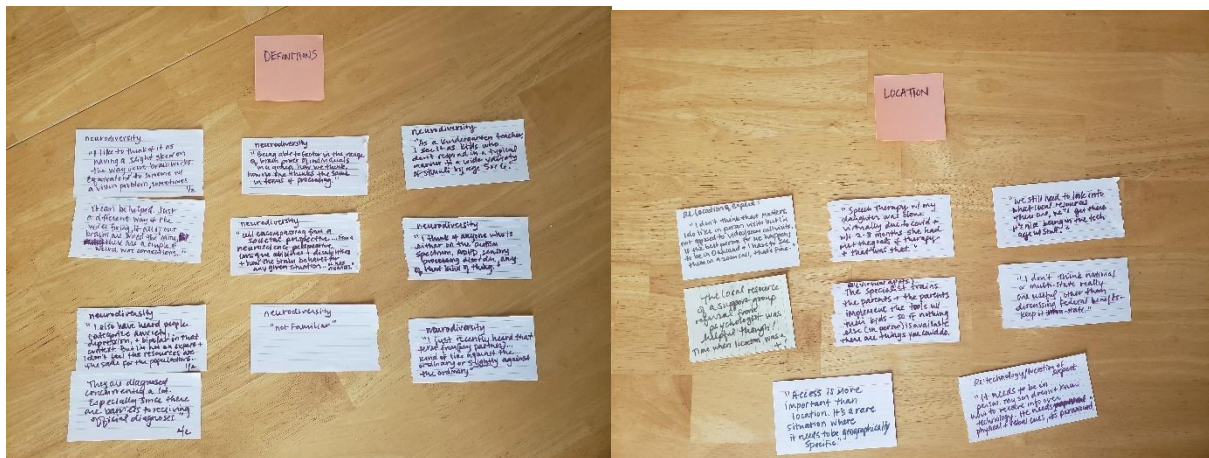
Once the flashcards were complete, I could finally begin round one of affinity mapping. With so much information to sort and no wall surface large enough to accommodate it, I used my dining room floor. Here is a photo from the “starting line”:

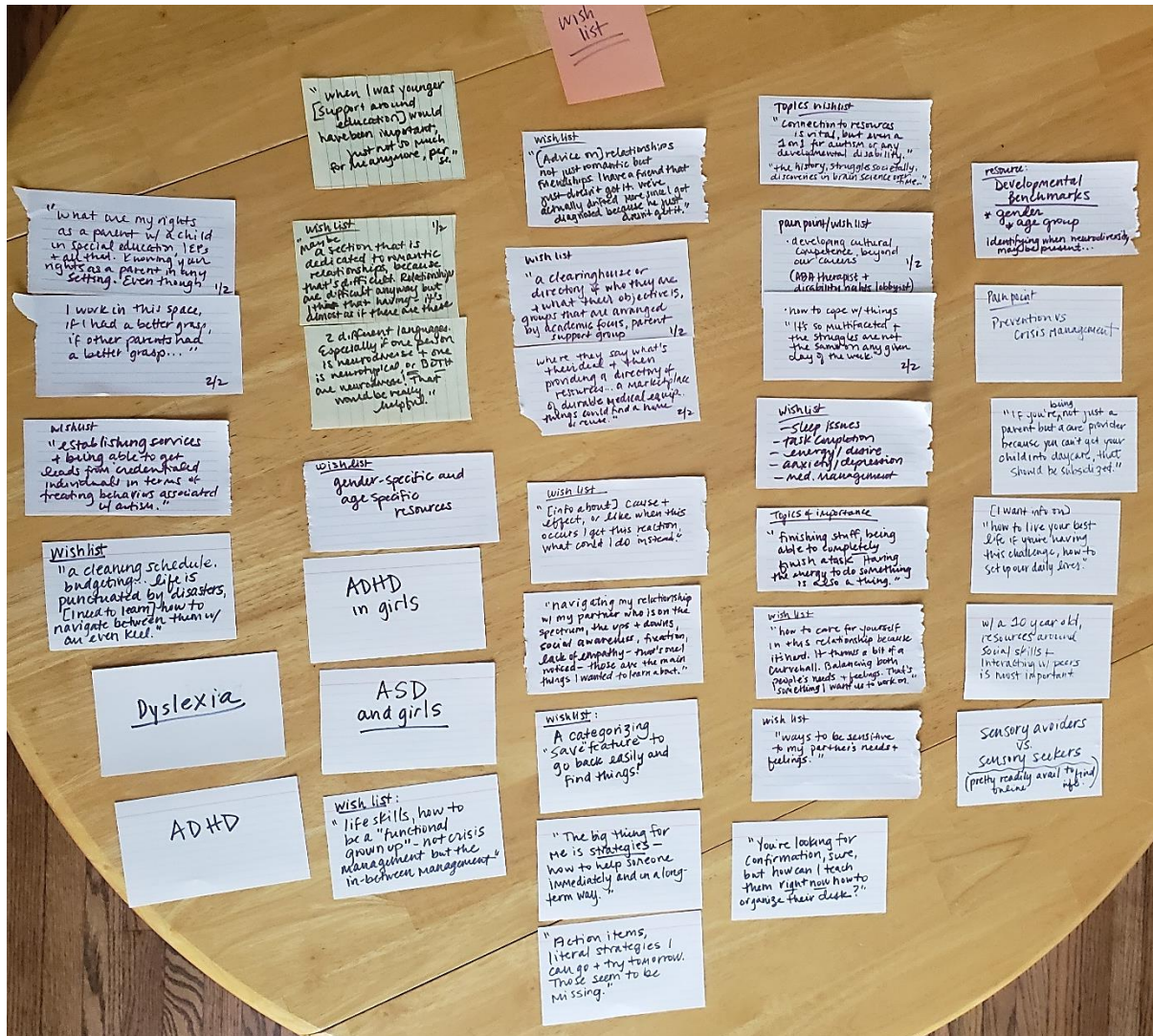


The result of the first round of affinity mapping looked like this:



I also photographed each cluster separately for future reference. Here are a few examples:





After completing the first round, I could then compile my insights. There will be more, but this is a great starting point! I am thrilled with how much has been illuminated through these interviews.

The initial groupings I chose for the information were broken into the following categories.

1. User definitions of "neurodiversity"
2. Personal connection to/experiences with neurodiversity
3. Barriers to access relating to cost & diagnosis
4. Wishlist
5. Pain Points
6. Resources that were game changers
7. Miscellaneous experiences and perspectives
8. Attitudes and perceptions relative to various resources and mediums

Some of the initial insights were identified by analyzing the headings I chose to "house" the information in round one of my affinity map. The following are some of the generalized insights that came from the interviews and the synthesis processes.

1. “Neurodiversity” is tough for people to define or explain.

Interpretations and definitions varied among interview participants and were often unclear. Additionally, most are not familiar with the entire range of formally recognized neurodivergent traits/diagnoses. Most recognize it as a term relating to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or ADHD. Few were aware of Tourette’s Syndrome, Dyscalculia or Dyspraxia, and only one interviewee mentioned Dyslexia and shared statistics about its shocking prevalence. A clear definition worked into the mission statement of my app will be helpful!

2. Neurodiversity is everywhere!!

All three target user groups (neurodiverse individuals, their caretakers, and their relationship partners) were represented in my interview pool but overlap existed where I wasn’t expecting to find it and other valuable perspectives were offered.

One person whom I approached to gain their perspective as an educator in the public school system surprised me by sharing feeling that they are likely living with undiagnosed ADHD, and spoke to both experiences throughout the interview. I learned that their state is instituting mandatory testing for all children in the public school system by age 5 due to increased awareness around dyslexia and its prevalence.

Another participant who I spoke to as a parent of a young child with autism reminded me that they are employed currently as a Disability Rights Advocate and especially involved in legislation and lobbying for this population. There were some amazing findings around the current frameworks for resources from a systems perspective, and specific to state/region.

Overall, as expected with an umbrella term such a neurodiversity and the spectrum nature of ASD, user experiences vary widely person to person. I did identify some repeating themes among pain points. I also noticed repetition of the phrase “I always knew something was off...” from both the neurodivergent perspective and caretakers.

3. The road (to diagnosis) is long and the journey (to access services) fraught.

Access is complicated for many, due either to cost, difficulty finding a specialist to receive formal diagnosis, and sometimes due to geographical location. Easing this process is critical to adequately supporting my three target populations.

4. There are many tangible resources that can be provided to improve outcomes for neurodiverse individuals and their people!

Big themes that came up were a need for: advice on daily living skills, support and community, age and gender specific resources, and resources that accommodate a range of learning needs through medium and style (inclusive design, accessibility in term of disability in app features). The user perspectives that fell under the general heading of Wishlist items can be further broken down by topic, and I will do another round of affinity mapping for just this information.

5. There is critical need for better resources for our target users!

These were the flipside to many of the pain points in most cases. The most commonly expressed frustration was difficulty locating the needed resources especially with regards to age and gender specific information (and saving the information in a way that allows review anytime), lack of diagnosis or awareness of neurodiversity as a framework to understand differences until later in life, overall stigma still associated with neurodiversity, negative experiences or attitudes about current community resources, and barriers to accessing services/expert advice. Similar to the Wishlist items, the pain points covered a huge range of experiences. I will complete a second round of affinity mapping for the information included under this category/heading in my original affinity map to see how it can be broken down further.

6. Tik-tok and social media have saved the day for a lot of folks!

I would never have expected just how game-changing these applications have been, and it also makes so much sense – especially when considering unique challenges of ADHD. Understanding how the *right* information was presented through some of these mediums will be extremely helpful to building an app that best serves a very broad population of target users.

7. Give the people what they want!

These were the items that fell slightly outside of the other categories, but spoke to resource-specific challenges, experiences, and the actual process of information discovery. Most people utilized some form of online resource to self-diagnose or understand presenting behaviors at some point. These ranged from a simple Google search, to YouTube or Tik-Tok content coming without a specific search via algorithm, to a subscription to a weekly online parenting newsletter. Again, looking at how people get what they need (or don't) will inform opportunities for my app design.

8. Medium matters!

I asked interviewees about the mediums they prefer when accessing advice, no matter what the topic, and then to identify any other mediums that I may have left out as options. Most everyone I spoke with stated that they like podcasts. They also like watching videos. Shorter content that utilizes audio and video features will be important to provide in my resource library. Articles and traditional written-format information - the tried and true – can be helpful and are good to offer, but the range needs to extend much further.