

Planetary Dysphoria Blues

8th March 2020

Part One - summary:

During part one there was a large group discussion of what our current feelings are; lots of important points were raised regarding accessibility and how climate activism can be exclusive. Other points raised included the mental health impact and how we can take what we know about organising as trans people and apply that to other forms of advocacy/activism.

Points raised:

- There are pre-existing solidarity funds, food drives, fundraisers, clothes swaps etc and what we came up with in part two could expand upon these efforts.
- Our community is what is around us, whether physically or online. It's not the celebrities capitalism makes into token representation. People aren't taken seriously for not being "the right kind of trans".
- The first community allotment date is the March 15th; someone raised the point that there is also an allotment in Wakefield.
- It's possible for us to factor in climate awareness to trans demonstrations/events.
- How class can have an impact on the way you engage with community and the climate crisis. "Hyde Park or Armley/Beeston queers" - your safety is affected by where you can afford to live.
- Somebody mentioned a Indigenous focused trans charity based in New Zealand that has a recycled clothes shop to raise funds for the community and unsold clothing goes to a local women's prison.
- Housing for trans people is often precarious due to a number of factors including price, location e.g. affordable places to live are often on flood plains.
- Spaces need to be made more accessible to those that are the most marginalised - POC, disabled people, those that are homeless etc.
- For disabled people, money has to go on costs related to health, adaptive equipment and accessibility first as well as bills etc. Disabled people are often poorer and there can be significant barriers to employment which means often are cut off from events/community due to finances and venues/transportation not always being accessible.
- Travel and childcare can be barriers to accessing services and community. It's important that individuals share resources, instead of hoarding them.
- Create an audit of people with spaces in their homes people can stay, numbers etc.

- To help with accessibility, try to make information available in as many formats in a variety of spaces.
- Due to government budget cuts, there has been a decline of localised libraries so it can be harder for individuals to access information and resources.
- Whilst there are valid critiques of green capitalism, we must be aware of how it can make sustainable choices more accessible to individuals who would not otherwise be able to make sustainable choices.
- Instead of placing judgement on those unable to make sustainable choices e.g. go vegan; work on breaking down barriers instead of condemning people and implement ideas such as cooking nights etc.
- For those advocating for veganism, be aware of and challenge the use of racist, transphobic and ableist language as well as language alluding to traumatic experiences.
- Prepare people for the emotional and mental health impact of conversations, events etc. For example with Planetary Dysphoria Blues the structure of the evening was broken down and a break was given.
- To create a sustainable culture within the community, engage in conversations first rather than callout culture. Calling someone out to be used as a last resort.
- Political leaders pay lip service to a variety of social justice causes including trans rights and climate change. However materially they do things that negatively impact this causes.
- Grassroots is the way to achieve our goals.

Part Two – summary:

During part two we proactively looked at what was possible for us to start planning and broke off into three groups to come up with ideas relating to the topics of the spaces audit, the allotment, skill sharing and accessibility.

Spaces Audit:

- Find out who has beds, sofas, bedding etc. Also find out the availability of the space and how long people can stay.
- Remain aware of online accessibility, not everyone will have social media. Potentially use some form of spreadsheet/google form?
- Share with lobbying groups e.g. Non-Binary Leeds, Trans Leeds and also on Facebook groups such as Housing for Queers.
- Ensuring that personal information is safeguarded by keeping information up to date and private.
- Have active management of the list e.g. meeting people who need housing, assessing situations, having resources of organisations that people can be signposted to for long term support such as council services, shelters etc.

- Contact existing short-term stay organisations such as Saint Georges crypt to understand the policy regarding trans-people so that we can give individuals the specific information about government/other services available.
- Making the existence of the network public knowledge within the community so that vulnerable trans people will be able to access it.
- Make sure there are clear points of contact/referral.
- Compile methods of contacting/organising community e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Signal etc.
- Ensure that timelines are specific, and centre the complex needs of homeless trans people.
- Limiting liability and protecting individuals; not taking on under 18's? Would DBS checks be necessary?
- Have rules in place that all people are aware of and agree to e.g. people letting out their space, be clear about boundaries such as guests, alcohol/drugs.
- No acting as a middleman unnecessarily; arrange a public meeting between the individual offering housing and the person seeking housing.
- Signpost physical spaces such as Wharf Chambers to allow physical accessibility of information as there is no guarantee that individuals will be able to access information through the internet.
- Contact community/cultural groups in suburban and deprived areas, not just Wharf Chambers, so that this resource is accessible to the whole community. Actively make less central/less white dominated spaces.

Allotment/Skill Sharing:

- Ensure that we make the allotment as accessible as possible. Regarding transport, possibly organise carpooling, fund for transport etc.
- Assess what access we have to tools, equipment and other relevant resources.
- Look into where produce can be stored.
- How often does the allotment need to be maintained and by who? Possibility of creating a rota of duties, ensuring that people are kept up to date via a group chat and know the level of commitment needed/the flexibility.
- Assess what we can grow within the allotment. Ideas include courgettes, broad beans, peas.
- Decide how the food will be distributed within the community, e.g. community meals, food packages.
- Reach out to other local organisations such as Rainbow Junction or Leeds Urban Harvest and see if it is possible to collaborate so people can learn new skills.
- Skill sharing can ensure self sustainability, personal development and allow people within the community opportunities to find new hobbies/interests.
- Skills that would be of interest include;- cooking, gardening, DIY, knitting, sewing, soap making, carpentry and fixing electronics.

Accessibility:

- Create a wishlist for allies; how they can help, what we need from them.
- Provide information about events/services in multiple formats (text, video, audio; as many as possible) to help reach more people.
- For events ensure information regarding light, noise level, stairs, activities and if facilities are easily accessible.
- If it is not needed, don't use excessively academic jargon.
- Potentially create a newsletter to keep people updated about events, community organising etc - refer to safeguarding issues mentioned in previous points.
- Look into creating workshops about accessibility, e.g. teaching people how to use image descriptions/alternative text correctly.
- Continue to implement quiet spaces during protests and also look at options for silent protests/quiet events.
- Make sure to do outreach so those who haven't engaged with the community before knows of it's existence, e.g potentially put posters up at libraries, universities/colleges, doctors surgeries, GIC etc.
- When relevant, have legal observers at protests, hand out bust cards with legal advice and make all aware of risks. Ensure there is a route to a quiet/safe space.
- Potentially work with other groups to help people access the library - maybe with Leeds LGBT+ Book Club?