

SANE

We're people like you

Peer Group Chat

Date: 18/8/2022

Title: Being Yourself

Description: Do you have spaces where you can be yourself? Whether it's a space where you feel comfortable, seen or understood, being able to be yourself can be such a safe and liberating feeling. Let's come together and talk about what it means to be ourselves and where we can find or create these spaces.

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| Girasole (Peer Worker) | <p>Hi everyone!</p> <p>First, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we are all joining this event from. We pay deep respect to the Elders of those Countries, past and present, and we further extend that respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people joining this group tonight.</p> <p>Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about being yourself. We really value your thoughts on how these groups go, so we will send a link to a short survey at the end of this event for you to complete. While this survey is optional, it is a chance to provide feedback for us to improve our services. In case you might need to leave part way through the event, you can find the survey here now:</p> <p>https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUFOsHJRKQ6wyW</p> |
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| The Hams | good evening |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Welcome @The Hams! |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | <p>Peer Support Workers @LittleSteps and myself will be facilitating tonight's discussion. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, we can all benefit from feeling comfortable to be ourself- its valuable for anyone.</p> <p>We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. @LunaSky, a counsellor, is also present to support our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs) or message @LunaSky.</p> <p>We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn more together about being ourselves!</p> |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Hey @The Hams ! Good to see you :) |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | <p>Within this group tonight we'll be talking about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What emotions we feel when we're comfortable to be ourself -Spaces and relationships where we're comfortable to be ourself -Our needs in such spaces |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join 😊 |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Hey @The Hams , how are you travelling today? |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Hello @felix! :) |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Hello @Jacques! :) |
| Jacques | hi everyone, i hope everyone is well tonight |

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| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Great to see you @Jacques and @felix! :) |
| Wellwellwellnez | hey all. |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Hello @Wellwellwellnez! :) Welcome! |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Hi @maddison! |
| maddison | Hey everyone! |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Welcome @Shaz51! :) |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Great to see everyone here tonight :) We can get started with our discussion for tonight – What does being yourself look like for you? |
| Jacques | hi @Shaz51 and @maddison |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Welcome @the magician! :) |
| Wellwellwellnez | I saw a show on Apple TV that covers this topic. Called "Severance". It's sci-fi where all these employees have a chip so they're work-self and home-self don't remember each other. It makes you think think a lot about work/life, balance/boundaries. |
| the magician | hi people lot of us here tonight;)) |
| Shaz51 | Hello @LittleSteps (PSW) , @Jacques , @Girasole (Peer Worker) |
| LunaSky (moderator) | Good evening everyone, lovely to see so many people :blush: |

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| Shaz51 | @LunaSky (moderator) xx |
| maddison | Being myself.. Looks like I am less confused! Not trying to live up to what I perceive others think I should be. My mind & self feel more at one. |
| Jacques | being myself, gosh that is a tough one, im so used to pretending, ok being myself, quirky i guess i could sum myself up, dry humor, kind and caring. with my panic attacks people see me as scary because im so tall, and my anxiety makes me look agressive. |
| Jacques | hi Jay5 |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Hello and welcome, @Jay5 :) |
| Shaz51 | Being myself @Girasole (Peer Worker) is caring , kind wanting the best for everyone |
| Wellwellwellnez | My weird thing on self is, I recently felt revelatory in being ok with wanting to be loved and pursuing love. Since then I've had a new question. What about when the desire to be loved, triggers insecurity? I guess this is why self-love is so foundational to social love. |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | For me, being myself means being able to express my identity and personality freely. To expand on this, it signifies, to me, safety in being myself. :) |
| Jay5 | Hi all |
| Jay5 | Being myself is feeling able to express myself and be who I really am |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | it's an interesting point you raised there @Wellwellwellnez - I feel like we could gave a whole peer group chat talking about that! I'll write it down on our list of future ideas :) |

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| the magician | feeling at ease and not having to force social relations. showing my true nature more easily. doing activities because i enjoy them and making career study decisions based on who i want to be / and do. with confidence. not caring so much what other people think. |
| maddison | It sounds like it should be so easy & simple..."be yourself" I find it can be so challenging at times. I feel like I could spend the rest of my life, learning how to be free to be me! |
| the magician | i feel i could speak up a bit more. |
| Jay5 | Being me is also feeling comfortable to speak without feeling like I have to be pretend |
| Jay5 | "Be pretend" not what I meant but like having to act a certain way to fit in |
| maddison | Yes. Same @the magician |
| the magician | the more yourself you are the more likely are to bond with people who want to know the real you. |
| Jay5 | So for example I can be myself at home but there are certain times where I feel like I can't be myself as much and I need to tone it down or just change how I behave slightly, like I can be myself at work but obviously not to the full extent |
| Wellwellwellnez | I think you can look at it semantically. Yourself means YOUR self. So that means not the self you pretend to be. Not the self others decide your self to be. Etc |
| maddison | Love that @the magician |
| the magician | its better than just sitting around uncomfortably with people for the sake of it. |
| the magician | being confident in my own company and being that same person when in company. |

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| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Q: What emotions do you associate with being yourself? When you have the opportunity to be yourself safely, what emotions arise for you? |
| Jay5 | I feel welcome and comfortable, I feel like I don't have to think so much, when you can't be yourself you spent so much time and mental energy thinking about how to act |
| Jay5 | Well that's just me anyway |
| the magician | relaxation. safety. freedom of my happiness. |
| Jacques | being myself and emotions, anxiety worrying about what people think, depression/sadness because i have lost so much time pretending, fear of being rejected relief because i can try to show my true self. |
| the magician | i feel that Jacques you have to navigate the good people and ones to stay away from. |
| Jacques | yes @the magician i have found it so hard, i have never met anyone in my life that has not used me. i don't have much luck with friends, i gave up years ago trying to have any friends. plus i can't afford to have friends anyway. so im better being alone |
| The Hams | sorry all - was doing some stuff - then got dinner |
| Shaz51 | I feel safe, at peace, content |
| the magician | when i was younger id talk to a lot of people on the phone but it wasn't until were in public i saw the real them. |
| Wellwellwellnez | Honestly, a fair whack of insecurity. And I think that insecurity can raise my stress. Recently learned about the "Push-back principle", which is basically when you try to hard, leading to neurotic decisions. Sometimes I'll just freeze, if it gets too heavy. |
| Shaz51 | Same here @Jacques , we don't have any friends either xx |

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| Wellwellwellnez | ...which is probably a good thing. After the freeze, I can unwind the panic-dial. |
| The Hams | i was once told that making friends was organic process |
| The Hams | but i think this means we need to be able to find hobbies and things we care about most in life - being ourself i guess |
| the magician | i find the process of acquaintances' to close friends a hard one i wonder if people accept me being myself |
| Jay5 | Sorry had to jump off for a min ute |
| the magician | i want to hear more about this organic process |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | @Jacques I'm really sorry to hear you've had rough experiences in friendships & relationships. You didn't deserve any of that. I've also had periods of isolation but have been able to reach a point where I have a number of really fulfilling relationships, none of which inherently involved needing to spend money. I hold hope for you that there will be possibilities in the future to get to know some good people :) You absolutely deserve it, and its an amazing thing you're seeking out spaces like this to possibly help with this - I hope this group will be valuable for you :blue_heart: |
| Wellwellwellnez | I really like how one of the questions last week was like "What if you identified differently?" |
| maddison | When I am safe to be myself I feel a sense of peace & calm. I feel self acceptance. I don't question myself. My thoughts are clear & deliberate. |
| the magician | same |
| Jacques | thank you @Girasole (Peer Worker) maybe one day, i have an amazing partner, she is my best friend, so i guess i do have 1 friend :) maybe one day i could try again |

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| Girasole (Peer Worker) | I think that's another valuable future peer group chat idea! The actual process of developing friendships – honestly so much to talk about, I think |
| Wellwellwellnez | Isolation is a huge epidemic right now. I'm also mucho iso'. Been reminding myself that it's a "skill to learn" rather than a "thing to acquire". That kind of makes the hits easier to take and the wins more rewarding. |
| maddison | It's not only you @Jay5 I feel exactly the same, lots of mental energy to fit in. |
| the magician | that's it i will suggest it online |
| Shaz51 | And @Jacques we have been friends for years and some other members too xx |
| Shaz51 | You are awesome my @maddison xxx |
| Jacques | yes, i know @Shaz51 i have lots of online friends, im refering to friends in person, socialising, etc. you are an amazing friend my dear @Shaz51 |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Q: Do you have spaces where you feel you can be yourself? If so, where/what are these spaces? If not, where might you be able to seek out these safe spaces? |
| Jay5 | My own home is definitely one of those spaces |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | I agree with you big time there @Jay5 :) |
| the magician | according to Tao philosophy there are 9 different personality types and its the same wherever you go. you just have to figure out what's you. |
| Shaz51 | Same here @Jacques no socialising here I real life too |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | That's interesting @the magician! :) |

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| maddison | Thankyou @Shaz51 :bouquet: you are awesome too. |
| Jacques | i don't know anout this question @Girasole (Peer Worker) i feel really uncomfortable near any pubs or clubs, which is bad where i live as most people drink when they socialise, i have had a few people from highschool reach out but when i say i don't drink alcohole they can't get away fast enough. i have not thought about safe places for me. my safe place is being alone. |
| Shaz51 | At home , we loved our home space until we had the fire which destroyed our home, now we have to make our new place our home all over again |
| Wellwellwellnez | When people are excited about what I'm excited about. That means I get to hear people say "Yes." Also, I get to say "Yes" while meaning it. That's the place I like. |
| maddison | At home mostly. SANE is a good place to feel like myself too! |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Solidarity with you there @Jacques - I also don't drink and I find drinking culture can be really awful, often with expectations of drinking, or people thinking you're no fun if you don't, asking you to justify why not. Awful stuff! The kind of people we need are those who respect our decisions, no questions asked. I have some people in my life who also don't drink which is nice to have that normalised a bit :) I hope with time you can find such respectful or non-drinking people |
| the magician | i like home. visiting family. waving at neighbours. being outdoors. peer groups. |
| Jay5 | I'm also myself when I'm engrossed in an activity I like usually outdoor stuff |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | @Shaz51 I am so sorry to hear that. It must be such a huge loss to go through. We are here to sit here through this with you tonight. |
| The Hams | for me usually i can feel myself when i know enough about the people i am with. Anything before that I usually need to suss out the situation more |

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| the magician | i like the idea of outdoor rooftop cocktail bars its just so risky at the moment. i think im myself when im singing and don't care if are in tune. |
| maddison | How devastating @Shaz51 This sounds like a nightmare. I'm so sorry. |
| Meggle | Hi guys |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Hello and welcome @Meggle |
| Shaz51 | Thank you @LittleSteps (PSW) it does take time to make a house into your safe, secure, home again |
| Wellwellwellnez | Heya Meggle. |
| Jacques | hi @Meggle |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Q: What do you need in order to feel comfortably yourself in a space? What are the qualities that other people would need to have in these spaces in order for you to feel safe being yourself? |
| the magician | i wads very socially ostracised in highscool. i had to reinvent myself for people to accept me |
| Wellwellwellnez | Where things get weird for me is I'm kind of low in social anxiety and high in avoidance. i.e: good with strangers but stress rises with intimacy and closeness. So I'm easy to get to know, until someone knows me. Then I get defensive. It's weird. |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | I think there needs to be an environment of acceptance in order for me to feel safe being myself, as well as a group of people who are open minded. |
| Jacques | i guess for me would be meeting people who are similar in personality and be honest. |
| Jacques | i can identify with that so much @Wellwellwellnez my instinct is to withdraw. i even do it with family. i try to just dissappear. |

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| the magician | for me it would be meeting people who ' get ' me. and likewise. |
| Shaz51 | Making a enviroment of acceptance, peaceful , a space that feels nice in |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | That sounds beautiful @Shaz51 |
| maddison | I need a place where my mind & self can simply 'be.' Usually I need quiet, low volume. Too many distractions prevent me from feeling comfortable enough to get in touch with myself. I need other people to at least be open to the idea of having no judgement, & open to accepting me. |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Q: How might we be able to help create spaces where ourselves and others feel safe to be ourselves? |
| The Hams | see you later |
| The Hams | gonna log off - see you round the forums |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Bye @The Hams! :) |
| Jacques | bye @The Hams |
| the magician | i need people who are not insincere or unsympathetic. |
| Wellwellwellnez | Maybe there's two answers. Either relationships where expectations are met. And relationships without emphasis on expectations. I guess that's also kind of one answer. |
| Jacques | im not sure i can answer this question @Girasole (Peer Worker) i guess a space i feel i can get out of if anything goes wrong |

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| the magician | respecting boundaries, having a core in common, being on the same wave length to chat. by getting out there and trying new things. |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | @Jacques that's a really good one! :) |
| Wellwellwellnez | Yeah Jacques. Exits are important. I saw a youTube spiel on conversation and giving people an "easy out" to reduce social tension. That, like you said, totally works both ways. |
| the magician | places we know mental health wont be an issue. places that leave you free to have fun, achieve. |
| maddison | I think I agree about the expectations @Wellwellwellnez ... Spaces to be free for ourselves & others to be true self/bed, need to feel 'easy'. I can create this space by reserving expectations. |
| the magician | being able to say no to people you don't particularly bond with. |
| the magician | going into a situation without expectations or assumptions. |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Totally @the magician :) |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | I think open-mindedness is useful in allowing people to feel safe being themselves. |
| Jacques | i did find in school there where some people i just "clicked" with they where easy to talk to and get along with. |
| the magician | sometimes it involves a need to know basis or being general rather than completely open and revealing. |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Q: What do you imagine some of the impacts on your life might be if you are able to engage in more spaces where you feel comfortable to be yourself? |
| LunaSky (moderator) | When I feel accepted I feel like a can be myself. Offering acceptance to others may help them to feel themselves |

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| the magician | happy. more circles of people created out of organic connections. |
| Wellwellwellnez | Tis the problem with the term "unacceptable" . If someone's feeling (or creating (or both)) challenges, those challenges are real. The universe has already accepted it. |
| Jacques | impacts would be huge, self worth, self esteem, self confidence. i guess maybe happy. it would help me focus less on how much of a failure i am. it would also give me purpose. |
| maddison | It would be a dream come true. It would be like living on another planet! |
| Shaz51 | Happy, acceptable, able to relax and to say anything |
| Wellwellwellnez | "Driven" is the word that comes to mind. I get more driven when I get to be the one driving. |
| the magician | easing of tensions |
| maddison | Yes @Shaz51 & not worry about how to phrase things correctly, or misunderstandings. People would already know you have good intentions, & could say anything!! |
| the magician | being in the drivers seat of your own life – what's the point if you're only navigated by other people? |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Q: Are you feeling curious, inspired, or motivated to consider or try out any ideas in seeking out spaces/connections where you can be yourself? |
| maddison | No, not really. |
| Jacques | i feel the time for me to seek friendships has passed, it has been 25 years since i have had a friend (not online) to socialise with, do things with. i don't know if it is worth seeking out friends now. |
| maddison | Maybe it is moreso in the back of my mind, than before this chat. I would likely be more open to it, if I saw an opportunity, than before discussion. |

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| Shaz51 | As a wife and a carer @Girasole (Peer Worker) , no as I have to think of my husband who has MI and do not want to put him in a uncomfortable situation and also my elderly mum |
| Wellwellwellnez | Of the three, mainly curious. Also, inspired and motivated, but mainly curious about equations that find the balance. Finding safety in the learning approach. |
| the magician | the work atmosphere or karate. ability to be self with a pet cat. current commitments, activities not expecting just open minded being. enjoying and getting the most out of the journey. |
| LunaSky (moderator) | I feel inspired to be more mindful in my interactions, to see what I can do to help others feel accepted, and how this might this affect the space |
| Wellwellwellnez |or karateing a cat, Magician. They do good karate. |
| the magician | more mindful definitely..... |
| Jacques | hahahahaha @Wellwellwellnez they are good ninja's |
| the magician | embracing the mind of the ninja maybe |
| maddison | Good point @LunaSky (moderator) I would also like to be more mindful of others feeling accepted. |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | It's a good point about animals @the magician - I know I often feel comfortable in myself when I interact with animals, because there are zero human society social norms underpinning the interactions |
| the magician | accepting and liking yourself as a starting point too |
| Jacques | that is a good point @the magician |

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| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Have you learned anything helpful from others' experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what did you learn? |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | I've learnt a little bit more about what the impact can be of having spaces where you can be yourself :) I have found that tonight. |
| Jacques | yes, it was good to hear different points of views on friendships and there complexeties. as @the magician and others have said tonight, mindset is a huge first step. |
| the magician | i think id like to look into the organic formation of friendships |
| Wellwellwellnez | I also like the idea of, gee, I guess you would call it "compliance testing". I mean, communicating an expectation and inviting the other to fulfill it. Being a distributor of approval for positive effect. |
| Wellwellwellnez |but I actually wouldn't call it "compliance testing". Compliance inviting. That's the thing I mean. |
| the magician | I've learnt not to be around people i can't be myself around and feel unhappy with. |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Q: Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish soon? If so, what might you do? 😊 |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | I am going to do some reading for self-care :) |
| maddison | That questioning myself, & using more mental energy & watching what I say etc are not unique to me. I feel more comfortable knowing that other people experience this too (even if I already knew) They are cues, that I'm not feeling safe to be myself. Possibly, suggestions to find environments & people that matter me comfortable |
| Jacques | music therapy and worry beads for me tonight, thank you @Girasole (Peer Worker) @LittleSteps (PSW) and @LunaSky (moderator) for the wonderful discussion tonight, i have enjoyed participating |
| Jacques | good night all, hugs to everyone. |

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| LittleSteps (PSW) | Thanks @Jacques! :) |
| the magician | chat to mum and a book. gratitude journal. maybe my mp3player in bed. |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | <p>Here are some further resources we recommend having a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Worksheet on identity https://socialself.com/Identity-worksheet.pdf -Worksheet: personal identity wheel https://coresourceexchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Personal-Identity-Wheel-Worksheet.pdf -How to be yourself in five simple steps https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/click-here-happiness/201810/how-be-yourself-in-five-simple-steps |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | <p>We'd like to invite you to complete a survey reflecting on your experience in this Peer Group Chat. We'd love to hear any feedback you may have. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Please click this link: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUFOsHJRKQ6wyW</p> |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | <p>Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion 😊 If you'd like to be informed when our next Peer Group Chat will be taking place, you can sign up to our mailing list here https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat You can also ask questions for us to discuss in future peer chats!</p> |
| the magician | good night everyone and thankyou once again always a pleasure |
| maddison | Thanks all. |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Thanks @the magician! Good night! :) |
| Wellwellwellnez | Yes. and reflect on what cool clever strangers I know. |
| Wellwellwellnez | The best, everyone. |
| Girasole (Peer Worker) | Thank you so much everyone for all your amazing contributions tonight! It was a great event we had because of you :) Take care and have a good evening |

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| LunaSky (moderator) | Goodnight everyone. Thank you for all the inspiration |
| LittleSteps (PSW) | Take care everyone and goodnight! :) |
| Shaz51 | Goodnight everyone |