



**QUEER
CREATIVE
HEALTH**

BY MEG-JOHN BARKER

FOR QUEER CIRCLE

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INTRODUCTION

(2)

IN 2022, LGBTQ+ CHARITY QUEERCIRCLE PUT ON A SERIES OF EVENTS & WORKSHOPS ON THE THEME OF

QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH

INSPIRED BY THEIR WORK, THIS ZINE HELPS YOU TO EXPLORE WHAT QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH MIGHT MEAN FOR YOU, AND TO TRY OUT SOME OF THE CREATIVE PRACTICES WHICH PEOPLE EXPERIENCED IN THE WORKSHOPS

TENDERNESS

ONE THEME THROUGH THE PROGRAMME WAS BEING TENDER WITH OURSELVES & EACH OTHER, AS OUR QUEERNESS, HEALTH & CREATIVITY CAN BE VULNERABLE THINGS TO EXPLORE, TOUCHING SORE SPOTS & TRAUMA

PLEASE GO GENTLY WITH YOURSELF AS YOU ENGAGE WITH THIS ZINE, ONLY GOING TOWARDS CONTENT & ACTIVITIES THAT FEEL GOOD FOR YOU, & STEPPING AWAY IF YOU FEEL CONFUSED OR OVERWHELMED AT ALL

DIFFERENT IDEAS & PRACTICES WORK FOR DIFFERENT PEOPLE AT DIFFERENT TIMES IN THEIR LIVES, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO QUEERLY, CREATIVELY EXPLORE & TAKE AWAY WHAT FEELS HELPFUL TO YOU

WHAT IS...?

LET'S EXPLORE THE MEANINGS OF THE WORDS & PHRASES WE'RE USING IN THIS ZINE

YOU CAN HIGHLIGHT OR CIRCLE THE MEANINGS THAT RESONATE WITH YOU, AND ADD YOUR OWN

"NOT GAY AS IN HAPPY BUT QUEER AS IN FUCK YOU"

"A TERM OF ABUSE I COULD NEVER FEEL OK WITH BECAUSE OF THE MEMORIES IT BRINGS UP"



ANOTHER WORD FOR GAY

RADICAL ACTIVISM

A POWERFUL RECLAIMED TERM

STRANGE, OTHER

MARGINALISED

GENDER, SEX &/OR RELATIONSHIP DIVERSITY

VOICES FROM THE MARGINS

QUEER

CHALLENGING FIXED LABELS OR IDENTITIES

CHALLENGING THE IDEA THAT STRAIGHT = NORMAL

"COMPLICATED THEORY I CAN'T GET MY HEAD AROUND"

ANYONE WHOSE WAY OF LIVING OR LOVING DOESN'T FIT 'NORMAL'



VERB - QUEERING
DISRUPTING THE IDEA OF 'NORMAL' E.G.
BY SHOWING HOW STRANGE IT IS, WHO BENEFITS FROM IT OR HOW FEW REALLY FIT IT

DISMANTLING BINARIES
E.G. GAY / STRAIGHT
MAN / WOMAN
NORMAL / ABNORMAL
NATURE / NURTURE

FLUID, EXCESSIVE,
ALWAYS BECOMING,
BURSTING OUT OF
CATEGORIES

SEE QUEER: A GRAPHIC HISTORY

QUEER AS NON-NORMATIVE

ONE KEY MEANING OF QUEER IS ANYTHING THAT QUESTIONS, CHALLENGES, DISRUPTS, OR DISMANTLES

NORMATIVITY

NORMATIVITY MEANS THE WAYS SOCIETIES/COMMUNITIES SET STANDARDS WHERE SOME PEOPLE/BEHAVIOURS ARE GOOD/RIGHT/ACCEPTABLE & OTHERS ARE BAD/WRONG/UNACCEPTABLE

QUEER WARNS AGAINST REPLACING HETERNORMATIVITY WITH ANY OTHER FORM OF NORMATIVITY



MANY-IF NOT MOST-PEOPLE FALL OFF THE NORMATIVE ESCALATOR AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIVES



CREATIVITY

PLAYING ROLES



TELLING STORIES



MAKING SOUNDS



COMIX



MAKING OBJECTS



MUSEUM OF TRANSOLOGY



COLLECTING / CURATING OBJECTS / IMAGES / STORIES



MAKING MARKS & IMAGES



VIDEO



PLAYING WITH WORDS

PHOTOS PICS INSTA



POETRY



BODY MOVEMENT



PERFORMANCE

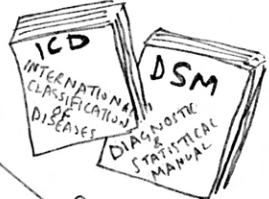
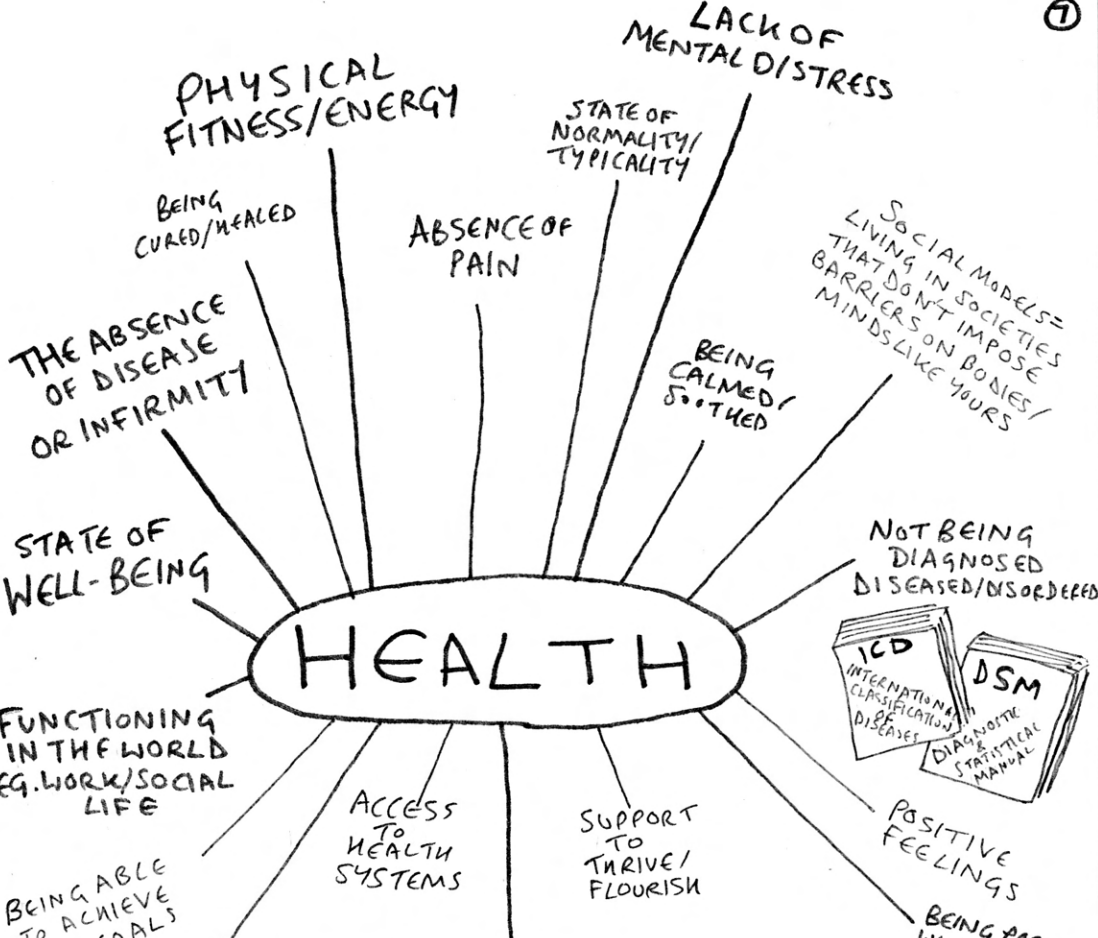


SELF EXPRESSION



DIFFERENT PEOPLE CAN ACCESS & ENJOY DIFFERENT FORMS OF CREATIVITY - ALL ARE EQUALLY VALID. FEEL FREE TO ADAPT ANY SUGGESTIONS IN THIS ZINE TO YOUR OWN CAPACITIES & PREFERENCES & DO THEM COLLECTIVELY OR BY YOURSELF

HEALTH



WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

'A STATE OF COMPLETE PHYSICAL, MENTAL & SOCIAL WELL-BEING'

|

'ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF EVERY HUMAN BEING'

|

'WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF RACE, RELIGION, POLITICAL BELIEF, ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL CONDITION'

MEANINGS

FOR ME, QUEER MEANS...

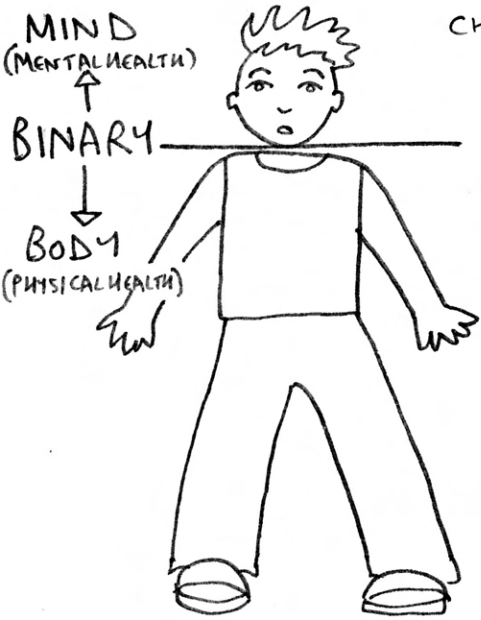
THE KINDS OF CREATIVITY I ENJOY/FEEL DRAWN TO ARE...

MY DEFINITION OF HEALTH WOULD BE...

CAN WE HOLD & VALUE OUR EXPERIENCES & UNDERSTANDINGS WITHOUT IMPOSING THEM ON OTHERS, AFFIRMING THAT OTHERS WILL EXPERIENCE & UNDERSTAND ALL THESE THINGS DIFFERENTLY TO US?

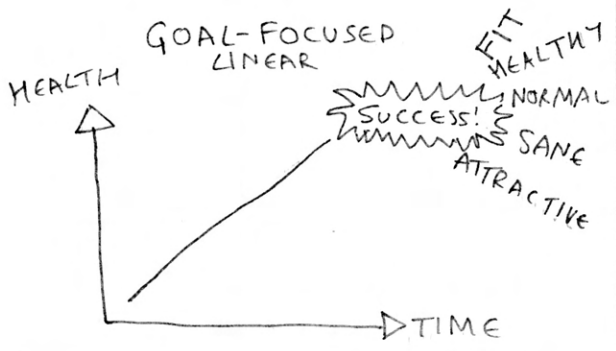
QUEER HEALTH

DOMINANT, CULTURALLY NORMATIVE UNDERSTANDINGS OF HEALTH



CHANGE DYSFUNCTIONAL THOUGHTS &/OR BRAIN CHEMISTRY TO FIX EMOTIONAL PAIN

CURE DISEASE/BROKEN BODIES TO FIX PHYSICAL PAIN



PRACTICES BASED ON BINARIES

BIG BUSINESS

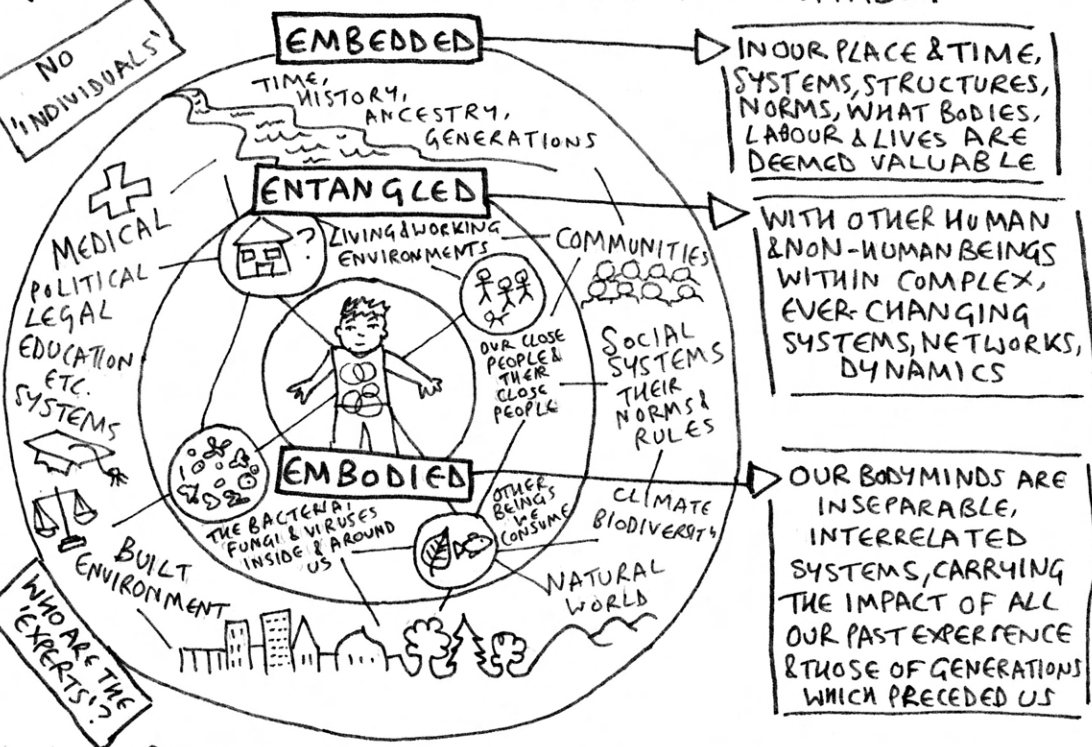
ILLNESS	→	WELLNESS
ABNORMAL	→	NORMAL
ATYPICAL	→ TO →	TYPICAL
DYSFUNCTIONAL	→	FUNCTIONAL
DISORDERED	→	ORDERED
MAD	→	SANE

FROM

INDIVIDUALS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING HEALTH, & ADHERING TO TREATMENTS PRESCRIBED BY EXPERTS

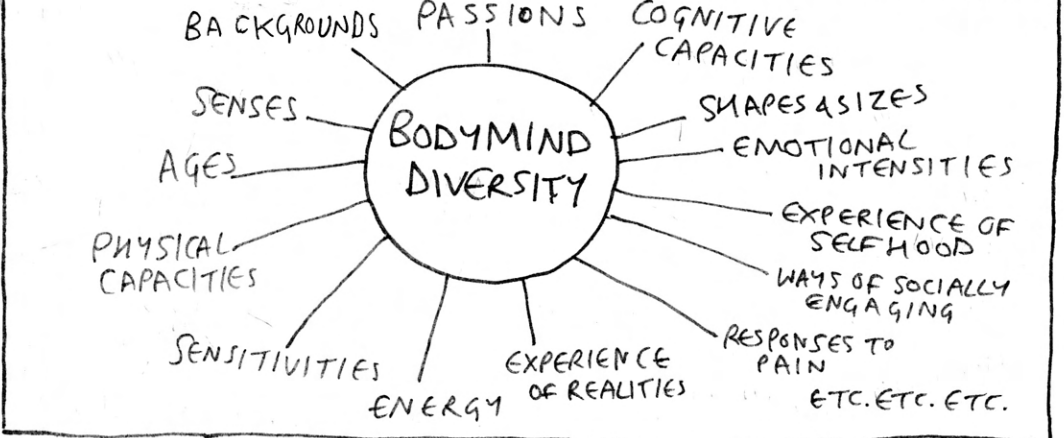
QUEER HEALTH

QUEER APPROACHES UNDERSTAND US AS INEVITABLY

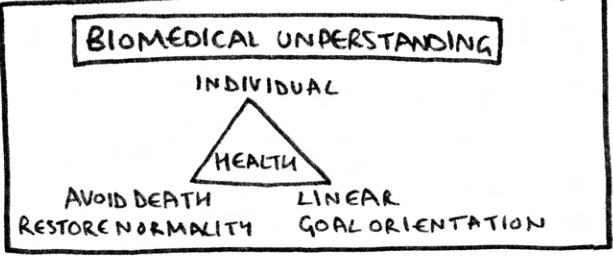


PRACTICES NEED TO ENGAGE ON ALL THESE LEVELS

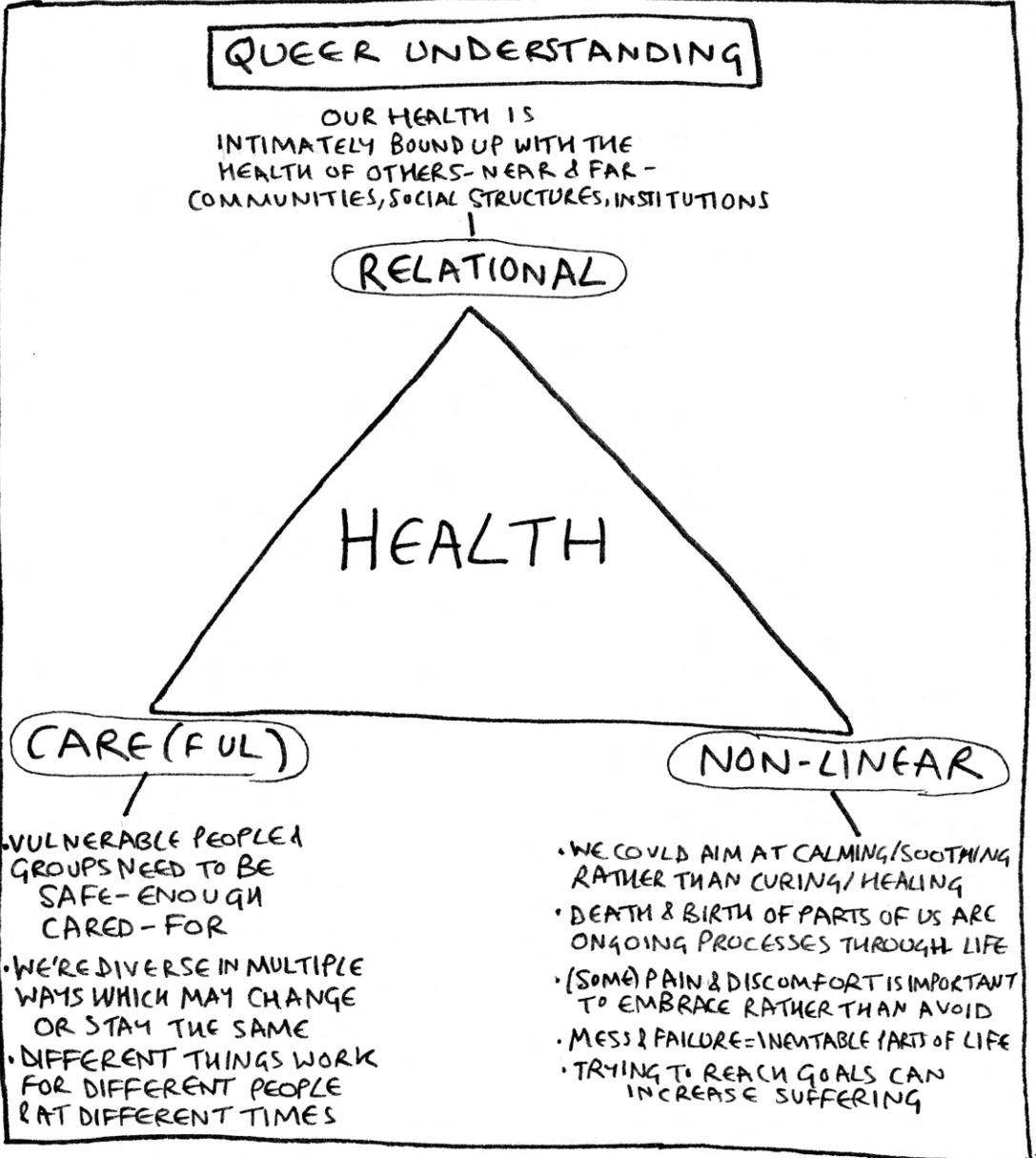
INSTEAD OF AIMING AT A VERSION OF 'NORMAL' - OFTEN BASED ON WHITE, WESTERN, MIDDLE CLASS, STRAIGHT, CIS MEN - EMBRACE



SEE DOLEZAL ET AL - QUEERING BIOMEDICINE



BOTH HAVE VALUE
-BEYOND-
BINARIES



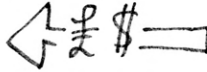
QUEER CREATIVITY

DOMINANT CULTURALLY NORMATIVE UNDERSTANDINGS OF CREATIVITY

PROFESSIONAL EXPERT
SKILLED
TALENTED
CREATORS

CREATE
GLOSSY POLISHED
PRODUCTS
FOR

PASSIVE UNSKILLED
AMATEUR
CONSUMERS



HIGH ART

LOW CULTURE

REPRESENTING NORMATIVE CHARACTERS/BODIES/LIVES



FOLLOWING STANDARD FORMS & LINEAR TRAJECTORIES



CREATORS = BRANDED, SUCCESSFUL, PROFITING CELEBRITIES



QUEER CREATIVITY

QUEER CREATIVITY MIGHT INVOLVE...

REPRESENTING QUEERNESS

- NOT (JUST) BAD/TRAGIC/TOKEN/STEREOTYPICAL/SENSATIONAL
- CENTRING OUR QUEER EXPERIENCE...
- ...WE'RE ABOUT MORE THAN OUR QUEERNESS
- BEYOND THE MOST NORMATIVE QUEERS
- MAKING INVISIBLE QUEERNESS VISIBLE
- RAISING UP SILENCED VOICES

QUEERING STANDARD FORMS & LINEAR TRAJECTORIES

- BEYOND COMING OUT / TRANSITION
- DISPLACING, DISTURBING, DESTABILISING WHAT YOU (THINK YOU) KNOW - KINA LESKI
- NON-LINEAR NARRATIVES
- MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES
- MASHING UP GENRES (e.g. FAN ART / FAN FIC)
- QUEERING EXISTING MEDIA
- TRANSITORY FORMS
- REAL & IMAGINARY

CREATING QUEERLY

- DIY - AMATEUR MEANS 'FOR LOVE'
- CURATING EVERYDAY OBJECTS
- CUT-UPS & COLLAGE
- ALTERNATIVE DISTRIBUTION
- COLLABORATION
- CONSENSUAL CREATIVE PRACTICES
- CHALLENGING WORK/PLAY BINARIES

CREATING OURSELVES QUEERLY

- MEMOIR, PERFORMING, PERSONAL BLOGS/VIDS, SELFIES, PLAY-LISTS, JOURNALLING, ETC.
- REPRESENTING OUR PLURAL SELVES - ROLEPLAY - DRAG
- REPRESENTING OUR FLUIDITY OVER TIME - EROTICS
- SELF EXPRESSION AS HAIR, MAKE UP, BODY, VOICE, ETC.)



ONCE WE BEGIN TO FEEL DEEPLY
ALL THE ASPECTS OF OUR LIVES,
WE BEGIN TO DEMAND FROM
OURSELVES AND FROM OUR LIFE
PURSUITS THAT THEY FEEL IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THAT JOY
WHICH WE KNOW OURSELVES TO
BE CAPABLE OF ... NOT
SETTLING FOR THE CONVENTIONALLY
EXPECTED, NOR THE MERELY SAFE



AUDRE LORDE

CREATIVE HEALTH

CREATIVITY TO MAKE HEALTH UNDERSTANDINGS & PRACTICES ACCESSIBLE E.G. GRAPHIC MEDICINE . ORG

PAIN IS REALLY STRANGE

LOOK AGAIN

CREATIVITY TO EXPLORE & ARTICULATE OUR HEALTH EXPERIENCES E.G. MADZINES.ORG

ASYLUM MAGAZINE

FUCKED ZINE

80% MANY WINGS

EVERYDAY CREATIVITY MOVEMENTS/COMMUNITIES



CREATIVE THERAPIES

MUSIC THERAPY

DRAMA THERAPY

ART THERAPY ETC.

MUSIC FOR DEMENTIA

SAND TRAY

CREATIVELY IMPROVING BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

NHS


MENTATION MAZE



BRINGING CREATIVITY INTO HEALTH SERVICES

NEONATAL WARD

CANCER WARD



IMPROVING ACCESS TO CREATIVE EVENTS & SPACES

THEATRE

MUSEUM

GALLERY

GIG

LIBRARY

GRAYSON PERRY



ART HELPS US ACCESS & EXPRESS PARTS OF OURSELVES UNAVAILABLE TO OTHER FORMS OF HUMAN INTERACTION, DELIVERING NOURISHMENT FOR OUR SOUL & RETURNING WITH STORIES FROM THE UNCONSCIOUS. MAKING AND CONSUMING ART LIFTS OUR SPIRITS, HELPS US MAKE MEANING FROM OUR LIVES AND MAKES US FEEL BETTER

ARTSHEALTHANDWELLBEING.ORG.UK/APP4 - CREATIVE HEALTH REPORT

SEE < FRANCES WILLIAMS - WHEN WAS ARTS IN HEALTH?

QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE HAVE WORSE MENTAL HEALTH THAN STRAIGHT/CIS PEOPLE

PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH ARE INTERRELATED (GABOR MATEI)

IT'S WORST AMONG THE MOST MARGINALISED & INVISIBLE GROUPS WITHIN LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITIES

MANY EXPERIENCE DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTHCARE SERVICES

THEY MAY WELL HIDE THEIR QUEERNESS & / OR AVOID SEEKING HELP FOR FEAR OF THIS

LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE WERE DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

AND BY THE 'SHADOW PANDEMICS' OF MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS & DOMESTIC ABUSE

HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC & ESPECIALLY TRANSPHOBIC HATE CRIME & DISCRIMINATION HAS RISEN IN RECENT YEARS

HISTORICALLY LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PATHOLOGISED AS DISORDERED BY PSYCHIATRY, & LINKS BETWEEN QUEERNESS & PATHOLOGY REMAIN

HEALTH SERVICES OFTEN ASSUME STRAIGHT CIS LIVES & GOALS

HEALTHINESS IS EQUATED WITH BODY MIND NORMALITY

BEING LGBTQIA+ IN HETERO-NORMATIVE CULTURE, FAMILIES, SCHOOL SYSTEMS & WORKPLACES IS TRAUMATISING

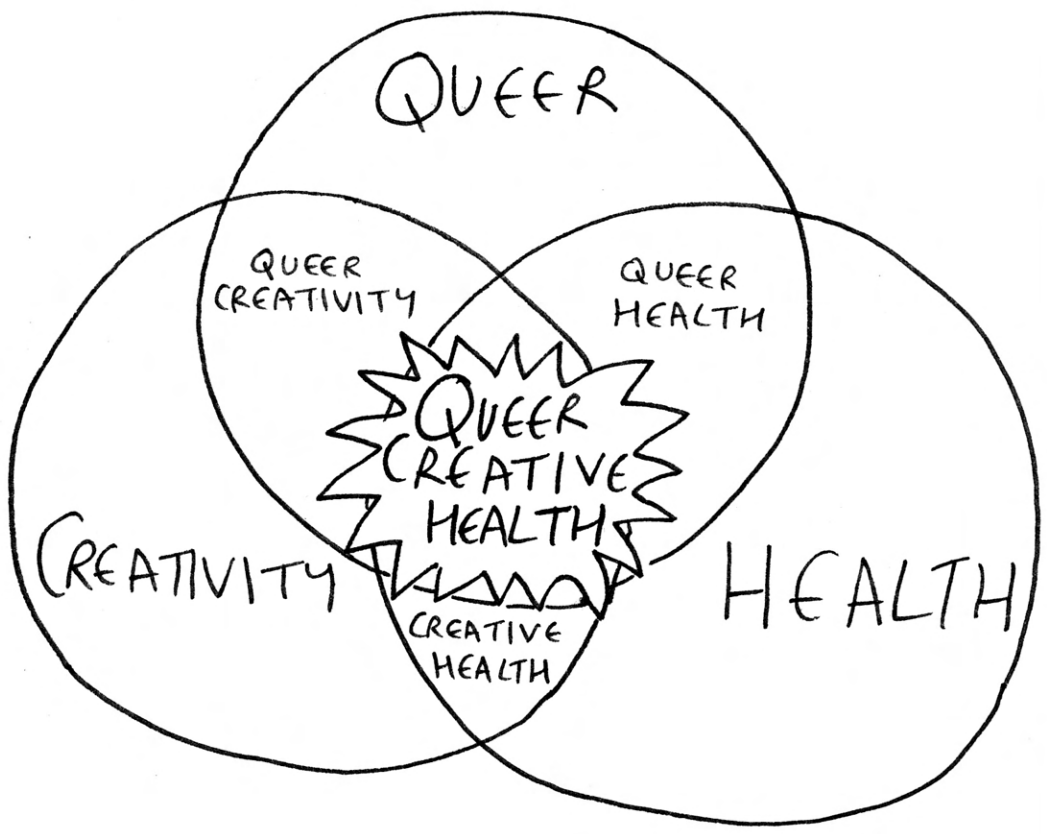
SEE < STONEWALL - LGBT IN BRITAIN - HEALTH REPORT
CUCKOOSNESTBOOKS.CO.UK - ON MARGINALISATION IN MENTAL HEALTH

SO WE NEED...

* QUEERER HEALTHCARE *

* CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES TO HEALTHCARE FOR QUEERS *

* QUEER CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS INTO HEALTHCARE *



WHY MIGHT YOU WANT TO ENGAGE WITH QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH?

WHAT QUEER HEALTH, QUEER CREATIVITY & CREATIVE HEALTH IDEAS &/OR PRACTICES EXCITE YOU?

WHAT MIGHT QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH LOOK LIKE FOR YOU? (LOTS MORE IDEAS ON THIS TO COME!)

A MAD, CRIP, NEUROQUEER ALLIANCE

♡ ALL RECLAIM WORDS THAT HAVE BEEN USED AGAINST US ♡

NEUROQUEER IS INTENTIONAL NON COMPLIANCE WITH THE DEMANDS OF NORMATIVE PERFORMANCE, ENGAGING WITH THE POTENTIALS FOR NEURODIVERGENCE & QUEERNESS & THEIR INTERSECTIONS / SYNERGIES, RECOGNISING COGNITION, GENDER & EMBODIMENT ARE ENTWINED, FLUID... CANVASES FOR ONGOING CREATIVE EXPERIMENTATIONS

NICK WALKER - NEUROQUEER.COM

THE SYSTEM OF COMPULSORY ABLE-BODIEDNESS, WHICH IN A SENSE PRODUCES DISABILITY, IS THOROUGHLY INTERWOVEN WITH THE SYSTEM OF COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY THAT PRODUCES QUEERNESS

ROBERT MC RUER - CRIP THEORY

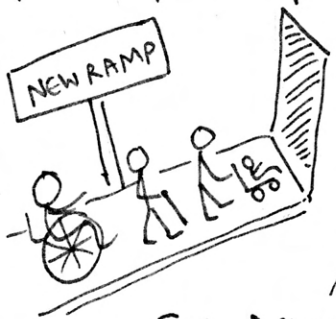
♡ ALL POINT OUT THAT MANY, AT SOME POINT IN LIFE, EXPERIENCE THINGS LIKE... ♡



HOW MANY MORE ARE MASKING THEIR MAD/CRIP/NEURO/QUEERNESS? WHAT EVEN IS NORMAL/TYPICAL?

♡ ALL POSITION DISORDER/SICKNESS IN THE SYSTEM RATHER THAN IN THE INDIVIDUAL WHO IS HURT BY IT, OR STRUGGLES TO FIT IT ♡

♡ ALL SUGGEST CHANGING SYSTEMS TO EMBRACE US & TO HELP EVERYONE ♡



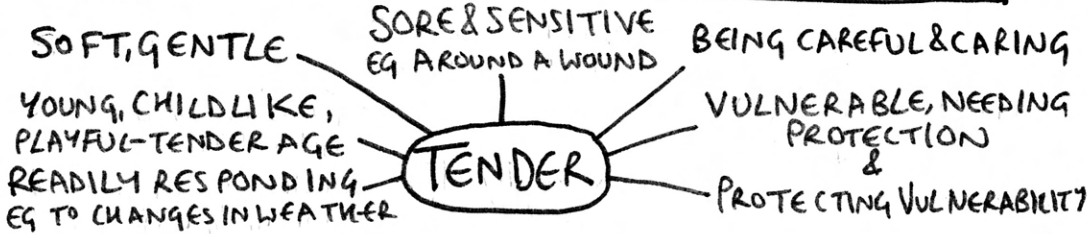
- EVENT POLICY
- QUIET AREA
 - STIMMING / MOVING / LYING DOWN WELCOME
 - NAME / PRONOUN BADGES
 - REGULAR BREAKS
 - CO-REGULATION

QUEER & GENDER QUESTIONING KIDS ARE MORE COMFORTABLE

RATES OF BULLYING HAVE GONE WAY DOWN FOR ALL KIDS

SEE - DEVON PRICE - UNMASKING AUTISM

A TENDER QUEER APPROACH



MAD/QUEER CREATIVES 'CRAFT INTIMATE ARCHIVES OF THEIR EXPERIENCES, CARETAKING UNHEARD VOICES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. CARETAKING IS AN ACT OF TENDERNESS, A FORM OF CRITICAL EMPATHY TO UNDERSTAND & PROTECT ONE'S PEERS. IT INSISTS: I FEEL THE SAME AS YOU, I AM ENRAGED/SADDENED/OVERJOYED, MY VOICE IS TESTAMENT TO YOUR SORENESS' - TAMARA HART

'TENDER QUEER' IS USUALLY USED AS A DEROGATORY TERM IN QUEER COMMUNITIES. MIGHT WE RECLAIM IT?

TENDER	BOTH / AND +	QUEER
PERSONAL / INTIMATE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT	+	POLITICAL / SOCIALLY AWARE
KIND & GENTLE	+	MINDFUL OF HISTORY & IMAGINING BETTER FUTURES
VULNERABLE	+	HONEST & CRITICALLY AWARE
HEARTFELT, DEEP-FEELING	+	PROTECTIVE
AWARE OF INNER STATES & IMPACT OF PERSONAL TRAUMA	+	PROTECTIVE
CARING & SENSITIVE	+	CLEAR-SEEING, TRUTH-TELLING
PLAYFUL & CREATIVE	+	AWARE OF THE WORLD & IMPACT OF NORMALITY & INJUSTICE
	+	RADICAL & DISRUPTIVE
	+	PASSIONATE TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

HOW MIGHT WE QUEERLY TEND TO OURSELVES, EACH OTHER, OUR COMMUNITIES & OUR WORLDS?

QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH

THE REST OF THE ZINE EXPLORES EXAMPLES OF QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH THAT YOU MIGHT ENGAGE WITH



WORKING FROM THE INSIDE OUT WE'LL INTRODUCE IDEAS & ACTIVITIES - INSPIRED BY QUEERCIRCLE EVENTS - THAT ADDRESS OUR HEALTH AT THESE THREE LEVELS

EMBODIED

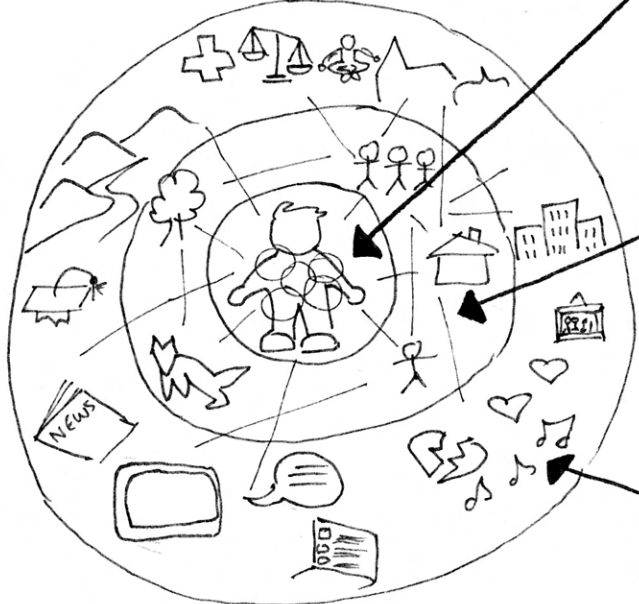
OUR BODY MINDS, FEELINGS & HOW WE EXPERIENCE OURSELVES

ENTANGLED

OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS - ONE-TO-ONE & IN COMMUNITIES

EMBEDDED

HOW WE'RE SITUATED IN OUR TIME & PLACE & THE WAY THINGS ARE DONE THERE





EMBODIED
QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH

QUEER FEELINGS

AT AN EMBODIED LEVEL MOST OF US STRUGGLE WITH FEELINGS WHICH ARE NOT THE ONES THAT DOMINANT CULTURE - OR EVEN LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITIES - WANT US TO HAVE

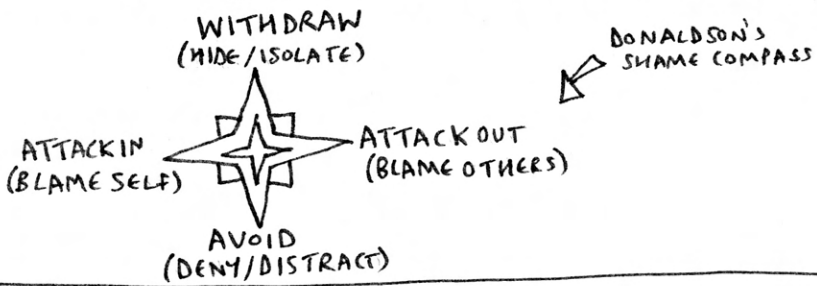


WE COULD USEFULLY CHALLENGE THE POSITIVE/NEGATIVE EMOTION BINARY AND WELCOME ALL OUR QUEER FEELINGS HOME, GIVING THEM SPACE TO FLOW

SEE < REWRITING-THE-RULES.COM/SELF/QUEER-JOY
SARA AHMED - LIVING A FEMINIST LIFE

SHAME

- SHAME IS ONE OF THE TOUGHEST FEELINGS BECAUSE IT COMES WITH THE SENSE THAT SOMETHING'S INHERENTLY WRONG WITH US
- OFTEN WE FEEL SHAME AVOIDANCE RATHER THAN SHAME ITSELF



- GEMMA LUCAS "SHAME FEELS INDIVIDUAL BUT ITS REALLY RELATIONAL & SOCIAL—IT COMES FROM MESSAGES WE RECEIVE FROM OTHERS & THE WORLD"
- YOU MIGHT THINK ABOUT THE MESSAGES YOU RECEIVED (EG ABOUT QUEERNESS/ CREATIVITY/ HEALTH) FROM OTHERS & WIDER CULTURE, GROWING UP & NOW
- THESE EMBEDDED & ENTANGLED MESSAGES BECOME LODGED IN US (EMBODIED)
- TO BEFRIEND SHAME YOU COULD TRY MAKING A MONSTER TO REPRESENT HOW IT IS FOR YOU—DRAW OR COLLAGE THEM BASED ON HOW THEY FEEL IN YOUR BODY & THE THINGS THEY TELL YOU WHEN THEY'RE AROUND



SHAME MONSTERS

MOVING SHAME

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP SHAME MOVE THROUGH WHEN IT VISITS US?
BECAUSE SHAME IS REALLY RELATIONAL & SOCIAL (NOT INDIVIDUAL)
THEN SHARING WITH SAFE-ENOUGH OTHERS CAN HELP A LOT E.G.

GETTING TOGETHER WITH CLOSE FRIENDS TO MAKE & SHARE OUR SHAME MONSTERS

"SHAME NEEDS SECRECY, SILENCE & JUDGEMENT. WITH EMPATHY IT CAN'T SURVIVE"
BRENE BROWN



ATTEND A SUPPORT GROUP WHERE PEOPLE SHARE OPENLY
EG 12 STEPS, IN YOUR QUEUE COMMUNITIES/SPIRITUAL TRADITION

TALKING TO AN EMPATHIC FRIEND OR THERAPIST OR ONLINE/PHONE HELPLINE

REMEMBER HOW YOU'RE CONNECTED WITH ALL THE OTHERS FEELING THIS WAY

WRITE DOWN YOUR STORY

BECAUSE SHAME IS EMBODIED IT CAN HELP TO LITERALLY MOVE



SHAKE IT OFF



BRUSH YOUR HANDS VIGOROUSLY DOWN YOUR BODY

AND FLICK OFF THE FEELINGS THAT DON'T BELONG TO YOU BUT TO OTHERS SHAMING CULTURE

TAKE DEEP BELLY BREATHS WITH YOUR HANDS IN CONTACT WITH YOUR BODY



GRIEF

• ONE WAY TO MOVE THROUGH SHAME - & OTHER STUCK FEELINGS - IS TO GRIEVE E.G. FOR THE IMPACT IT'S HAD ON US & ALL SHAMED PEOPLE

• DOMINANT CULTURE TELLS US WHAT WE'RE ALLOWED TO GRIEVE FOR & HOW WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GRIEVE



WHAT KINDS OF THINGS MIGHT QUEERS NEED TO GRIEVE? (ADD YOUR OWN)

THE ONGOING IMPACT OF THE WORLD RIGHT NOW

LACK OF ELDERS DUE TO HIV/AIDS & ANTI TRANS CULTURE

LIVES WE COULD HAVE HAD IF NOT FOR HOMO/BI/TRANS/AGE WHORE PHOBIA ETC.

PEOPLE LIKE US WHO DIED - EVEN IF WE DIDN'T KNOW THEM PERSONALLY



RIFTS & RUPTURES IN OUR COMMUNITIES BECAUSE WE ALL CARRY SO MUCH TRAUMA

• HOW MIGHT WE CO-CREATE OUR OWN GRIEVING RITUALS? (ADD YOUR OWN)

"GRIEF IS A UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE - WE SHOULDN'T BE LONELY" - JUNE BELLEBONO

ATTEND A QUEER GRIEF-TENDING WORKSHOP

ATTEND A QUEER DEATH CAFE

MAKE REGULAR TIME TO JOURNAL ABOUT GRIEF

GET TOGETHER WITH FRIENDS TO CREATE A ZINE ABOUT LOSS

GO TO A TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE VIGIL

JOIN A REGULAR ON OR OFFLINE SHARING CIRCLE



ENTANGLED
QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH

RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

• WE'VE SEEN HOW ONE-TO-ONE AND GROUP CONNECTIONS & SUPPORT ARE VITAL ANTIDOTES TO SHAME & ISOLATION, IMPORTANT FOR HEALTH

• BUT THERE ARE BIG CHALLENGES TO DEVELOPING & MAINTAINING NOURISHING, CARING, MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITIES

COMMON SHAMEFUL UPBRINGING RELATIONSHIP MESSAGES

COMMON SHAMEFUL CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP MESSAGES

(GOOD) RELATIONSHIPS LOOK LIKE THE FIRST ONES YOU SAW / EXPERIENCED

RELATIONSHIPS = ROMANTIC COUPLES (NOTHING ELSE COUNTS)

IF YOU WANT TO BELONG YOU NEED TO BE ALL THE THINGS THAT WERE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR FAMILY / COMMUNITY & NONE OF THE UNACCEPTABLE

YOU NEED 'A RELATIONSHIP' TO BE HAPPY / SUCCESSFUL

TO BE LOVED, YOU HAVE TO PERFORM SOME FEELINGS & HIDE OTHERS (WHATEVER YOU ACTUALLY FEEL)

SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS

- LAST A LONG TIME
- MEET ALL YOUR NEEDS
- HAVE NO PROBLEMS
- ARE SEXUAL
- REMAIN 'IN LOVE'

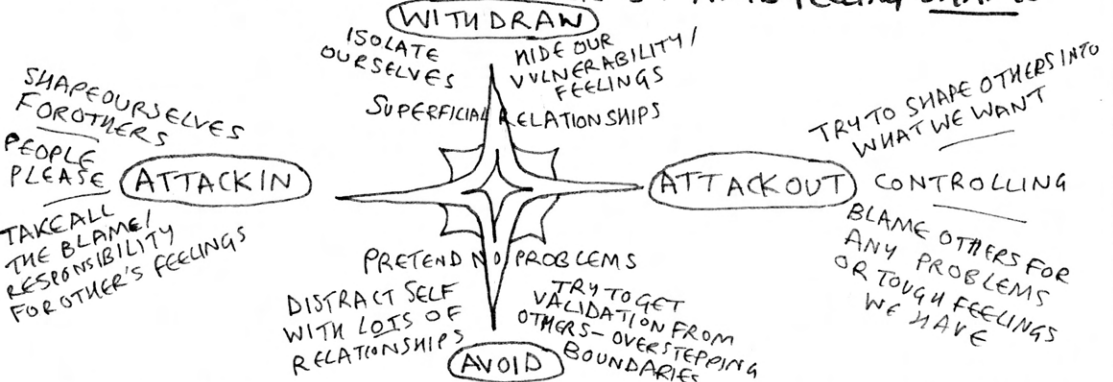
TO GET SAFETY / LOVE / RESPECT YOU HAVE TO CONFORM YOURSELF TO FIT OTHERS & / OR CONTROL THEM

IF YOUR FEELINGS CHANGE OR YOU BREAK UP YOU'VE DONE SOMETHING BAD



WHICH OF THESE ARE FAMILIAR TO YOU? ANY OTHER ONES YOU'RE AWARE OF?

WE DEVELOP RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS TO AVOID FEELING SHAME



SEE - REWRITING-THE-RULES/ZINES - RELATIONSHIP STRUGGLES

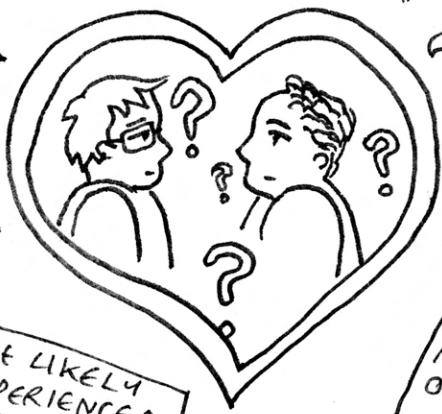
QUEER RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

ON TOP OF ALL THIS, THERE ARE SPECIFIC CHALLENGES TO DEVELOPING & MAINTAINING QUEER RELATIONSHIPS

LACK OF ROLE MODELS OF QUEER RELATIONSHIPS GROWING UP

SMALL COMMUNITIES MEAN BREAKING UP CAN RISK LOSING WHOLE COMMUNITY

NO RULE BOOK!



DENIAL THAT QUEER RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE ABUSIVE - SO IT'S HARD TO REALISE & GET SUPPORT - SEE 'IN THE DREAMHOUSE' - CARMEN MARIA MACHADO

WE'RE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE EXPERIENCED PAINFUL/REJECTING FAMILY/FRIEND RELATIONSHIPS GROWING UP - LEAVING US VULNERABLE AND SEEKING WHAT WE LACKED, OR LOST

PRESSURE TO PRESENT QUEER RELATIONSHIPS AS SUCCESSFUL - OR 'NORMAL' IN EVERY OTHER WAY - TO THE WORLD

MAY WELL INVOLVE NAVIGATING DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIP STYLES, TRAUMA PATTERNS, NEURODIVERSITIES

QUEER STANDARDS OF WHO IS/ISNT DEEMED ATTRACTIVE

NORMS OF HOW TO FORM RELATIONSHIPS & WHICH ONES COUNT IN QUEER COMMUNITIES - EG. FOCUS ON SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS, PRESSURE TO COMMIT FAST

HIGHLIGHT ANY THAT RESONATE FOR YOU & ADD YOUR OWN

QUEER CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES FOR RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

ROMANTIC / FRIENDSHIP

LONG TERM / FLEETING

MONOGAMOUS / NON-MONOGAMOUS

'(IR) ONLINE

QUESTIONING RELATIONSHIP BINARIES WHICH SUGGEST SOME RELATIONSHIPS ARE SUPERIOR TO OTHERS

'IN LOVE' / COMPANIONABLE

BIO / LOGICAL FAMILY

EROTIC / PLATONIC

CHALLENGING RELATIONSHIP EXPECTATIONS

ALL RELATIONSHIPS WILL CHANGE OVER TIME

THERE ARE LOTS OF DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEING INTIMATE

THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE SEXUAL OR ROMANTIC TO COUNT!

DIFFERENCES & STRUGGLES ARE INEVITABLE

ALL KINDS OF RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE VALID / VALUABLE, HOWEVER LONG LASTING



RECOGNISING WHEN THEY SHOW UP & GENTLY SHIFTING THESE

MAKING TIME FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OURSELVES

GETTING SUPPORT FROM PROFESSIONALS & / OR GROUPS

SHARING WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THESE WITH OUR PEOPLE OPENLY

KNOWING THIS IS A LIFELONG JOURNEY

BEING HONEST ABOUT OUR HOPES & FEARS

LEARNING ABOUT TRAINING AT UNIVERSITY, THERAPY, ETC.

DEVELOPING OUR RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT SYSTEMS

LEARNING EMOTIONAL REGULATION & CONSENT SKILLS

DEVELOPING QUEER, CREATIVE WAYS OF TENDERLY RELATING, RECOGNISING WHAT WE'RE ALL UP AGAINST

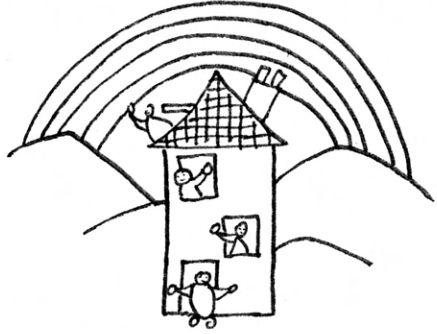
REGULARLY CHECKING IN WITH EACH OTHER

PRACTICING MOMENTS OF RUPTURE & REPAIR

SHARING OUR PREFERRED WAYS OF RELATING

QUEER CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH

- LIKE 1-TO-1 RELATIONSHIPS, WE CAN PUT A LOT OF HOPE ON QUEER 'FAMILY' &/OR COMMUNITIES TO PROVIDE US WITH HOME, COMPANIONSHIP, SAFETY, BELONGING & VALIDATION - ESPECIALLY IF WE'VE LACKED OR LOST THESE THINGS BEFORE
- WHAT HOPES/EXPECTATIONS DO YOU BRING TO QUEER COMMUNITY/NETWORKS?



- QUEER COMMUNITIES CAN EASILY REPLICATE TRAUMATISING SYSTEMS OF DOMINANT CULTURE UNLESS WE CONSCIOUSLY CULTIVATE SOMETHING ELSE
- HOW MIGHT WE CO-CREATE CARING TENDER QUEER COMMUNITIES?

MOVING FROM...

- EXPECTING EVERYONE TO BEHAVE WELL AT ALL TIMES
- BLAMING ANY PROBLEMS ON ONE INDIVIDUAL
- POLICING & PUNISHING EACH OTHER
- TRYING TO GO IT ALONE AS A GROUP / COMMUNITY
- AVOIDING CURRENT / POTENTIAL PROBLEMS
- SEEING STRUGGLES / ENDINGS AS FAILURES

MOVING TOWARDS...

- RECOGNISING THE TRAUMA WE ALL CARRY, OFTEN UNCONSCIOUSLY
- ASSUMING PROBLEMS ARE SYSTEMIC & STRUCTURAL
- RECOGNISING THAT WE'RE ALL IN DIFFERENT PLACES & DEVELOPING 'SHAME SENSITIVE' APPROACHES
- GETTING AS MUCH SUPPORT AS POSSIBLE, E.G. MEDIATORS, SYSTEMIC THERAPY, PODS DOING SIMILAR THINGS TO YOU
- REGULAR CHECK-INS, HANGOUTS, ATTENDING TO GROUP DYNAMICS
- A GENTLE, FORGIVING ACCEPTANCE OF WHAT WE'RE ALL UP AGAINST

SEE < GENDERED INTELLIGENCE - HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS GAMING PROJECT
 SOPHIE K ROSA - RADICAL INTIMACY, DOLEZAL & GIBSON - TOWARDS SHAME-SENSITIVE PRACTICE



EMBEDDED
QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH

QUEERS IN TIME

- AS WELL AS BEING ENTANGLED IN THE RELATIONSHIPS & NETWORKS AROUND US, WE'RE EMBEDDED IN THE TIME & PLACE WE LIVE IN
- THIS HAS A HUGE IMPACT ON HOW WE UNDERSTAND & EXPERIENCES OUR QUEERNESS, OUR CREATIVITY, & OUR HEALTH
- FOR EXAMPLE, VERY DIFFERENT WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING OUR QUEERNESS & PHYSICAL/MENTAL HEALTH, & EXPRESSING OURSELVES HAVE EXISTED IN DIFFERENT TIMES & PLACES



1990s



2000s



2010s



Now ...?

- WE MAY FIND OURSELVES COMING OUT REPEATEDLY & /OR CREATING OURSELVES ANEW AS WE MOVE THROUGH TIME & RELOCATE
- IF WE WEREN'T UNDERSTOOD & EMBRACED IN OUR QUEERNESS - OR OTHER IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF WHO WE WERE - WHEN WE WERE YOUNG IT'S NOT TOO LATE! WE CAN LOVE OUR LITTLE QUEER SELVES NOW!

WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR LITTLE QUEER SELF

GET THEM THE KIND OF CLOTHES THEY WANTED TO WEAR

TAKE THEM OUT ON A DAY TRIP

GIVE THEM THEIR FAVOURITE EVENING ROUTINE (FOOD, TV SHOW/BOOK, ETC.)

GET TOGETHER WITH OTHERS TO PLAY (DANCE, GAMES, ART) ETC.

SEE ← KIT HEYAM - BEFORE WE WERE TRANS, GRACE PETRIE - BLACKTIE JUNOROCHE - GENDER EXPLORERS, TRAVIS ALABANZA - BEFORE I STEP OUTSIDE HOT PENCIL PRESS - LETTERS TO MY LITTLE QUEER SELF

QUEER AGING

KIT GREEN - "AGING IS THE GREATEST TRANSITIONING PROCESS"

- IN A WAY WE ARE ALL IN AN ONGOING PROCESS OF BECOMING - GOING THROUGH MULTIPLE TRANSITIONS AS WE AGE
- QUEERS HAVE SOME UNIQUE RELATIONSHIPS TO TIME, E.G.

WE MAY HAVE 2ND ADOLESCENCES

WE MAY BE OLD IN YEARS BUT YOUNG IN YEARS SINCE COMING OUT

OUR QUEERNESS MAY BECOME MORE/LESS VISIBLE OVER TIME

WE MAY LOOK YOUNGER/ OLDER THAN OUR AGE

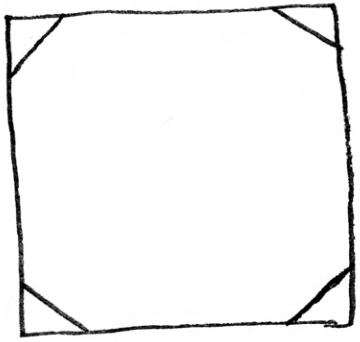
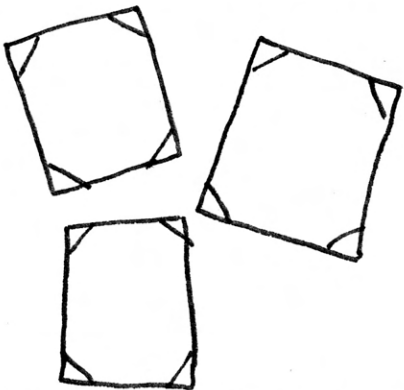
OUR LIFE COURSE MAY BE NON-LINEAR

• WHAT DOES AGING OPEN UP & CLOSE DOWN FOR YOUR QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH?

CLOSES DOWN...	OPENS UP...
E.G. SEEN AS LESS 'ATTRACTIVE' FEELING MORE VULNERABLE IN THESE WAYS...	ESCAPING UNWANTED ATTENTION & PRESSURE TO BE 'ATTRACTIVE' FEELING WISER/STRONGER IN THESE WAYS...

WHO ARE YOUR QUEER ELDERS? IN AGE, EXPERIENCE &/OR WISDOM

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR YOURSELF AS A QUEER ELDER?



CHRISTOPHER GREEN.NET

SEE KIT GREEN / TONIC HOUSING PROJECT < TONIC HOUSING.ORG.UK

QUEERS IN SPACE

- QUEER SPACES ARE IMPORTANT PLACES FOR MANY PEOPLE TO
- FIGURE OUT THEIR QUEERNESS
 - FEEL SAME FOR ONCE
 - EXPERIENCE BEING IN THE MAJORITY
 - FIND LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE
 - FEEL ABLE TO BREATHE
 - NOT FOCUS ON QUEERNESS FOR ONCE BECAUSE EVERYONE IS QUEER HERE
 - CREATIVELY EXPRESS THEMSELVES
 - GET SUPPORT
- ➡ ALL IMPORTANT FOR MENTAL/PHYSICAL HEALTH

- LONDON LOST ~ 58% OF QUEER VENUES 2006-2017
- PANDEMIC & COST OF LIVING CRISIS BROUGHT FURTHER PRESSURES
- MOST COMMON 'NIGHTLIFE' VENUES AREN'T WELCOMING/SAFE ENOUGH FOR ALL

Expectation to drink

Expensive

Noisy

Late night

Have to go out

In urban areas

Often young crowd

Can have oppressive ideals of sex/attractiveness

Inaccessible for many disabled & neurodivergent people

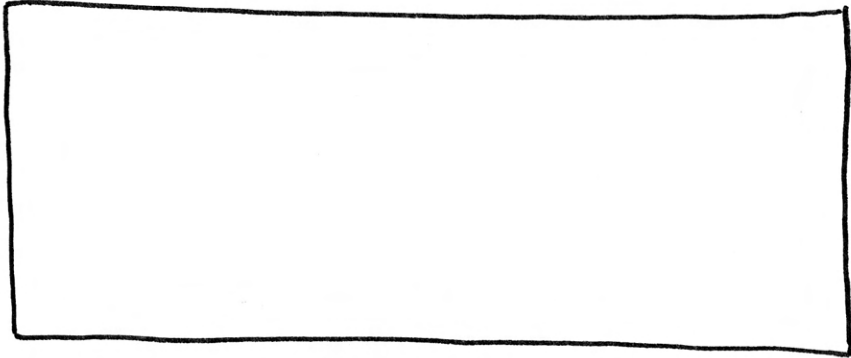
RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN:

- DIVERSIFICATION OF QUEER SPACES FOR SPECIFIC INTERSECTIONS
- MORE COMMUNITY SPACES (DAYTIME, NOT PARTY-FOCUSED)
- MORE FORMAL/INFORMAL ONLINE SPACES

<p>WHAT KINDS OF OFFLINE / ONLINE SPACES APPEAL TO YOU? FOR WHAT ACTIVITIES? (EG. DANCING, SHARING, SEX, CRAFTING, RITUALS, SPORT)</p>	<p>WHICH OF YOUR INTERSECTIONS WOULD YOU LIKE TO FIND SHARED SPACES AROUND? (EG. FAITH, LANGUAGE, POLITICS, DISABILITY, RACE, AGE-GROUP, FAMILIES, GENDER/SEXUALITY)</p>

CREATING QUEER SPACES/ QUEERING SPACE CREATIVELY

- QUEERCIRCLE HOSTS REGULAR SPACES AROUND SPECIFIC INTERSECTIONS AND ACTIVITIES, RECOGNISING "THE IMPORTANCE OF A SPACE THAT ACCEPTS YOU FOR WHERE YOU ARE AT THAT POINT AND ENABLES YOU TO ENGAGE ON YOUR TERMS"
- WHAT QUEER SPACES CAN YOU FIND LOCALLY / ONLINE THAT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO ENGAGE WITH? IT'S WORTH SEARCHING FOR QUEER SPECIFIC SPACES AND FOR QUEER BRANCHES OF COMMUNITIES YOU'RE INTERESTED IN (EG. WRITERS / BUDDHISTS / WALKERS)



- WE CAN ALSO CREATIVELY QUEER THE SPACES WE INHABIT
- DECLAN WIFFEN SUGGESTS "CRUISING NATURE — SEE WHERE DESIRE MIGHT TAKE US WHEN WE ALLOW OUR ATTENTION, IMAGINATION & WRITING TO LOITER & WANDER WITHOUT SPECIFIC DESTINATION OR FOCUS. WHAT ENCOUNTERS WITH PLANTS, ANIMALS, LANDSCAPES, AND NONHUMAN OBJECTS MIGHT OPEN UP TO US THROUGH THIS PRACTICE OF CURIOSITY, AND HOW MIGHT THEY CHANGE OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE ENVIRONMENTS WE INHABIT?"

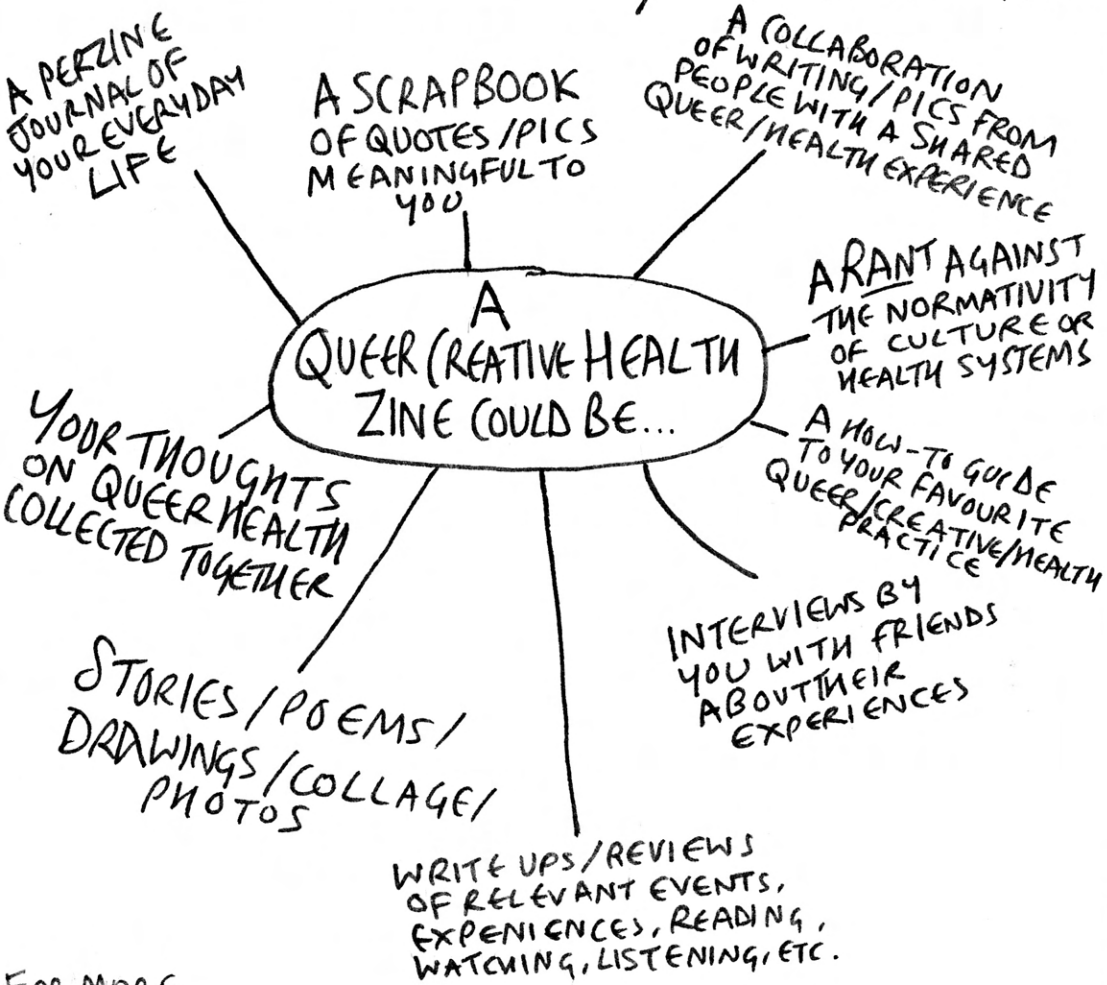
TAKE A SHORT WANDER OR SIT TO CROISE YOUR LOCAL NATURE / LANDSCAPE

WRITE UP THE EXPERIENCE OR MAKE A DRAWING, POEM, COLLAGE, SERIES OF PHOTOS OR ZINE ABOUT IT



MAKE YOUR OWN QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH ZINE

- IF YOU FELT INSPIRED BY ANY OF THE IDEAS OR ACTIVITIES IN THIS ZINE, YOU MIGHT LIKE TO MAKE YOUR OWN ZINE
- ZINES HAVE THEIR QUEER ORIGINS IN THE HOMOEROTIC STORIES OF SCI-FI FANDOM & THE NON-NORMATIVE SUBCULTURE OF PUNK
- BOTH ENCOURAGED READERS TO MAKE THEIR OWN ART/MUSIC & TO CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO/IMAGINE BETTER FUTURES



FOR MORE IDEAS SEE ←

- REWRITING-THE-RULES/ZINES - ZINEMAKER
- THE POLYPHONY.ORG/TAG/IN-THE-ZINE-HOUSE
- DOLLYSEN.COM - QUEER METHODS FOR ART & ACTIVISM

MAKE TIME

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- QUEERCIRCLE HOST REGULAR 'MAKE TIME' SESSIONS:
"DROP IN CRAFTING AFTERNOONS FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN TRYING OUT A NEW SKILL OR SHOWING OFF EXISTING HANDIWORK IN A RELAXED SOCIAL SPACE"
- IF YOU CAN'T ATTEND THESE YOURSELF, COULD YOU GET TOGETHER WITH FRIENDS ON OR OFFLINE TO MAKE TOGETHER? THAT MIGHT INVOLVE CREATING ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER, TAKING IT IN TURNS TO SHARE A KIND OF CREATIVITY YOU ENJOY, OR MAKING SOMETHING COLLABORATIVELY, LIKE A ZINE



- YOU COULD MAKE TIME FOR EACH PERSON TO SHARE SOMETHING THEY'VE CREATED, OR A QUEER CREATIVE THING THAT THEY'VE ENJOYED (E.G. A BOOK, ZINE, VID, WALK, EXHIBITION, ALBUM, ARTICLE, ETC.)
- YOU COULD USE THE PROMPTS & ACTIVITIES IN THIS ZINE AS AN INSPIRATION FOR YOUR 'MAKE TIME' &/OR CHECK OUT PAST QUEERCIRCLE WORKSHOPS FOR IDEAS
- YOU COULD MAKE TIME TO TRY OUT HEALTH PRACTICES TOGETHER & REFLECT/CREATE ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES

FIND OUT MORE

YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT QUEERCIRCLE'S GREENWICH-BASED & ONLINE EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, EXHIBITIONS & CONVERSATIONS AT...

[QUEERCIRCLE.ORG/WHATS-ON](https://queercircle.org/whats-on)

YOU CAN SUPPORT QUEERCIRCLE'S WORK AT...

[QUEERCIRCLE.ORG/SUPPORT](https://queercircle.org/support)

YOU CAN FIND MEG-JOHN'S FREE RESOURCES, & DETAILS ABOUT THEIR BOOKS AT...

[REWRITING-THE-RULES.COM](https://rewriting-the-rules.com)

YOU CAN SUPPORT THEIR WORK AT...

[PATREON.COM/MEGJOHN BARKER](https://patreon.com/megjohnbarker)

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SUPPORT AROUND YOUR HEALTH

[MIND.ORG.UK](https://mind.org.uk) & [EQUALITY-NETWORK.ORG](https://equality-network.org)

HAVE GOOD LISTS OF GROUPS & HELPLINES - IT'S WORTH SEARCHING WHAT'S AVAILABLE LOCALLY TO YOU

★ THANK-YOU FOR READING ★