**Transcript of In Queer Minds, episode four: youth perspectives and narratives of lived experience with Kai Schweizer and Shoshana Rosenberg.**

MADDY: Hello everyone. I'm Dr. Madison Magladry. Before we get started, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land I'm on today, recording this podcast, the Whadjuk Noongar people. I'd like to pay my respects to elders past, present, and future, and extend that respect to all indigenous peoples in our audience, and indeed in our studio. I'd also like to acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. Australia is stolen land and always was, and always will be Aboriginal land. Welcome to the fourth and final episode of In Queer Minds, a project emerging from the Human Rights Visionary seed grant from Curtin University developed with Dr. Deborah Hunn and Dr. Bri McKenzie.

This is the fourth in a series of four episodes that explores the ideological and practical approaches of individuals operating within intersectional queer academic, activist or community spaces. Today's topic focuses on youth perspectives and narratives of lived experience in the gender and sexually diverse community. Joining me to discuss this today, are our special guests Shoshana Rosenberg, who is recording today from Wurundjeri country, and Kai Schweizer, to speak to these topics in relation to their own work, which spans academia, creative practice, and more grassroots community engagement. So thank you both so much for coming in.

KAI: Thank you.

SHOSHANA: Thank you for having us.

MADDY: Shoshana Rosenberg is a queer butch Jewish PhD candidate in Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry at Curtin University with a Master's of sexology. She's currently conducting research on the lived experience of gender and sexually diverse Jewish people in Australia. Shoshana works at the Australian Research Center in Health, Sex and Society at Latrobe university in Melbourne. Kai Schweizer is a sexologist and LGBTIQA plus specialist located in Western Australia. He is currently employed as a project support officer at the Youth Educating Peers project and a research assistant at Curtin University. He is the co-founder of the Youth Pride Network and the founder of the Youth Homelessness Advisory Council. On behalf of Deb and Bri, thanks again. And let's get started.

SHOSHANA: Thanks for having us. That was an amazing intro. You are a gun, I love it.

MADDY: I've had four, three practice sessions, yeah. So I've had some previous conversations on the podcast about what it means to represent someone in a group to which you yourself don't belong. And as a follow-up to that, I wanted to ask you both about what you see as the advantages and disadvantages of being a part of the group you're researching and writing about, if we can invoke the old academic binary, which is still relevant in some ways, but very questionable or questioned in others, of the insider outsider research identity. Let's start with Kai. What do you think? What are your thoughts?

KAI: My thoughts are in terms of advantages, I'm have just finished; I'm doing research from that inside/outside perspective, on a study that Curtin has been undertaking with Pride in diversity around employment and recruitment discrimination against trans and gender diverse people. And to my knowledge, I'm the only trans or gender diverse person in that research team. But from what I can tell, I think it's really, it's really valuable to have that perspective in the work that we're doing. Because there's questions that we've added to the, you know, the interview guide that wouldn't have been there otherwise that are just sort of, that really insider knowledge of the kinds of things that might come up.

But in addition to that, just undertaking a bunch of interviews with transgender, diverse people. Just the rapport that you build with them is very different than for someone who's on the outside of that experience. And just, I noticed people in that interviewing stage, just not feeling like they have to explain themselves or educate me as the researcher about their identity; They can just sort of say what is going on for them and know that they're going to be understood. And I think that that can really elicit better and more rich data. If you know, you've got like a, a pre-established relationship in just knowing that you're talking to someone who's in the same community and who will understand you. I think in terms of the disadvantages, I already know a lot of trans and gender diverse people already. So when it came to actually studying our own community, I really couldn't interview anyone in Western Australia without conflict of interest. So I could only interview people from other states. And even then there was a couple of people that I had to pull myself off interviews for.

But yeah, it's, it's challenging when you're trying to elicit data from people who you don't know in a small community where most people do know each other and that can definitely be a challenge.

MADDY: That's great. Are there any challenges about being sort of the, the only trans person in the project, like personally, if you don't mind answering that question?

Speaker 3: Yeah, I guess it's, it's tricky to be the sole voice of that. And also to then be getting different data from different people, because you've got researchers taking on the interviews who are non-peers and people who are peers, and there's not really any way for us to determine whether that's improving or changing the data in any way. But yeah, in terms of like, I jumped on the project at the end, so they'd already finished the ethics approval and planning most of the project and the questions for the quant side were already set. So some of the data around that is not perfect or ideal.

But yeah, it's sort of a, just a challenge that has come up. I'm not sure it's, it's tricky, it's, it's hard to measure whether it makes a difference, but in my opinion, and anecdotally it makes a difference. And I think Shosh can probably talk to data that shows that it works really efficiently and effectively.

MADDY: Great. Shosh, what are your experiences?

SHOSHANA: Yeah, I mean, first of all, I totally agree with Kai around everything around this idea of building rapport and also this idea of, I think the kind of, I think even just the, the trust that people in trans researchers and in trans peers like across not just in, in research, but, you know, medical settings, anything, that sort of experience of a peer is really specific. And I think that in a way I'm even messier than Kai,, in the sense that I, so I take, , I take, I think Jodie Taylor's approach, which is the idea of the 'intimate insider'. So for me, I think this idea of the mess, this fear of mess that we, that we have in general, but specifically, I guess, within academia, this idea that we must be, as professionals, we must be objective. We must be, you know, we must be distanced. We need to, essentially make a big blockade between us and the people that we're working with. And that is, that is seen as rigor. That is what we've sort of come to understand as academic rigor or as research rigor, or as even practice rigor.

And I just think it is absolutely bizarre. And I think that every experience in my life has shown me that having to undergo any kind of clinical, bureaucratic, or even like mundane experience, having to have these kinds of interpersonal experiences with people who understand some really fundamental things about me is always going to make for an easier interaction. But also it's going to make me want to give more, it's going to make me trust more. It's going to make me pass on more information and, and, you know, and I think that that's part of it.

I think that it's a really, it's very interesting too, to have that kind of, to be able to have that kind of honesty with people, particularly for people whose experience as trans people has been to have to be dishonest or have to engage with people who are not interested in their truth, their whole truth or any of their truth. You know, so I think there is something really, there's something really interesting there about accepting that it's messy and accepting that anytime you sit in a room with another person, it is immediately tainted by everyone's; your experiences, their experiences, the institution in which you sit, the setting, the physical setting in which you're in, all these things are going to affect who you are and how you interact. And I think I'd rather be honest about it, you know?

MADDY: That's great. I think what both of you are saying is about, I suppose, very dominant narrative in academia that that data is better when it's, when it's objective, as you're saying Josh. And I think what you're both finding out, you know, Kai, you said this, that the data is actually is, you know, better, quote unquote 'better', when people are comfortable, when you can be honest.

And I think something that this highlights is the importance of vulnerability as researchers, as well as the vulnerability of the participants, because of course, historically, yeah, as you were saying, you know, the outsider researcher comes in and they have, you know, one position and, and interview, you know, people of a certain population who are often marginalized, socially, and they are asked to be vulnerable, but the researcher is not. And, you know, so your, explicit presence in these projects kind of de- stabilizes that binary, that insider/outsider, that objective/subjective binary.

SHOSHANA: And not only is it a binary, but it is a power dynamic too, you know, it's not, and I can, and I can attest to this, I suppose, actually, as someone who often gets spoken to as someone who is, quote unquote, 'just a member of the community', even within professional settings. But you know, there, there is a dynamic there, this dynamic that there's academics and then there's us. And so being someone who is both of those things, really, you know, it's a really, it's a fascinating experience - let's go with fascinating - but, you know, but there is, but there is a kind of, there is, there is power there and objectivity is just a sort of sort of singular HammerFall application of that power.

KAI: I think also that, if we take it a step even before actually, and kind of interviewing someone just in that recruitment phase, that work around having peers visible in that process is super, super important. And we've seen that with studies that have collected bigger samples of trans people than ever before. It's very clearly because of the fact that there were very explicitly trans people involved in that research. And I think there's a lot of research happening about trans people right now, but not much of it actually includes us in the process of collecting that data.

And as a community, we're very distrustful of research because it's often been used against us in really unhelpful ways, that someone's collected data on us with the intention of creating something that paints us as a community in a negative light. So there's a real, real fear and distrust of engaging in research, even though we're, you know, quite a highly studied group. And yeah, being able to do research in a way that says, like we are peers, we intend to use this research in an ethical manner that actually won't harm the community is a really important part of, you know, studying a very vulnerable population. I don't like calling it vulnerable because not vulnerable, we're vulnerable because of society's stuff, but we're not, we're trying to avoid contributing to that.

SHOSHANA: And it's interesting that you mentioned this idea of vulnerable because like Maddy mentioned earlier, actually, we are also, we are forced to be vulnerable in order to be researched about our vulnerability. We aare double wounded when we are engaged with, by cis-gender, you know, 'gender tourists' who just want to study us under their Petri dish and leave us and not have any actual ongoing relationship with us. So it's like both that we are already targeted. We are not vulnerable. We are extremely resilient. We are very powerful as individuals and as a group, but we are made vulnerable by being targeted.

KAI: And that just in the long term creates distrust, that people will not re-engage in research. And then we lose a lot of valuable experiences that we could be collecting.

MADDY: Something interesting that I see come up is that, you know, gender and sexually diverse people are expected to give their time often for free, as participants, and perhaps, you know, bringing in trans people as researchers, gender and sexually diverse people as researchers is a way of, I guess, acknowledging their expertise as well in a paid way. Maybe? Sometimes?

KAI: We should be valuing people's time.

MADDY: We should, absolutely.

KAI: A lot of researchers feel very uncomfortable with the idea of giving someone renumeration [sic] for their participation. But we know that when we're talking about communities that live in extreme poverty and don't have the capacity to offer their time in the same way that other research populations might, then it's really important that we are able to acknowledge that. And if we want queer people and trans people in particular to contribute to research, we're asking them to give up their time during their day that they might be needing to work, to make a living, to survive. We should be they're offering their life experience, which is their expertise. So we should be paying them for that experience.

MADDY: Yup. Many universities, it's very common practice to, you know, give the illusion of reward or give the illusion of remuneration by giving you, you know, like you participate in a survey or whatever, and you get like the chance-

KAI: The *chance* to win, yep.

MADDY: The *chance* to win like a $30 Coles gift card. Which is interesting as a way of thinking about rewarding or acknowledging that time. And also putting people in competition, maybe indirectly with each other, which is,

KAI: I don't love it.

MADDY: No, no. But then of course, there's also, you know, you have to navigate that with tensions of the funding that you get, which is difficult, which says something about the limitations.

KAI: It should be budgeted into every study ever that if you want to research populations that live in extreme poverty or have particularly high levels of challenges related to their economics in some way, or, you know, especially when I've been looking at studies around like street-present young people, lots of them in Perth are trans, it's a population that we want to be studying, but they don't have the time or the capacity to contribute if they're not being paid for their time. So we should be taking that into account. And in all of the budgeting we do for research, and ideally that's something that, you know, every university would be considering is there are these, this particular population, we have to pay them to be involved in research. So therefore; put it in the budget.

SHOSHANA: Even beyond that, I mean, I actually, I had this done recently; someone wasted my time, which happens very regularly for me. And I just had this thought and I was like: what, what could I have done with this amount of time that this person has taken away from me to get my, you know, totally informal, but also unpaid opinion on trans stuff and exp- and walk them through something, in the middle of a busy day? And it was like, wow, I could have achieved so much. I could have achieved so much more. It's, you know, it is, it's a labour, it's a labour.

KAI: We've got to do better, or empower people to do better, especially like the young people that I'm working with, who are in the community, just constantly giving out free advice or educating everyone around them for free. And I've had to learn in my own life and try to continually remind other young people, like if you're not getting paid for teaching, you should be, you should not teach off the clock, you know? And that's sort of something that we've had to, I've had to work on, is that I used to give out like workshops; three hour workshops for free. Cause I just was desperate for people to get that information. And that's not how it should work. You know, it's, you're, you're providing expertise. You're, you're providing really vulnerable lived experience. You should be remunerated for your time.

SHOSHANA: Totally.

KAI: It's hard to like undo that way of thinking of like, 'oh, we've got to make the world better'. So we have to, you know, make sacrifices for that. But actually, like that's not a sacrifice that is worth making for most people.

MADDY: Agreed. Okay. Second question: Kai, much of your work addresses young people specifically about their health and sexuality. Thinking about previous iterations of sexual education for school students that have this very didactic, patronizing tone, which is often satirized as something that is in the past is not happening anymore. What approaches do you take in your work to avoid this?

KAI: It's definitely not a thing of the past anymore. I agree. We do have in this state, pretty solid and good school sexual health curriculum, RSE: relationship and sexuality education. But the problem is that schools have a lot of discretion in whether they actually follow that curriculum or not. So they will pick and choose the bits that they're comfortable with and they'll leave out the stuff that they're not. So any of the stuff around sort of gender and sexuality gets culled by most schools, pretty much everything that's not, like, human biology, labelling a diagram, gets taken out. And maybe if you're lucky you get sort of a condom demonstration. But it really doesn't address the stuff that young people actually want to know about.

And certainly in the work that I've done, we've collected surveys of what do young people actually want to know, and what do they feel their sex education is missing. And then you've also got things like the, the secondary school student sexual health surveys that have been coming out for years and years that shows very similar things to what our work has collected. Young people get how to put on a condom. They're tired of having to learn that; they can absolutely label where the uterus is, but what they can't do is negotiate how to actually ask about putting that condom on and how to have a conversation around consent instead of just, you know, you learn what consent is in school, maybe if you're lucky, or you see the Tea video and you're like, cool, I understand I need consent, but how do I actually ask for that without saying 'Hello, I would like to have sexual intercourse, sign here', because that's not realistic to actual young people's lives.

So a lot of the work that we are doing is really on interactive sort of, experiential learning, where we're going through, how you actually ask for consent in a way that it's in your own words that make sense for you. So, you know, a young person isn't going to ask, would you like to have sexual intercourse? They're going to say, 'Hey, do you want to fuck?' And it's actually getting some of that practice in a safe environment to know how to verbalize these things in your own language, in your own way of saying them and also doing a huge amount of sort of inclusive sexual health education, because that's where the real obvious gap to me as the sort of peer inside of the peer. You know, I'm meeting young people who are 18 and 19 and have never had sex education in their life that is relevant to them; who have never seen a condom in some instances, have barely ever heard of a dental dam. Dental dams are a wonder to most people.

And yeah, lots of trans, gender diverse young people who are desperate for some education around how to negotiate their gender dysphoria and their body and sex and sexuality. But yeah, I guess the way we do that is we try to be as non-didactic as possible do as much learning through experience, not as in doing sex, but experiencing activities that might support young people to kind of come to their own conclusions. And it's very much harm reduction approach. So not saying, don't do this thing. it's: how do we avoid you getting harmed from doing this thing? Or how do we reduce the risk of this thing? And yeah, being as sex positive as possible. So anything that is healthy, consensual and pleasurable is a great thing. And we definitely get a lot of questions that I don't think a teacher is going to get asked because they recognize that we will actually answer the question without judgment.

MADDY: Cool. Shosh, do you have anything to add? I'm thinking about your experience researching health issues and outcomes. I'm not sure I'm not aware of any more, like, direct approaches, you know, telling for example, you know, a population like not how to put on a condom, but how to ask for consent or, or those kinds of things. But I know that you're an educator as well. What are some of the ways you negotiate, I guess, that sort of very common didactic approach to telling people how to do stuff?

SHOSHANA: Yeah. I mean, I guess I am very privileged to have had some mentors and colleagues and now friends, who have already been researching pleasure and thinking about pleasure and thinking about taking things at, you know, again, because to me, I think pleasure is the exact; is the counterpart to that sort of didactic, robotic sort of thing that, that we're, that is foisted on all of us, you know, the, these templates, these really simplistic templates of how to and how to ask how to and how to be okay with it.

And so I think, I think that it is one of those things that I've certainly found even when teaching, when teaching things that are nothing to do with sexuality, for me, those kind of same principles apply. And for me, those principles of definitely, honesty, you know, like, and transparency, and also like being a bit human, being a person about these kinds of discussions. And that's whether I'm running a class on HIV or whether I'm running a class that talks about sex work or, just a history of homosexuality or anything like that. I don't do giggles, you know, I really like it's like, or like, it's not that I don't do giggles, but to me I'm like, okay, it's, it's, you know, these things are funny or these things are challenging, but actually also, like just interesting and actually finding things; you know, humor is great. Humor is better than like depression. Like I'd rather the people were having fun with, with this kind of material.

But also I think getting people to the point where they're like, 'Oh, actually like, these aren't like intellectual exercises that we're talking about. These are people, these are sexual experiences that people have. These are life scenarios and life experiences that people have gone through.' And actually, like that's both maybe embarrassing, maybe even actually just legitimately funny, but also just an absolutely fascinating way to gain a deeper understanding of people. So I take that to my research. I take that to any sort of public speaking that I do. I take it with utmost care into my personal relationships too. You know, I think that it is, it is a framework that applies across the board.

KAI: Mm. And I think all of the work that I've done in terms of actual, like practical sexual health education teaching comes from an evidence base of the research that's out there. So, you know, as educators, we have to rely on the research that's available to us on what works and what information is available. And it's always a bit star struck for me whenever I get to be on a podcast or do anything with Shosh because.

SHOSHANA: Aw.

KAI: You're a huge part of everything that we do, you know, and we cite you on a daily basis in all of my works, so.

SHOSHANA: Oh, sweetie. And on the flip side, I need people who aren't nerds in the back room, like me who are actually putting this thing to application because I'm not getting out of this bathrobe ever again, if I can help it.

KAI: Yeah, I think we want everything we do to be evidence-based and often, education in the school setting. And for young people generally around sex is often not super evidence-based or the evidence that's being used hasn't been updated in 50 years. And so they're still going off those things that are really disappointingly, inaccurate. I still see a lot of young people think they can't get an IUD because you have to have had a baby first, which is not true. Lots of, you know, attitudes around the copper IUD being harmful and causing illnesses, which has not been the case for many years. And it was just one brand, but yeah. There's a lot of misinformation and myths that are still spouting. And a lot of what we have to do is dispelling those,

MADDY: I remember hearing about the copper IUD thing when I was in sexual education, like in year nine.

KAI: Yeah, and values-heavy stuff. So like the emergency contraceptive pill; when I was in school at a, you know, religious school and a number of other religious schools, they tell you, you've got sort of three, you can take it three times and then it stops working. And it's sort of, that's not even remotely scientifically true. It's just sort of a thing that they tell people to try and put them off utilizing it. But yeah, it's just, you know, a lot of undoing what's been taught in school sometimes when we're working with people who are outside of school age.

MADDY: Wow. What I'm hearing from both of you is I guess, having to take more creative or outside the box approaches; and I hate using that word 'outside the box' because it implies-

KAI: There is no box.

MADDY: Yeah, yeah, exactly. The box is in our minds. Right.

SHOSHANA: What's in the box, what's in the box?

KAI: It's Gwenyth Paltrow's severed head,

MADDY: But, on that point, as a, as a transition,

KAI: \*laughs\*.

MADDY: I know that some of you; yeah, so to speak;, there's going to be a lot of that in here. I know Shosh, that in addition to your professional work, as an academic, as, you know, in community engagement, you also are a musician, you have a creative practice. And I wonder what the role of your creative practice is in expressing and negotiating narratives of, of queerness, of, you know, being, generally, in ways that maybe your professional work can not reach.

SHOSHANA: I mean, I first and foremost take, I take Shawn Wilson's perspective on my entire career, which is research as ceremony. And I think that to me, music and creativity across the board is also a type of ceremony. It is a type of ritual. It is a type of, it's a, it's a way of, I guess, about experiences as something other than, than, than data. And also at the same time, maybe thinking of things that other things that have been sort of classified as, you know, capitally data as it's something else like, I've, you know, I've been very fortunate to have been able to release a few albums now, since I've transitioned and there's something about, and, you know, a lot of those albums are instrumental as well.

And I think that that, even that in itself provides like a really nice counterpoint for me, because I spent so much of my time writing about these experiences, and also talking really directly about these experiences and educating people and, and thinking about them in my own kind of day-to-day life and being able to just, sort of embody and release these kind of feelings and these kind of like more, the more ambiguous feelings and this is really useful.

And I think that that's part of it too. I think that there are the hard lines that we must tread the hard linguistic lines that we must tread in order for you to understand my experience, and for me to understand your experience. There are words that we use, like transgender or or whatever it is that these, these words that kind of make sense that we can sort of use, but they're never enough and they never capture everything. And so actually specifically making instrumental music has been really, really useful. It just lets me feel all the things that usually I'm sitting around and, and intellectualizing over or mulling over in my mind in a really pragmatic way. So yeah, it's like a, it's like a deep pragmatism bomb, you know,

MADDY: Kai, anything to add? I know that you, I, again, I stalked your website. So I've seen that you do like have done spoken word and creative writing in the past. Do you have any experiences with the way your creative practice has, I guess, led to different articulations of narratives?

KAI: Yeah, I think it's just a very different way of getting across in the same information. You know, not everyone wants to sit down and read a study, like I do, and go through all the data and the numbers. I think creative writing in comparison is a very approachable way of getting those stories across. And some people respond to numbers and some people respond to stories. And, you know, that's where sort of the, the crossover of qualitative research is really important, but being able to have that really like personal story put out there can be really valuable as well and I think there's different ways of furthering sort of the queer rights movement and creative practice is definitely one of those for sure.

In the last couple of years, I've kind of tapered down off of doing as much creative writing. Cause I've just been straight up too busy doing non-creative writing. But I have continued doing like, creative writing workshops with young people, particularly in school settings. And it's really wonderful and powerful to hear some of the creative work that they can create. And so that's kind of, you know, kept me creatively nourished for the last year or so just doing some of that as well. But yeah, it's amazing the sort of confessional creative work that young people can create and the sort of stories that they're willing to share, when they're given the opportunity to

SHOSHANA: Kai, do you find as well, like, so even though I publish X amount of like peer reviewed articles per year and this and that and the other, I also make sure that every study that I do has at least like one sort of really plain English, non-wanky accessible kind of article. Do you find that you kind of do that as well? Like even though you're like neck-deep in academic stuff half the time, like, do you, do you also try to kind of make that an outlet for the research that you're doing?

KAI: Absolutely, I think one of the biggest challenges that faces like the general population now in terms of research is it's all behind a paywall. So I, I'm kind of like experiencing that a lot on the internet right now. People going like, 'Oh, well there's this study that shows this thing and then someone else goes, well, I can't actually access that. So how can you, you know, how can I understand and have evidence-based knowledge of the world when what I'm actually able to see is BuzzFeed?

And so what we need to be doing more often and something that I do a lot is, you know, infographics of that information in an easy bite size way that the average person can say, I'm predominantly working with young people who have low literacy who are refugee and migrants, who've never been to school or who have been to limited school. They deserve access to that information as well, but it needs to be presented in a manner that's actually, you know, accessible to them. So yeah, a lot of it is if you are a researcher, then you need to be able to not only give that information to other academics, but that information is supposed to benefit and further the general population as well. And we need to be better at actually translating that into ways of understanding. That makes sense to others outside of our little bubble of academia.

MADDY: All of these responses so far have led very nicely to the last question, which is: I want to know how your work highlights the importance in giving gender and sexually diverse people, the opportunity to tell their own stories and their own lived experiences. And I think you've addressed this in a lot of ways about, you know, contacting or asking, you know, students in school: 'what do you want to see?' And also, you know, working with that two way vulnerability with, you know, the participant as a researcher. Can you tell me about how your work highlights the importance in giving gender and sexually diverse people, the opportunity to tell their own stories and lived experiences?

KAI: Yes, I think, certainly every single interview I've done in the last several months on this particular study around recruitment and, employment discrimination at the end, they've gone 'I'm so glad that I had the opportunity to participate, I really hope this makes a change and a difference, I can't wait to read it when it comes out.' Hopefully it makes, you know, policy change. As a community we're really switched on to the discrimination that our community faces, not just for ourselves as an individual, but also more broadly.

And we, I think are quite good at recognizing the impact and the power that research has and the way that it can be translated into legislation and policy. And you know, even just organizational policy as well. All of that sort of stuff came up with every interview that I did. But yeah, we, we as a community really see the value in research and I think that's why we're a group that's so primed to do research, but we also are a group that's very prone to research fatigue as a result that we're overstudied, but not often by peers. And yeah, it's just, uh, it's tricky, isn't it?

SHOSHANA: Yeah, for sure. I mean, and, and, and I agree it, it is, it is tricky. I really do wonder what the sort of mental load is for someone who's engaging with a fellow trans researcher versus someone who has to engage with a cisgender researcher talking about this kind of thing. I mean, as far as like, my sort of like where, where my work sits with like highlighting other people's stories and that kind of thing, first and foremost, I think it would be really disingenuous of me to not state that, like, I am an intermediary for other people's stories. I'm very privileged to have been given access to now many, many, many stories from people, whether cis or trans, really, really privileged.

But I think that I do my absolute best to reflect and put together and like really show the sort of themes between what all of these people telling me, but I could never fully capture these stories. And if anything, I think that that's maybe some of the humility that I wish was applied more broadly. I think that we have mistaken research participation, or even an interview of any kind we've mistaken that with like having an actual capacity to not just express what is going on with your life, but also really to like, to, to survive, it long enough to make that sort of expression. So as much as I, you know, I, as much as I, I do what I can to show other people's stories and represent them truthfully, and I set up a lot of things in place for that. Everyone checks their transcript before I touch a word of it or publish anything out of it. I do all this work so that everyone is happy with very little crumb of their story that I'm trying to sort of tell and cobble together and make it through this, I dunno, make into this weird Ed Gein face mask kind of thing of gender experiences.

So, you know, I, I think that I, on the flip side, I highlight the importance of it by doing it. I am a fierce advocate for the inclusion of trans people everywhere up and down the chain when it comes to academia, but also when it comes to any kind of institution, I mean, I'm also an advocate for dismantling those institutions, absolutely brick by brick with my bare hands, if I have to. But in the meantime, I think that the best thing that I can do is pull up other people to do this stuff with me. And I think that that's work that I want to do that I haven't managed to do very much and that I want to do more. And I, on some level, I think that that is just as important as interviewing people. It's employing them. It's a show of finding a way for them to find further stability; it's giving up some of your work so that someone else might do some of that work and gain that experience and money and all that kind of stuff. So I think that for me, it's, it's something that is very systemic.

KAI: Mm. And I think the only other thing that I'd add is just, like people can, people contribute to research cause they want to make a difference. But often what happens is people contribute their really vulnerable, personal story, and then that's it. And like it goes off to the academic journal and it's de-identified, and that's the last they see of it and they hope that it's made a difference, but often there's no tangible, no notable thing in their own life that changes. And so I think one of the things that we need to do better in the world of academia and in research is actually, you know, emailing and going, here's the study, here's a copy of it. You contributed, you get a copy of it. And that's, you know, we need to be able to show participants that what they've contributed was meaningful. We need to keep them in the loop of everything that we've done with that afterwards, you know, and I think that's, what's been-

SHOSHANA: Absolutely.

KAI: -Amazing about some pieces of research that have occurred is just like, you know, they've included people throughout that process and gone, here's where it is now here. Now it's been published. You, you know, as a participant, you are a part of that research, you should be proud of the contribution you made and you should feel like you're a part of that whole process even after you've stepped back from it, you know? But yeah, I think we just need to do a better job of keeping people up to date with what's happening with their story.

MADDY: What I really like is, and excuse the use of the word queer as a verb,

SHOSHANA: How dare you, how dare you!

MADDY: It's the queering of the researcher/researched relationship and, and the queering of the boundaries around, you know, what research is and what research does, which I think is, is excellent. And, you know, we have to acknowledge that some of the very tools that we use to, you know, highlight people's stories or to create social change are the tools that made that change necessary in the first place. So it is, you know, we have to be critically and reflexively interrogating those tools and where they came from and what they do.

KAI: Yeah. Trans culture is a culture. Queer culture is a culture. And I think we need to, a lot of researchers don't necessarily understand that to the extent that we do from the inside that like we have our own food customs, and language of, we have ways of speaking and music that we listened to, and obviously that's not homogenous. We don't all have exactly the same experiences, but there is sort of a culture that we are embedded in as researchers, if we're peers that we can then understand more about the other people that we're talking to. And yeah, we, we try to have that insider attitude with any other sort of cultural difference that we're working with, but it's something we need to understand better in the context of working with queer and trans people.

SHOSHANA: Yeah. And it's a question of alignment, you know, it's a question of who do you, who do you choose to ideologically, practically, methodologically, align yourself with, you know, do you align yourself with the institution or do you, or do you align yourself with your culture? Or do you do what most of us have been forced to do, which is sit smack bang in the middle? I mean, my colleague Megan Sharp has written a paper talking about 'insighters as in, I N S I G H T E R S insighters. So, talking about specifically this, like being inside the university, but also existing, kind of belonging to that culture. And I think that that's ultimately even that, even that in and of itself is, is a matter of alignment and negotiation, you know, that I think is something that everyone should do.

I wish everyone really thought about who they are aligning themselves with. Who do they have affinity with? What institutions, what movements, what even, what, what kind of, what kind of evidence are you aligning yourself with? Are you just aligning yourself with quote unquote, 'peer reviewed scientific stuff' written by cisgender people about trans people that looks good because it's in the Q1 journal? Or you aligning yourself with the affected people.

KAI: In my mind I like to say that research is just like extremely ethical journalism. Like you're, what you're trying to do is to share people's stories and their experiences in a way that is designed to get them out there to the public and in a way that ideally make some sort of change. And so there's a lot more like, you know, ethical approval and stuff that goes into research. But at the end of the day, what you're trying to do is you're trying to elicit those stories and use them in a meaningful and contributable way. And so that's what we should all be trying to do.

MADDY: Great. I think that's about all we have time for today. Thank you so much to both Shoshana and Kai for joining me and thanks to everyone for listening. This has been the final episode of In Queer Minds. It's been a real pleasure and a really great learning experience to speak to all of our guests. And I really look forward to seeing what comes out of all of your work. Thanks very much and goodbye.

**END**