



**QUEER
CREATIVE
HEALTH**

BY MEG-JOHN BARKER

FOR QUEERCIRCLE

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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

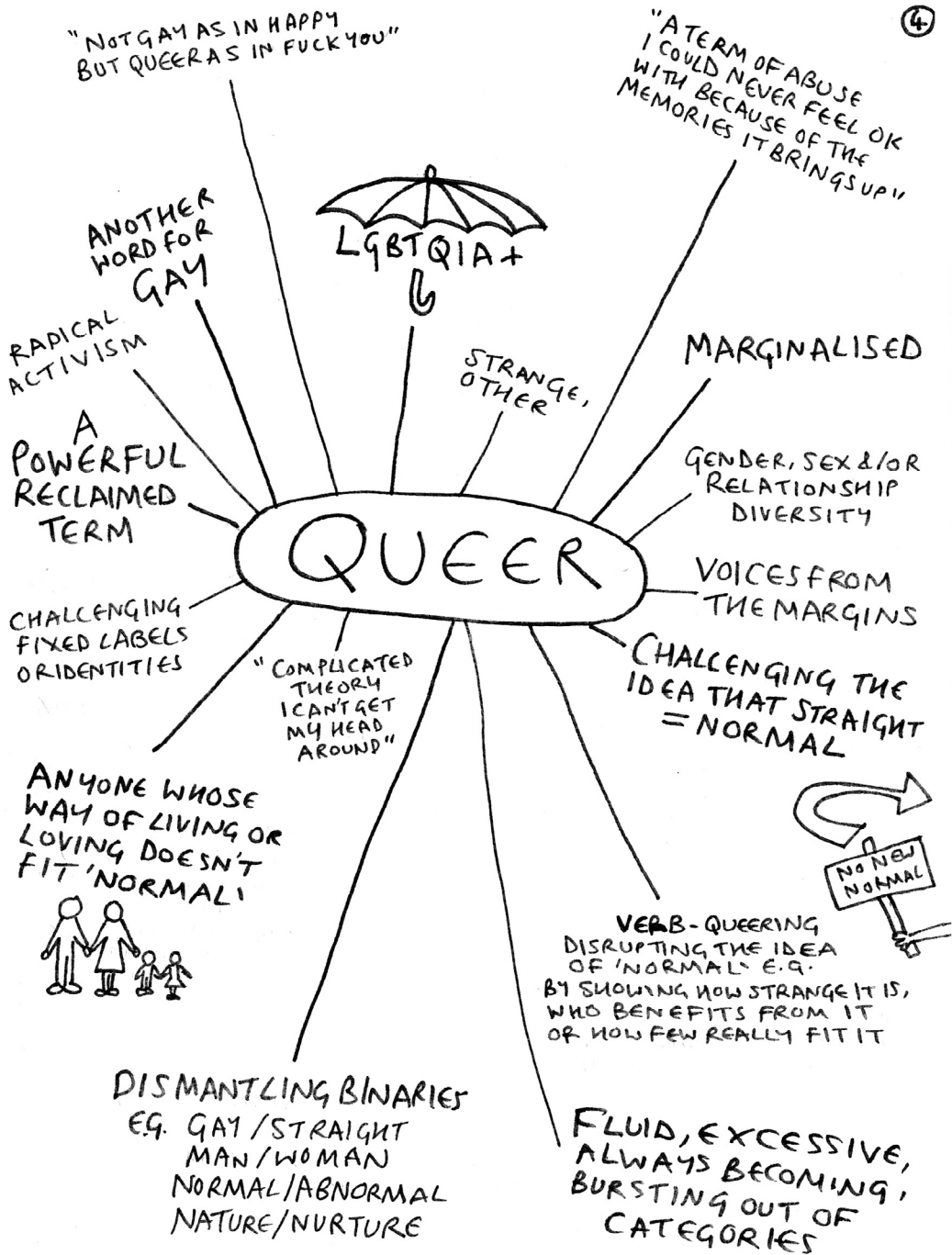
PLEASE GO GENTLY WITH YOURSELF AS YOU ENGAGE WITH THIS ZINE, ONLY GOING TOWARDS CONTENT & ACTIVITIES THAT FEEL GOOD FOR YOU, & STEPPING AWAY IF YOU FEEL CONFUSED OR OVERWHELMED AT ALL

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



SEE QUEER: A GRAPHIC HISTORY

QUEER AS NON-NORMATIVE

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

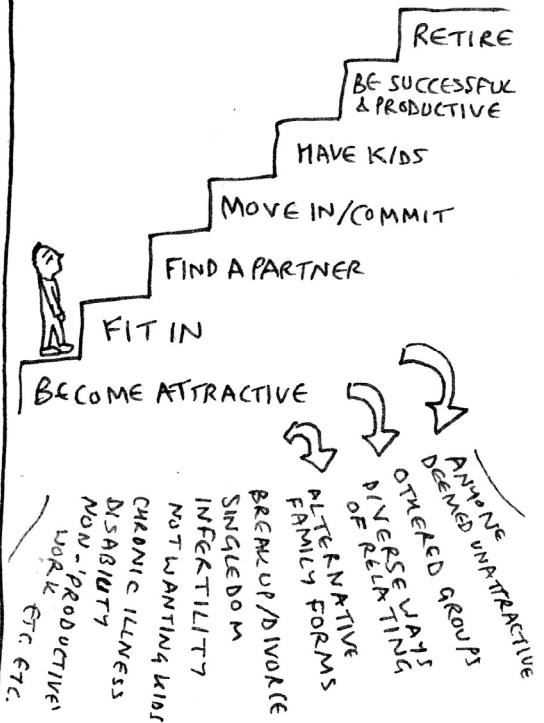
NORMATIVITY

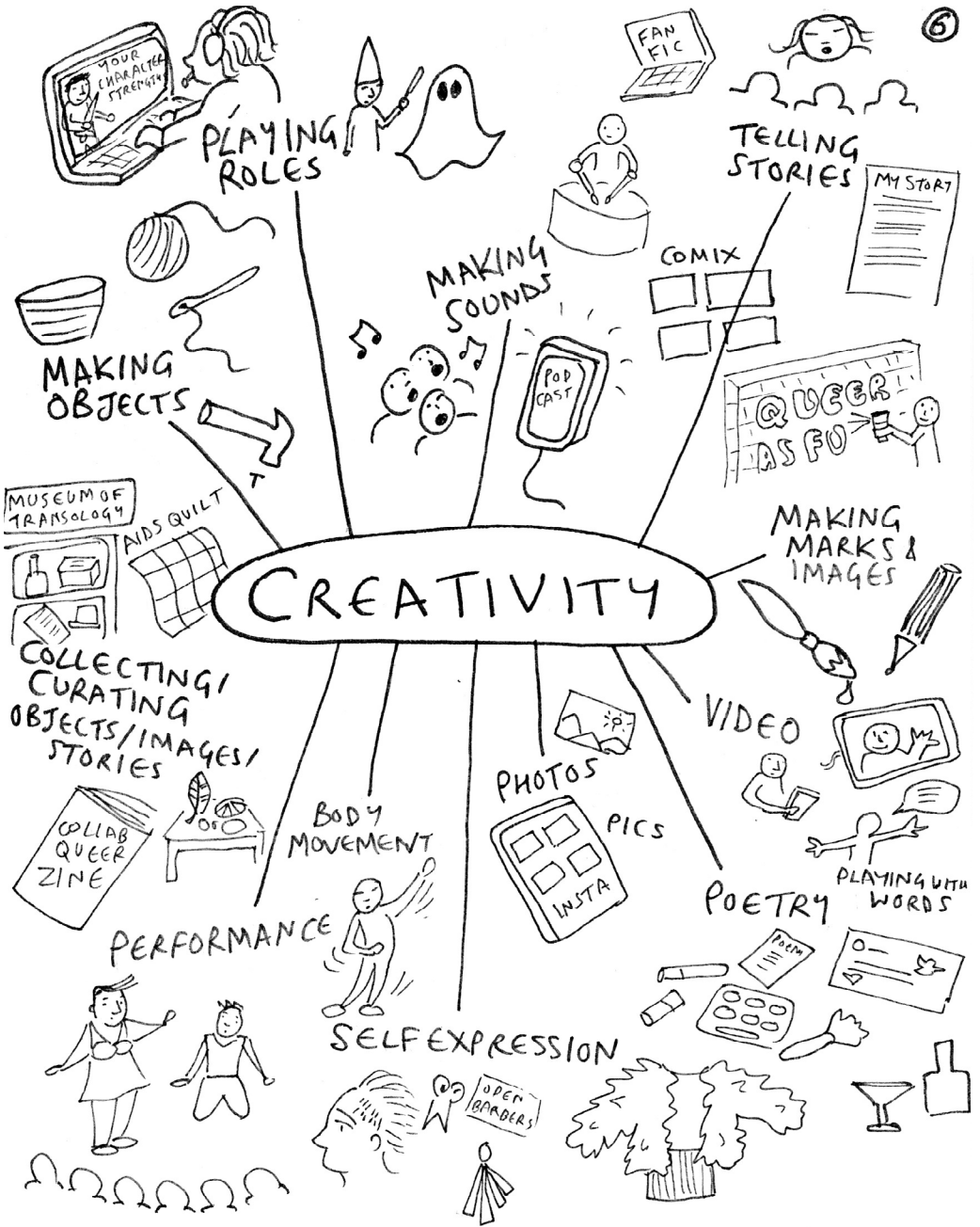
NORMATIVITY MEANS THE WAYS SOCIETIES/COMMUNITIES SET STANDARDS WHERE SOME PEOPLE/BHAVIOURS ARE GOOD/RIGHT/ACCEPTABLE & OTHERS ARE BAD/WRONG/UNACCEPTABLE

QUEER WARNS AGAINST REPLACING HETERONORMATIVITY WITH ANY OTHER FORM OF NORMATIVITY



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





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

PHYSICAL FITNESS/ENERGY

LACK OF MENTAL DISTRESS

STATE OF NORMALITY/TYPICALITY

BEING CURED/HEALED

ABSENCE OF PAIN

SOCIAL MODELS = LIVING IN SOCIETIES THAT DON'T IMPOSE BARRIERS ON BODIES/ MINDS LIKE YOURS

THE ABSENCE OF DISEASE OR INFIRMITY

BEING CALMED/ SOOTHED

STATE OF WELL-BEING

NOT BEING DIAGNOSED DISEASED/DISORDERED

FUNCTIONING IN THE WORLD EG. WORK/SOCIAL LIFE



BEING ABLE TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

ACCESS TO HEALTH SYSTEMS

SUPPORT TO THRIVE/ FLOURISH

POSITIVE FEELINGS

HOW YOU FEEL WHEN YOU'RE MOST ALIVE

BEING PRESENT WITH HOW THINGS ARE RATHER THAN STRUGGLING AGAINST IT

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...

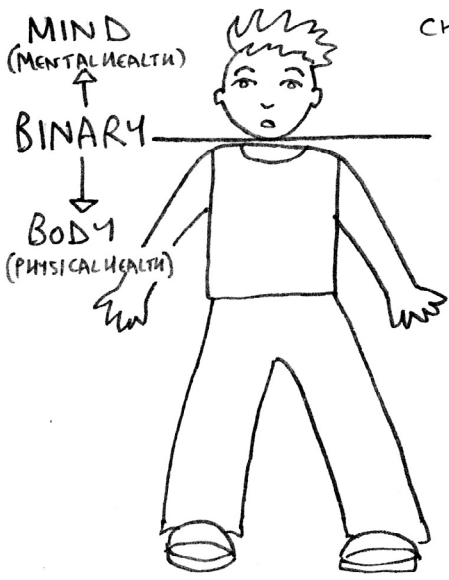
THE KINDS OF CREATIVITY I ENJOY/FEEL DRAWN TO ARE...

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?

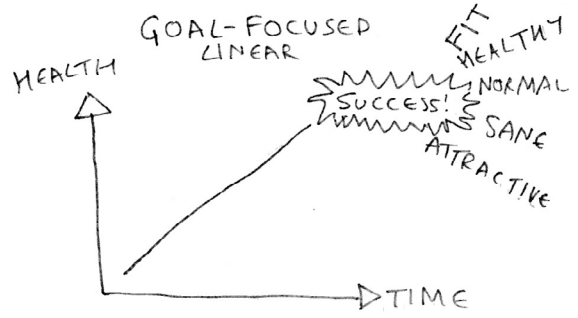
QUEER HEALTH

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

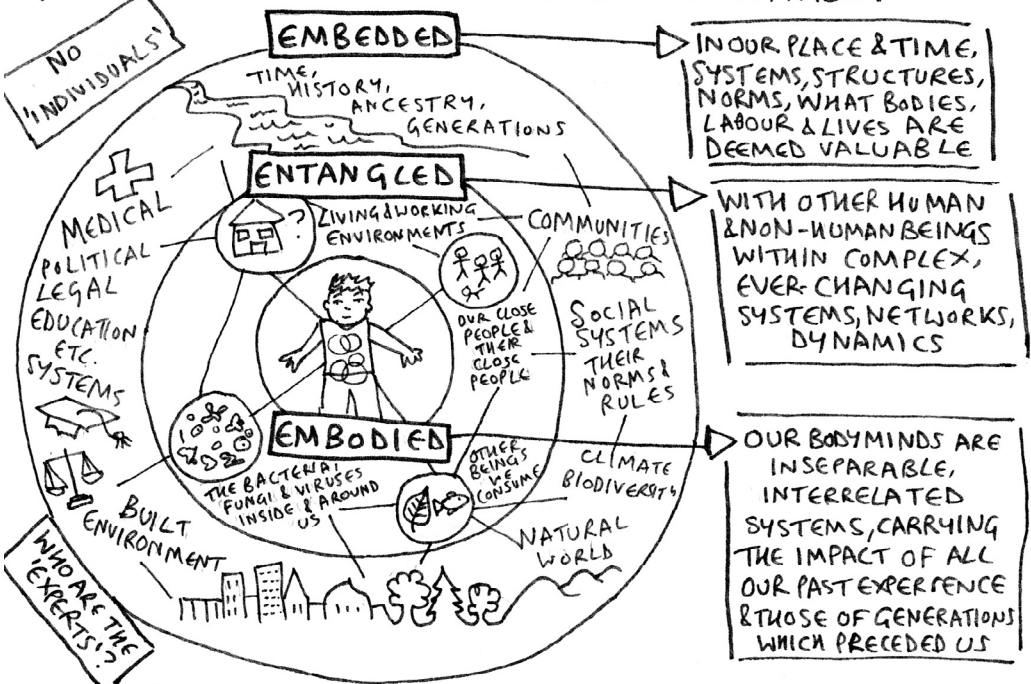
ILLNESS	→	WELLNESS
ABNORMAL	→	NORMAL
ATYPICAL	→	TYPICAL
DYSFUNCTIONAL	→	FUNCTIONAL
DISORDERED	→	ORDERED
MAD	→	SANE

BIG BUSINESS

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

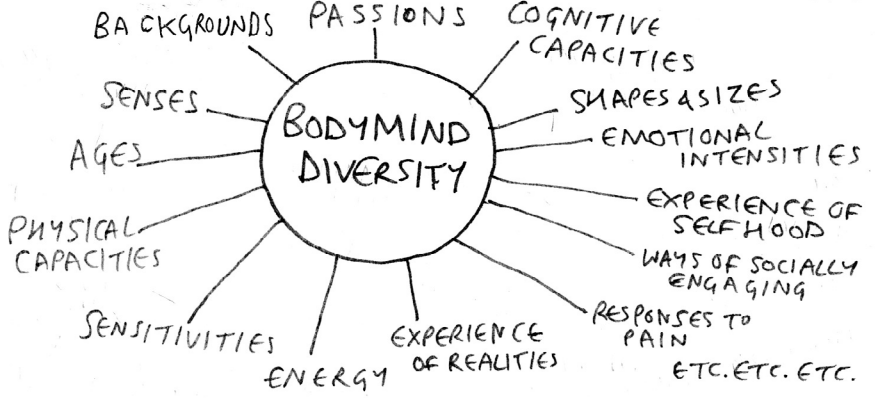
QUEER HEALTH

QUEER APPROACHES UNDERSTAND US AS INEVITABLY

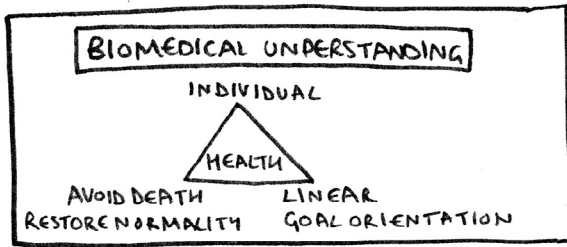


PRACTICES NEED TO ENGAGE ON ALL THESE LEVELS

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



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BOTH HAVE
VALUE
-BEYOND-
BINARIES

QUEER UNDERSTANDING

OUR HEALTH IS
INTIMATELY BOUND UP WITH THE
HEALTH OF OTHERS - NEAR & FAR -
COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL STRUCTURES, INSTITUTIONS

RELATIONAL



CARE (FUL)

NON-LINEAR

- VULNERABLE PEOPLE & GROUPS NEED TO BE SAFE- ENOUGH CARED- FOR
- WE'RE DIVERSE IN MULTIPLE WAYS WHICH MAY CHANGE OR STAY THE SAME
- DIFFERENT THINGS WORK FOR DIFFERENT PEOPLE & AT DIFFERENT TIMES

- WE COULD AIM AT CALMING/SOOTHING RATHER THAN CURING/ HEALING
- DEATH & BIRTH OF PARTS OF US ARE ONGOING PROCESSES THROUGH LIFE
- (SOME) PAIN & DISCOMFORT IS IMPORTANT TO EMBRACE RATHER THAN AVOID
- MESS & FAILURE = INEVITABLE PARTS OF LIFE
- TRYING TO REACH GOALS CAN INCREASE SUFFERING

SEE QUEERCIRCLE QUEERING CREATIVE HEALTH EVALUATION REPORT - YASMIN JIANG ET AL

QUEER CREATIVITY

DOMINANT CULTURALLY NORMATIVE UNDERSTANDINGS OF CREATIVITY

PROFESSIONAL EXPERT
SKILLED
TALENTED
CREATORS

CREATE
GLOSSY POLISHED
PRODUCTS
FOR

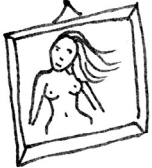
PASSIVE UNSKILLED
AMATEUR
CONSUMERS



HIGH ART

LOW CULTURE

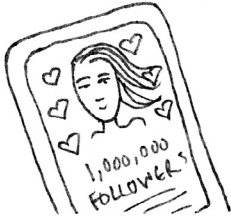
REPRESENTING NORMATIVE CHARACTERS/BODIES/LIVES



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

CREATING QUEERLY

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

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
- QUEERING EXISTING MEDIA (EG FAN ART / FAN FIC)
- TRANSITORY FORMS
- REAL & IMAGINARY

QUEERING OURSELVES

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



SEE - REWRITING-THE-RULES.COM/ON-QUEER-WRITING, JULIET JACQUES-TRANS A MEMOIR

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 EG GRAPHIC MEDICINE . ORG

BOOKS: PAIN IS REALLY STRANGE, LOOK AGAIN

CREATIVITY TO EXPLORE & ARTICULATE OUR HEALTH EXPERIENCES EG. MADZINES.ORG

MAGAZINES: ASYLUM, FUCKED ZINE

SO 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, MEDITATION MAZE

BRINGING CREATIVITY INTO HEALTH SERVICES

NEONATAL WARD, CANCER WARD

IMPROVING ACCESS TO CREATIVE EVENTS & SPACES

THEATRE, LIBRARY, MUSEUM, GALLERY, GIG

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/APPG - CREATIVE HEALTH REPORT

SEE < FRANCES WILLIAMS - WHEN WAS ARTS IN HEALTH?

QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH

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WHY DO WE NEED IT?

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

↓
PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH ARE INTERRELATED (GABOR MATE)

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, BI PHOBIC & 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

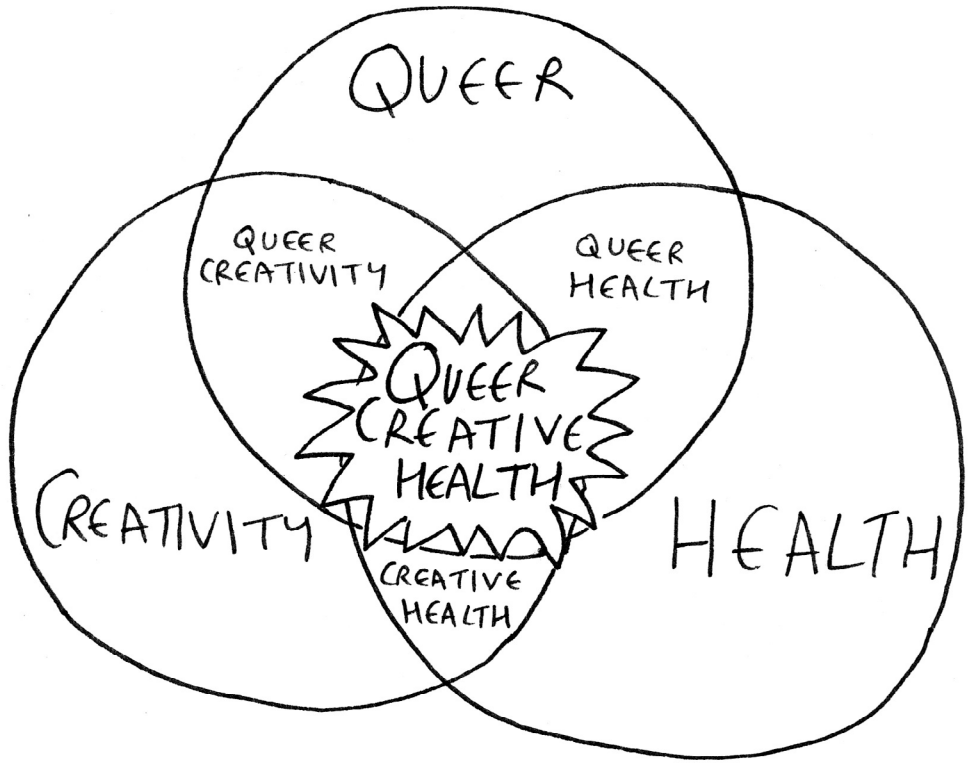
SEE < STONEWALL - LGBT IN BRITAIN - HEALTH REPORT
CUCKOO'S NEST BOOKS.CO.UK - ON MARGINALISATION IN MENTAL HEALTH

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 EXPERIMENTATION
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 M'RUER - CRIP THEORY

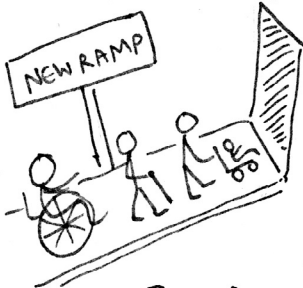
♡ ALL POINT OUT THAT MANY, AT SOME POINT IN LIFE, EXPERIENCE THINGS LIKE... ♡



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 ♡



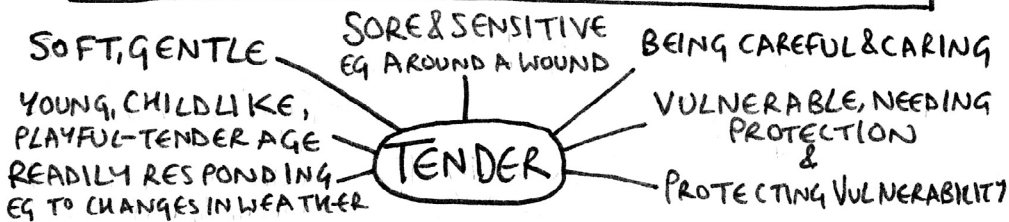
- EVENT POLICY
- QUIET AREA
- STIMMING/LYING DOWN WELCOME
- NAME/PRONOUN BADGES
- REGULAR BREAKS
- CO-REGULATION

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

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

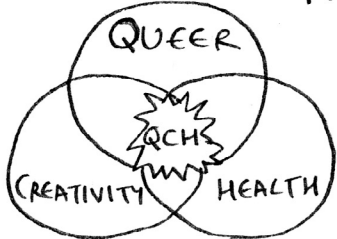
TENDER	BOTH / AND +	QUEER
PERSONAL / INTIMATE	+	POLITICAL / SOCIALLY AWARE
IN THE PRESENT MOMENT	+	MINDFUL OF HISTORY & IMAGINING BETTER FUTURES
KIND & GENTLE	+	HONEST & CRITICALLY AWARE
VULNERABLE	+	PROTECTIVE
HEARTFELT, DEEP-FEELING	+	CLEAR-SEEING, TRUTH-TELLING
AWARE OF INNER STATES & IMPACT OF PERSONAL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

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

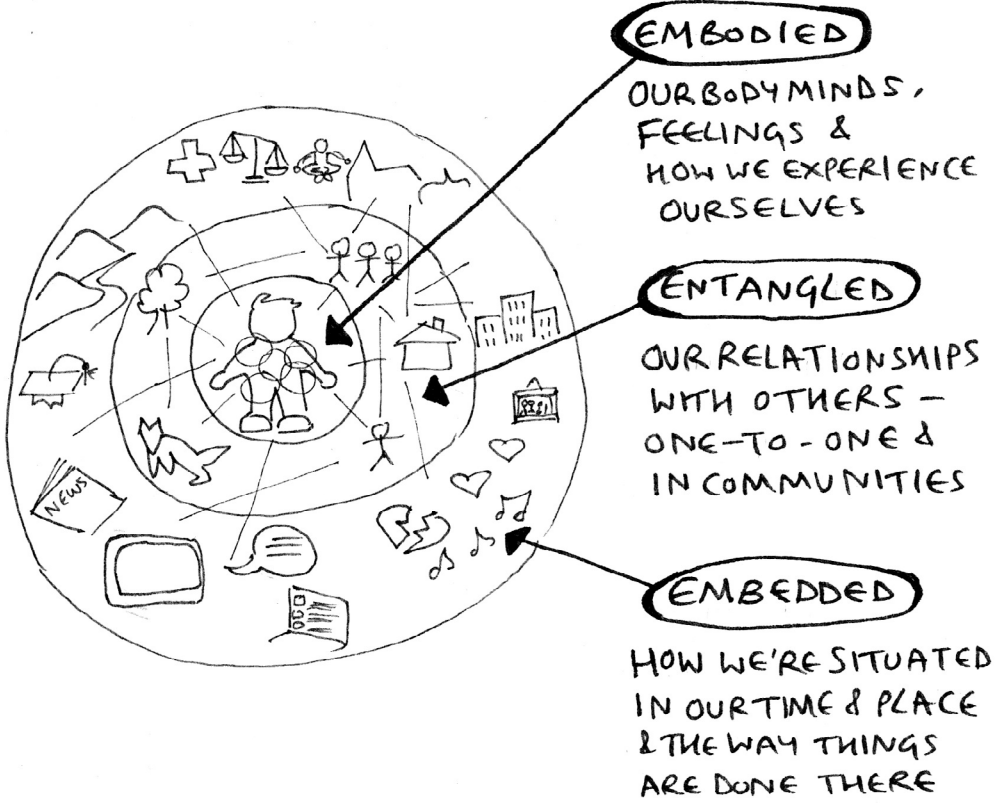
SEE - MAGZINES.ORG/TENDERNESS-AS-A-TOOL-ZINE-MAKING-WORKSHOP-AT-THE-FEMINIST-LIBRARY - TAMARA HART

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

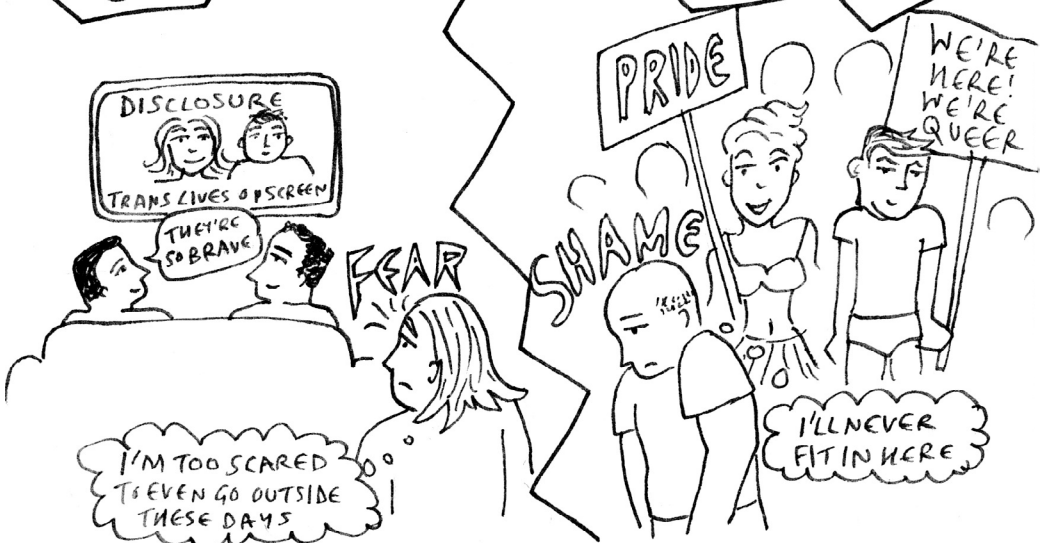




EMBODIED
QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH

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

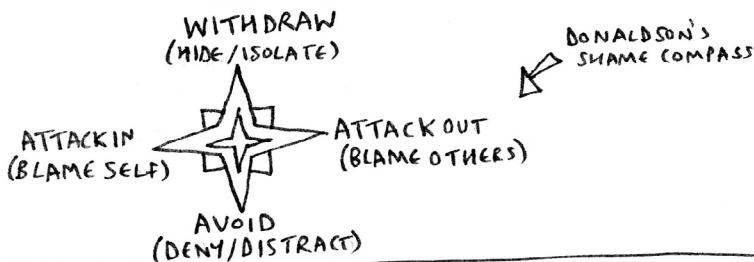


WE COULD USEFULLY CHALLENGE THE POSITIVE/NEGATIVE EMOTION BINARY AND WELCOME ALL OUR QUEER FEELINGS HOME, GIVING THEM SPACE TO FLOW

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 (EMBODED)
- 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

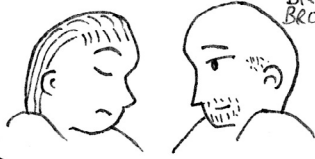
SEE - REWRITING-THE-RULES.COM/ZINES 'WELCOMING YOUR MONSTER FEELINGS'

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"
BRENÉ BROWN



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

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

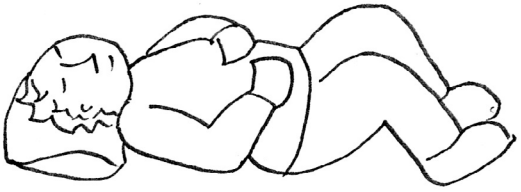
REMEMBER HOW YOU'RE CONNECTED WITH ALL THE OTHERS FEELING THIS WAY

WRITE DOWN YOUR STORY

BECAUSE SHAME IS EMBODIED IT CAN HELP TO LITERALLY MOVE



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 EG. 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)



- HOW MIGHT WE CO-CREATE OUR OWN GRIEVING RITUALS? (ADD YOUR OWN)
- "GRIEF IS A UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE - WE SHOULDN'T BE LONELY" - JUNE BELLEBOND

- 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

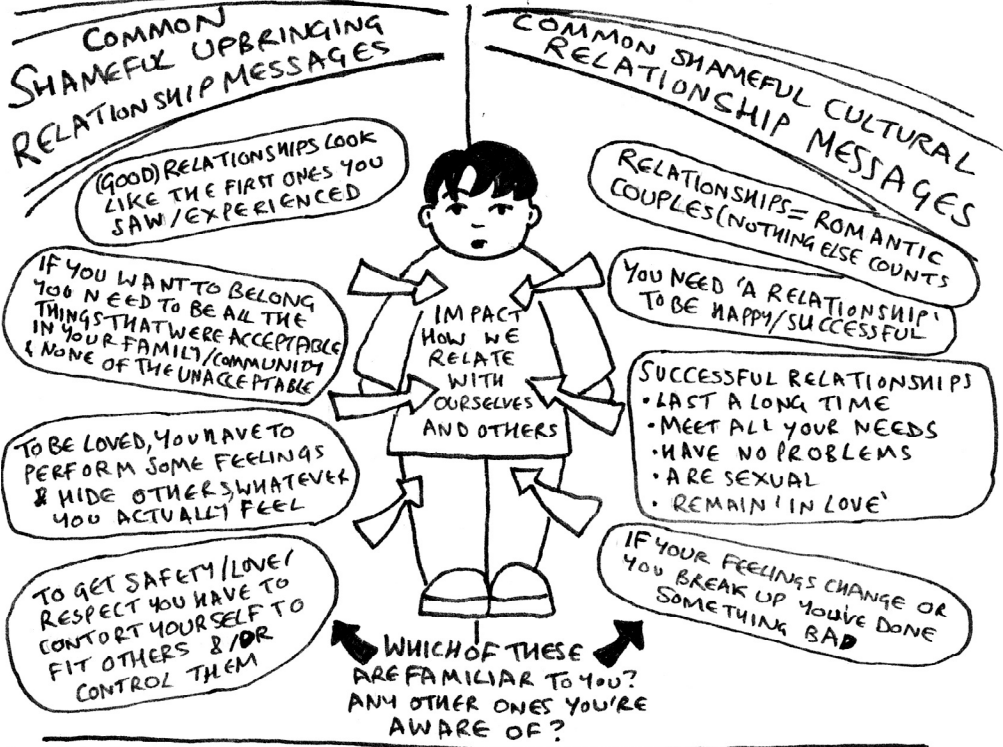
SEE - HEARTOFGLASS.ORG.UK/PROJECT-AND-EVENTS/EVENTS/QUEER-GRIEF-A-CONVERSATION
LOVEANDLOSS.CO.UK/LOSS/GRIEF-TENDING-VIDEOS



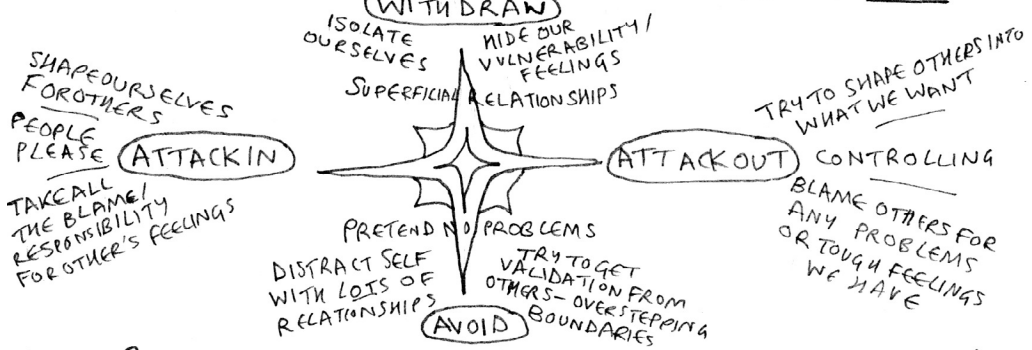
ENTANGLED
QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH

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



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 E.G. 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

'IN LOVE' / COMPANIONABLE

BIO / LOGICAL FAMILY

EROTIC / PLATONIC

QUESTIONING RELATIONSHIP BINARIES WHICH SUGGEST SAME RELATIONSHIPS ARE SUPERIOR TO OTHERS

CHALLENGING EXPECTATIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS

ALL RELATIONSHIPS WILL CHANGE OVER TIME

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

THERE ARE LOTS OF DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEING INTIMATE

DIFFERENCES & STRUGGLES ARE INEVITABLE

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

RECOGNISING OUR RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS WHEN THEY SHOW UP GENTLY SHIFTING THESE

MAKING TIME FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OURSELVES

GETTING SUPPORT FROM PROFESSIONALS & / OR GROUPS

LEARNING ABOUT TRAUMA, ATTACHMENT, NEURODIVERSITY, ETC.

SHARING WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THESE WITH OUR PEOPLE OPENLY

KNOWING THIS IS A LIFELONG JOURNEY

BEING HONEST ABOUT OUR HOPES & FEARS

DEVELOPING OUR RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT SYSTEMS

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

LEARNING EMOTIONAL REGULATION & CONSENT SKILLS

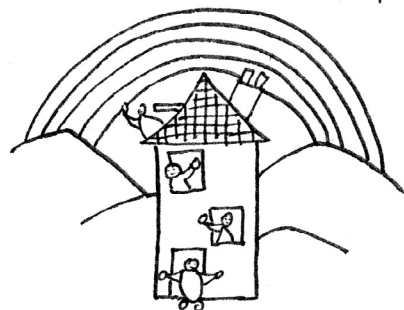
PRACTICING MOMENTS OF RUPTURE & REPAIR

REGULARLY CHECKING IN WITH EACH OTHER

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/ENDING 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
 SOMIE K ROSA - RADICAL INTIMACY, DOLEZAL & GIBSON - TOWARDS SHAME-SENSITIVE PRACTICE



EMBEDDED
QUEER CREATIVE HEALTH

QUEERS IN TIME

(33)

- 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 & EXPERIENCE 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

TAKE THEM OUT ON A DAY TRIP

GET THEM THE KIND OF CLOTHES THEY WANTED TO WEAR

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

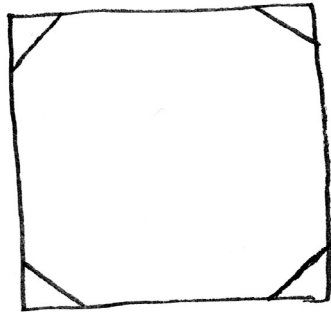
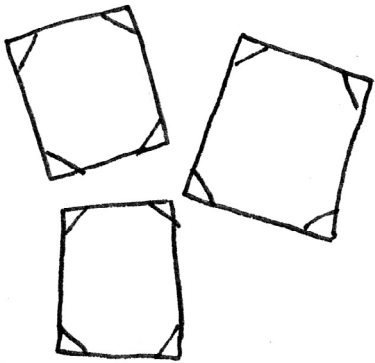
OUR LIFE COURSE MAY BE NON-LINEAR

• 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 ELDER? IN AGE, EXPERIENCE &/OR WISDOM

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



QUEERS IN SPACE

(35)

- 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



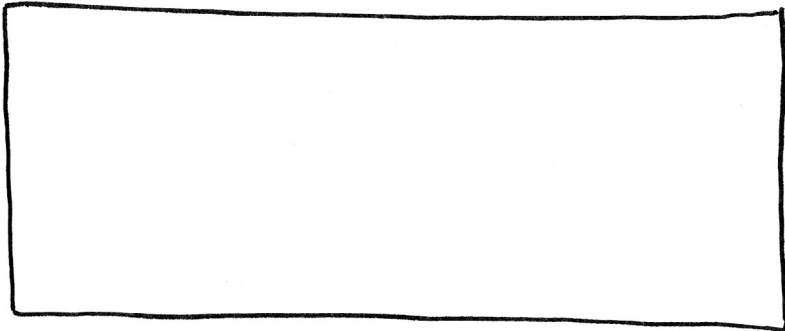
RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN:

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

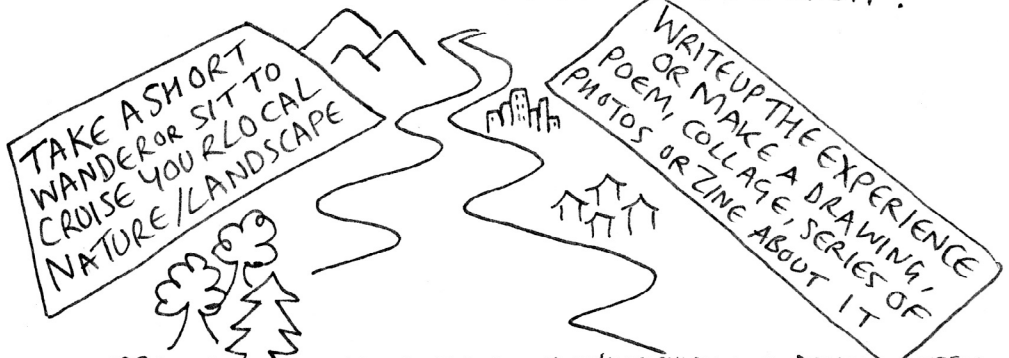
WHAT KINDS OF OFFLINE / ONLINE SPACES APPEAL TO YOU? FOR WHAT ACTIVITIES? (E.G. DANCING, SHARING, SEX, CRAFTING, RITUALS, SPORT)	WHICH OF YOUR INTERSECTIONS WOULD YOU LIKE TO FIND SHARED SPACES AROUND? (E.G. FAITH, LANGUAGE, POLITICS, DISABILITY, RACE, AGE-GROUP, FAMILIES, GENDER/SEXUALITY)

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?"



SEE < [BEYOND FORM CREATIVE WRITING . COM / POST / INTERVIEW - WITH - DECLAN WIFFEN](https://beyondformcreativewriting.com/post/interview-with-declan-wiffen)
YARROW MAGDALENA - RITUALS

MAKE TIME

38

- 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 & EQUALITY-NETWORK.ORG

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

☆ THANK-YOU FOR READING ☆

