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Welcome to Trans*cending Desires

WHY THIS ZINE?

To be very direct: We started this project because we both were tired of explaining the same things over and over again when having sex with cis gay guys. It's exhausting to constantly navigate assumptions, questions, or just the weight of being trans in spaces that aren't always built with us in mind. At the same time, we wanted to acknowledge that the lines between "cis" and "trans" aren't always so clear.

That's why we chose the subtitle "Navigating Gay Sex for and with Trans, Non-binary and Cis Bodies on the Masculine Spectrum." We talk about "navigating gay sex" instead of "gay men having sex." It's a small shift, but it matters. Because for us, this zine is so much more about experiences than labels. It's about the messy, joyful, confusing, and sometimes frustrating realities of sex and desire — both "gender" and "desire" really aren't as straightforward as we are made to believe. We wanted to create something where we could share general knowledge more communally, something that creates trust and makes those repeated conversations a little easier.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

This zine is for anyone who feels like exploring gay sex and gender in ways that don't fit neatly into boxes. Maybe you're a.m.a.b. non-binary and have been living gay sexuality long before you understood your gender. Maybe you're a trans guy who's been in gay spaces for years and just wants to feel resonance in some

of the shared stories. Or maybe you identify as a cis gay man who's curious to learn more about yourself and the trans or non-binary people people you connect with.

In short, this zine is for anyone who's ever felt out of place in gay spaces, who's had to explain themselves too many times, and anyone who wants to understand better — and who wants to hear about these things from a trans-centered perspective.

WHO'S BEHIND ALL OF THIS?

We are Elin and Jespa, two people on the trans masc spectrum, who both also like having sex with cis men. Between the two of us we have often talked about this topic, discussed our experiences and frustrations. Because we both identify with the idea of community learning, we came up with the plan to make this zine. And we wanted it to be not just an "how to" for cis men, but a genuine reflection of how we, and many other people we know, navigate the maze of gay culture. So we interviewed and invited other people — some trans, some non-binary, some cis, some with years in gay spaces, some still figuring it out — to speak and write from their own positions and experiences. Due to our own backgrounds, it was important to us to have many different perspectives represented — those of sex workers, people of colour, and those with histories of migration and those of different generations. We definetly won't claim to speak for everyone, but we wanted to start conversations, share what we've learned, and make space for others to do the same.

HOW TO USE THIS ZINE

Feel free to read the articles and interviews in whichever order sparks your interest. Some of the nerdy details we dive into might feel overwhelming. Don't worry — no one's going to quiz you before you're allowed to hook up with this hot trans cutie on Grindr. You don't have to remember every detail. But you could just have a look here when you're with a person thet feels new and your curiosity is sparked.

The interviews we have conducted each turned out to be around 15 pages or so long — hence due to readability and space limitations, we have edited, shortened, and sometimes corrected them. All of the people who participated were informed and agreed in the process of us doing so.

INVITE US

We're available for readings, workshops, and conversations. Let's talk about sex, gender, and how to expand our horizons together.

Write us: transcending_desires@riseup.net

A NOTE ON CONSENT PRACTIECES ACROSS QUEER COMMUNITIES

In our efforts to build bridges across different parts of the queer community, we've often run into a bit of friction. Different communities have developed different norms around sex, intimacy, and consent, shaped by their own histories and lived experiences. Even within individual queer communities there are subgroups with different expectations and practices around consent.

For example, approaches to consent in many cis gay spaces often differ from those in self-described queerfeminist or "FLINTA*" spaces. These differences include practices such as opt-in consent, where an explicit "yes" is sought before initiating or escalating sexual interaction, and opt-out consent, where sexual interaction may begin non-verbally and continue unless someone communicates a boundary or says "no." They also include different attitudes towards drug use during sex. All of these practices have developed in specific historical and social contexts. Gay cruising culture, for instance, emerged when openly expressing same-gender desire was criminalized in the USA and most European countries, making non-verbal communication a necessity. In contrast, many queerfeminist spaces emphasize explicit verbal communication as a way to counter harmful heteronormative assumptions of "just knowing" what the other person wants without words.

This does not mean that one consent culture is inherently better or safer than another. Boundary violations can happen in any community, regardless of its norms or language around consent. Rather than presenting one model as the "correct" one, we want to encourage curiosity about why different cultures have developed the ways they have.

As you read this zine, we invite you to approach unfamiliar practices with openness rather than judgment. Some descriptions may resonate with your own experiences, while others may challenge your assumptions. We hope this zine