

June 18, 2020 Webinar: Fat & Queer Intersections

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Tigress Osborn (TO): Hi everyone, welcome to the newest installment of our 2020 NAAFA webinar series. I am Tigress Osborn, I am NAAFA's Director of Community Outreach. Today we are gonna be talking about Queer and Fat identity and the intersections of those identities. I'm joined by three very special guests, but before I let them introduce themselves today, I want to just give you a little bit of information about NAAFA for those of you who may be joining us the first time and a couple of announcements and then we'll get right on to our hosts. If you are new to NAAFA, NAAFA is the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance. We are a fifty, now fifty-one year old, civil rights organization working to protect the rights of fat people. And working to improve the lives of fat people. As you can tell from our name and if you have ever encountered us out in the wild we fully believe in embracing the word "fat". We will be using the word "fat" during this webinar, we'll hear from our speakers about what they think about that word and other words for fat folks. But that's what we say around these parts.

Thank you for being here with us. Today's webinar will be in English and it, there are not captions available through Free Conference. We will have a transcript of the webinar available for you at a later date.

I want to tell you that we are very excited, in addition to the three fabulous folks we have today, that we have two upcoming webinars scheduled for June 26th Gloria Lucas from Nalgona Positivity Pride will be joining us to talk about colonialism and its effects on body image. And then in July, and I actually didn't write down the date, if one of the Board Members would please put the date in the chat for the folks who are with us live it's in late July, Nancy Ellis-Ordway will be joining us on a Saturday morning to talk about how weight stigma benefits social policy-makers. So we are gonna be looking at some of the folks who make the rules and talking about how weight stigma works in their favor and what we can do about that.

We also want you to know that we've been hard at work on a new website for NAAFA. NAAFA doing updates to our website, so you can look for that coming soon our current website at NAAFA.com, org, I'm drawing a blank. (<https://naafa.org/>) Bad hosting moment, on our current website, you can always sign up for our NAAFA newsletter, which once a month will give you updates about what we are doing. And, if our Board Chair would kindly put that address, in the correct address for our organizations in the chat as well, I will make sure it gets into the captions on the YouTube video.

Okay, so, with no further ado I'd like to, Happy Pride Month to all of you there are so many things that are going on in the world, that and we were told that because of the pandemic that Pride had been cancelled but we know that Pride "trademark" was cancelled, but that Pride exists throughout our communities in many, many ways, and it's being shown in many ways through the other kinds of social cause protests and especially anti-racism protests and Trans Lives, Pro-Trans Life and Pro-Black Life protests that are happening in the world, all over the world right now. We know that we are seeing Pride in those activities. And we are gonna take the next hour, or so, to talk about Pride and Queer identity and how it intersects with Fat Community. I'm gonna let our speakers introduce themselves to you. And and let's start with Educator Andy. Andy, would you tell the folks a little bit about yourself?

Andy Duran (AD): Yeah, sorry. I'm not used to having someone mute me and unmute me (laughter). So I'm Andy Duran, also known as Educator Andy. I teach sex education, sexual health, and sexual wellness workshops and trainings all across the country and I am 35, I'm from Oakland, CA, I use he/him pronouns. I'm Queer, I'm Trans, Blaxican, so Black and Mexican. I identify as a Bear Cub, and yeah I'm just here, ready to do this.

(off screen) TO: Thanks, Andy. Yarrow would you introduce yourself?

Yarrow Halpern (YH): Sure. Hi, ya'll. My name is Yarrow, I'm also from the Bay Area, from Oakland and Berkeley. And I actually have known Andy since I was a tiny human. So, it's nice to be on a panel with him. I work at an organization called Gender Spectrum and we do education around gender, we do trainings, we work with professionals. We also work with schools. And our overall goal is to make the world safer for Trans, Non-binary, and Gender Expansive kiddos. When I am not doing that, I facilitate groups and workshops around gender, also around race, also around Queerness. And I identify as Black, brown, Indigenous, Queer, Fat, and a lot of other things. Excited to be here. Thank you.

TO: Thank you!

And Trevor would you introduce yourself, please?

Trevor Kezon (TK): Sure. I'm Trevor Kezon. I live in Los Angeles, I'm a writer. I'm a fat, Gay, man. I'm also the co-host of the Big Fat Gay podcast, which actually my, two of my co-hosts, I think, are here right now; Michael and Dan, my husband. So we talk about issues, basically, about being fat and gay and also pop culture politics involving

fatness and gayness. I also had an article published in the New York Times last year about doing Sumo and how that got me interested in going to the gym and what that's like as a fat person. I'm also a member of the Future of NAAFA committee. I got to go to the NAAFA conference last year which was wonderful. And I am looking forward to when that can happen again.

TO: Thank you. I'll just say for our audience, the Future of NAAFA Committee is a group of folks that attended that 50th Anniversary conference last year who are working on helping us with some idea generation and strategic planning about what NAAFA's role should be in Fat Community and how we can be more intersectional and more in solidarity with other with other marginalized groups, other groups who are fighting for their liberation. So thank you for that.

I also realize that I asked people to introduce themselves with their pronouns and I did not say them. My pronouns are she/her and does somebody wanna talk about why it's important for us to all introduce ourselves with our pronouns? Would one of you wanna address that?

(unknown off camera): Sure.

TO: I'm tempted to always be like "Educator Andy", cuz the name "Educator" is literally in Andy's tagline, but it doesn't have to be you, Andy.

YH: (laughter) So, I think it's important to introduce ourselves with our pronouns because you never know what someone's pronouns are, or even if they use pronouns. And so there's assumptions that we make based on folks' appearances but until you ask somebody, you don't actually know. yeah, and consent is important, always.

TO: Thank you. I had also promised our panelists that I would make sure, that that I know we have a wide span of folks that, who again, people from all over the world watch these webinars on our website and join us live, and I just want to make sure everybody is on the same page about some other terminology as well. So, I want to make sure folks understand what all the letters in LGBTQIA+ stand for, and what the plus is. Speakers, do any one of you want to jump in and re-highlight which of those letters you are and say something about what, like your relationship with that terminology? Cuz, I think I heard a T and a G, and I heard some other letters. Like, which ones are y'all's?

AD: (laughter) So, yeah, I'll jump in. So, so, I had said that I identify as Trans, so, that's the T in the LGBT acronym, and that stands for folks that identify as Trans,

Transgender. And, you know, there are lots of many ways that people identify within that. It's an umbrella, so, you know, that would include folks that are Non-binary, that would include folks that are, you know, Trans-Masculine, folks that are Trans-Feminine, etc. So, for myself, I identify as Tran-Masc which is I was born and assigned female at birth and I identify as masculine and male now. So, on the Trans spectrum that would be me.

TO: Andy, before we pass the mic, can you would you say a little bit about that term that you just used, "assigned female"? Why do we say it that way?

AD: So, we like to say assigned female at birth because there's this idea, you know, that a lot of times people kinda feel like "you used to be a girl" or "you used to be a boy" and for a lot of Trans people, they never felt that way, you know. And so, you know, we really wanna kinda reiterate that, you know, it, it's our society that feels like they need to assign a gender on somebody as soon as they are born, so that we can all use that and that's not really very helpful for a lot of us in how we engage with each other and how we, you know, make assumptions about pronouns that we use or traits that we might have or who we date, or everything else. And, so, it's really just kind of a movement of "Hey, this language sucks. And it's not inclusive, and it hurts a lot of us. And so, you know, let's just kind of call it what it is, it's assign, it's not how you identify necessarily."

TO: Thank you. Alright. What is, what about some of the other LGBTQIA+ letters? What else have we got on our panel?

TK: I mean, I identify as Gay. I feel strange talking about it cuz I feel like, especially Gay men, tend to can tend to kinda suck up the air in the room, and not see the bigger picture of LGBTQIA+. So, I don't, I don't really know what to say about that.

TO: Are there other terms that you also like for yourself? That we, that are not part of the acronym?

TK: Yeah, I mean, so within the fat, Gay world Andy was talking about identifying as a "bear cub". I kind of am in this Venn Diagram of, I can fulfill that, but I identify more in the Chub Chaser scene. Which is the Gay proxy to the BBW/FA in the the straight community where I would be a Super Chub, which is like the equivalent of a SSBBW.

TO: And in case anybody who is with us doesn't get those: BBW is Big Beautiful Woman, FA is Fat Admirer, SSBBW is Supersize Big Beautiful Woman. This is all terminology that comes out of nightlife and party life and dating life for, for plus-size folks or, that at least it gets used in those communities. And I will say, as we start as we

start to think about intersections, we are going to get to fatness in a minute, after we get through the rest of the letters. But you know, I often talk about how there are these different segments of Fat Community, we use "Fat Community" as this umbrella, but there's a nightlife segment, there's an adult industry segment, there's a fashion segment, there's an activist segment. And BBW, and the other ones you just said probably get used most in the social life and nightlife, and sometimes adult life sections. They are not always terms that come up in the activist world and since NAAFA is oriented from the activist world, there might be folks out there that are listening who don't, who aren't familiar with that terminology. So, I just wanted to footnote that.

We're gonna pause sometimes to clarify terminology for ya'll, and also, there may be times I have assured our speakers that it is also ok to say "I'm just not gonna define that one. If folks don't know that one by now, they need to look it up." It's totally ok to say that. We know this is an educational moment and any grace that our speakers have in answering these questions should not be assumed as grace that every person in the LGBTQIA community will be showing you every time you have a question. So, I want to thank our speakers again for their patience with these questions, which for some of them, you know, may be things they have said a million times before. Thank you for that, but, yeah, just a reminder, that, like, you don't always get to question folks about all of these things. This is this is a gift we are being given today. Ok, Yarrow, where are you now in the letters?

YH: Yeah, so I identify as Trans, which I don't really name that much, because I feel like I am taking up space when I say that, but I do identify as Trans, and I do identify as Non-Binary. Which, to me, is under the umbrella of Trans. And I identify as Queer. I also identified with other letters when I was growing up. And Queer is what feels the best. But I have definitely had some L moments, some G moments, some B moments. And now I am comfortable in Q.

TO: And do you think that sometimes-I've also heard the Q to be used for people that are Questioning. Is that part, was that part, of your experience of having some other letters?

YH: I guess we talk about congruence at Gender Spectrum and how gender can often feel like you're trying different things and you're circling closer to your truth, but that might mean stopping and a lot of places along the way. So, I don't know that I call it questioning, I would more call it exploring and trying things.

TO: Yeah. Thank you. Okay, so just to, so, we've got "L" is for? Anyone?

YH: Well, I think, traditionally, it stands for Lesbian.

TO (off screen): Have you heard it stand for other things?

YH: (shakes head “no”)

TO (off screen): in this (inaudible) (laughter) ok, and, so we got “L”, we got “G”. What’s the “B”?

Unknown speaker (off screen): Bisexual.

TO: See, we covered “T”, “Q”. “I”. What’s the “I”?

AD (off-screen): Intersex.

TO: Which means?

AD: I feel like at this point these things could be something that people could Google. Just cuz, I, you know, you can probably- it’s pride month you can just type in, like, what is the acronym for LGBT stand for. And that would probably be the best thing to do, if you haven’t done that already.

TO: Okay, I’ll go with that. But I don’t, um... Okay, well I’m gonna say what the others are just because we started it and I don’t want people who are in the others, who are here with us, to feel like we did some of them and didn’t do the other ones. But, you’re right, we don’t have to. We can name them without defining them. If people don’t understand what they are, they can do that research on their own, get what they can out of this conversation, and then do some reading. So, we’ll just go, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual. And the plus, there are lots of things that fall under the plus.

Unknown speaker (off-screen): (inaudible)

TO: Pansexual is the one I think of most often, but I, I also think that you know, there’s this thing that, that people who are less willing to learn about this often say which is, “Like how many more letters are they going to add to that.” And I feel like, if it’s 27 letters long I’m going to say the twenty, like, you know, it’s like, you know, it was four letters when we were saying it, but it doesn’t mean there were only four letters worth of people when we were only saying four letters, right? And so, I, I feel like I’m gonna put all the things, actual letters, if people start putting them as actual letters. I don’t think I’m

the driver of that, but, I'm gonna honor it if people do it. But, in the meantime, that's what that plus is holding space for is for some of those other things that people haven't started using regularly in the, in the list. So, okay, so, let's yeah, so, let's move on from there. I think Andy's right, we don't want to stay too long, on, on just basic definitions. But what is the-

So I told our audience what NAAFA thinks about the word fat. I'd like to hear from y'all what you think about the word fat and what are the other words that you like most to talk about your body? Trevor, will you start?

TK: Sure, so I, I love the word fat, I think it's accurate. I hate when people use euphemisms, like, oh, "big guy" or, you know I personally hate "overweight" because it feels like it is a direct assessment that you are more than you should be. And I know it's- I, I like to use it because I think it kind of takes away the un-, the discomfort that someone might have with being afraid to use it, or even just make them feel more comfortable with it when I'm saying it because I'm fat. And even if they have any kind of fears around that word, I'm a manifestation of that, making it okay. In, yeah.

TO : Thanks. So, Yarrow?

YH: Yeah, so I feel like I've had a journey with the word fat. It was used a lot against me when I was younger as a negative attribute of my body. And, so, learning to reclaim that word and then saying it with pride feels like a really radical act. But I love the word fat. I am fat, I think it's rad. And my boo uses the word "chonky" sometimes to describe me which also makes me super happy. I'll see, he'll (inaudible) will have this like voice that he does and he's like, "Chonky!", and it's like, it makes me really happy so fat and "chonky" are like two words that I, I'm really feeling right now.

TO: Andy?

AD: Yeah, I, I love the word "fat". I also, you know, didn't always. But much like, you know, how I've learned and gained so much power from a lot of the Queer words that were used against me, including the word "queer" you know, I got to reclaim that and an own it and have the power that they tried to use against me with it, and I feel like fat is another one where you know, it, it, you know, I was familiar with that and was like, let's go like you know it's (inaudible) mine now.

So, I also enjoy the word "chonk". So, you know, I don't know if it came from the SNL skits or what, but like, you know, just "chonk" is like a fun one to say, so I echo that.

TO: And I do see “chonk” like that, always spelled with an “O” online, right? Yeah, totally. Yeah, I mean, I, they are euphemisms I like. I think there are lots of euphemisms that are fun. I just don't want them in place of “fat”. I want them in addition to “fat”. Like, I'll take all the words, you know, I'll take all the words.

So, have y'all? Let's talk a little bit, I, let's talk a little bit about coming out. And, and, as sort of a two part, what coming out was like for you, and then whether you think coming into Queer community as a Fat person was different from you than other experiences that you've, you've seen from your peers.

One of the things that I'm thinking in particular about is, many of you saw last, last year that was a pretty big Huffington Post feature about fatness. And in talking to that journalist, he talked a lot about how being Gay was the lens through which he- 'cuz he was not a fat person- and so being Gay and his thinking about his coming out process was a lot, a lot of how, you know, how he came to see the process of fat people going from being fat and not being okay with that to be as you all have described, like, I'm fat. I use that word, I it empowers me, I embrace it, whatever. But, that, that he felt like there was a similar arc. So what I'd like to hear from you about, as much as you're willing to share with us, about what you're “coming out” was like, and then hear from you if you agree with him, that there's a parallel there. 'Cause I think other people try to make that parallel all the time. But I'd like to hear that from Queer identified people about whether they think there is really a parable a parallel there. Like, what's the same about coming out into fatness versus you know, versus coming, coming out as any, any kind of Queer identity.

AD: I think one of the things that is one of the challenges with that is, is it's just like an arc of acceptance. And, you know, there are many people that might embody the identity but how, you know, be in a different place on their level of acceptance of that identity. So, you know, we see folks that are, you know, coming out as Queer but have some so much internalized homophobia that they just don't want that, you know, identity. Or, you know, I see lots of folks, they're, you know, fat, but like feel like that's like a, you know, something they don't want to accept, it's something that they want to change or it's something that they want to have ignored or, or, all these other things. And so you know, they might have very different feelings about fat acceptance and, and that place of coming out to, to where some of us have talked about getting to. I hope, ultimately, that, you know, when somebody learns something about themselves; that they learned to love it. But, it is often hard, and especially hard, when people tell you these things about yourself before you even know or question it to approach it in that way.



TO: Other panelists? Thoughts on coming out and how the process of coming out as Queer parallels or does not parallel the process of coming into a fat identity that you're comfortable with?

TK: I think it's definitely a similar process. I talked about this on the podcast I co-host, where you know you come out. And then, you know, you come out, like, you know, I came out as Gay. My mom, you know, initially had the whole parental freak out but then was very accepting. And then as an adult, as I was kind of getting more comfortable with my fatness, I think in that process of seeing me more comfortable, she had this concern, kind of from the same place where, when, you know, people come out sometimes their parents will say that, oh, you know, but there's concern because they're worried that it'll be harder for you. And I had a similar talk with my mom when I came out as Fat as, you know, saying, "I'm very comfortable with myself. I'm happy at this size. And I know you're worried about me. You may have concerns about my health or how I may be treated." And (inaudible) parents are going to do that with whatever aspects of your life. But, I need you to be comfortable. Like, I need you to be accepting of this. And she's been really great about it. And I think, you know, as Queer people, we, we've gone through this process, probably once already and maybe many times you know in different social circles, at work, at school. But there's a lot of people who don't know how that works. So, you know, trying to come out as fat is a whole new experience for them.

YH: I guess the only parallels that I draw between queerness and fatness are that I think they're both seen as a choice. They're seen as something that you choose. A lifestyle, quote unquote, that you're choosing rather than just an inherent part of your nature. And so I think that there can be a lot of adversity that you face because it's just like, "Well, why don't you just lose weight?", or like, "Why don't you just like try being straight?", or whatever. It's like that there's this idea that there's the norm and that it's the safer choice. The choice that makes more sense. And you're deciding to, like, deviate it from that, and you're like, going against it and it's like, "No, I'm just actually being true to myself. I'm not trying to be radical with it." Like, it might be considered radical but really it's just to me my inherent nature. So, that's where I see that there's a parallel between the two.

TO: Thanks everybody. Have y'all always been fat?

AD: I'll start again. (laughter) I was not always fat. When I was a young youngster, I was a child model and I was very thin, and you know I did like different auditions and photo shoots and stuff from, like, three and a half up to like seven or so. I remember that that's around the age where I started gaining weight. And remember some of the

things that were, like, we were doing. Like regular weight and height test. And test and checking and stuff that we stopped. And then I remember, like, not getting calls for auditions. And I kind of remember us not talking about why, but just like the progression of like, you are no longer, like, able to model. And I feel like that was that was the beginning of like kind of my fat acceptance also. Just kind of like cool you're gonna weigh me anymore? Dope. (laughter)

TO: Did you ever consider modeling as a Fat person. Or have you modeled as a Fat person?

AD: Oh, I model all the time. (laughter)

TO: Are there places where we can see examples of you modeling as a Fat person?

AD: I usually model for different photo projects that folks have done. And so, I can definitely, like, drop some in my social media accounts. There's lots of different people that have done projects on fat bodies, on Trans bodies, on non-op Trans bodies, which, I haven't had any surgeries and so that is also, like, kind of plays a lot into my fatness. So, all of these individual projects are not like in one place. Like, I can kind of, I can link to them if anybody's interested.

TO: I was just curious about your modeling history. I didn't know that piece about you. What about you, Trevor? Have you always been fat?

TK: I would say mostly. I mean there was definitely, I was a fat toddler. I was, like, a skinnyish kid until probably second grade or so and then I was fat again. And I remember, it's funny that Andy was talking about being weighed because I remember going to the doctor, you know, every year and there's always this like, "oh", like, I was him, looking at the chart. And, like, oh you're, it's, it's steady and I remember thinking like, oh okay that's like, it's not like it's normal it's a steady progress and not really getting that it was a "bad thing". Or, you know, that it was being shown to me in this way, that this is supposed to be a bad thing. And obviously, you know I'm a fat adult.

So, it's been this constant thing, but it's also been you know, different degrees of fatness and also geographically- I'm originally from Chicago. and I noticed a big difference in body culture moving from Chicago to Los Angeles. People in Chicago, are just generally bigger. I think it's the, you know, the streets are paved with pizza and Arctic winters that you need to survive. So, I think as an adult, it was the biggest kind of shock in how my perception of fatness kind of shifted was this geographic shift.

TO: Mmhm. Yeah, that, that really can, can make a huge difference. I don't think I said where I am when I was introducing myself. But Trevor's in the LA area. Andy and Yarrow are in the San Francisco/Oakland Bay Area, in Oakland, and I'm in Phoenix. Although, most of my activism around everything was shaped when I lived in the Bay Area. I lived in the Bay Area for 21 years. But yeah, it's, and what happens sometimes in some of those places- like Trevor's talking about Chicago, I've had this experience in Phoenix. It's like, there are more fat people, but there are less fat people who are, like, talk fat liberation-talk. There are more fat people who talk diet-talk, and less fat people who talk fat liberation-talk. At least that's my experience here.

And I want to talk about diet body image in queer community but I do want to give Yarrow a chance to answer that last question first. Have you always been fat, Yarrow?

YH: Yeah, so this is interesting for me to reflect upon because I thought I had an answer immediately when you asked the question, and then, I've gotten a chance to think about it. And I think that I was always made to think that I was fat, but I don't actually think that I was fat until I was in my late teens. But I did think I was, and I thought that it was a negative thing, even before it was my actual identity. So, that's interesting to reflect upon.

I was adopted by two white people. And I think a lot of the colonialism, in my household, and the idea that my body was supposed to look like theirs. And that my that I was supposed to like to eat the foods that they ate and like that my body would behave in the same way that they did if we had the same amount of exercise, was a huge part of like, basically, I feel like my parents created an ED for me as a child.

And that that's, that that's what happened. And, so, I think like re-, like being able to like reclaim fatness as an identity was such a long process because it was enmeshed with adoption, with transracial adoption with you know, people who are supposed to, like, love and care about you but then, like, make you feel terrible about your identity and body. It was complex. But, so, no, I wasn't always fat.

TO: And I see affirmation in the chat room folks that are saying that they were made to think they were fat, even if they weren't. Also, y'all should take a peek at the chat, there are a couple of folks who are giving you particular feedback about your eloquence and just affirming your answers.

Folks, I am going to take questions from the chat in just a minute. I'm gonna pose one more myself to our panelists and then start looking at your questions. So, if you have

something that you want to ask these folks please go ahead and put your questions in the chat and I'll get to as many of them as I can.

So, I want to go back to that issue of body image in Queer community. How, if, is it different than it is in sort of mainstream culture? How is it different? What has your experience been you know, in Queer community as a Fat person? In contrast to what you see has been people's experience in that community any thoughts y'all have about that?

Yarrow, it's on you. So, why don't you go ahead and talk.

YH: Okay. So I don't, this is about like, sorry, just to reiterate your questions. This is about like queer like queerness and existing as a person in the Queer community.

TO: Yeah.

YH: Okay, so I basically don't really mess with the Queer Bay Area Community because I'm fat and the politics around dating while fat and Queer is so scandalous and so inapropo, in the Bay in particular, that I just don't, I just don't even participate. If you are not thin, white, androgynous, whatever that means you're not accepted and no one wants to date you. And it's the worst. So, I don't even, I don't even try to go there. If I meet somebody who happens to be Queer, that's so great. And that's random. It's definitely not something that I'm able to pursue. And it's unfortunate. I definitely feel ostracized by the Queer community, the Bay Area one especially. I'm Bay Area born and raised and I've never felt a part of the community. And I think that it's unfortunate when there's a community that is marginalized and that has gone through so many battles to, to then ostracize another community that has gone through so much. It's very disappointing.

TO: Do you have the opposite? I mean, is the, is the experience the same in the opposite direction that in Fat community you have that experience as a Queer person, of being ostracized even though it's a community that's been marginalized? Like you said, you don't, you don't fucks with the Queer community in the Bay. Do you fucks with the Fat community in the Bay Area?

YH: I do but I will say that they, like, they'll try to ride hard. But then at the same time, like, my identity isn't understood. I'm probably gonna be misgendered. I'm gonna have to explain my gender a lot. There's just not the same level of understanding. And also, the Fat community that I have been around in the Bay Area is predominantly white. And so that's another thing where I'm, like, okay, yeah, we vibe up on this fat level but like

we're not vibing on this- on the fact that I'm multiracial, I'm multi ethnic, like. So, I think, either way, it's, it's, it's disappointing, which is why I'm hanging out at home with my cat.

TO: I'm gonna go to Andy next because Andy is also in the same geographic area. I know that doesn't necessarily mean you're having the same experience of Queer community or Fat community in that area, though. But are you, Andy? Like what, what has your experience been like with being a fat person in Queer community or a Queer person in Fat community?

AD: Super similar. So I will, I will totally reflect that back. That back that like you know, I came out, Yarrow and I both came out as young people, you know, so I came out at like 15. I was super plugged in, going to all the Queer Centers, Youth Centers making LGBT films. I was in the SF Gay & Lesbian Film Festival at 16. Like, I was all up in the community cuz I needed the community so badly as a kid. And the community did not show love to a, to a fat, brown boy. And, you know, like there's some (inaudible) for (inaudible), and, like, you know, like I'm still part of this. This is my city. This is my hood, but in this, as far as dating goes, like, you know, if you- when you said the like the white androgynous whatever that means, like, I used to- at that time I was like, "Oh, God. If you don't look like Shane from the "L Word" no one wants to fuck with you." And I feel like now, it's like if you don't look like Ruby Rose no one wants to fuck with you. And it's like that's real, like, this is, the like, oh cool we're seeing queerness represented. But what kind, right, like, and even when we do see it from like our folks, it's, like, still not our folks of size. It's like, "Oh cool we got, like, you know, Janelle Monae representing, like, all kinds of Queer and Pan identities, but it's also like very, like, you know kind of straight-size, like, a, you know, typical, you know, attraction level kind of thing. And so, I, it is hard.

I definitely spent a long time feeling like I was not as attractive as the friends that I hung out with, not as attractive as the community I hung out with, not as attractive as the people that like you know kicked it with me in, you know, we're like political with me and, you know, like, worked with me but like I wasn't attractive enough. And it really wasn't until I started getting more involved in the sex positive community that I found more acceptance of my queerness and fatness and my fat body. And, you know, luckily for me that didn't come much later. It was in my early 20s. But that was like the, the biggest "we see you where you're at, we'll meet you where you're at" and, you know, that's where I got some love.

TO: And, if y'all don't mind, I, none of us said when we introduce ourselves, anything about our age, but, I know that some of these things about how we fit in in community

they don't, they're not inherently generational but they can have generational things. So, your hostess is 45. Andy, do you mind?

AD: Yeah, I'm almost 36

TO: Yarrow?

YH: I'm 33.

TO: Okay. Trevor?

TK (off screen): I'm 31.

TO: Okay. And Trevor what was, what has your experience been like in the two different communities as a fat guy in Gay community, and as a Gay guy in Fat community.

TK: So in, I mean, I, so I noticed (inaudible) when I was twelve, (inaudible), so much of it was online. Like, basically, you know, when I realized I was gay, the next week I kind of knew that there was this Fat Gay World. Which in some ways made it difficult, kind of, then especially through high school, you know I was part of my school's GSA, Gay Straight Alliance and I didn't, you know I had friends, but I was, I was, you know, fat and I didn't really- I felt this otherness because of that.

But, then kind of going into college and once I started dating I was so in the, this kind of, Ven, you know. I mentioned Venn diagrams before. This center of the Venn diagram of Fat and Gay, that so much of, you know, my dating and also socialization came from this niche that, you know, the generation before me carved out. And so much of my life, is there. And that's really just me because of the internet. I think it's wonderful, especially for these younger generations coming up because there's, you know, we don't see a lot of representation, but people are starting to be able to find that and amplify that. Especially through social media, through Instagram. But I mean I did kind of just work hard to find this little space for myself and so many of my friends are either other fat, Gay men or, you know, chasers that I've dated. And it's this, and everyone kind of knows each other. So, it's this weird small, little enclave.

TO: How do you separate? This is a question that comes up all the time in Fat social life but I don't know how it works, particularly in dating in Queer community. How do you separate whether people are fat admirers or fat fetishizers, or do you separate that? Do you care? Does it bother you? Is that a thing?

TK: Personally, I mean, I-

My experience is, I think, different than a lot of people. I think the-  
For me, the difference between fat admirers and fat fetishizers is consent. And you  
know, am I being humanized? Am I okay? You know, I am-

I said this, I'm like, I'm perfectly okay being objectified but the difference is I am, I am  
open to that I am welcoming of that and when so-

I think it is an issue when someone is objectifying someone else and they don't see that,  
that's an issue and they don't care.

TO(off-screen): Yarrow, I saw you nodding enthusiastically when I mentioned the word  
fetish. Did you have something you wanted to  
chime in about that?

YH: Yeah, well, it's something I've been thinking a lot about because  
to me, I, I'm okay with the admiration, but not like fat fetishization. And I've been on  
websites-

Actually, when current boo and I met on Phoebe, which I feel like neither of us  
particularly feel a connection to the community, but happened to both be on there. I just  
wanted to find somebody who I could date, who didn't care that I was fat, and he wanted  
to date somebody who was fat. That was like the only reason why we were on there.  
And, so, I think it's interesting for me. It's like, I don't want to be performative with my  
fatness. I just want to exist. And I feel like with the fetishization there can be, like,  
activities that I'm not comfortable with, or, like things like that. So, definitely can relate to  
Trevor saying, like, consent with it all.

And I also, like-

I am fat right now. And, I don't know what could change that, but, I wouldn't want  
somebody to be with me simply because of one characteristic physically that I have-  
that can change. Not that I'm wanting it to, but, like I don't know where my life is gonna  
take me. And if the only reason that you're into me is because I'm fat, like, that is not a  
lasting connection. In my opinion.

TO (off-screen): Andy? Did you have thoughts about fetishizing versus admiring?

AD: Yeah, well, I super echo that last comment that Yarrow said about, like the, your identity changing and if you're only into us for that one aspect-

Especially as a trans person you know, it's like, I don't know what my body may look like in five years. I don't know, you know, any of that, you know, so all of these different ways that my identity- as I do that kind of exploration circle that you're kind of talking about or you mentioned- you know, I, I want people that are either down for the ride or down for the individual moments but like no one's like down for something that was like conditional. I'm just, I'm so used to conditional love already, like, that it's like just not how I ride.

You know, and like, as a, as a brown person and as a Trans person I'm already very used to being fetishized. And so I'm not, I'm not here for it personally. Like, you know, I do have folks that, you know, admire, and I feel like that, you know, like somebody asked me recently if I date, like, thin folks. And like, yeah, totally you know like if they're like aware, you know like, then I'm down,

Like you know, they're not gonna put me in this like armed chair and not see like my struggles or you know like all of these other things like you know but if you can see this, then I'm, I'm down and but if you only see it as something that you like and you don't see it as the full experience that I deal with, then, then you can't hang.

TO: When I asked about community, all of you talked about dating. Are there other spaces in Queer community where you feel like fatness works differently than it works in terms of dating? Like in activism, in art, in- I don't know- other areas of the community where you feel like it's a different experience of being fat than it is in the dating part of the community? I'm looking at y'all's faces. No?

AD (starts off camera): (laughter) I mean, I, I think that the community here is dope as far as like, you know, um-

I think that one of the things that our communities needs to work on, as a whole. And we're seeing this a lot right now with the, like, you know, like with, with the folks on like Grindr and stuff like that. And they'll be like, you know, "Oh, I'm not into that. No Fats, no Femmes, no Blacks, no, you know, whatever." And this whole thing of, like, it's just a preference. And like, I think that, like, what's happening right now is, like, the community really needs to, like, look deep into, like, some, like, homophobic, sexist, racist, sizist, ableist shit that we have going on on who we think is like doable to fuck.



Because we all seem to be, like, cool with kickin it with each other. Or, like fighting for each other in certain avenues-

Unknown (off-screen): As just friends.

AD: -or whatever, but, there's, we definitely, I think, you know-

And I think, you know, everybody, including myself included, like, have things that we have just been, like, societally taught to not see as attractive. That's really fucked up. And you know, I remember having to work through that myself to like, you know, be like, "Oh yeah, like other fat people and my own fat body is beautiful. Like, oh my God!" And so, you know, I think that that's really where it's at. It's that thing about attractiveness and dating that seems to be the biggest part but a lot of the other parts seem to be alright.

TO (begins off-screen): Other thoughts on that? Trevor? Yarrow? No pressure.

TK (begins off-screen): I mean, I think, going off of that, aside from that, like-

I think we're seeing this more and more just in the world in general but I would love to see more, you know, thin people from the Queer community standing up for their fat friends, their fat family. Just, I mean, if everyone's standing up for fat people, but the idea of using your privilege, and for, you know, the traditional, you know, fit, beautiful, whatever (inaudible) from these communities, standing up for us using their platforms to talk about these issues.

TO: Yeah. Are, are there people who you think are good examples of folks who are doing that?

TK: I'm trying to think, but I'm-

TO: Not enough for them to come to mind immediately!

TK: (laughter) I mean I would love to, you know, like, Ruby Rose. I don't know.

AD: (laughter) (inaudible)

TK (begins off-screen): (laughter) I mean, I know you know, being in L.A., being in just kind of the, the body capital of the world, in being open with anything related to fatness- I often have to deal with, you know, with opening up and showing, like, I'm okay with

this and everything. And people often you know vomit their body issues on me, or just want to know everything about, like, how is that possible.

AD: Yeah.

TK: So, for people just to be able to do some of that work on their own. And also just be like, my, um-

I do pilates. My pilates trainer used to be fat. But he always talks about when he was overweight. He's very attached to the word overweight, even though I said, like, "No, but that's actually, I think one of the offensive words, you could use." And praising my- how comfortable I am, but then kind of beating on himself in the past. And just seeing that you can, you know- there's, there's so much around body culture. And I wish people could have those discussions without us necessarily doing the heavy lifting.

TO: (begins off-screen): We do have one question in the chat. We have a few more minutes. We started a couple of minutes late. (inaudible) Can you stay for another 10 minutes-ish.

Unknown (off-screen): Oh, yeah.

TO: Okay, we're gonna hang in there a little bit longer. Audience, we'd love to have you stay as long as you can.

The question in the chat was about thinking about intersections between fatness and asexuality. And that's part of the reason that I asked the question about dating. I mean, I, I get it that asexual people also date. But I think that looks different than dating for other identities. Or, maybe it doesn't maybe I'm wrong about that, but I know none of you identify as asexual but do you have thoughts just about what you've seen in community about asexuality and Queerness?

I can't see Andy anymore so I don't know if he is nodding.

AD (begins off-screen): Uh weird. (laughter) I wasn't nodding, but, I, I'm here. And you know, I'm a sex educator so we talk about asexuality a lot and how that's something that, you know, unfortunately, a lot of people don't know a lot about and folks that are asexual, like, receive a lot of, like, pressure and expectation, like, from people that are, like, trying to date them, or parents that are like, "You should be dating or getting married, or blah, blah, blah." You know, all these kinds of things. You know, like and so I

imagine that the fatness aspect would definitely play into it. How, I don't know personally.

But I do know that as far as some of the things that I've seen, you know, directly, I've had friends who have, you know, not identified as asexual, but just kind of have, you know, kind of assumed that they would not and could not date, as a fat person. And that's different, but it's definitely something that, like, has been, like, a challenge. Or, something that I've seen a lot, is this kind of, like, asexual by default, or kind of like, kind of like a non-sexualized fatness that people feel. And that's something that's really shitty.

I've had a lot of fat friends that are like, "Damn, like, I can't believe that, like, you have, like, have as many dates as you do, you know, things like that, you know, because of the projection of their own feelings that they have with that.

Again, that's different from asexuality, but I also can imagine that there is a level of folks that, you know, may not have even really kind of dealt with, like, kind of, where's this coming from?

TO: Yeah, that's a really good point. I think that there's a tendency- when it comes to stereotyping fat people- there's a tendency to either completely desexualize fat people or to completely over-sexualize fat people. And you know, we're people. (laughter) That's it.

Do either- Yarrow or Trevor, did you have any thoughts in response to that question about asexuality in Fat community? Ok.

If there are other questions in the chat, we probably have time for just a couple more questions.

In the meantime, while y'all type those out. I think that, Yarrow, I didn't give you the chance to answer the last question that I had the other two panelists answer about. Was it, was it fetishizing? Was it that one? No.

Oh! It was about Queer community when it's not dating, what other aspects of queer community, and, and whether being fat is- like, what the experience of being fat is in, in Queer community when it's not about dating.

YH (begins off-screen): Yeah, I think, when it's not about dating there can be a lot of tokenization that happens. And a lot of expectation of, like, labor, and expectation of

education. And I also want to say that I feel like fat phobia is one of the last socially acceptable forms of bigotry. And that I feel like every community is comfortable being fatphobic and anti-fat. And that's actually something that kind of seems to bring folks together. Even just in the news recently, like, everyone tearing Trump down for being fat. I think he's a terrible person. His fatness doesn't have anything to do with me thinking he's a terrible person. And so that interesting thing where it's like, well, but he's like, well, such a bad person. Yeah, and I don't know why we had to drag fatness into that. Like, I don't know how that had anything to do with him being terrible. Like, there are literally endless examples of how he's terrible, and none of them have (inaudible).

TO (begins off-screen): (inaudible) whole family of terrible thin people.

YH (off-screen): (inaudible)

TO: (laughter) (inaudible) Sorry.

YH (begins off-screen): But, it's this thing that, that happens and it's a thing that, like, it's this, like, default joke that we go to and it's like this like meme that people feel comfortable-

Even these, like, this Queer page that I follow, like pretty religiously follow their work and really love the thought provoking things they are coming out with, and they just posted this video of someone in a fat suit. And I'm just like, are you kidding? Like, are you serious right now? So, it is just one of those things that it's like, folks just feel comfortable doing it.

It is so, in, in, entrenched in our culture. It is just such a thing that people feel comfortable doing. And even at work, like, the micro and macro aggressions about like, "Oh, like, put away the doughnuts, I don't want to eat one." Like, it's just like, I don't need to hear about that deal with that your-

You put away the donuts and keep it to yourself. I don't, I don't care. So, it's just this weird thing that like everyone's, like everyone agrees, pretty much, that, you know, homophobia is inappropriate. We're, apparently-

Last week, we started realizing racism was inappropriate. And, so, I just feel like people are catching on to, like, different -isms. And that is not one of them. That, like, it's just like, it's like the unspoken rule. Like, like, "Don't be, you know, don't be inappropriate to people, unless they're fat." And I feel like that is entrenched in the Queer community. Like regardless of dating or not.

TO (begins off-screen): I think it's really challenging to talk about, to talk about what, what you're talking about fat phobia because I have said- I'm just gonna, you know, like- this is me. I have spent much of my life as a Black Fat activist, in predominantly white Fat community, trying to get white people to stop using the phrase that you just used, that "Fat is the last acceptable form of prejudice", and it sounds so different, coming from someone who is a member of another marginalized community than it sound where I've usually heard it which was coming from white people who are trying to use it to avoid talking about those other, all those other issues you just talked about. Right. And so it's really complicated to talk about because there are ways in which there is truth to that both socially and legal. Right? Like there are ways you can legally discriminate against fat people that you can't discriminate against other people. Or, that the only reason you can't is because those fat people are also disabled so it's somehow covered by the ADA. Or, because obesity has been pathologized or you know, made into a disease and, and so then, then you can get it but not really because you're fat because there's something else. And like, you know, so, there are, so, there are all these ways where it's true, like, we don't have protections as fat people that some other groups have. We don't have social protection in some ways, we don't have access to things in some ways that other groups do. And, but it sounds so different talking about that in community and this is part of-

One of NAAFA's goals has been really looking at what intersectionality means. And really looking at how it's not just about highlighting the ways that we have things in common, but also the way that we don't.

Unknown (off-screen): Yeah.

TO: And one of the ways that we don't, as folks for many other marginalized communities is that we are fully aware of the ways that the other discriminations are still working. So, when we talk about how bad fat discrimination is, we're not using that as an escape hatch (inaudible) some of the other ones.

AD: Yeah.

TO (begins off-screen): And so, so, I just think it's, I think it's important to footnote that difference. And that's one of the reasons why what you talked about earlier, Yarrow, about being in, being in Fat community and being the only Queer person of color may be a different experience than being in F community and being a Queer person who is not a person of color. I think, lots of are, lots of art that activist elders will tell you that the

fat liberation movement was predominantly especially on the West Coast, predominantly a movement by lesbians and I think those, those Lesbians would refer to themselves as Dykes. Right? It's a Dyke movement.

AD: Yeah.

TO (begins off-screen): In many, many ways but it's also, like, very specifically a white Dyke movement in many ways. Like, there are clearly key, important, throughout the decades of fat liberation activism, key, important people of color, especially women and Femmes of color, who have been instrumental to Fat activism. But, also, the fact that they're, you know, that there's like a historical roots are fat activism that has something, that has a clear overlap with the Queer community. And yet, Queer people of color are saying, "Oh, but, I don't feel that when I come in." You know? I think that's really important.

AD: Mmhm.

TO (begins off-screen): Thank you for highlighting both of those things. do y'all have- Trevor, Andy- Do you have other reactions that you want to have (inaudible) last acceptable prejudice?

AD (begins off-screen): Well, I'm really glad that you said what you did because I can imagine that there's lots of people, maybe even, like, some, you know, savvy white, like, you know activists, that are like tweeting it right now. Like, because, like, Yarrow said it. And, probably, you shouldn't. and if you did, delete it. (laughter) Because, you know, it's not something that, like, should be really said by white folks that don't experience those other experiences of oppression to know any of that.

But I do think that, you know, it's one of those things that I mean, I- I am many identities, and every single one of them has taught me that I don't fit in. You know, like, I am, you know, biracial. I am, you know, like- I- when I was figuring out my gender, and like you know bi-gendered, of sorts. And, when I was, like, you know, like, figuring out my sexuality and, like, I love dudes and I love other people, you know and, like, all of that. Like, all of those things, I didn't fit into the other kind of identities or molds. And, fatness is really similar, you know, in that same regard, and I'm used to physically not sitting into spaces (inaudible) clothing, you know, everything. And, so in a lot of ways, there is the overlap, it is incredibly intersectional but they are not, they are not the same oppressions. They just are intersectional and intertwined. And like Yarrow said, they, you know, it exists within every community so we're gonna receive it in every community, which is the bottom line.

TO (begins off-screen): Thank you. Trevor, do you have any thoughts on that?

Ok. Um.

YH (begins off-screen): Can I say something about intersectionality really quick?

TO (off-screen): Yes, please.

YH: Yeah, so I was listening to a colleague of mine, Erica Woodland, and (inaudible) was talking about intersectionality the other day, and I jotted this down. Intersectionality is not about identity, it's about systems of oppression, and it specifically came out of looking at the legal system. And I just think that's important to note and to remember. Yeah.

TO (begins off-screen): Thank you. I promised our panelists-

Let me just check and see if there are any last questions. No last questions I see from the chat and I promised our panelists that I would end with this question: Is there something that I did not ask you about that you think it is really important to talk about as we think about where fat community and where Queer community- or where your personal experience and Queer experience overlap? Is there something that I didn't ask you about that you really want to share?

AD (begins off-screen): I'd love to see more, like, in conversation about fat acceptance in the Trans community especially. Because I know that one of the things that I tend to see that in, like, kind of Trans supportive media or anything is, is all about, like, kind of the, like, you know, the "Look how well these people pass. Or, like, look how fit these Trans guys are. Look at their muscles. Don't they look like every other like cis guy you've dreamed of?" And it's like this kind of, like, just, you know, doing the same kind of, like, shitty messaging that, like, folks have been doing already and, like, we're just perpetuating it in our own community and I think we need to not do that. You know, and I think that, that's something that, like, you know, it's like there's many ways to be trans, you know, and not all of them are about, like, passing quote unquote or any type of identity like that. You know, and I think that, like there's, you know when we talked about different types of bodies and body acceptance, that also include, like, bodies that, you know, are big. Bodies that have lots of folds. Bodies that haven't had different surgeries, or, maybe, you know, or have. And, like, I'm really kind of like embracing the fullness of Trans-ness without it being just, like, "Let's see if we can now build the perfect body in, you know, within our own community, you know, so.

TO (begins off-screen): Thank you. Trevor, you have any thoughts about-

I mean things we didn't ask you about that you think are important for folks to think about.

TK (begins off-screen): Not that I can think of. I think that there were a lot of wonderful areas covered in this discussion.

TO: Okay. Thank you.

Yarrow, anything from you? I wish we had talked about "fill in the blank."

YH: No. I'm, I'm good.

TO (begins off-screen): Okay, so we'll just close by-

I'll remind everybody that if there were things that you things that you'd like to revisit, brilliant quotes that they said that you didn't get jotted down that you are welcome to that you are welcome to revisit this on our website and on our YouTube channel, we'll have a recording up soon and a transcript soon.

And I'll ask our panelists just to close by telling folks where to find them if they want to follow them in real life things that they are doing or online things- online is also real life, but, you all know what I mean- online things that y'all are doing or not online things that y'all are doing. And, also, as you shout yourselves out, if there's anybody in particular who- other fat Queer folks- that you think people should be paying attention to that you just love, and that you think other people should be following, you are welcome to mention them now too.

Trevor, let's start with you, how do we listen to the Big Fat Gay Podcast? And, where else can we find you online?

TK (begins off-screen): You can get the Big Fat Gay Podcast on Stitcher (<https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/the-big-fat-gay-podcast>), Apple podcasts (<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-big-fat-gay-podcast/id1492958651>), Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/show/1ABZt7BLwr17Hqu7bf6uyf>). Follow us at Big Fat Gaypod on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/bigfatgaypod/>) and Twitter. The Big



Fat Gay Podcast on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/bigfatgaypod/>). You can follow me on Instagram or Twitter at @treeboir (inaudible) T-R-E-E-B-O-I-R.

TO: Okay. And anybody else you want to shout out? No pressure. I didn't prep them in advance for this, audience, so, if they don't think of anybody, it's not because they don't care about those people. I did not tell them in advance that I was going to ask them to shout out others.

TK: Yes. I'm- Lindy West (<https://www.instagram.com/thelindywest/>), Ady Del Valle ([https://www.instagram.com/\\_adydelvalle/](https://www.instagram.com/_adydelvalle/))( <https://www.facebook.com/adydelv/>), a third person. (laughter)

TO: Ady Del Valle, I'm gonna second that one. If y'all don't know, Ady, (inaudible) most, like, fabulous models of all time.

I will tell our panelists if you have thoughts later, you can give me those and I'll put them in our NAFAA newsletter, as other folks that you should follow.

Andy, where can people find you?

AD: I am Educator Andy on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/EducatorAndy>) and Instagram. About my Instagram, it's private, but if you send me a little message that you were watching this and you want to be friends, I will add you. And if you're in the Bay Area, you can find me everywhere. (laughter) I (inaudible) running, mostly doing karaoke or selling sex toys. And I'm so thankful to be here. Thank you for having me. And, someone that people should follow is you, Tigress.

TO: Thanks. I am I of The Tigress in my non-NAAFA life (<https://www.facebook.com/iofthetigress> )( <http://iofthetigress.com/>)( <https://www.instagram.com/iofthetigress/>). And, we are NAAFA Official on Instagram ([https://twitter.com/NAAFA\\_Official](https://twitter.com/NAAFA_Official))( <https://www.facebook.com/EqualityAtEverySize>) in our official capacity.

And Yarrow, anyone you want to shout out and where can we find you?

YH: Yeah, so I want to shout out Shooglet, who is an artist and takes photos and does art of fat people. I'm currently staring at the calendar that they made, which affirms me daily. And they're on Instagram at Shooglet (<https://www.instagram.com/shooglet/>), S-H-O-O-G-L-E-T. And, also Shoogs Art - S-H-O-O-G-S-A-R-T. (<http://shoogmcdaniel.com/>)

And I'm on the gram as well. My handle is at Oakland, O-A-K-L-A-N-D, Bae, B-A-E.  
(<https://www.instagram.com/oaklandbae/>)

TO: Alright, well thank you everybody for being here. Once again, Yarrow Halpern, Trevor Kezon, Andy Duran- our very special guests for our Pride panel this month.

And we'll see you back in, next week with Gloria Lucas of Nalgona Positivity Pride talking about deconstructing de-colonializing body image. So hang out for a little bit longer before- I'll hang out a little. We'll stop the recording here, but, if y'all want to hang out in the chat a little bit longer I'll leave it open for a minute just so people can put their links in there. Or, people in the chat want to connect with each other, you have time to put your contact information in. So we'll give you another five minutes in the chat but we're going to stop the recording for the webinar now.

-END-