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Peer Group Chat

Date: 04/05/23

Title: Why Be 'Normal'?

Description: It can be a common experience to feel "I just want to be normal." But what is normal, exactly? Why is there such a drive to be 'normal'? Perhaps our diverse experiences are more normal than we might think? Let's come together to talk about ideas of being 'normal' vs 'different' and whether 'normal' is actually as bad as we might think.

TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi There @Keppy! Great to have you with us. We'll get started soon :)
Amber22 (PSW)	Hi everyone. 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. Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about Why Be 'Normal'?

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Meggle	Good evening
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi @Meggle:) Good to see you!
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome @Meggleand @Keppy! :)
Meggle	Normal is just one of those words isn't it? Like what does it mean anyhow? I guess we will cover this when we get started
Amber22 (PSW)	Yes we will! But that is a great question@Meggle
Meggle	I am not sure what I have to offer this conversation. I don't think I am very normal
CloudBerry	hi guys
Meggle	Hiya everyone
Amber22 (PSW)	Hello! @Snowie and @CloudBerry:)
Amber22 (PSW)	<p>Tonight, Peer Support Workers @Amber22 and @TideisTurning will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of Why Be 'Normal'? Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, it is important to understand feelings of not feeling 'normal' while experiencing complex mental health.</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. Some of the conversation may be heavy in nature as we talk about what 'normal' means to us, and why we may not feel as 'normal' as others.</p> <p>@Jynx, who moderates on the SANE Forums, is working behind the scenes to ensure 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 @Jynx. We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn more together about Why Be 'Normal'?</p>
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi @7cough9, @CloudBerry& @Snowie:)
7cough9	Good evening. I am curious what thf prompting qs for discussion will be.

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	<p>Within this group tonight we'll be talking about: What 'normal' means for you, different versions of 'normal' and where our ideas of 'normal' come from. Our understandings of 'different' as well as our experiences with feeling 'different' versus 'normal' and the impacts of those experiences. Impacts of perceptions of 'normal' and 'different' + ideas for reframing the way we think of 'normal' and 'different'</p>
Amber22 (PSW)	
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome! @7cough9@Captain24:)
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi There @Captain24:)
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome everyone! We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join. In the meantime, feel free to introduce yourselves. I'm @amber22
Captain24	Hi @Amber22 (PSW)
Captain24	Hi @TideisTurning (PSW)and everyone else
Amber22 (PSW)	Q1: What does 'normal' mean to you? Where do you think your ideas of 'normal' may have come from?
Jacques	hello ladies, gentlemen and gender neutral peoples
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome! @Jacques
Meggle	To me normal means what the majority of the population is like
Jacques	apologies for leaving early last week, i got really anxious.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hiya @Jacques:) You're just in time
TideisTurning (PSW)	All good @Jacques. No need to apologise- good on you for recognising what you needed and taking the steps to take care of you!
Amber22 (PSW)	Thats totally understandable, I hope you're feeling okay tonight!@Jacques

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Jacques	i always wish i was normal, normal to me is social norms, have a job, have a partner, have kids, have a home, a car, etc. i know i am not normal, i always apologise to my partner for not being normal and not being like other men.
Snowie	I have never felt 'normal' even though I don't know what normal is. I have always felt different from such a young age.
7cough9	in a support group I attended they used a metaphor from geometry where 'normal ' means 'perpendicular '. If you are in a normal pose you are upright and stable, not falling over.
Captain24	I'm not sure what normal is I just know that it's not me.
Meggle	I wish I was normal too. I didn't have a normal childhood so I didn't really stand a chance of being normal. My husband is what I would call normal. His parents were good to him and his brother and his parents stayed married until they died
Jacques	being 40 an not being able to be away from my mum for 1 night i know is not normal, the last time i managed 1 night away from her was 1994. my separation anxiety is so out of control. i have even been told i am not normal and i don't have normal behaviours.
CloudBerry	yeah I see normal as like... successfully 'adult-ing' and not really having any mental health issues
TideisTurning (PSW)	Ooh. That's a really interesting and unique take @7cough9:)
7cough9	The way I tend to think in practice is that normal is being able to have enough overlap with the viewpoints and roles of society at large that you can communicate and not actively alienate each other.
Meggle	I fight going to a lot of mental health related things/appointments because I just want to be normal and live a normal life
CloudBerry	I agree @7cough9thats awesome
TideisTurning (PSW)	Like a lot of you have said, for me, 'Normal' often means 'like everyone else'. This idea developed when I learned there are areas where I'm not necessarily like everyone else, and this was labelled 'not normal'.

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Meggle	I wonder if everyone else thinks they are normal or not or if noone considers themselves to be normal?
Amber22 (PSW)	Wow, that's a great point @Meggle
Snowie	Good question @Meggle
CloudBerry	normal has actually been phased out of my vocabulary lately
Jacques	i agree @Megglebeing normal is subjective to ones own views and beliefs.
Snowie	My mum was always on me about not standing out in a negative way. I think I was always trying to be normal in her eyes.
CloudBerry	because its not really definable for me anyway and I think im pretty comfortable accepting that no one is "normal", and with that, not being "Normal" is totally "normal"!
Meggle	Well @JacquesI could consider myself to be normal but that wouldn't make it true
7cough9	For me getting to be 'normal' has been just something i experience in episodes, like having a 'calm build-up' rather than a 'nervous breakdown'
Amber22 (PSW)	Q2: Do you find you tend to compare yourself to 'normal' people/behaviour? If so, how has this impacted you – and how have you tried to deal with this?
CloudBerry	I do tend to do that, and it is soul-crushing
Jacques	i guess that is why their is no clear definition of normal @Meggleas humans we are all unique so maybe there is no such thing as normal, maybe normal is a construct of our imagination to keep us as a species motivated?
Meggle	I think everyone compares themselves to others and when we do that it steals our joy
Captain24	I do compare myself to others and it makes me realise that I'm failing at life.
Amber22 (PSW)	Comparison can be really hard, you're definitely not failing at life, everyone's path looks completely different @Captain24
7cough9	I briefly in my 20s thought of my appearance as a groomed or attractive person as important to being a normal person doing dating but I mostly let that go. Just being able to go out in public without getting arrested for nudity or smelling like feces is going to be enough.

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TideisTurning (PSW)	<p>Ah, the comparison trap. One of my great foes, and a dangerous black hole that is all too easy to be sucked into. I say it's dangerous because of the negative effects it can have- feeling a failure like you've said @Captain24.</p> <p>I feel like this kind of comparison involves some kind of judgement that I am 'not normal', that I don't live up to 'normal', whatever that is supposed to be in the context. My attempts to deal with this is to remind myself that</p> <p>I am enough as I am. There may be 'normal', but I also have my own version of normal, 'my normal'. My attempts to deal with this is to remind myself that I am enough as I am. There may be 'normal', but I also have my own version of normal, 'my normal'.</p>
Snowie	<p>I agree @Megglel think a lot of people compare themselves to others in many different ways. I think I've tried to deal with this by hiding who I really am. It's like when people ask how I am. I always just say I'm ok. I don't want to stand out in a negative way. I would just rather hide from the world.</p>
Amber22 (PSW)	<p>Hey! @Shaz51:)</p>
TideisTurning (PSW)	<p>Hiya @Shaz51:)</p>
CloudBerry	<p>grounding exercises are also helpful when comparing</p>
Jacques	<p>i always compare myself to my peers, it makes me really depressed and sometimes suicidal, feeling of never having had a job or left home. i've never been intimate with anyone, never had children. and prospects of any of these things are 0% i just can't function outside of my house or away from mum</p>
Shaz51	<p>ha ha hello @Amber22 (PSW), @TideisTurning (PSW)</p>
Amber22 (PSW)	<p>That sounds great - are there any in particular that help you?@CloudBerry</p>
Snowie	<p>I compare myself to others all the time, but then end up getting angry with myself because I am not like them. It is certainly something that stems from my early childhood years</p>

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CloudBerry	focusing on my breathing and taking a second to observe my environment, noticing what is -mine- and what -my life- looks like, as opposed to the imaginary life im assuming [random person] is living
Amber22 (PSW)	Love that :) @CloudBerry
Shaz51	@Jacques i could not have any children of my own and I did not get married until i was 43 xxxx
7cough9	I have been obliged for most of my life to apply for jobs and to present myself as an engaged and responsive worker, while judging myself as lacking a lot of the qualities or strengths to justify that claim and feeling like an imposter. I have only just come to accept the option of being only a casual or volunteer worker or just living off the Support Pension
Amber22 (PSW)	Sometimes things can happen really differently to how we plan them, and that's okay @JacquesIt's lovely to know that you have such great support from your mum
CloudBerry	yo @7cough9 ... are you me?
Shaz51	compare myself to others all the time,, me too @Snowie, @Amber22 (PSW)
Jacques	dealing with any comparison i just sleep to make the days go faster, i have been sleeping as much as possible for the past 23 years. im so sorry @Shaz51im not sure if my partner ever want to get married again, she had a really abusive husband. and im ok with that. she is an amaizng woman and im happy just being her partner.
Amber22 (PSW)	Q3: Who's to say you're not 'normal', in terms of, where does this idea of 'normal' come from?
TideisTurning (PSW)	I feel like comparison is such a natural tendency @Shaz51, @Snowie, @Jacques. Why I call it the comparison trap and/or a black hole :)
Meggle	I feel like I get the idea I am not normal from mental health professionals
CloudBerry	society as a whole perpetrates this fake idea of normal when even those that are presenting 'normal' enough still get ripped to shreds
TideisTurning (PSW)	That sounds like such a rough & invalidating experience @Meggle. I'm so sorry :(
CloudBerry	so like what's the point

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Amber22 (PSW)	Society can set some pretty unrealistic standards, they are hard to not focus on sometimes, so I definitely get where you are coming from @CloudBerry
Meggle	and then there are still the bully's out there in society that still think that they are in high school
CloudBerry	yeah its unrelenting ugh
Shaz51	m ok with that. she is an amazing woman and im happy just being her partner., that is soo wonderful @Jacquesxoxo
Captain24	I guess a normal person doesn't have a MH team behind them. In my world I'm the only one that has a team. So that makes it really hard to think of myself being normal.
TideisTurning (PSW)	The goal posts of what might constitute 'normal' move, it sounds @CloudBerryand it can be super frustrating!
CloudBerry	hahah yes frustrating is one word for it!
Shaz51	but society still thinks there is something wrong with you if you don't go a certain way in life xxx
Amber22 (PSW)	That's so valid, we should normalise support systems more @Captain24
TideisTurning (PSW)	Like I mentioned earlier, me and/or my behaviour has been labelled 'not normal' at times. Something I've learned about this though, is that this kind of labelling is more about the other person than me- perhaps, for some reason, me or my behaviour doesn't meet their idea of 'normal', and that might be making them uncomfortable, which results in them assigning that 'not normal' label.
Snowie	I think the idea of 'normal' starts early in life. For me it certainly was something that came from childhood.
7cough9	Q3 there is plenty of ways for people to be, but we do tend to have at least a couple minimum expectations of people in a handful of major categories (irresponsible young child, socially aware but dependent child, productive and engaged adult, dependent senior or otherwise impaired adult.)
TideisTurning (PSW)	I'm wondering though, if more people than you might think have a support team @Captain24

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Jacques	i don't know where normal came from, i know right from primary school it was drummed into me i had to reach certain goals through life. and if i didn't there was something wrong with me. before i met my partner friends and family kept saying i was gay because i didn't have a partner, i was lazy because i didn't have a job. i was weird because i don't have friends. i guess between friends, family and education build up my view of normal.
Snowie	I'm sorry those things were said to you @Jacques
TideisTurning (PSW)	That is indeed very rough @Jacques. It sounds a lot of conclusions were jumped onto!
Jacques	it is ok @Snowiei have become used to it. i sometimes even feel like i deserve it.
Captain24	Not in my small circle @TideisTurning (PSW). When I've told people that I see a psychiatrist they instantly think I'm crazy.
Amber22 (PSW)	I'm sorry that you were made to feel like that @Captain24
Meggle	I embrace my crazy! It's the good kind
Snowie	It is not something you deserve @JacquesYou are an amazing person just the way you are.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Trust me, @Jacques, as someone who has experienced similar, NO ONE deserves to have those kinds of things said to them. It's a reflection on the other person, and as @Snowiesaid, you are amazing, just as you are.
Amber22 (PSW)	Q4: What does 'normal' look like for you? How might this be different from others' versions of 'normal' (for example if two of you share the same diagnosis)?
Snowie	My mum won't tell her friends I see a psych or a pdoc because she doesn't want it to look like she has a 'crazy' daughter. She has said to me multiple times that psych's are just there to take your money.
Jacques	thank you @Snowie
Jacques	thank you too @TideisTurning (PSW) i really appreciate that
Captain24	When I told mum the other day about my MI she said 'so I have a crazy daughter' @Snowie

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CloudBerry	honestly when I see the word 'normal' I think of like... 80s/90s parent going to work and caring for kids and sort of just plodding through life in a 'normal' way with nothin really happening
7cough9	I have a neighbour in my building who will not acknowledge any person he passes in the corridor even to the point of closing a door in their face as they come up behind him. I put him into the category of 'impaired adult who can't be relied on to communicate responsibly about shared concerns ' but I try not to resent him for it because i can easily see how i myself could be judged harshly for similar but different behaviours
CloudBerry	@7cough9 you sound super insightful, that's amazing
Shaz51	you are amazing my forum brother @Jacques
TideisTurning (PSW)	I feel like what 'my' normal looks like is a really hard thing for me to define, because my normal is just that- 'my normal'. It becomes easier though, if I look at myself next to someone who may share an experience of mine. My anxiety, for example, will not look the same as theirs, both what activates or triggers it and how the anxiety looks or presents. I feel like this is a more positive version of the kind of comparison or 'comparison trap' we talked about earlier, perhaps because it acknowledges the differences in a very neutral way, and even helps normalise it.
Meggle	Everyone is an individual, people with the same diagnosis tend to present very differently. My normal tends to depend on where my mental health is at, at any given time
Jacques	that is so awful @Captain24:(im so sorry your mum was not more compassionate.
Jacques	normal for me is just making it through each day. keeping a routine and trying not to think too much of my past or future. i use music a lot to drown out any thoughts.
Captain24	I think normal for me would just be being stable mentally. I'll always be different as I don't fit the stereotypes of being married or having children.
Snowie	I have a hubby, 2 kids, a house, financially stable.... some might find this as normal, yet I feel far from it. I think we put too much pressure on ourselves to show others just how normal we are. We hide from the world. I certainly hide my diagnosis from people around me.

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Amber22 (PSW)	That's it, someone can have the same diagnosis as me but present so differently, and have such different feelings. It really is individualised @Meggle
TideisTurning (PSW)	That's an excellent point @Meggle. What 'normal' is, including our own, individual version of normal, can change
CloudBerry	my normal looks like when I have a good couple of days and I'm being productive and I feel emotionally stable
TideisTurning (PSW)	I feel like it's fair to approach with caution @Snowie. That caution is, after all, there for a reason :)
7cough9	I am active in some neurodivergent forums and there are multiple versions of normal across those groups of identities and diagnostic labels. I try to imagine myself as a reincarnated prehistoric hunter gatherer, transplated into the agricultural epoch with my highly evolved but currently devalued modes of roaming and exploring environments. Minimal normality is being able to manage my chaotic executive function enough to get enough sleep and domestic tasks done and find ways to get some exercise and self care done
Meggle	Wow @7cough9 that's very creative and thoughtful
Amber22 (PSW)	Q5: What are your experiences with feeling 'different,' and how has this impacted you?
Captain24	I have a cousin with BP2 as well. His mum said to me that mine mustn't be as bad as I have a job and get out of bed. So I guess our normal is very different to each other
CloudBerry	for Q5 oh jeez don't get me started hahaha
CloudBerry	I have felt different my literal entire life and I struggle hardcore with imposter syndrome. I'm only just getting to a point now in my life where I'm beginning to develop a sense of self and identity
Amber22 (PSW)	I'm sorry that you experienced that comparison, it can be really hurtful when others don't seem to understand, normal is very different for everyone @Captain24

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TideisTurning (PSW)	I feel like I've alluded to this a little already through this chat so far, but I'll summarise my experiences with feeling different as, for the most part, having learned that different = bad, something I feel like a few here might be able to resonate with. That has left me feeling pretty negatively, because the things that make me different aren't necessarily all things I can help or change, just as you can't necessarily change your eye colour. It's just you or part of who you are, whether you like it or not. And so when different is made to feel like a bad thing, it feels pretty bad and can carry the potential for serious damage. All of that, though, is when I define different as being 'not normal'. But, I feel a bit better about 'different' if I think of different as me being 'unlike others', 'unique' or 'individual'.
Snowie	@CloudBerry I agree that it stems from such a young age.
Jacques	the impact of being a normal member of society is crushing mentally, emotionally and physically. the pressure of meeting societies expectations is too overwhelming for me to even think about, i guess one good thing about being agoraphobic is i am not out in society much, so i don't see what i have missed out on. i really am a ghost, no one knows who i am, i have really just disappeared from my local society.
7cough9	I have treated dating as like being a migrant from a different culture – I have minimal idea what people's expectations of me will be, and struggle to find some way to interact with people that won't result in them jumping to conclusions and dismissing or exploiting me. Chasing employment has been analogous, and progressively more discouraging in the past decade or two.
Amber22 (PSW)	Oh that is so great that you're starting to develop a sense of identity after so long, that must be a really nice feeling@CloudBerry
CloudBerry	thank you for the validation @Amber22 (PSW):)
Captain24	I feel very different to my close circle. I can no longer hide how I'm feeling and the others are all bright and happy. It's obvious to me that I bring them down and that's why they have limited contact. So currently I'm very alone.
TideisTurning (PSW)	@Jacques!m curious- do you necessarily have to meet all of society's expectations?

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Jacques	i get that @Captain24i felt the same when i had friends back in the 90's i felt i always was a drag on any gathering. i am sort of glad in a way i walked away from all my friends and family. so they could enjoy life and forget about me.
Meggle	I recently got tired of feeling different, isolated and lonely. I have stepped outside my comfort zone and have joined some groups. Knitting, canasta, mahjong and a coffee group. I am starting to feel a bit more included and maybe accepted. Perhaps a bit more normal
Captain24	I'm different to my immediate family. Mum dad and my brother are all very similar. It makes me feel as though I don't belong. However being different to them is actually a good thing.
Amber22 (PSW)	I am wondering if hearing how you both can feel isolated at times makes it feel a bit more 'normalised' that others are feeling it too? I know I experience it as well, but it's nice to know that others do too <3@Jacques@Captain24
Jacques	I'm not sure @TideisTurning (PSW)i feel a lot of pressure to meet them. from anyone i meet when they ask what i do or what i have been doing, when i tell them i have been house bound for 23 years they can't get away from me fast enough. i always tell my partner she deserves a real man and she is wasting her time on me.
Jacques	sorry i meant a lot of pressure to be normal
7cough9	I participate in some support services or activity groups with structured social activity like board games, but I expect that as soon as I have to interact in unstructured ways – small talk, remembering people's names – it will expose my oddities and alienness, so I will run down any goodwill I may have from people giving me the benefit of the doubt.
Amber22 (PSW)	Q6: What are some of the challenges you experience as a result of being seen as 'different' by others?
Meggle	I relate @JacquesI apologise to my husband for being damaged goods
CloudBerry	Q6: due to complex trauma (thanks mum!) even something as simple as someone giving me a weird look after I say something is enough to send me spiralling
Captain24	Being alone, isolated and not belonging in this world.
Meggle	The challenge really is to just try and fit in.

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Jacques	challenges for me is meeting anyone who understands and who wants to put in the time to know me. i have only succeeded in making friends online is very specific forums, like sane and playing games
Meggle	I am terrible with small talk - I hate it
TideisTurning (PSW)	That sense of pressure makes total sense @Jacques. I also wonder if, like I mentioned earlier on, that pressure is a result of their discomfort from the wonderful you. You are not necessarily fitting neatly into what they see as 'normal'.
Captain24	Me too @Meggle
Meggle	I am ok once in a conversation but if I have to start one just forget it
Jacques	it is possible @TideisTurning (PSW)i guess i don't blame people they want worry free friends and not have to put time into understanding. i guess too with all the stigma of mental health issues people fear saying the wrong thing or being responsible for my wellbeing
7cough9	I have suffered when I could only get housing in share houses and inevitably eventually get treated as a problem to be fixed or as a weirdo to be insulted or harassed. I got trapped on a lease with an apparent former domestic abuser who enjoyed messing with me, and I ended up with constant sleepless nights and losing about 15 kg
Snowie	I find people try and avoid me or they don't know how to talk to me. I can be standing right next to my husband and they will only talk to him. It's like I am not there. They don't want to ask how I've been. I think some are scared that I will tell them the truth even though I would always say 'I've ben good'.
Meggle	yeah I find that too @Jacqueswhen I am presenting as normal other people know how to treat me but if I am presenting as a bit different or mentally ill people don't know what to do or say. They avoid me all together
Meggle	I find that I can submarine and noone checks on me besides my immediate family
Shaz51	@Snowie, that is totally how my mr shaz feels my friend xoxo
Snowie	@Meggle@Jacques I am always apologising to my husband for being like I am
Meggle	Well that's interesting @Snowie@Jacques that it's not just me that apologises to my other half

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Meggle	I feel like he got a bad deal. Because he was normal he could have done better than me
TideisTurning (PSW)	I feel like those who are worth it will put effort into figuring out, or better yet, ask you! Those who don't try are the ones who miss out on knowing the awesome person you are and having your presence in their life @Jacques@Meggle.
Jacques	no @Meggle you are not alone with feeling inadequate, im sure many people feel the same way.
7cough9	Meggle, that is an interesting term, 'submarine ' Do you mean, 'go dark' or 'run silent'? get watchful and pick non peak hours to do anything?
Meggle	No I mean stay in my house and don't do anything, usually sleeping all day as well @7cough9
Amber22 (PSW)	Q7: Are there times where you have felt like your 'differences' were a good thing? Tell us about it!
TideisTurning (PSW)	I've felt similar @Meggle. You're definitely not alone with those feelings, as @Jacques has said. Your partner evidently sees something in you that he values
Meggle	Yes I feel like my differences make me unique. This is usually when I am in a good mental space though
Jacques	no, sorry @Amber22 (PSW) i have never been able to find anything positive about being different. just a wasted life.
Meggle	I don't mind being a good crazy, a fun kind of crazy, a playful, childlike crazy
Captain24	Me being different to my Dad, Mum and brother is a good thing. They are very judgemental and inconsiderate of others. I'm a more thoughtful, considerate and caring person than they are.
Amber22 (PSW)	You are a very thoughtful person :) @Captain24
Meggle	Yes that too @Captain24 I feel like my differences make me more empathetic and compassionate towards others
Captain24	Thanks @Amber22 (PSW)
Amber22 (PSW)	Yes we can learn a lot from when others have hurt us, it can make us into much better people! @Meggle@Captain24

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Snowie	@Captain24I agree. Being different, especially from my mum and brother is a very good thing. I was always much more like my dad when he was alive. I'm not sure if my differences were a good thing or not, but I have always strived to be not like my mum in the slightest. To me, that is a good thing.
CloudBerry	I don't mind being different. its just a matter of finding others who are different in the same way you are :)
TideisTurning (PSW)	I can understand that @Jacques. Something I see in you though, that shines through is your sensitivity. This is a quality of mine too, and for me something that's borne of my experiences around being 'different'. To borrow from Kate Miller Heidke, 'this pain makes you who you are'
Captain24	I'm on the receiving end of their inconsideration which is hard but it has taught me that it can be a good thing to be different
CloudBerry	for example, if I wasn't "different", I wouldn't have gelled perfectly with my current partner and be as happy in my relationship
Snowie	@CloudBerryI don't mind being different either.
CloudBerry	so like yeah I don't fit in a lot of places but I fit in with them, so im fine
7cough9	Having missed full socialisation into 'normal' behaviour scripts freed me up in multiple ways. When a cinema screening has a technical issue like no sound, I don't wait for 'someone ' to do something. I head out and infirm staff, and am the only one to do it.
Jacques	that is really kind of you @TideisTurning (PSW)i really like and understand that concept, what has happened to us makes us who we are. i try to be kind and caring because i understand what damage abuse can do.
Meggle	I don't understand why everyone can't just be kind to each other. It would make life so much more bearable
Captain24	That's so true @Meggle
TideisTurning (PSW)	Right there with you @Meggle. Kindness costs nothing, but it's impacts can be priceless

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Amber22 (PSW)	Q: 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?
Snowie	I learnt that we are all different in our own special way. I learnt that normal can not be defined and we should not label ourselves.
Meggle	I have learnt that others think and do similar things to me so maybe I am more normal than I thought. It's also ok to be different! It just makes me special and unique
CloudBerry	I've learnt that most people can agree that 'normal' doesn't exist
Jacques	yes tonight i have learned a lot, that there really is no such thing as normal, and @Meggletalking about feeling inadequate in relationships. i felt like i was the only one. and that we are all perfect in our own unique way.
Captain24	I have learnt that everyone's normal is different. That others think their MI makes them feel different and I'm not alone in feeling isolated and lonely.
Amber22 (PSW)	Q: Tonight's topic may have brought up some heavy feelings as we talked about feelings of not feeling 'normal' while experiencing complex mental health. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do?
Meggle	I am going to eat dinner and watch some telly with hubby
CloudBerry	im gonna have a de-caf coffee and my partners gonna rub my shoulders
Jacques	tonight has made me very anxious, i will play with my worry beads and put on some music to try to get some sleep.
CloudBerry	and then probably get nice n warm in bed
Snowie	Going to have a shower, take my meds and snuggle into bed with my fur baby
Captain24	I'm going to have a hot shower, hot chocolate and then jump into bed
Amber22 (PSW)	I'm going to have some sleepy time tea :)
7cough9	Mint chocolate and a trip to the cinema
Meggle	Are you in WA too @7cough9? still early here
TideisTurning (PSW)	We've really appreciated your openness and vulnerability in sharing tonight, but that does take it's toll. Please do take gentle care of yourself @Jacques

SANE

We're people like you.

Amber22 (PSW)	Here are some further resources we recommend having a look at: 1 What is 'normal' and what is 'different?' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZzOXcneakeg_2 Wonder is an incredible book and movie- https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/11387515-wonder (book) & https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngiK1gQKgK8 (movie trailer) 3 The Trouble with 'normal'- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAeEQvj16XM
7cough9	Qld, but I can get to a 9pm session
Meggle	Thanks so much for running tonight's chat @Amber22 (PSW)@Jynx (Moderator)@Snowdragon@TideisTurning (PSW)
CloudBerry	thanks guys
Amber22 (PSW)	Thank you for joining tonight! @Meggle:)
Amber22 (PSW)	Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion You are more than welcome to continue the discussion over on the SANE Forums if you would like https://saneforums.org/t5/Social-Spaces/Peer-Group-Chat-Why-Be-Normal-Thursday-4th-May-2023-7-8-30PM/m-p/1289875#M330914 Keep an eye out for the next Peer Group Chat discussion about 'What Brings Life Meaning'. If you'd like to be informed about future Peer Group Chats, 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!
Jacques	yes thank you moderators for your time, effort and a good topic.
Captain24	Thank you
Jacques	good night all. hugs to everyone.
7cough9	Thanks, bye
Amber22 (PSW)	Thank you for joining everyone :) It's been a lovely discussion tonight!
CloudBerry	see ya
Snowie	Goodnight all
Meggle	Goodnight everyone