

Connection with Intention



A Zine on Radical Love and Mental Health

WHY THIS ZINE?

To the reader(s),

In 2022, terms like “goblin mode” and “quiet quitting” defined the times. Perhaps, they capture the increased priority we place on self-care and reclaiming space. This comes in the wake of a devastating and isolating pandemic, where folks' mental health has suffered.

As many of us face an increasingly volatile world: do traditional modes of love--familial love, the “best friend”, and a single romantic partner--mean the same for all? Do we all feel and practice love in the same way? How does this love find it's way into our work as MHPs?

Thus, we sat with a few MHPs to understand how they love and community care both in the contexts of their lives and work. We put together the zine to open up space for you to put down your thoughts as well.

Please review this guide in order. The pages alternate between findings from interviews with MHPs (**odd-numbered pages**) & questions/exercises for reflection (**even-numbered pages**). We encourage you to download/print & mark up this book in any way you wish.

RELATING TO THE SELF

How have your experiences shaped the idea of love? Do you categorise love in any way?



MHPs did not "categorise" love & their diverse relationships.

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“...growing up largely with women, and now via my work with the queer community, I see **sisterhood** as a form of love. There is this inherent care and affirmation that I have received in sisterhood.”



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"I want to build a world where love includes **repair work**. Where we are ready to keep some doors open, at least for some time – that is my idea of love."

RELATING TO THE SELF

How is love shown every day from person to person and towards the self (through acts, gestures, words, recognition, etc.)?

Alongside balancing self-care, safety, and healing from trauma, how do we balance caring for those around us?

SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS



Many participants noted an internal conflict about love as:

an act of **agency** vs. **social obligation**.

Folks noted that despite prevailing structures, modes of love like queerness exemplified how love was derived from community.

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“I have always thought of love as a **social contract**. One that is imbued with racism/classism/sexism and patriarchy.”

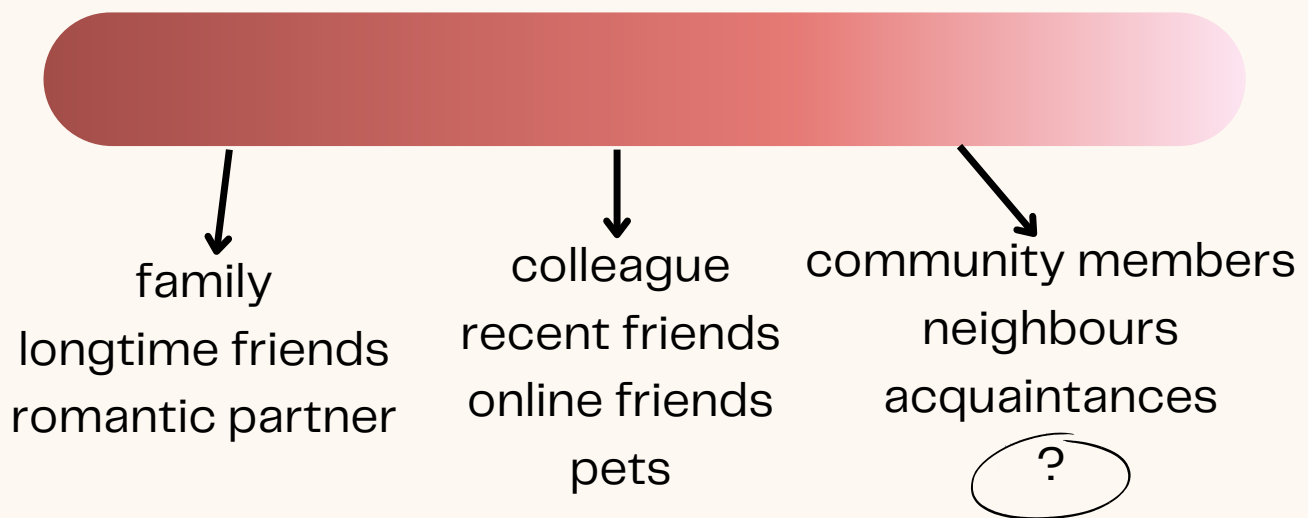
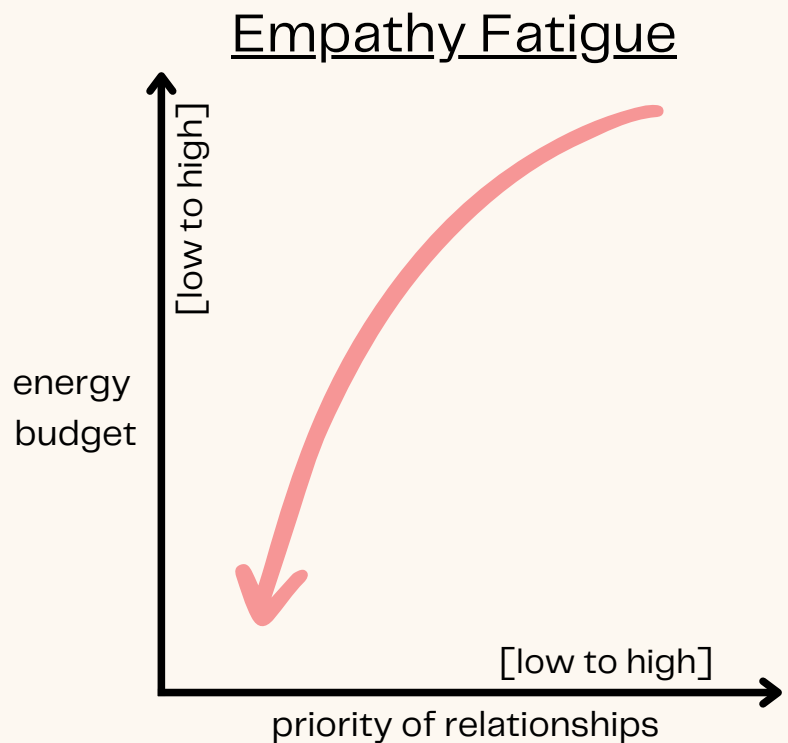
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“Society expects you to prioritise your family. So, even the love for my pets might not be seen as important by the world.”



SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS

While religion, caste, class, and other factors determine who comprises our communities, there is limited time overall for investing in relationships.



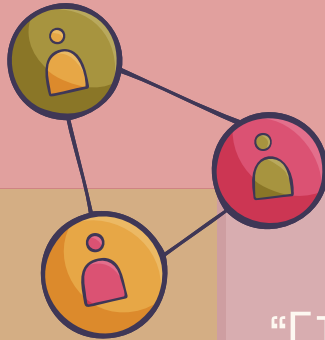
What agency do we have to decide what love we want to engage in?

How else can we practice love inclusively and **not** get fatigued while acknowledging boundaries?

MENTAL HEALTH'S ROLE

What are the challenges to showing empathy/love in therapy? What are the benefits?

“Overthrowing neutrality and allowing emotions to come through in therapy validate my clients and give opportunity to **model grounding and regulation.**”



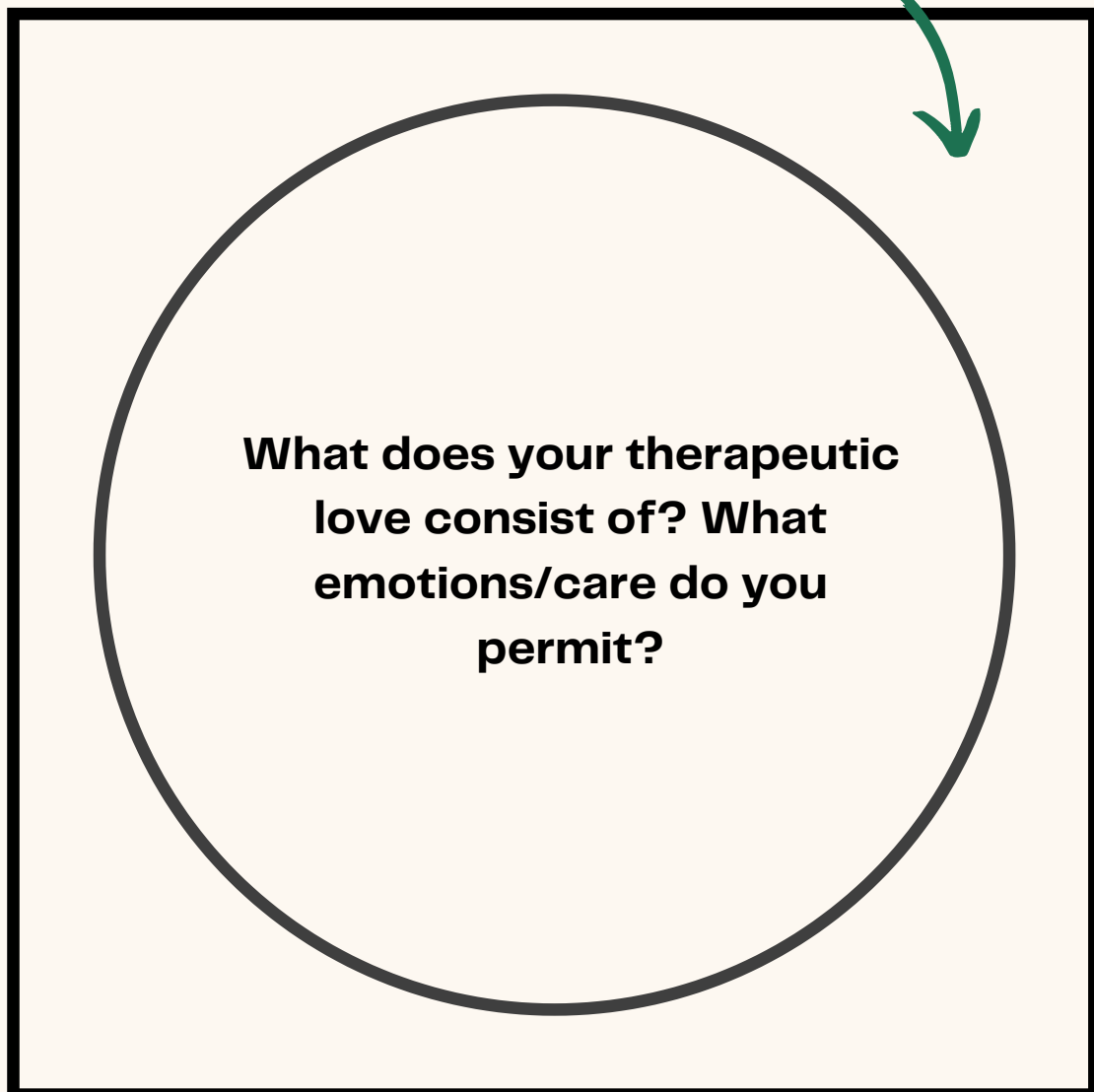
"It's hard to connect with and show empathy to a person whose beliefs are radically different from mine."

“[In] peer counsell[ing], care can be misperceived as flirting. Sometimes clients might also expect financial assistance. In these situations it can be hard to reiterate **boundaries.**”

Mental Health's Role: Exercise

Should mental health professionals highlight other forms of love that are not 'traditional', especially when 'traditional' forms cause distress/are not fulfilling?

What's in the boundaries?



RADICAL LOVE

Should mental health work reinforce that community love can be equally fulfilling as more 'traditional' forms?

"Mental health can play a role in **creating spaces** where radical love can thrive. Such spaces allow people to safeguard and protect **what is radical to them** peacefully, restfully, and without judgment.

"There is a sense of love being a **one-on-one** act. Community love is also just as important, as we do live together. It could just involve looking out for someone."

"We're shifting away from the typical family structure and looking at love in the community, but even then love can be exclusionary and violent. Whom do we love and **'allow'** within our community/lives?"



RADICAL LOVE

What does radical love mean to **you** and **your work**?



What would you tell your clients experiencing loneliness, lack of fulfillment, or related circumstances, if you weren't bound by ethical objectivity/neutrality? Try writing a letter to them.

Epilogue

Love is difficult to analyse. However, academia has been unpacking it as modes of action and existence. This means that love can be treated as more than just "a feeling".

Take this quote:

"...the productive social affordances of love, and its capacity to create relationships that may be mobilised for political purposes, can be understood as complementary to critical paradigms that illuminate the shortcomings of narratives about love."

– Laurie, Timothy, and Hannah Stark. "LOVE'S LESSONS: intimacy, pedagogy and political community." *Angelaki* 22, no. 4 (2017): 69.



As we continue to recognise the significance of mental health in community work and social movements, it's important to discuss the growing possibilities of love and radical love.

How would you like to continue conversations on community care and radical love with those in your circles?

Please write to us at **tangentmhi@gmail.com** with any questions or thoughts.