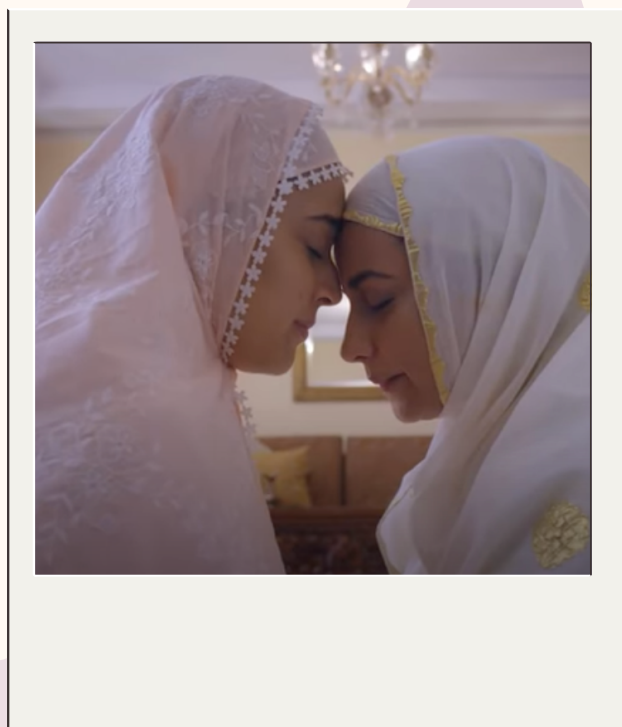




# WITNESSING TRANSFORMATION

a workbook to accompany the film

*Sheer Qorma*

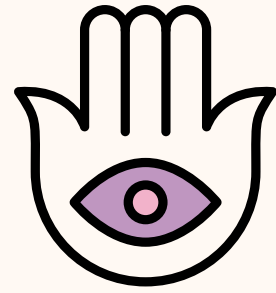


Created by Queer Crescent @2022



QUEER  
CRESCENT

# Introduction



Queer Crescent is excited to offer this resource to accompany the complex film *Sheer Qorma*, written and directed by Faraz Arif Ansari. We hope this resource helps you along your healing journey towards wholeness and dignity.

Queer Crescent is a U.S. based nonprofit organization where LGBTQIA+ Muslims are building possibilities towards collective liberation. Our work is shaped by resisting gendered violence and islamophobia through cultural organizing, base-building, and defining Muslimness as an inclusive racialized identity



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# How to use this resource

We recommend you use this resource to reflect on how this art touches your own experiences. We believe Sheer Qorma offers possibility mapping for relational work, with community and family-of-origin alike, on how to heal queerphobia.

Consider sharing this resource with siblings and other family members directly, to support the growth and reflection of your beloveds.

On the following page are tips for engaging with the toolkit. Take what works, leave the rest.

# Tips for engagement



**Take YOUR Time:** heart work can conjure painful and emerging feelings. Take your time with this work, stay hydrated and call in community for support.



**Pair Share:** we don't have to do this work alone! Enlisting loved one(s) to explore this resource together can support the pace and space you need to move through the content.



**Create a Supportive Container:** honor your heart in this work by offering a luscious, love-filled container to be held in while you do this work. Light candles, set an intention, drink chai. Ask for what you need bbs.



**Reflect:** Who are your people?



# Themes

Sheer Qorma illustrates common experiences faced by many LGBTQI+ Muslims including grief and loss; repair and reconciliation; and reparenting. Through the characters and the choices they face, community is also given a roadmap on how transformation can be achieved at various places - whether parent, sibling, partner or self.



## REMINDER:

Make space for yourself and honor your needs as you move through these themes. Take a deep breath.

# I. Grief & Loss

Beginning with the opening scene of the film, grief is saliently felt throughout this film. The ways X and their partner are invisibilized compared to the doting over their brother and partner experience. The ways X is othered within their own family. And simultaneously there are moments of resistance, however small and subtle, they create a balm to take in the story that is cloaked in loss.

Grief and emotional exile for LGBTQI+ Muslims is compounded by the islamophobic and cultural violence many Muslims face across the globe. This creates a feeling of loss and searching for belonging. In this film we can feel viscerally how we are anticipating the loss, activating our defenses and anxiety.

**How do you define grief? Write it out.**



## **JOURNAL & REFLECTION**

When you lean into the feeling of grief, who do you think of? What do you wish you could say to whoever comes to mind? Where do you feel the grief in your body?





## JOURNAL & REFLECTION

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for journaling and reflection. The background of the box is a light lavender color.



## LEARNING & GROWTH



READ: *Grief Belongs in Social Movements, Can We Embrace It?* By Malkia Devich Cyril for In These Times



WATCH: First season of POSE  
- Available on Netflix, HULU, and FX



Art by Jeanette Chan – I sit with my grief. I mother it. I hold its...



## PRACTICES

**Build a practice of imagining beyond the harm.**

Your imagination is a powerful tool to practice experiencing the dignity and connection you deserve and are longing for. This could look like meditation with affirmations, taking in nature, and role playing difficult conversations in ways that allow you to embody your power and grief.



## PRACTICES CONTINUED

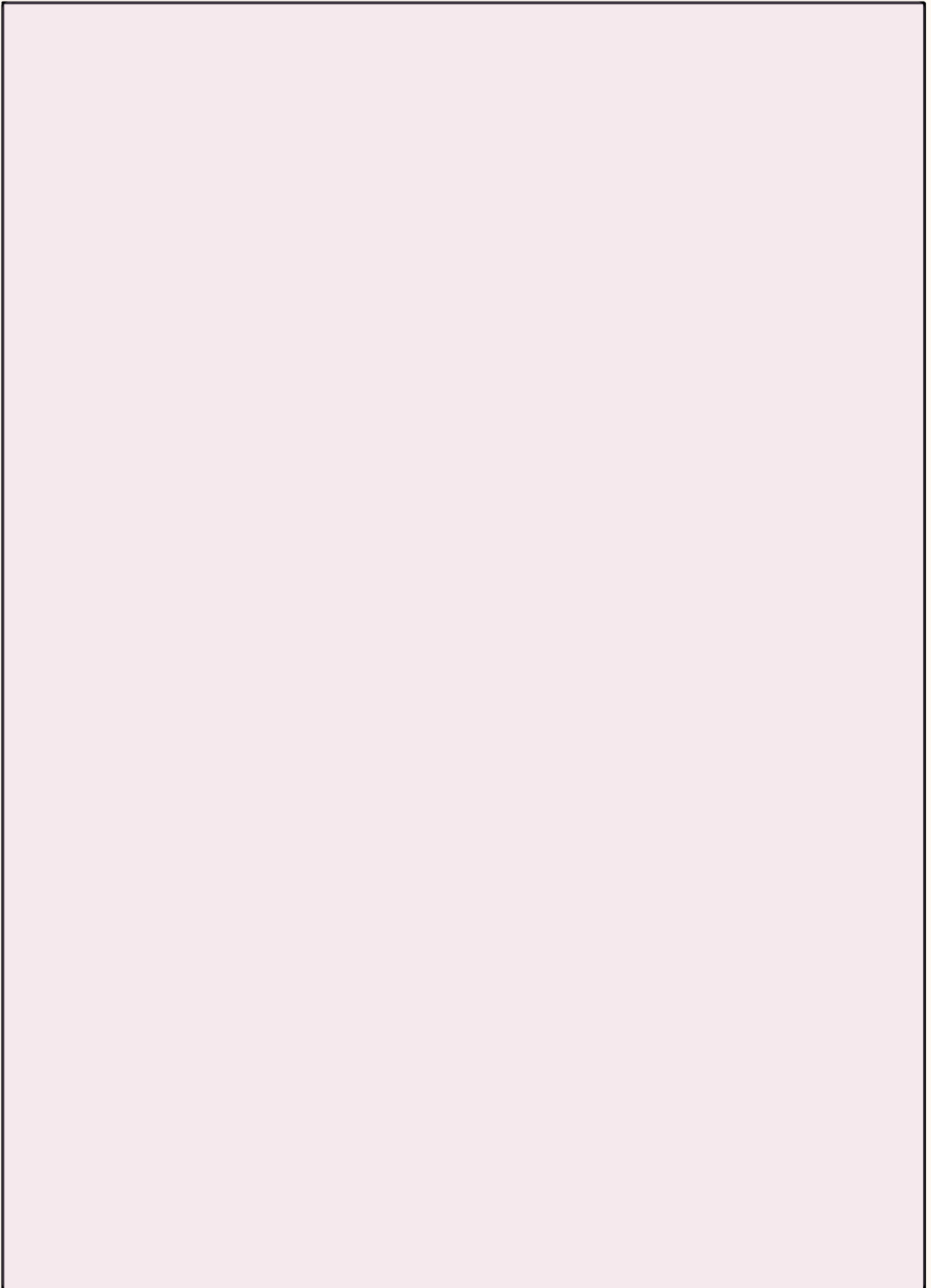
**Develop a community where you can bring your full self.** The weight of code-switching and feeling like there is space to bring only part of yourself, can be taxing emotionally. Building community and chosen family can be a powerful antidote to this erasure of self.



## QUICK NOTES



# Grief & Loss Notes



## II. Reconciliation

Many queer Muslims struggle with the notion of reconciliation of many things. To reconcile queer and Muslim; to reconcile the version of us before and after coming into our queerness; to reconcile between grief, pain, and joy. The idea is that reconciliation often suggests something may be incompatible. Perhaps being queer and Muslim is inherently divinely compatible? To be queer can mean to love by transcending the bounds of gender. To be queer is a gift from God and is at its core a spiritual experience.

*So how can love be a sin? When Allah swt is the origin and cause of love. Allah never stops loving you because his love is eternal and has no beginning or end. Love is not something Allah does, love is something Allah is and it is often queer love that creates our love for humanity. It is queer love that creates radical self-love, it is queer love that shows you the unconditional bounds of care in the way Allah loves all his creations. Perhaps the reconciliation process is to see queer and Muslim as bountiful love and inherently compatible.*



## **JOURNAL & REFLECTION**

What does being queer mean to you? What does being Muslim mean to you? How do these lived experiences merge beautifully and how have you struggled with co-existing with these identities? How has Islam empowered you to queer your love?

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## LEARNING & GROWTH



READ: Inviting In vs. Coming Out By Darnell Moore for Feminist Wire (parts 1 & 2)



WATCH: Ilk عِلْق – (Per)forming a Queer Arab Muslim Futuristic Vision



## PRACTICES



READ: Secrets of Divine Love

*Grab a notebook and a pen and take a walk out in nature (beach, desert, mountains, forest, jungles, river, lake, or wherever else on Earth that calls to you). Allow your heart to choose something around you to meditate on or to just simply notice. It can be the waves at the ocean, a tree, a mountain, an animal, a flower, a sand dune, a shell, or even a stone. Take a moment to write down certain qualities that you witness in this natural object. Is it majestic, beautiful, soft, strong, kindlooking, or intricate? Can it move? Can it create life or take life? If it could speak, what would it say? Really listen. Write down whatever comes up for you.*

(From Secrets of the Divine Love, p.61)



# Reconciliation Notes



# III. Reparenting

A reparenting process looks like revisiting the core wounds and hurts where our caregivers and family may have failed us.

When we revisit these wounds, we tend to those parts in a compassionate way by giving ourselves the love we always needed. If your caregivers never told you they were proud of you, if they made you feel like you weren't good enough, if you constantly fight against proving your worth, then reparenting can be extremely healing.

For LGBTQI+Muslims, this is often compounded by navigating homophobia and transphobia and can show up in feeling as though one is punished for being the authentic self Allah created. Beginning the process of reparenting starts by learning what **radical self-love** is, often shown to us by our chosen family and community.



## **JOURNAL & REFLECTION**

What does your queer inner-child need at this time in your life? How has your queer inner-child been nurtured by community and your intimate relationships?

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## LEARNING AND GROWTH



READ: "How I Have Been Reconnecting With My Queer Inner Child During Quarantine" by Rowan O'Brian for In Magazine



READ: Adult Children of of Emotionally Immature Parents by Lindsay C. Gibons (book and workbook)



## QUICK NOTES



## PRACTICES

**Offer affirmations and care to the wounded parts of yourself.**

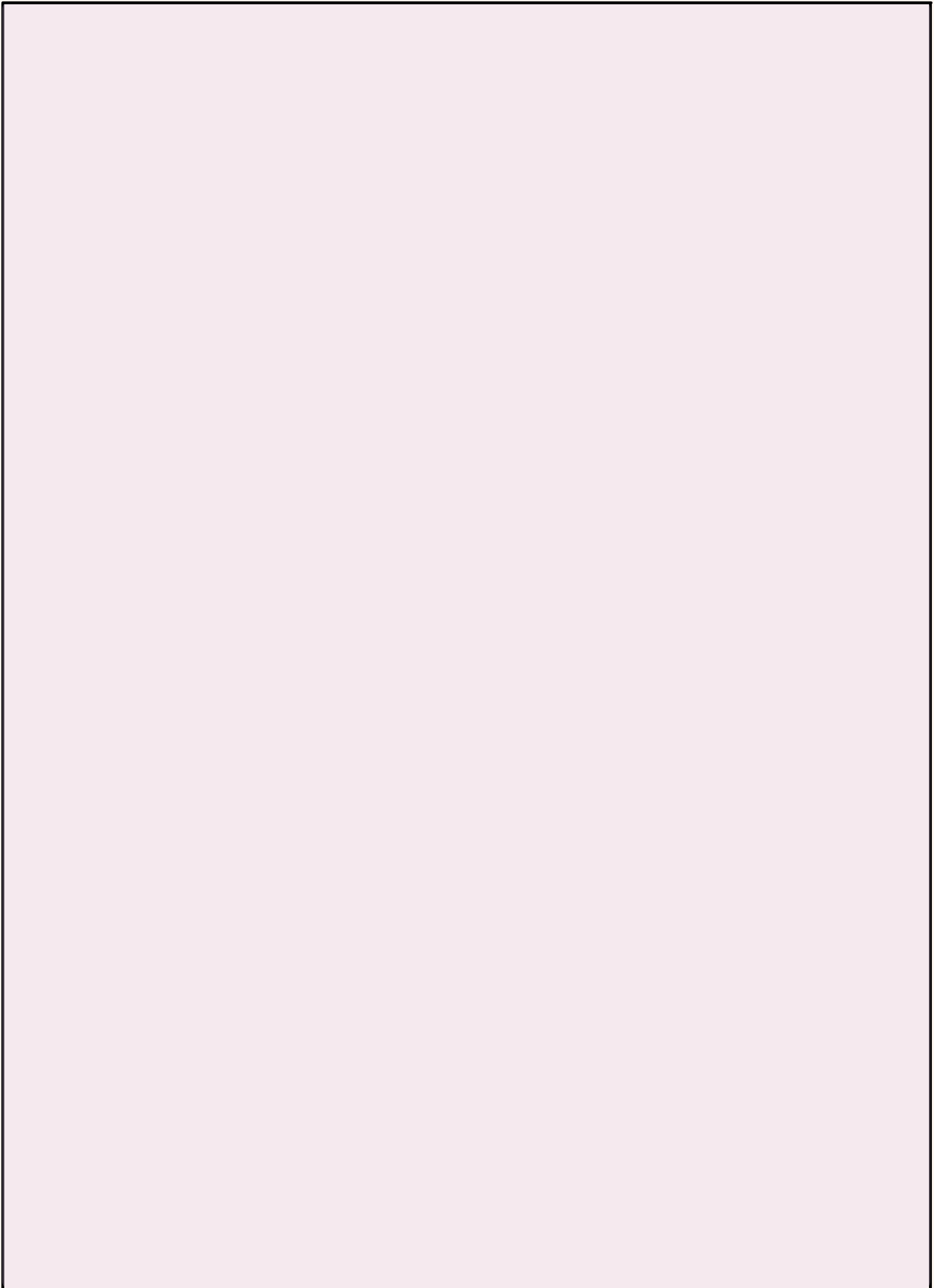
"I am so glad you were born. You are a good person. I love who you are and am doing my best to always be on your side. You can come to me whenever you're feeling hurt or bad. You do not have to be perfect to get my love and protection. All of your feelings are okay with me. I am always glad to see you. It is okay for you to be angry, and I won't let you hurt yourself or others when you are. You can make mistakes – they are your teachers. You can know what you need and ask for help. You can have your own preferences and tastes. You are a delight to my eyes. You can choose your own values. You can pick your own friends, and you don't have to like everyone. You can sometimes feel confused and ambivalent and not know all the answers. I am very proud of you."

~ Pete Walker

**Build an altar of love to your younger self.** This could include photographs of importance from your childhood, as well as pictures of your younger self. Welcome in reconnecting with your former self to validate and honor the feelings that were were not held in the past.



# Reparenting Notes



## IV. Family Roles

Each family has a system in place that consists of members who each hold a different role. Your current family system is influenced by those who came before you and the intergenerational trauma passed down which created the current structure. The role of caregivers, siblings, and extended family are also impacted by multiple layers which include multiple forms of islamophobic violence, state-sanctioned violence, culture, religion, historical trauma, etc. Family systems are often complex because each person contributes to the dynamics of upholding the structure, starting with your caregivers. Your caregivers will shape the way you see yourself and others.

In collectivist cultures, families are often an extension of their community and tend to operate together. This can be especially challenging for LGBTQI+ Muslims who not only have to navigate their queer and gender journey within themselves and their families but within a larger community. All while resisting the hyper-individualism of colonial societies. You may struggle with finding a balance between your role within your family who raised you and trying to create a chosen family and community for yourself.



## JOURNAL & REFLECTION

What is the culture that has been created within your family that impacts your relationship to your queerness? For example, do you find that your family has put you in the role as the savior, fixer, or caretaker? Do you feel an immense pressure to hide out of safety and fear while also valuing the relationships you hold with your family? Take some time to ponder and reflect on these questions of grayness and uncertainty.



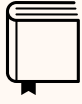
**JOURNAL & REFLECTION**

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## LEARNING & GROWTH



READ: How the Black queer community is re-imagining the family tree



WATCH: Activists Discuss Being LGBTQ+ in the Arab World | NowThis



LISTEN: Bad Brown Aunties, Episode 6 Fariha: Self-Care is Survival



## PRACTICES

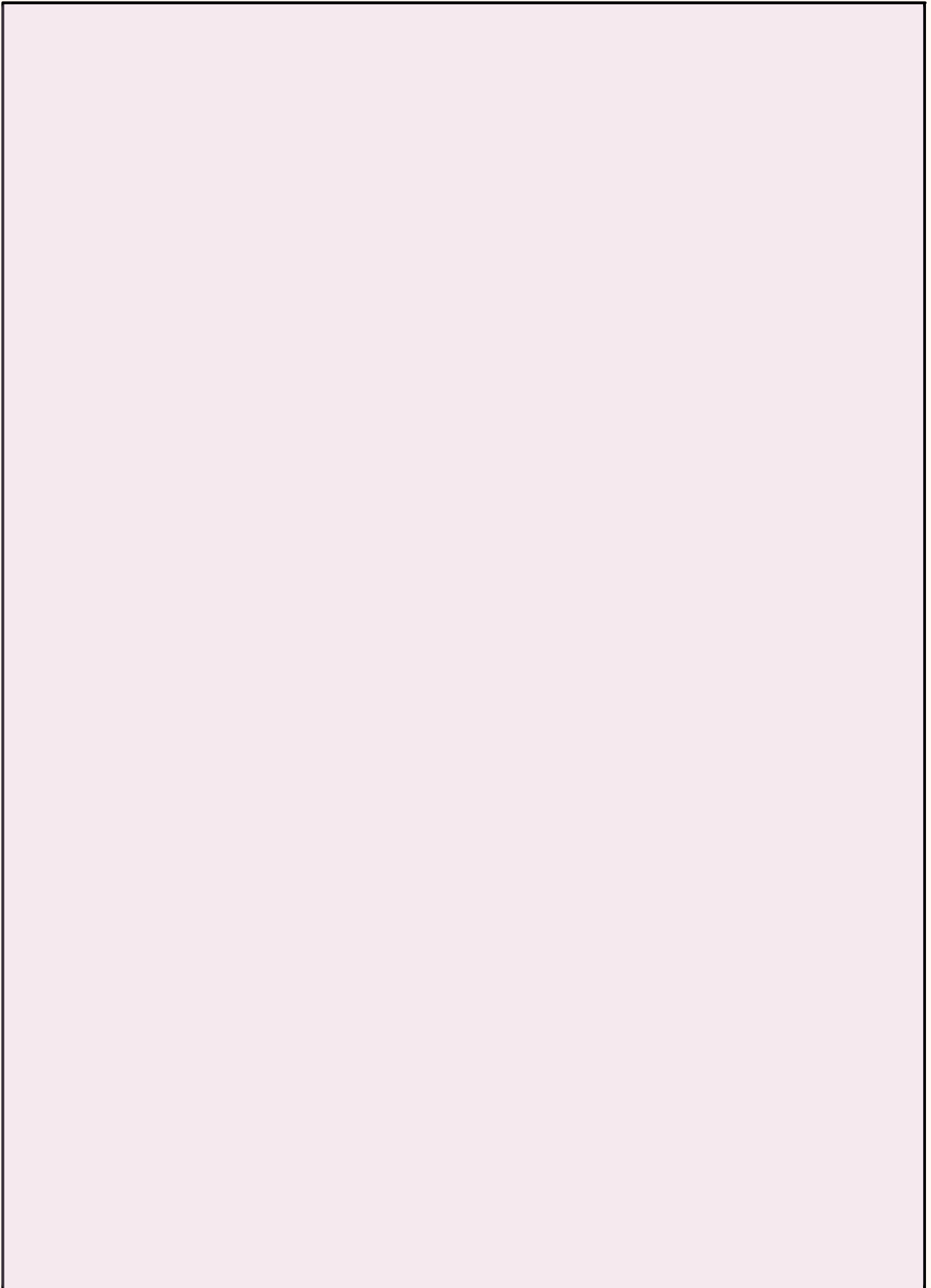
Tell 3 beings how much you care about them in your own way. It could be a friend, a fur baby, a nibling, plants and the earth, a mentor, God/Allah, someone you admire online, and really anyone who has shaped your life in some way and accepted you for YOU.

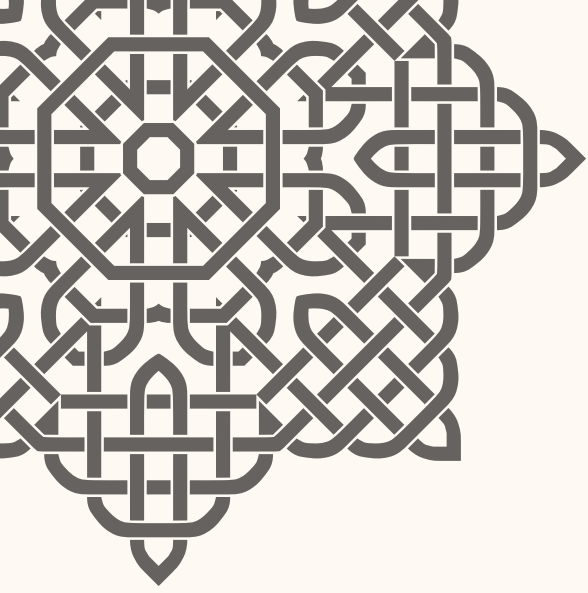
Practice this often.

Build a pod of chosen family, support practice mutual support and reciprocal relationship. Plan and prepare for ways to show up for each other in crisis using this Community Care Support Plan tool by BEAM.



# Family Roles Notes





# Resources

## **Comprehensive Resources:**

[Queer Healing Resources](#)

[Queer Muslim Resource Guide](#)

[@peersupportspace | Linktree](#)

## **Affirmative Therapy and Mental Health Care:**

[Abolition Centered Care Provider Database](#)

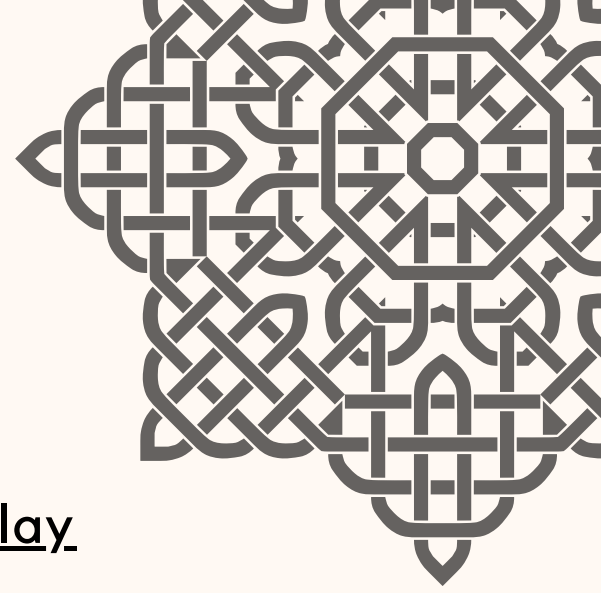
[Inclusive Therapist Directories](#)

[How to be culturally competent when supporting LGBTQ+ Muslims](#)

## **Boundaries:**

### **Family/Friends/Work**

[build-a-boundary\\_workshop\\_replay](#)



## **Non Carceral Crisis:**

Trevor Lifeline 866.488.7386

Trevor Text. Text START to 678678

LGBT Youth Talkline 800.246.7743

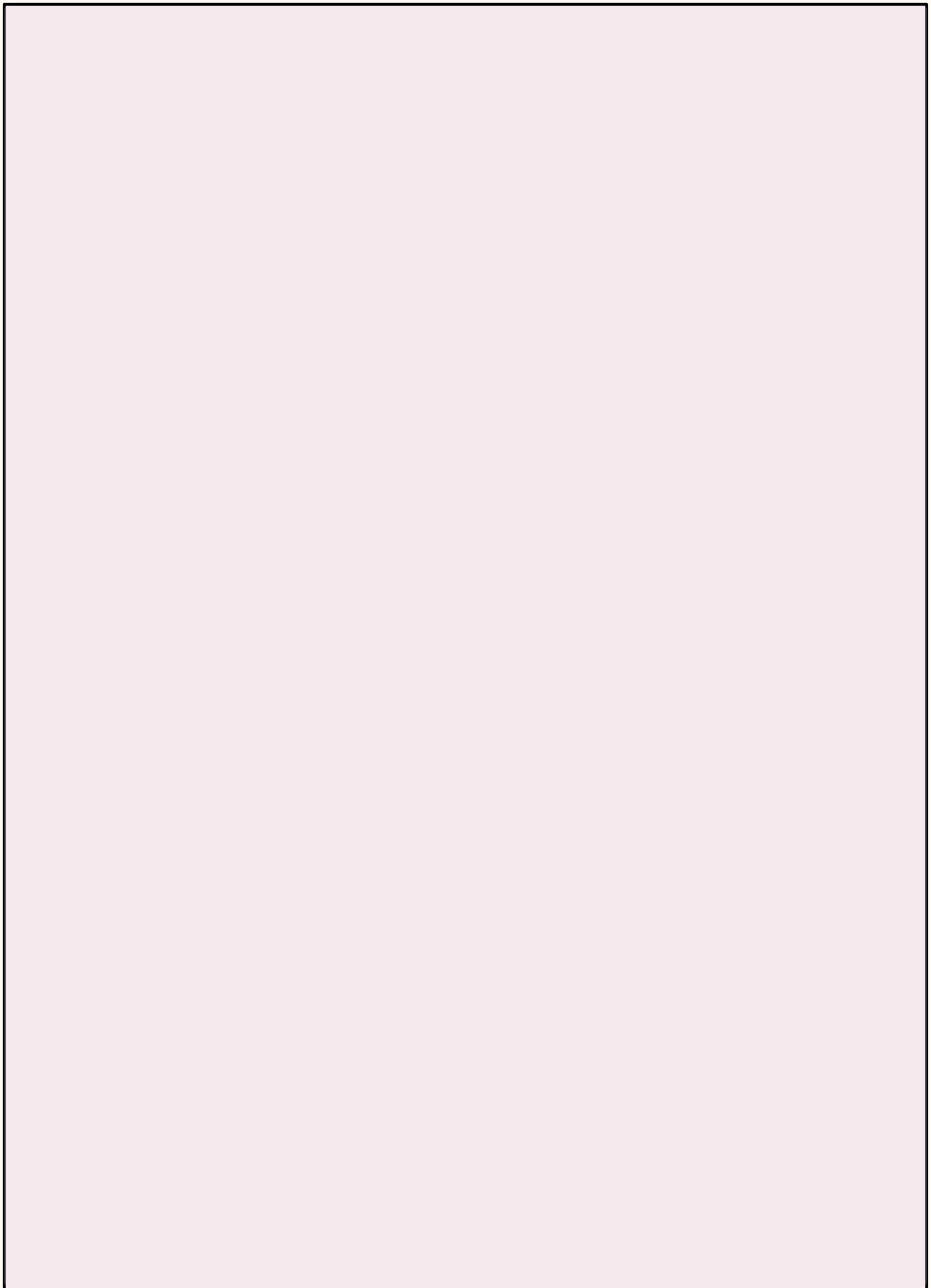
LGBT Youthline call 800.268.9688

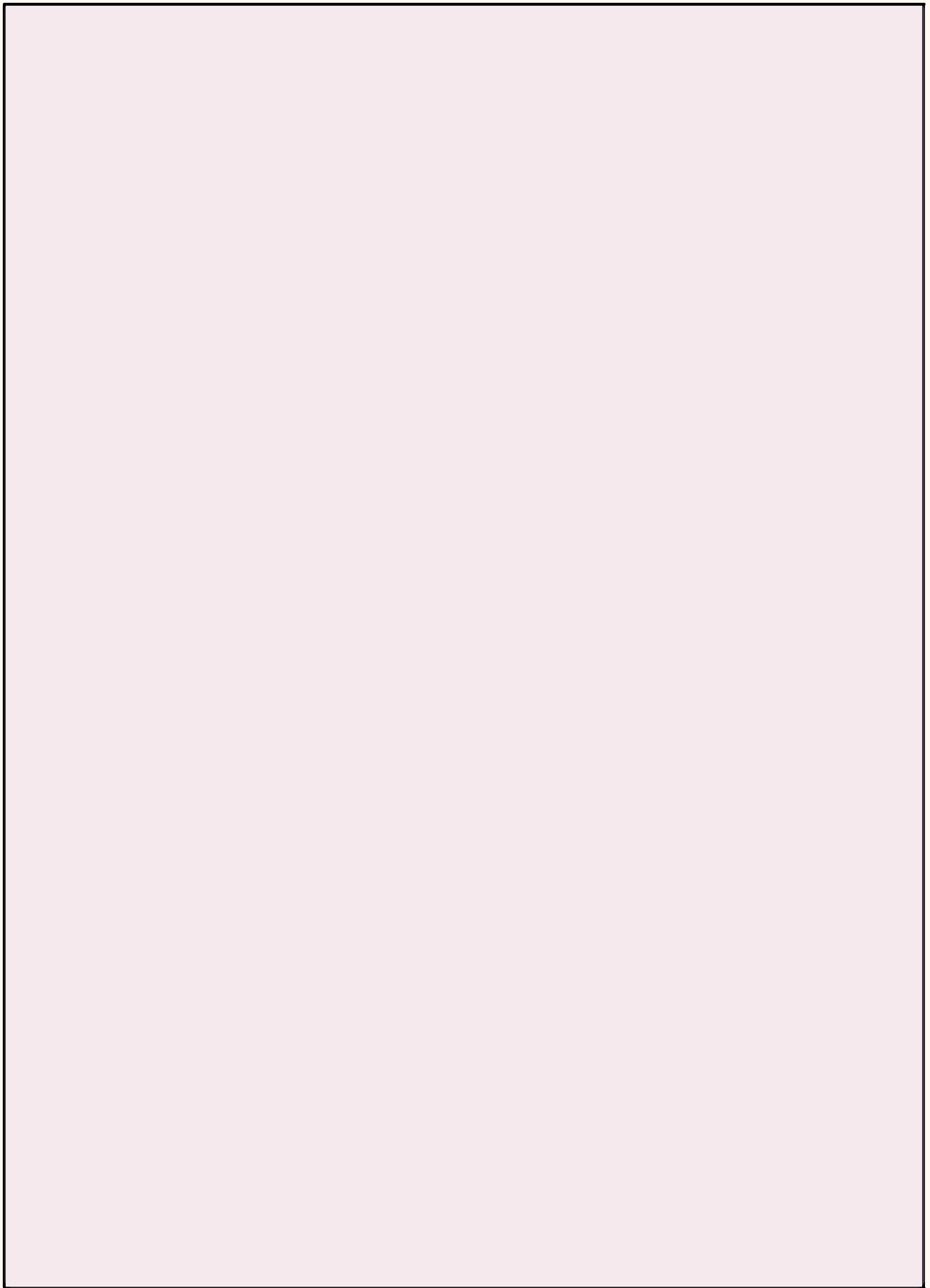
LGBT Youthline txt 647.694.4275

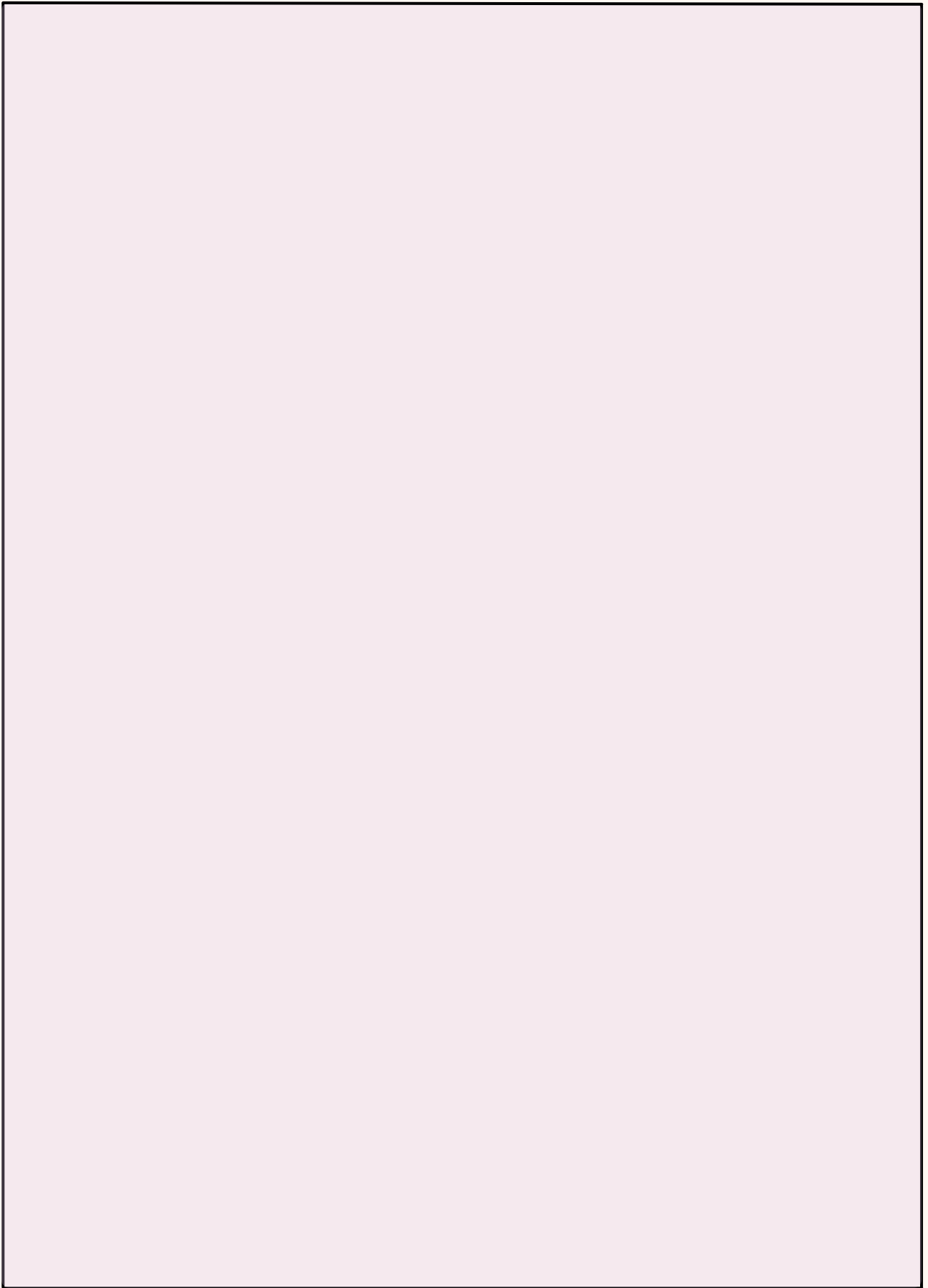
TrevorSpace social network

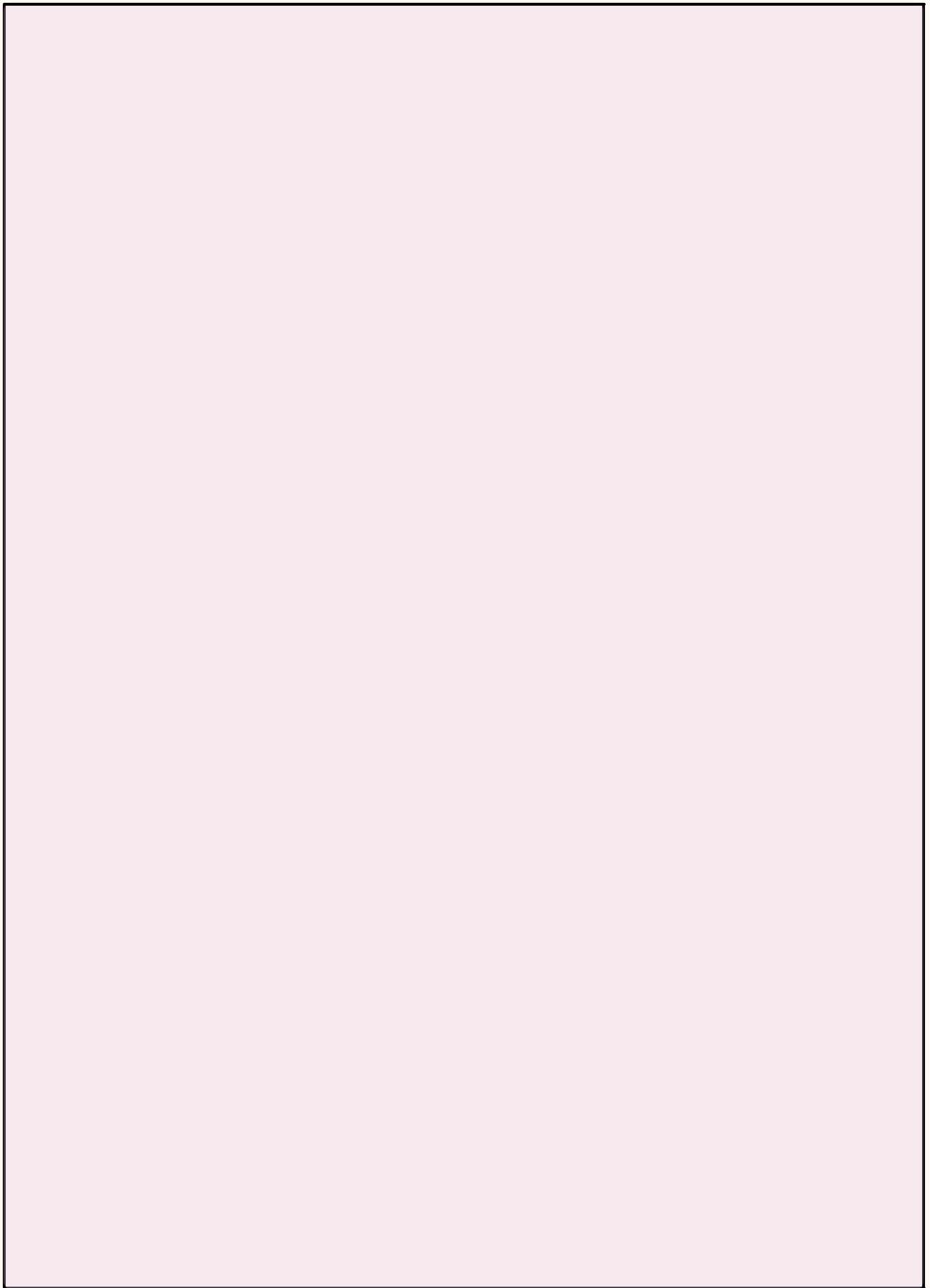


# *Space for Notes*



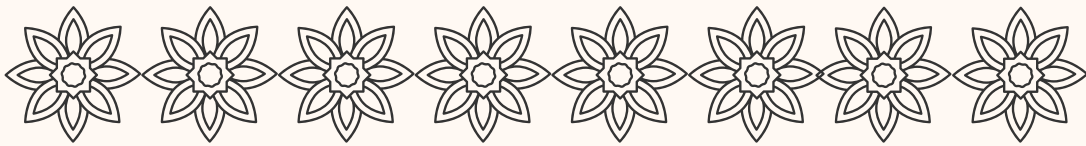








# Gratitude



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