

# From allies to accomplices

Gender diversity, trauma, and liberation

Who am I?

Mx. Elise Diamond

# Who have I learned about this stuff from?

Alok Vaid-Menon

Audre Lord

Octavia Butler

Judith Butler

Legacy Russell

Rivers Solomon

adrienne marie brown

Sophie Labelle

Marsha P. Johnson

Ursula K. Leguin

Sylvia Rivera

Dorian Electra

She/Her/Hers

my community

# Defining terms

**Gender** - A socially constructed local paradigm often treated as universal, that is used to assign people into one of two classes, and to facilitate assumptions about power dynamics, individual capabilities, and rules for relationship within and between those classes. Also refers to a given individual's self-understanding within that paradigm

**Transgender or trans** - A person whose self-understanding is different from the gender they were coercively assigned at birth

**Cisgender or cis** - A person whose self-understanding is more or less aligned with the gender they were coercively assigned at birth

**Cisnormativity** - The idea that being cisgender is normal/baseline/correct/appropriate, while being transgender is abnormal/pathological/false/inappropriate, and all the ways that idea is enforced

## Binary gender

The idea that there are only two genders, that they are opposite, exclusive, inherent, and unchangeable



**Girl/Woman**

**Boy/Man**

Gender is not a trait of an isolated self.

Everything that gender actually means and does is relational.

It is about defining what we are allowed to do, who we can be with, our roles in communities and in stories, our place in hierarchies.

# Trauma

"An event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being."

SAMHSA

# Trauma

“Trauma is the shock to the psyche that leads to dissociation: our ability to separate ourselves from parts of ourselves, to create a split within ourselves so that we can know and also not know what we know, feel and yet not feel our feelings. It is our ability, as Freud put it in Studies on Hysteria, to hold parts of our experience not as a secret from others but as a “foreign body” within ourselves.”

(Gilligan, 2002, p. 6)



# What does gender enforcement look like?

“Life was presented to me everywhere ... as “boys = masculine = violence = power” and “girls = feminine = softness = weakness,” and that is so damaging for a child.”

Cressa Beer

“You remember things your parents say about other people not performing gender correctly. You remember those are things you need to be careful about or those comments will be made about you, or worse.”

V

"What part of yourself did you have to destroy in order to survive?"

- Alok Vaid-Menon

# How Gender Enforcement Causes Trauma

“[Gender Performance] is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production...”

- Judith Butler

# Queer technologies of liberation

“... the sheer act of living--surviving--in the face of a gendered and racialized hegemony becomes uniquely political. We choose to stay alive, against all odds, because our lives matter. We choose to support one another in living, as the act of staying alive is a form of world-building. These worlds are ours to create, claim, pioneer.”

Legacy Russell

“Some therapists emphasized that “critical consciousness” or “consciousness-raising” processes were integral to empowerment. Clients were supported to develop clarity about how relationships, systems, and social structures have influenced them. Clients’ inner power, therefore, was about a self-in-context.”

Zenobia Morrill

We talk about it

We create spaces

We make art

We practice authenticity



We trade clothes