

♀♂ BITS AND ♂♀ ♀♂ PIECES



vol 1

BITS & PIECES is a group for gender and sexually diverse people in Adelaide with lived experience of mental illness. This zine serves as an ongoing project for us, giving us an outlet to express ourselves and provide information.

We welcome those who wish to contribute submissions, or are looking for a supportive and inclusive environment. Submissions for the zine include, but are not limited to, poems and other written work, drawings, photography and questions.

We meet as a group fortnightly in Adelaide city.

For more information on any of the above, please email:
bits.n.pieces.group@gmail.com

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CONTENT WARNING:

This zine might contain content which is distressing for you. It details people's lived experiences of mental health issues, the system that services these, and also experiences of gender and sexually diverse lives, lifestyles and issues.

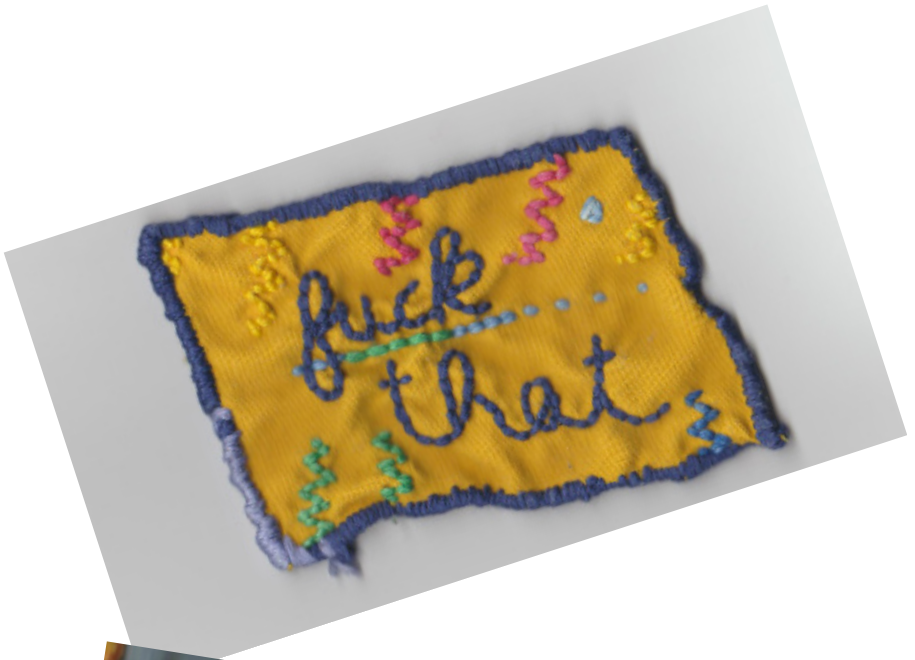
Please consider your sensitivities and triggers before reading on, as we aim not to censor those who wish to tell a story, but provide them a platform free of the world's baggage.

Trans Fucking Manifesto

By Kai Niezgoda (they/them) and Jasper Denton (they/them and he/him)

- **You are your gender/sex. Whether you've transitioned socially, medically, whether you ever want to. Your body is your gender/sex too, because it's a part of you.**
- **You don't have to hate your body to be a True Trans. You can love it (or try to) and let other people love it, too. Dysphoria and self love are not mutually exclusive.**
- **You're not an oddity or a collector's item, your body may be the first of its kind someone has seen, but it deserves reverence. Conversely, they're not a hero for getting into bed with you.**
- **The words you use for yourself are the words your partner(s) should use. Chest, boobs, pecs, dick, clit, junk, front hole, back hole, whatever. You have the right to communicate which words fit best and to have those words used about you.**
- **Same goes for naming sex acts. Do you want them to give you head, suck you off, go down on you? It's important your partner(s) feel(s) comfortable with the words you use too, but don't call it something that makes you feel misgendered, dysphoric or otherwise shitty for their sake.**
- **Throw your clothes on the floor, you have the right to be here. You have the right to own your body, take up the space you're in, get off when you want.**
- **Keep your clothes on, you have the right to feel secure. Maybe you need time to build trust, to learn more love for your own skin. Take your time.**
- **Avoid anyone who makes you feel like you have something to prove. You are already trans/non-binary/woman/man/you enough. You don't need to fuck anyone, any way, for this to be true.**
- **This, like anything else can reaffirm/subvert/build your gender. It's okay for sex acts to exist in your nebula of gender performances.**
- **Say yes. Say no. Say let's try it and find out. Say touch me here, don't touch me that way, more of this, less of that. Say this body is mine, and it is with yours on my terms.**

(originally published in Trans Sex Zine)



BULLIES

by Tamika

Humanity can be caring and kind but with that they can also be selfish and hateful, I'm not individualising people between good and bad, I know there is so much more to it. I know that we can be all of the above or none at all which is what makes up individuals but one thing all of us will always share, no matter how big or small, is pain. People react differently to their pain depending on them and the extremes of the pain but unfortunately many of us seek to hurt others to numb our own.

It's a survival instinct, most of what we do comes down to survival. Not just food and water but our interactions with others, you might of heard the whole fight or flight thing? There is more to that then just the saying but it's true. Us humans are social creatures, so because of that, we have learnt ways to still interact with each other whilst ensuring our own safety. This becomes most prominent in school, because it is hundreds of young people in one space. So we go into survival mode, some of these tactics include:

- The chameleon effect (blending into your surroundings, so as to not be noticed)
- Undercover (similar to the chameleon but instead you try to falsify your appearance and how you act to blend with the other creatures around you)
- The intimidator (when someone tries to make themselves seem more threatening then what they are, most commonly these people will group up with others for safety)
- The crazy (now this one is similar to the intimidator but these people will mostly be alone not from choose so try and seem threatening and a bit strange so other creatures stay back)

These are just some, but all of these are shown within different animals all over the world, after all, we are animals too.

Another thing is that unfortunately humans are very easily threatened by differences. When we see an animal or a person different from us, we want to learn about them but also we want to control them and make them stop. I don't think I need to give you a history lesson to understand this. Just look at our history here, in Australia. Luckily these days we don't kill and enslave everyone who looks different (well not here we don't) but what I mean is, that nowadays we will firstly stereotype, this is also a survival instinct. To put a name to something we are unfamiliar with, we don't handle not knowing very well so naturally assume so we can decide whether this person is a threat. Secondly we will either fight or flight, now in comparison to other situations, these instincts are used much more mildly here. So we'll either avoid them or abuse them. Now we may not even follow through with these instincts, especially since today, humanity is far more open minded and adaptive to society and differences than what we used to be. Don't get me wrong, we still need a vast amount of improvement. But on this subject, I read something that might help ease your conscience when you judge someone at first but see through that after. "The first thought that goes through your mind is what you're conditioned to think. What you think next defines who you are"

Despite me explaining the survival part of why some bullies do what they do, it still doesn't justify it. It's still a horrible way to go in life and unless humanity improves then I have low hopes for this changing. If you're being billed or harassed, stay strong and stand up for yourself if you can.



I just want to be free,

free of the system that
tells me I have to
be one thing or
the other, the system
which forces us constantly
to pick a side.

I want to be free of
a society which teaches
people that my body
is, and will be,
undesirable.

I want to be free
to seek pleasure, passion,
and connection without
fear of abuse, without
fear of being used or
taken advantage of.

I want to be free
to live, love, and
identify how I please,
without needing to justify
or explain myself-ever.

*I just want to be free,
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or explain myself, ever.*

- Spike

I suffer a paradox of identity, whereby I can list a number of identifiers that I can apply to myself: queer, trans, anarchist, musician and music-lover, writer, critical-thinker (if not cynic), a person with schizophrenia and depression, an enthusiast for Left-Hand Path philosophy and religion, the list goes on; though for all of this, I have a very weak sense of self. Whether it's loose, fragmented, completely null or just hidden from me at this point in life is hard to determine.

I find it hard to trace this lack of firm identity back to any specific point. Did I lose it in my intensive period of Chaos Magick experimentation when I underwent deliberate reality deconstruction and a dismantling of all the perceived notions of self? Or was it perhaps in my drug-addled teens that I never came to actualise a real 'Me' like so many of my peers did? Both of these seem like fairly logical answers; that I followed a period of extreme substance abuse and a four year psychotic episode with determined occult practice that deliberately aimed to cause an esoteric upheaval of the psyche and the dismantling of all it perceived which left me fucked for a firm grounded reality to stand in with a mildly (to say the least) cooked brain.

Unfortunately, though, I don't think it's so simple.

I think these practices were partly symptomatic of an already unstable Me.

I remember that when I was young, I lied. Lots. Not just little ones either. I made creative storytelling a lifestyle and treated all my inventions as very real people, events and facts. One of my earliest memories of doing this was when I was six years old or so, and we had to give a little presentation about an animal. I straight-up shot lies from my mouth about blue ring octopi.

Something about their rings floating away when they die to attach to other octopi, infecting them with the blue ring contagion or some such horseshit. You could probably pass this off as a creative kid enthusiastically letting their mind run free. But it didn't stop there. I I did this impulsively, maybe compulsively, for years and my lies became progressively more elaborate (and convincing). I think I had very low self-esteem and I wanted to make myself seem like a more interesting person. I think I lacked a sense of self, way back then. I was bullied pretty consistently throughout my primary school life and then to a lesser degree in my teen schooling. I perhaps had to build a reality because my own was not one I wanted, or maybe because I hurt a lot, didn't fit in, was too smart, too goofy-looking (word up to my two centimetre overbite, don't miss ya) or maybe too sensitive.

These days I've ceased lying (or at least, to the abnormal degree I once did). I'm still deeply invested in the esoteric and occult, though with an interest in self-making, rather than unmaking. I've been through a couple more dope crises, but I'm stable now. I've started a therapy task where I identify values in different spheres of my life, set small goals that shoot toward these and try to meet them. My psychologist is excellent. Hopefully, one day, I'll understand what it is to love myself, feel who I am and know that I am that person, unwaveringly.

Until that point I'll avoid taking psychotropics and performing nude ceremonies by candlelight to the purpose of the total decimation of my ego and grip on reality. Not because it doesn't sound fun anymore, but rather because it might put me back a step. Maybe.

- Anon

Enough.

You starved me with your *words* and your *lack of acceptance*.

Hidden *between the lines* and in the cracks of context.

Secret *meanings* you conveyed,

Made so obvious in your behaviour.

The *message* was very clear;

“Not Good Enough”.

It hung over every conversation,

Like an ornament on a wall.

Every sideways glance,

Every snide remark and simple comment,

They spoke volumes of your *disapproval*.

I learned my unhealthy habits from what you *communicated* through your own.

Strict rules to follow that, if adhered to, might one day make you “Good Enough”.

The funny thing about this sentiment is that it was *never really attainable*,

Just a vision to look up to, and then down on yourself.

All of this chanted a theme; you didn't love me.

Only choosing to see your *ideal of me*, of how I should be,

Not the 'me' that I was.

Enough.

- Anon



Dreams in a Bottle by Ulvr

The Missing Parts
by Christen

Goodbye old friend
I never really got to know you
Neither of us were ever around to laugh
I thought you were happy for a while
When I was away for a while

Then one day you left
When I was sitting next to you
It clicked in my mind
You faded away
I faded into picture
and they said I had a million problems
but one of them was always you

and you're still here for a while more
Like a snake leaves its skin
No one told me about the isolation
That I was gonna want it when you're gone.

Growing up together
Growing up apart
I was never really there
I was the sibling locked away
Crying through a door

Ill keep your photo in my wallet
See how we look so much alike
And There is no one we can talk to
And There is no one we can blame
But I'm sorry anyway
For sending you away

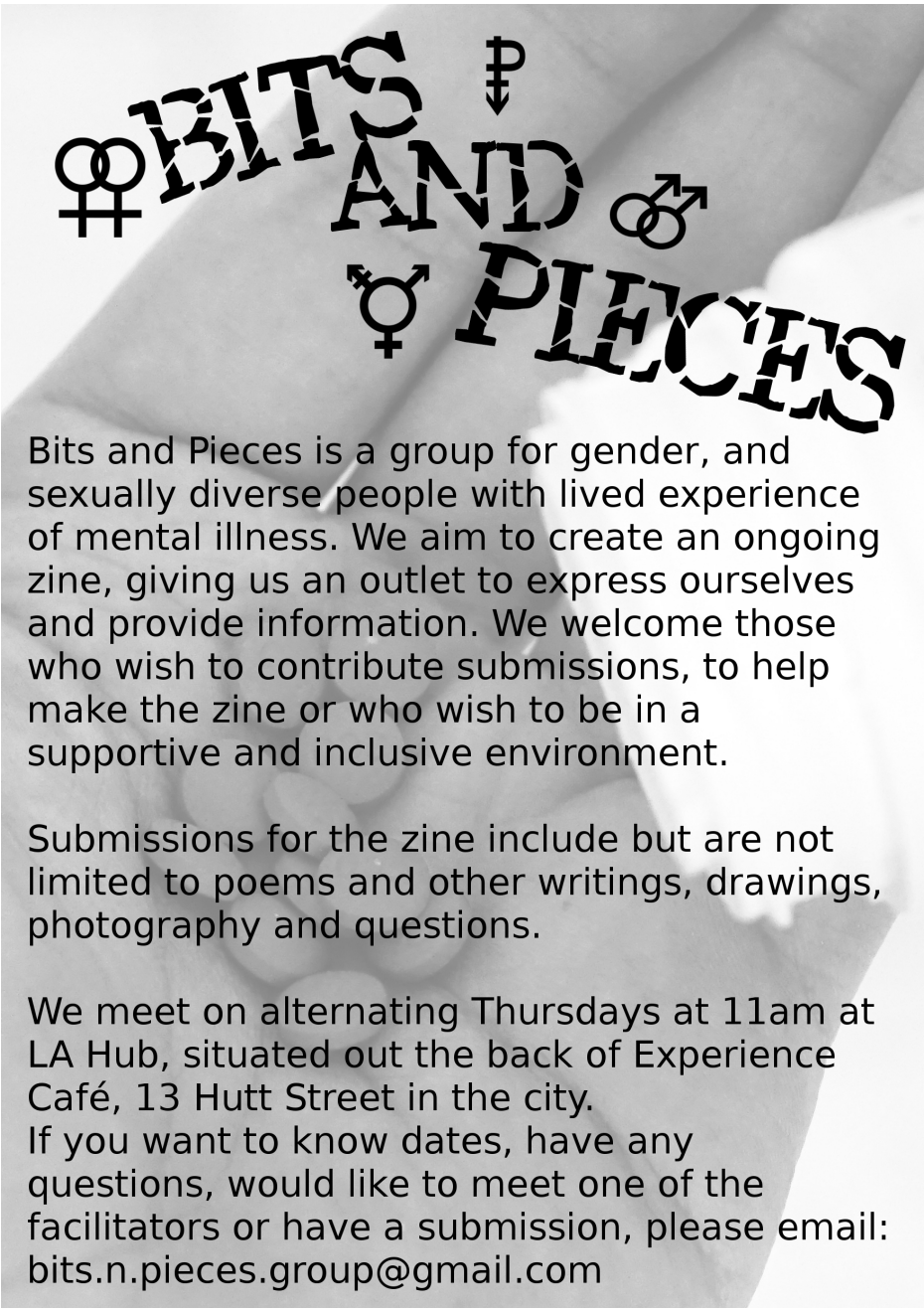
Do you want to contribute a discussion but are finding yourself stuck for ideas?

Here's some discussion points that may prompt your creativity!

- How do you identify? Is it easy for you to define, or difficult?
- How do you practice your relationships? You could discuss your life with friends or lovers, or anything in between!
- How does your mental health impact your life as a gender and/or sexually diverse individual, or vice versa?
- How do you feel about diagnoses? Are they helpful to you? If not how would you define what you experience?
- Have you had experiences with medications? Were they good or bad?

In the next issue there will be a section called 'Ask Wendy' if we get enough questions, so please feel free to email us at the address on the inside of the front cover with any queries in relation to gender, sexuality, mental health or all of the above!

(Wendy is a Mental Health Peer Worker with lots of experience in the field.)

The background of the entire page is a grayscale photograph showing several hands holding and turning the pages of a zine. The hands are positioned in a way that suggests a collaborative or shared activity. The zine's pages are visible, showing some text and possibly illustrations, though they are out of focus.

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We meet on alternating Thursdays at 11am at LA Hub, situated out the back of Experience Café, 13 Hutt Street in the city.

If you want to know dates, have any questions, would like to meet one of the facilitators or have a submission, please email: bits.n.pieces.group@gmail.com