

Dancing with Rainbows: Throwing Perspective on a Person-centred Partnering Trans-identified and Trans-historied People – Tina Livingstone

Resource Guide

About Tina Livingstone

Tina Livingstone is an Advanced Accredited Sex and Gender Diversities Therapist working within the Person Centred Approach, based in private practice in Glasgow. She gained her MSc in Counselling at Strathclyde via research into Trans-identified and Trans-historied clients' experience of therapists behaviours in relation to helpfulness ratings; wrote the first chapter in "Counselling Ideologies" (Ashgate May 2010), and has had articles published in CPJ (2004), Therapy Today (2006), PCEP Journal (2008), and BACP Healthcare Journal (2014, 2015).

Tina has presented her research at BACP, UKCP, COSCA, and BACA conferences; delivered training with regard to trans' issues at both local and national level; and is currently completing a run of Professional Development Days on Working with Trans' clients for BACP.

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Dancing with Rainbows: *perspectives on person-centred partnering trans-identified and trans-historied people*



Regulatory Discourse of Relationship

Heterosexual people and homosexual people
have rights of relationship

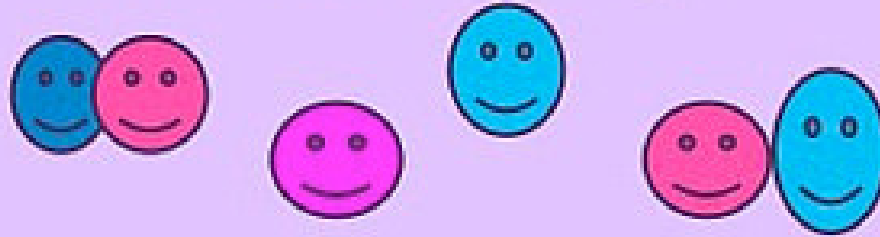
man and woman

man and man

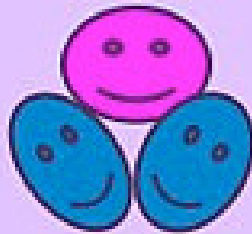
woman and woman

Equally recognised and respected

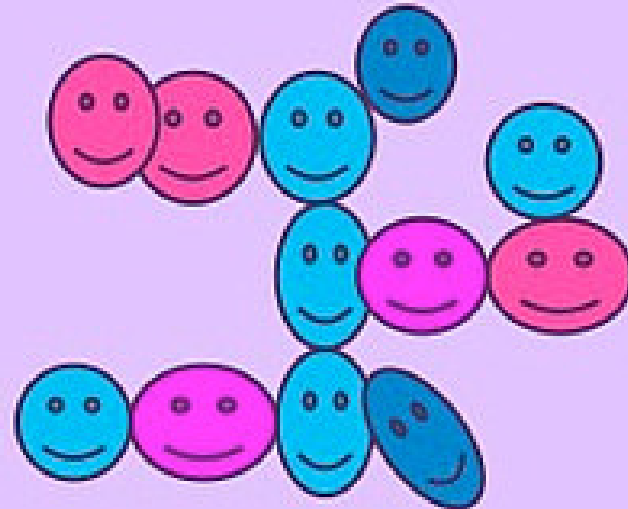
Negotiated non-monogamy



Triads



Poly-amorous Networks



Bisexuality

sexual attraction toward either or both classic binary sexes

Asexuality

total lack of sexual attraction to either classic binary sexes

Pan sexuality

sexual attraction not focussed on biological sex

Partners of Trans' People

Have no commonality to draw them together

- Heterosexual or homosexual - change of partner's gender challenges that dynamic
- Bisexual or Asexual – being beside difference is still not easy and partnering a trans' person raises curiosities in one's communities and the wider world
- Whether partner's gender transition is Part time or Full time – alterations in appearance, touch, and smell of a loved one can be profoundly alienating

Queered (or straightened) by Association

- Silenced by situation
- People have no frame of reference for Trans' relationship
 - Curiosity/Opinion can be exhausting
and
 - Loss of ordinary life is isolating

Wives and Partners (MtF)

Historically –

divorce prerequisite for clinical gender reassignment.



Treatment protocols categorised marriage as
*'a contraindication to cross-sex
surgery'*

(Randall J.R. 1971)

Requirement for proof of divorce being

*'to protect the surgeon and referring physicians from possible
lawsuits from alienated spouses'*.

(Clemmensen LH 1990)

Transvestism was regarded as sexually deviant,

so

wives and partners were similarly described –

- *'malicious male-haters'*, all having in common *'a fear of and a need to ruin masculinity'*

(Stoller R.J. 1968)

- *'often demoralised and agitated'* and subject to *'depression, hostility, sadism, and alcohol abuse ... to cope with their perverse mate'*

(Wise T.N. 1985)

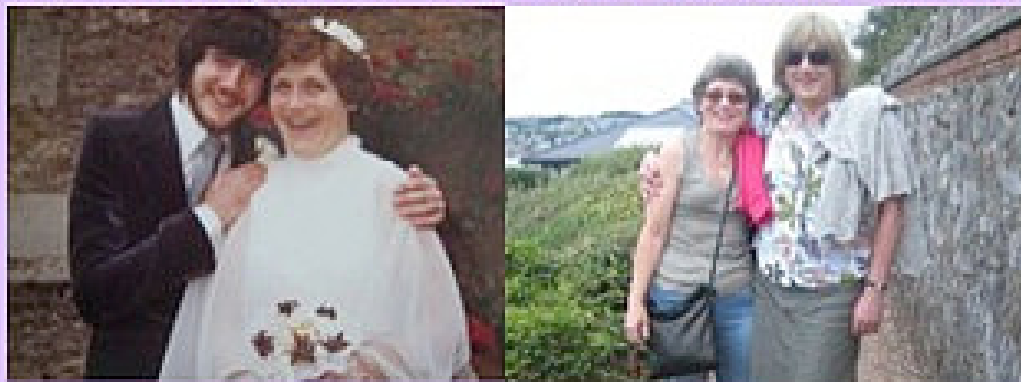
Therapists were encouraged to

‘help such women... develop sufficient insight and information to intelligently manage the dilemma’

(Wise T.N. 1985)

with accepted outcomes being either
the wife accepting her husband as perverted
or
severance of the relationship

Fortunately not everyone around at this time had therapy



Discovery and Disclosure

Whether Unintentional (finding out) or Deliberate (being told)
at the Point of Knowing

Partner /Spouse

- **Betrayed**
- **Bereaved**
- **Bewildered**

Trans' Person

- Exposed**
- Hypervigilant**
- Egotistical**

'understanding the reality of negative impacts without denying good intentions requires a person centred connection with both perceived victims and perceived offenders'

(O'Leary 2011)

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Multi-directional partiality

Holding the fact that
two things can be true at the same time
enables our potential
*'to be a believable translator
between
seemingly irreconcilable inner realities'*

(O'Leary 2011)

Non-trans Partner

- Deluged
- Positioned as parent
- Erosion of Self Worth

Trans Partner

- Eager for answers
- Positioned as child
- Abundant Egoism

Knowledge of conditions and common patterns

‘Knowledge can lead to deeper and more accurate empathy’

Enabling us ‘to be a believable translator between seemingly irreconcilable inner realities’

(O’Leary 2011)

Framing the un-frameable opens doors to possibility

Not all trans-identified people transition

The repressed self does not extinguish all other parts

Acceptance comes more easily at a distance

Acclimatising to Difference



Lev (2013) recognised narcissistic self obsession as part of the normative process for a trans' person who has repressed or hidden their true nature.

Process takes Time

Panic is a Frequent Visitor

Discussing the Un-discussable Intimacy

- Do not fancy same sex /opposite sex
 - Don't know what to do
- Do not want to be thought of as gay/straight
 - Are they expected to go without sex?
- Are they expected to do sex differently ?
 - If so - how does it happen?

The Unkindest Cuts of All

Fear – loved ones survival
things going wrong
post operative care

Lack of support

Acclimatising to altered anatomy

Genital

Top Surgery

Facial

Active Facilitation

Making dialogue possible

Discussing the un-discussable

Holding huge emotions safely

Enabling perspectives of possibility

Knowing that relationships can survive

Sexual and non-sexual bonds are equally valid

Successful female fathers and male mothers exist

Couples that separate still remain friends / parent successfully

Thank you

For Listening

And

To those who lent their photos
to demonstrate positive possibility

Tina Livingstone

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