

Kayla Woodward
 SOC 301
 November 29, 2016

Kayla: Ok so today is Wednesday, November 16, 2016 and we are conducting this interview in the University of Southern Maine Glickman Library. This is Kayla Woodward, K-A-Y-L-A W-O-O-D-W-A-R-D.	Introduction: Interviewer
Nate: and Nathaniel Koch or Nate. N-A-T-E K-O-C-H	Introduction: Interviewer
Kayla: We are the student researchers that are interviewing Kennedy today. Could you please say and spell your name for us?	Introduction: Interviewer
Kennedy: My name is Kennedy Barteaux. K-E-N-N-E-D-Y B-A-R-T-E-A-U-X	Introduction: Interviewee
Kayla: Ok, can you tell us how old you are?	Age
Kennedy: I am 38 years old.	Age
Kayla: Will you tell us about your birthplace, where you grew up, your childhood memories?	Question: Birthplace, Childhood
Kennedy: Woah, um let's see, I was born in Norridgewock Maine, and your going to say where is that? It's way out in the woods, uhm it's up near Skowhegan. So it's a really, really rural part of Maine. Let's see, memories of childhood. Mostly just roaming around in the woods and just being outside in the woods every day all day. I have one brother and two parents and we lived in the same house all growing up. My dad was in the military and is a teacher and my mother is a special education teacher uhm, they work in the same school. Let's see, childhood memories, I guess I would say a lot of freedom that I wish every kid could have when they grow up. Uhm just the freedom to roam around and with no boundaries, there's no, besides like rivers or natural things, there wasn't much to be concerned about.	Birthplace: Norridgewock Maine Childhood memories outdoors Description of family: 1 sibling 2 parents Father military/teacher Mother special education teacher Childhood memories Freedom to roam nature
Kayla: Ok so out of the topics that you listed that	

<p>you would be interested in talking about, is there anywhere specific that you would want to start?</p> <p>Kennedy: I don't think so, if you have a list going that you have, that would be good.</p> <p>Kayla: Ok so, we'll just start with the process of coming out then.</p> <p>Kennedy: Oh wow.</p> <p>Kayla: So, when did your sexual orientation become apparent to you?</p> <p>Kennedy: Pretty much very early on, when I was a very, very young child. But you don't really know what it is when you are a kid, you just like, you feel different, you know it's not something your suppose to talk about or that you would necessarily even bubble up in your consciousness but very early on, I'd say like 4 I remember knowing that about myself, so that was the recognition sort of, of it but coming out was much later. Uhm, I think I was 14 years old, I was in high school, I was a freshman in high school and that was like so exciting because I was like I know who I am and this is awesome and amazing and then realizing where I am in the world and how not awesome and amazing that is for other people like friends and family and what not. And I live in a very conservative area, a very religious Christian area where there's just not very many out people in rural, like in the town that I grew up in so there wasn't a lot of example to look at and to be like "that's what it looks like to come out" or like be gay in this community or whatnot. So I started with telling my friends because that was a safer route and then just being like ok, I'm going to lose some friends like, this is going to happen so lets just get it over with. Like I need to know who's going support me and who isn't because I knew that it was not going to be a good time. But all of my friends that were like close friends, were, probably already knew, they were like "oh, yeah we know" uhm, or were like totally fine really supportive, it wasn't an issue at all but people that</p>	<p>Topic: Process of coming out</p> <p>Question: Sexual orientation</p> <p>Sexual orientation: age of appearance</p> <p>Knew from age 4</p> <p>Process of coming out: age 14</p> <p>"I know who I am"</p> <p>Lived in religious, conservative Christian area</p> <p>No examples of being gay to look at</p> <p>Process of coming out to friends Safety</p> <p>Friends acceptance and support</p>
---	--

<p>I had grown up with who I wasn't so close to was a big issue, it was a huge issue and then I didn't really come out to my family, they sort of found out because the teachers and kids talk, so it was the high school and the junior high so they sort of just found out. So one day I came home and they were both standing in the kitchen with their arms crossed and I was like "what the hell, what's going on here?" and they were like "well we heard something very disturbing today" I was like "ok" and I'm thinking like, of all the things that I could possibly get busted for right when your 14 I'm like "oh no what did they find out" and so they had said, "we heard that you have a girlfriend or whatever" and I was like "yeah" and then it was very clear that was not welcome in the house, that wasn't acceptable at all and it was a really, really, really, really, really awful time, because until that point, I was allowed to sort of be this like tom boy person until a certain age point, then I was steered towards being very feminine and very this and that. So it was definitely something that "wasn't allowed in the house", in quotes. I was told that it wouldn't be acceptable under that roof so I felt like I lost my family you know, and like they were freaking out and my brother was freaking out because I was upsetting them and you know, nobody understood why I was like doing this to people and I couldn't wrap my head around that because your 14 years old your just like, I'm just trying to live my life like doing my thing and this should be a celebration because this is something I found out about myself and it's like so, so much weight off your shoulders to like know that about yourself. But then having them, immediately, no time in between having to deal with like the reality of being a gay kiddo in the rural sticks of Maine. So I was kicked out of the house and so I moved in with my girlfriend who was a little older, a little older, she was over 18 so uhm, my dad actually got in touch with her and told her that he would have her arrested because she was older than I was and over 18. So I had to move out of her house, her apartment, and move in with another family in Skowhegan which was a good friend of mine and her family and it was awesome and they were</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Process of coming out: to family Parents found out</p> <p>Age 14, has a girlfriend</p> <p>Gayness unacceptable to parents</p> <p>Tom boy</p> <p>Wasn't allowed in house</p> <p>Lost family</p> <p>Being a gay kid in rural Maine Kicked Out</p> <p>Dad threatened to arrest girlfriend</p> <p>Moved in with friends family</p>
---	--

<p>really supportive and really worked to reunite my family and I even though I wasn't ready for that because I felt like so angry and just like oh my god. Like I couldn't imagine doing that to somebody in my family you know, for any reason except you know if they tried to kill me or something, that'd be weird but you know like, you talk about those things, I mean that's all you have is your family, you know it's like, that's where you come from. So not only was I being pushed out of my house but all the people that I went to school with, there was nobody who was out in my high school, it was just me that I knew of. I knew a lot of queer kids but none of them were out and for a very good reason and they watched me get harassed and bullied and you know, spit in my face and beat up after school and all that stuff and teachers seeing these things happen and allowing it to happen and so why would they come out, I mean it doesn't make sense, if you see the example in front of you, your like "no thanks, I'm good in the closet." So that was the first time I came out, was when I was 14.</p> <p>Kayla: What did you find to be the most difficult thing about the process that you were going through?</p> <p>Kennedy: In a long view that I have now, the fragility of love, the fragility of family and friends, when you think that something is solid and something is unquestioned, unquestionable you know, it's like "this is family this is, these are people I've known all my life, the friends that I grew up with" and then they're just horrible beings to you you know, it's just like, that was the worst to sort of have the wool pulled out very quickly.</p> <p>Nate: You said you took part of the pride dyke marches?</p> <p>Kennedy: Yes</p> <p>Nate: What was that, what was that like?</p> <p>Kennedy: The dyke marches are my favorite part</p>	<p>Friends family, very supportive Reunite with family</p> <p>Angry that family did that to him</p> <p>No one else out in his high school</p> <p>Process of coming out: high school experience Bullied</p> <p>Why would others want to come out after seeing what he went through?</p> <p>Question: Process of coming out</p> <p>Most difficult about the process of coming out Fragility of love, family, and friends</p> <p>Question: Pride Dyke March</p> <p>Question: Pride Dyke March</p>
--	--

<p>of pride every year, ever since I came to Portland when I was 18 years old because I feel like dykes are not super visible in terms of the gay community especially in the 90's when I came to Portland because when people think of gay people, they think of gay men or lesbians which is very different than dyke identities and it was just, it was such an awesome celebration, it was so much fun to hang out with other people who probably have very similar experiences to you in terms of walking around on the earth, what you look like, what your politics are, who you chose to partner with or sleep with and how that affects your, moving around in your own community. So the dyke march was just like a huge celebration but also a big huge "fuck you" like with both fingers out like yeaahh ya know, like dykes on bikes, leading the dyke march every year. Just like a bunch of motorcycles and a bunch of dykes just like being loud and taking downtown just like riding down Congress Street so everyone can see you. Also in allowing you in hoping that other dykes or queer kids will look at that and be like oh you know like people can be out and people can be walking down the middle of the street in like booty shorts and leather you know or whatever and just how amazing that is to see as a young kid and then be involved in and then parties afterward and just hanging out with your crew and meeting a bunch of people from out of town too which is always fun.</p> <p>Nate: So I suppose with uh, onto our next topic that we had was uh, gender identity. Now, have you ever felt a conflict with the normative expectations of your sex and your feelings about your gender?</p> <p>Kennedy: Every day since the day I was born. Yes, every single day yeah I felt that growing up a lot. Like I said, my parents just let me do what I wanted in terms of expression like the tom boy kind of situation where I just, I was interested in hanging out with guys and doing things that were stereotypically for guys. I was one of the first in quotes "female person to play little league". That</p>	<p>Pride Dyke March description and experience Came to Portland at age 18 in the 1990's</p> <p>Dyke identities different from gay men or lesbians</p> <p>Similarities between dykes</p> <p>Riding down Congress Street for everyone to see Represent and influence other dykes and queers to come out and support</p> <p>Meeting people from out of town</p> <p>Question: gender identity, expectations</p> <p>Feelings towards gender identity Parents allowed to be a tom boy Childhood and gender identity</p>
--	---

<p>was a huge deal cause I like wouldn't let it go I was just like I love baseball, I want to play you know, I didn't understand why people, I didn't understand it and I thought it was ridiculous and so I pushed that and I've been like that my whole life, I've felt different and been different from other kids I guess, since I was a kid. I never was, I never cared, you know, I never was, I never saw, I never understood why people had to be separated in that way like if you like doing something it doesn't mean anything about who you are, do it you know. So that continued throughout my life, it still continues I still, I still have, I still think about it every day cause it's like you know, walking around as a trans man, not knowing how your read every single day, using bathrooms, whatever, walking down the street holding my partners hand like, you don't know how your seen necessarily. I think I'm forced to think about it even when it slips my mind and I'm not thinking about it. You can't help think about it because it's everywhere and it's such a shame that people feel locked into that you know, I don't necessarily, I definitely don't feel locked into that but it's never been an easy thing but it's something I celebrate a lot. Ya I think even within the queer community and within the trans community and even the dyke community back in the day like, I never, I always felt different and I always felt like there were too many boundaries being laid out you know, like butch femme, blah blah, this and that which is great and important you know to like lay, to sometimes put yourself in those boxes and say I am a dyke like this is my identity or I am butch like, those things are beautiful but when you don't, when you don't feel like those are the places you belong and people are putting you there and you know, even down to dating, like who approaches you or who doesn't approach you or who you know, includes you or doesn't include you depends on how they perceive you you know and I just always thought that that was just using the existing paradigm of straight and gay and girl and boy and all this and using it in our own community which is like totally dangerous and totally you know, not, it's totally what I felt I was first and foremost</p>	<p>First female to play little league</p> <p>Feelings of conflict with gender identity and expectations from society Felt different from other kids since a kid Never understood why people had to be separated by gender</p> <p>Walking around as a trans man not knowing how read</p> <p>Don't feel locked into particular identity</p> <p>Always felt different Felt like there were too many boundaries</p> <p>Where and how you are included depends on how perceived Paradigm of straight, gay, girl, boy</p>
---	---

<p>trying to get rid of, is all of those like weird divisive categories. Not to say that I would, you know like if somebody identities in any kind of way that's not a problem but to like try and make other people identify a certain way or act a certain way or you know, try to socialize you in your own community is pretty wrong and I felt definitely those things from both the queer community and who sleep with and who I hangout with and the trans community big time because when I was first coming out in like 2005 I think, there was a very certain way to be, there was a very certain, you know you have to be masculine and you have to pass like passing is the biggest deal which I understand as a trans person for safety reasons but in terms of really expressing who you are and being who you are, I mean it's just ridiculous to think that every trans man wants to be a butchy, lumberjacky, bearded, you know, all that. So early on it was difficult to sort of find the space that I belonged in the trans community not being that person and not believing in those stereotypes.</p> <p>Nate: Speaking of the community, what was your relationship with the Maine Trans Net?</p> <p>Kennedy: Oh the Maine Trans Net. I became involved with them pretty much immediately after I came out because I was like "what's going on who's like, who's organizing " and you know, I was very social at that point, a lot of social gatherings, which is awesome, I just love, like I used to host meetings at my house, so I lived with a lot of trans people like, I lived with a shit load of people like I don't even know, like 8 people or something in an apartment and we were sort of a safe house for a lot of people and we would have meetings there and people from all over the state would come, people from Bangor and what not to just come and be themselves or, sometimes we'd work on a project like we did some screen printing of like Maine Transnet t-shirts and whatever else we could find around the house to screen print and people would come from all over the place and we'd meet them in like a parking lot somewhere you know, just to meet face to face because people</p>	<p>Trying to get rid of labels</p> <p>Try to socialize someone in their community Feelings towards expectations</p> <p>Came out as trans in 2005 Certain way to be Have to pass</p> <p>Safety</p> <p>Difficult to find space that he belonged in the trans community</p> <p>Question: Maine Trans Net</p> <p>Involvement with Maine Trans Net</p> <p>Very social: Social gatherings, host meetings Live in safe house for Trans</p> <p>8 other people</p> <p>Meetings for Trans People form all over the state would come Screen printed Maine Trans Net t-shirts</p>
---	---

<p>were, a lot of people were terrified cause they were trying to find community and they didn't know who to trust and so they get online and they're like "who are these people" you know, it's a website, they haven't met anybody yet and so meeting people and you know, talking to people and inviting them into your house and just saying you know, "it's safe here and you can come and like get dressed the way you want to get dressed you know, or however you want to be, is fine in this house, everybody is your friend". So that, it started out like that and then we'd have like basketball games and like going to like movies or whatever just together as crew cause people, you know, just safety in numbers kind of thing and just being able to hang out. Then it got more involved and became like an organization and a couple friends of mine headed it up in terms of making it like a 401C3 and getting an office and I did some fundraising and, just getting the word out, talking to people about where we were and what we did and we went through ugh, what is it called, like a speaker training because there used to be the Maine speakers bureau and then that went away so we sort of pulled a little bit from there and went up to Bangor, a bunch of us were, ugh, trained on how to speak to large groups about coming out and being trans and kind of trans 1-0-1 type of stuff for people who didn't know sort of, anything about trans folks. So that was really cool to bring people together to tell our stories and to, to try to reach out to people who, especially in the medical community, that was a big focus because, the medical and the psychiatric community because those are two historically damaging pieces of society or organizations to trans people so those were big focuses, also the police department, another historically damaging entity. So those were big focuses on like who we would talk to, but a lot of doctors, because back then, there were, and it still is, I shouldn't say back then, but in my experience back then, there were a lot of things that you had to do in order to medically transition if you wanted to get prescription above the board, if you wanted to get a legal prescription, then you had to go through all these psychiatric evaluations</p>	<p>Met with people to make them feel safe</p> <p>Support Allowed to dress, look, and feel however they want</p> <p>Had basketball games and went to movies Safety for Trans: "safety in numbers"</p> <p>Became an organization</p> <p>Fundraising, getting the word out</p> <p>Maine Speakers Bureau: Speaker training</p> <p>Went to Bangor to speak to large groups about coming out and being trans</p> <p>Told their stories and educated people Especially the medical community</p> <p>Medical and psychiatric community: "damaging pieces of society"</p> <p>Education for trans and non-trans community</p> <p>Process of medically transitioning Receive prescription above the board</p>
---	--

<p>and deal with doctors and shrinks who didn't, usually didn't know what the hell they were doing and so followed the Harry Benjamin standards very strictly, which means "you have to live in your gender..." and I'm putting air quotes "for a year before you, even if you had lived as yourself for ten years, they needed to be part of the process of you so that also you know, is uhm, so what does that look like? dressing like your gender, so that means if you are a woman than you need to wear a dress and you need to do these things and act this way and that's just, anyway, very destructive so those are the people that we would target because we felt that that would be the best place to start because those were the groups that we were encountering a lot that were uhm, most damaging but most needed so that's where we focused initially, and then it uhm, decided to lose the office I guess, I wasn't part of that transition I sort of dropped out a little bit because I was feeling a little burnt out and it just became like meetings for trans only, non binary folks, ally's, or, and or, partners of so that people could find support and be around other people so partners of trans people so that they could have a space to talk about their experience without feeling like they're going to say something wrong or like you know, and also just feel the comradery of other people who are uhm, who are partners of trans people or non binary people and be in a safe space. Then, I can't remember what year it was but it was the first time that there was a Maine Trans Net presence at Pride, we had a spot in the pride parade and that was a big deal, that was a really big deal. I don't know why, it was like exciting and really scary which is a strange thing because we were around our people but it was just like you know, there had never been like a trans organization you know, that was like you know, specifically for trans folks so it was, it was empowering to be part of a giant parade of queer people that could find a spot that maybe they couldn't find before and walk with us or cheer us on on the sidelines, that was a pretty big undertaking and a pretty big deal for us. I've been apart from them for a number of years now but uhm, I've been wanting to get back into the</p>	<p>Psychiatric evaluations</p> <p>Harry Benjamin standards Live in your gender for a year</p> <p>Dressing like your gender</p> <p>Dropped out of organization Feeling burnt out Became meetings for trans only Search for Support</p> <p>Space to talk about experience</p> <p>Maine Trans Net presence at Pride: Big deal</p> <p>There had never been an organization that was specifically for trans Empowering to be a part of pride</p>
--	---

<p>fold and meet more people and hangout in those spaces, especially now in the climate that we're in, we need to like, really find each other again and organize. Now it's all over the state, in Waterville, Bangor, there's meetings all over the place and they're well attended, it's great, it's a great thing.</p> <p>Nate: Do you have a message for someone who might be transitioning that you'd like to put out there?</p> <p>Kennedy: Ohh Man. Do it your own way, do it your own way and you'll do it. There are people out there, your people are waiting for you.</p> <p>Kayla: Going off on the trans, how do you feel that that has affected your life?</p> <p>Kennedy: Oh my god, it's changed it, it's changed..., yeah it's changed every single thing about it, it's changed everything in my life. God, it's like trying to think of like where do I start for that one because...I mean, it's like, it's a strange thing to like become who you are and know who you are and come out as a trans person and then, it's just unfolding over years of what that means so it looked like trying to pass and all of these things at first and then realizing that that's not, you know, maybe that's not who I am but maybe that was safe, and that was good you know that's good for, until I can peak my head out and say ok well I'm done with this bullshit because I don't care anymore like, I need to be, I need to be myself because there's just no other way to do it you got one shot and it's affected everything, my family, my relationship with to family, that was really, coming out as trans was not actually a big deal to my family, oddly enough so it affected my family in a way that I was able to be more open with them about the things that I was doing in terms of like medically transitioning and how I am walking around in the world so you know, it's just a different way to walk around in the world, there are things that you encounter that you would never encounter as a person who, or you know, your psyche is different, it changes your psyche, it</p>	<p>Wants to get back into organization</p> <p>All over the state: Waterville, bangor</p> <p>Question: Transitioning</p> <p>Message to someone transitioning</p> <p>Question: Impact of trans on life</p> <p>How trans has impacted life</p> <p>Changed everything about his life</p> <p>Come out as a trans person</p> <p>Trying to "pass"</p> <p>Safety of passing as a man</p> <p>Started not to care Needs to be himself</p> <p>Affected family</p> <p>Coming out as trans: not a big deal to family Able to be more open with family</p> <p>Openness about medically transitioning</p>
--	--

<p>changes the way you see the world and the way that the world sees you. So, I think it just changes everything I wish I could be, I don't know more specific, maybe I could think about that question more, uhm, it's certainly changed me politically, or being more active politically. Jumping into Maine Trans net and just being out, like super out right off, right away was uhm, super beneficial and for me but also, I don't know if I would've, I don't know, I don't know how I would be politically and how active I would be if I wasn't somebody who knows what it's like to be under a thumb, who knows what it's like to have laws that prohibit you from living your life and to be a citizen of where you live. It's, I mean it's never-ending, it's incredibly changing, it's incredibly change, and I also just I think, started putting up with a lot less bullshit you know, just like, you know, you can only sort of pander or cater for so long and try to be understanding and then your like you know what, you got stuff to work on, you can do that over there, I'm not, I'm not doing all of this work, I cannot do your work and just feeling more pride than being scared so going through the being terrified and like what the f...like what does this mean you know, and like you know, people questioning your sexuality so your not gay anymore, your not queer anymore because you date women, it's like oh, it does not work that way. I was actually in a relationship with my partner that had a child, she was I think 8 when I came out so that was interesting, so that changed, that changed a lot in terms of our family because it was another element of safety and another element of taking care of this kid and making sure that she understands what's happening and like, she was actually way cooler than anybody, she was just like, yes, that makes sense, she had no issue with it but it definitely, it puts a lot of pressure on you to like, to get your shit figured out you know what I mean, to sort of you know cause your not just doing it for yourself, you have to figure this out with your family and with the person that your with and how your child was awesome and that she was just so much more open about it and it made me feel better about it, I was just like yes</p>	<p>Changes psyche Changes the way sees the world</p> <p>Changed him politically More active politically</p> <p>Beneficial to be out right away</p> <p>What it's like to have laws that prohibit you from living your life</p> <p>Never-ending Started putting up with a lot less</p> <p>Can only try to be understanding for so long</p> <p>Feeling more pride than being scared</p> <p>People questioning sexuality</p> <p>Relationship: Partner, partner's child Child: 8-year-old girl when he came out</p> <p>Changed family: in terms of safety</p> <p>Making sure child understands</p> <p>Child had no issue with it</p> <p>Puts on pressure</p> <p>Have to figure it out with family</p>
--	--

your right like this is not, this isn't as complicated as it seems sometimes you know, just inwardly so there's like, when you think about it within yourself and then there's dealing with it in the world right so your like I'm good with me but it's just dealing with everybody in the world you know in every aspect and your you know, medically being refused medical treatment of not getting jobs, not getting housing, those are all things that I've experienced and to just be reminded that your inner self is not actually struggling with it, it's not actually you struggling with it was an awesome reflection from a kid. Now I forget the question, I'm just going on, just going on.

Nate: For the sake of interest, can you recall a situation possibly that you were denied simply because of being trans?

Kennedy: Yes, absolutely. I, after, I don't know how long after I had come out, I had started calling around to different doctor's offices because I didn't, there wasn't a lot of people seeking what you would call legal medical assistance in terms of medically transitioning which is what I wanted to do. So I just started calling around because I did want to have it on the books because I wanted to know where this shit came from. Like I'm putting this in my body, I want to know who's making it, where it's coming from and if there's a problem with it, it can be traced and like there's somebody watching out for my health while I'm on it because at the time, there wasn't much and there still isn't much research about what testosterone or taking hormones does to your body so your kind of going into it blind, or at the time I was. So I'd call an office or walk into an office and I'd say this is what I'm looking for and they'd just be like "we don't do that here" and I'm like "I can't speak to a doctor, I can't speak to anybody?", "no we don't, we don't do that here, your going have to go somewhere else". Then I experienced points of time where I would be sick and I'd go to a doctor's office and they would refuse, I've actually been hung up on because I would say, because I'd be looking for both things I'd be like "I need this

Child made him feel better about it

Dealing with everybody else in the world
Medically refused treatment
Refused Jobs
Refused Housing

Inner self is not struggling with it

Question: experience of denial

Experience of denial: Doctors

Not a lot of people looking for legal medical assistance

Started calling doctors offices
Wanted it to be legal
Wanted to know what he was going to be putting in his body

Wanted somebody watching out for his health

Not much research on what testosterone does to body

Call an office and get denied

Been hung up on by doctor office

<p>thing but also I'm sick right now" and they'd be like "we don't do that" and I'd be like "you don't do sick people? because you are a doctor so I'm a little confused about what you do". But I've definitely gone into doctor's offices where they wouldn't treat me because they didn't know how, they would say "you need to go to a specialist "and I'm like "but I have the flu, you can treat me for that, you can touch me it's ok like, nothings going to happen". So I've definitely been refused when I've been sick like very sick and I just didn't get anything for it because I was freaked out you know like I don't want to go to a doctors office that thinks I'm untouchable because I'm some horrible form of human and so I just, I didn't go to the doctors for a long time and I still have trouble going to the doctors because there's still a lot of that out there and a lot of people who if they don't know how to quote "treat a trans person" they'll just sort of pass the buck or just be super inappropriate with you like, a lot of inappropriate shit happens in the doctors offices with trans people that even if you do get seen, it's the things that people say to you while your in a very vulnerable position is terrifying, it's very odd and very, you just wouldn't think, sort of the professionalism just goes out the window, he's like oh your a freak, I can say whatever I want or I can do whatever I want and it's like that's just not how it works you know. So that's just some broad examples of how I've been denied, outright denied services.</p> <p>Kayla: So, another topic that you had marked down was the HIV/AIDS epidemic.</p> <p>Kennedy: Yeah</p> <p>Kayla: Can you just tell us a bit about that?</p> <p>Kennedy: Yeah, well let's see, probably start back in high school when I was coming out when I was 14 years old. My cousin passed away of AIDS and it was a big, huge thing in my family, he was the only other gay person that we knew of at the time in my family and he, it wasn't my immediate</p>	<p>Wouldn't be treated because didn't know how</p> <p>Referred to a specialist</p> <p>Refusal when sick with the flu</p> <p>Untouchable</p> <p>Didn't go to the doctors for a long time Still have trouble going to the doctors</p> <p>Don't know how to "treat a trans person"</p> <p>Doctors, inappropriate</p> <p>No professionalism</p> <p>Topic: HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Question: HIV/AIDS</p> <p>First understanding of HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Cousin passed of AIDS</p> <p>Only other gay person in the family</p>
--	---

<p>family because it was my cousin but his family refused to see him and he went to California to try and get treatment and to try and see if he could survive at that point and they refused to go see him in California and just sort of left him to die and at the last minute, they changed their mind and they went out and they saw him and they were with him and that made a really big impact on me you know, the only person in my family who was gay and was dead now and seeing how my family reacted to that even though they did turn around it was scary in that in between time to be like, this must be happening to people all over the place you know, so just learning more about it, this was pre-internet so that challenging in a rural place to find out information but somehow we got, my friend and I started a AIDS/HIV group for other people who may have family members or friends or just want to learn more about it and we had, we did some education in my high school which was extremely challenging and terrifying which was another wool being pulled very quickly because, so we had an entire week where we had peoples attention, we had people come down to the auditorium class by class you know, and see skits about what people go through when they get he positive id and the lack of health care and the lack of even testing, the lack of education that was being, especially in the gay community, it was intentionally not given to the gay community and people were just dying all over the place and it was, it was terrifying to watch that happen. So anyway, we created this group and we had a week to educate people, so we had the gym would have like pieces of the AIDS quilt in it and people could come and walk around and look at it just to get a sense of how enormous this was, this was just a small piece of the quilt that we were somehow able to get in tiny Skowhegan Maine and we'd came up against a lot of pressure from the community and from the school and even the nurse, the school nurse that we were working with and some of the teachers that were helping us do it because we had a, we had to have a school meeting, a school community meeting about this education because a lot of parents were concerned</p>	<p>His family refused to go see him Went to California for treatment</p> <p>Refused to see him in California Changed their minds at the last minute</p> <p>Large impact: seeing how family reacted</p> <p>Learning about HIV/AIDS: before internet Challenging to get information in a rural place Started HIV/AIDS group for others</p> <p>Providing education for HIV/AIDS: in his high school</p> <p>Had an entire week of this education</p> <p>Skits about what people go through</p> <p>Lack of health care Lack of testing Lack of education</p> <p>People were dying everywhere</p> <p>Created a group and had a week to educate people AIDS quilt</p> <p>Got a piece of the AIDS quilt in Skowhegan Maine Pressure from the community and the school</p> <p>School meeting for event</p>
---	---

<p>that people were being taught how to be gay. So that was, it was actually terrifying because we, as 14/15-year-old kids setting up this education week and for, to go to this meeting where there were parents and adults, we were like the only kids at this meeting, saying things, you know, threatening us with weapons, saying you know, I have a gun and I'll use it kind of thing. People being enraged that we were doing this and we actually ended up having police protection to come to enter school and to leave school because we were getting harassed and beat up and there were protests outside of the school, the Christian Civic League took it upon themselves to whip up this frenzy of anti-gay rhetoric and got a lot of support, a lot of parents and kids too would leave school and be part of this protest and they would block the doors and so the police had to become involved. It was terrifying, it was absolutely terrifying to know that this epidemic was happening, to know that people weren't getting the education especially the gay and queer communities and that everybody needed to know about it because it wasn't just gay people, and that's what everybody, especially in rural Maine was thinking about, "it's just queers" you know, it's like no it's everybody and were going to talk about anal sex and were going to talk oral sex and were going talk about all of these things because everybody has the opportunity to do those things, I'm not saying that everybody does but you have the opportunity and if you have the opportunity, you should know how to protect yourself. So when we came down to do certain parts of the education in the auditorium we were told right before we went on stage that we can't talk about anal sex and we were like, "that's the number one point of transmission and we can't talk about that?" I don't actually remember what ended up happening, I think one of us did end up talking about it because it was just like "fuck you, like are you serious? your going support these crazy people?". It was just amazingly terrifying and to be the only out person that I knew of in my entire school of a thousand kids because it was a regional school that pulled from like many, many communities and just the level of harassment just</p>	<p>Other parents concerned that people were being taught "how to be gay"</p> <p>Age: 14/15 setting up an education week In a meeting with only parents and adults</p> <p>Threatened with weapons</p> <p>People angry about this education</p> <p>Police protection Harassed Protests Christian Civic League: Anti-gay rhetoric</p> <p>Block the doors</p> <p>People weren't getting the education needed Not just the gay community</p> <p>Know how to protect yourself</p> <p>Education: told what they can and cannot say</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Only out person in school of 1000 kids</p>
---	--

<p>skyrocketed for myself and for other people who were perceived as gay so a lot of my friends that I hung out with who were gay and were not out and were perceived as gay were just victims of hate crimes exponentially during that time. My parents supported me in doing it because that's, we didn't really talk about it, but they were like you know, they let me borrow their car one day to bring all of the, I had a bunch of signs and things that we had made into school and things like, there would be people at the end of the driveway, it was a long driveway of the school blocking the entrance, or being at the entrance saying "honk if you hate fags" written on a, spray painted on a sheet you know, a big white sheet and it was just terrifying to see those people there and when they saw me coming, they blocked the entrance to the school, to the driveway and I was like "shit these people are going to like jump in and kick my ass" so I just drove through them, I was like "it's me or you man like, it's not going to be me" and I continued to do the work that we had set out to do that week but it was absolutely terrifying to have, and also to have the administration pissed off at you for doing the work even though they allowed it to happen, the administration labeling you as a trouble maker and all these things because you wouldn't because I and a bunch of us wouldn't let go of our position, that what we were doing was really important to the health of everybody and that all of these people talking about how you know, we're trying to teach people how to be gay and all of this stuff was just like, insane and to see how much support that they had you know, and the police just being like "oh we got to come like escort you" and it was just such a, a hassle for everybody to help us you know, it was just like "oh your such a trouble maker" kind of thing. But so that's, that's kind of what started, what started my knowledge of the AIDS epidemic. Later on from being a youngin and being in high school, actually in high school, I was tested myself which also in rural Maine is a thing because everybody knows you so I chose to go to a town that was just far enough away where I thought maybe there wouldn't be a lot of overlap, but that was a terrifying experience, and at that</p>	<p>Harassment: increased</p> <p>Victims of hate crimes Parents support</p> <p>Sings</p> <p>Blocking entrance to school Honking</p> <p>Continued to do the work</p> <p>Administration angry</p> <p>Labeled as a trouble maker</p> <p>Important to everyone's health</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Hassle for people to help them</p> <p>Testing for HIV/AIDS</p>
---	---

<p>point I think you had to wait two weeks for the results, it was a blood test and you had to wait two weeks for the results and that's when I wasn't living at home so there was like tons of stress just like oh my god, this can't be true you know. That ended up being, I'm still negative so there's that, I just, other experiences that I've had where I've had to be tested and just having to think about your life in a different way and how you do things in a different way. How you have sex in a different way, how you stay protected in a different way, just different risk factors in your life and then, I know of course, lots of positive folks and have friends who are bad ass activists who educate us on what it's like to be alive right now, being positive and I've also had a lot of people, or a few people in my life who have been refused to be tested because of their perceived risk factors, so based on their gender identity, based on their sexual orientation, even though they ask for an HIV test, just denied being tested or being told that they were tested and actually not being tested and that happened to a really good friend of mine who almost died of AIDs and didn't know that he had AIDs because he was told that he was negative or had been refused to be tested but that had been sick and just not understood why and doctors just couldn't figure it out, they just could not figure it out but based on their gender identity and their sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation, that just wasn't a part of their, what the doctors apparently were looking for and this was like recently, this was like, 5 years ago you know, this wasn't like in the 80's or something, this was like very recently. So just, terrifying things from the past that keep happening you know, and you keep seeing that lack of education and lack of outreach to medical folks and to just people in the community, not being aware that that's something that they could be at risk for or just being denied service once again, or being denied medical treatment or the proper tests.</p> <p>Nate: You mentioned the Frannie Peabody Center, what did you have to do with them? What was your relationship with that?</p>	<p>Had to wait 2 weeks for results</p> <p>Stress</p> <p>Still negative</p> <p>Protection Risk factors Know positive people Friends are activists that educate on what it's like to be positive and alive</p> <p>Denial for testing based on gender identity, sexual orientation</p> <p>Friend almost died because didn't know he had AIDS Told that he was negative or refused to be tested</p> <p>Time: 5 years ago</p> <p>Lack of education Lack of outreach HIV/AIDS: Awareness Denied service</p>
--	---

Kennedy: I'm not sure why I mentioned that specifically, because I never worked there, I never, did I volunteer with them? That's a possibility that I maybe remembered at that point. Well I know I've been, you know I go to the AIDS walks and you know anything that's a public event that I definitely go out and support and different art shows and things like that were on moral AIDS day and different occasions of different communities but I don't, I'm not sure why, maybe I'll remember at some point.

Nate: Another topic you had, that you said you were interested in talking about and we kind of combined it all together, was Love, Romance, Sex, Pleasure, so with Styxx and other gay and lesbian businesses shutting down, is it hard to meet and find prospective partners?

Kennedy: [00:47:57.19]

Question: Frannie Peabody Center

May have volunteered

AIDS walks

Support

Question: Love, Romance, Sex, Pleasure, Commerce

Nathaniel I. Koch
SOC 301
December 12, 2016

Nate: Another topic you had, that you said you were interested in talking about and we kind of combined it all together, was Love, Romance, Sex, Pleasure, so with Styxx and other gay and lesbian businesses shutting down, is it hard to meet and find prospective partners?

Kennedy: Hmm well I haven't been on the dating scene for a while, so i don't know about that one. I would say in general, I don't know. I mean I think everyone's doing soo much online activity, yeah that's part of the reason why those places are shutting down. Umm so personally no.

Nate: Umm how do you think it's affecting the community? I mean you saying that a lot of people are going digital basically, so I mean is it really an issue for meeting people, i mean not just you but I mean as a whole.

Kennedy: It's definitely, I think so. I mean i'm somebody who values a face to face interaction. I don't understand online dating I mean that's just me. Online hookups I mean that's you know that's different, we do that in bars anyway. You know. Umm, I think it's definitely changed the way that yeah the way that people interact and the way that people meet and date and the whole courting thing or not courting and just hooking up. Yeah cuz then you're out with your friends at the bar, a gay bar and you know your friends meet them, you know it's kind of a vetting situation, you know what they look like, you know. you sort of can see the crew that they hang out with. You know its like, its a little bit cuz you know, around here everybody knows everybody, for the most part a lot of you know it's just so small. But umm, yeah everything is different, there's no like dancing, you know there's no like, I don't, I mean I wouldn't know cuz I havent online dated but umm yeah it certainly changes the dynamics of dating

Question: Digital age dating

Change in the dating scene

Question: Community Support

<p>and finding people and i'm sure that it sort of opens the pool up, you know. So it's not just Portland queers, your sort of able to branch out. You don't have to drive to another city to go to a bar, or whatever. You just talk to somebody online and be like, oh you live in montreal or whatever. It sort of opens up your dating experiences.</p>	Clarification
<p>Nate: I mean outside of dating with umm with business' like that closing down, I mean you lose a support community right? I mean where do you go to meet with these people, if you you no longer have these big sites?</p>	Safe designated queer spaces
<p>Kennedy: For, you mean specifically for dating?</p>	Unsafe in general public
<p>Nate: No I mean just support in general.</p>	
<p>Kennedy: Oh support, yeah, I think that, I think that those places have slipped away and umm I think more now than ever people are probably thinking about that right now. Its like shit I mean like where can we go and like hang out and all be together and be in a safe place and not be surrounded. You know just have sort of your own your own like queer space, or gay space, instead of being in public and and I don't know. Say you go to like some bar in the old port. Like I don't, I don't know I just wouldn't feel safe doing that and I certainly don't want to be surrounded by that while I you know try to hang and talk about issues that perhaps aren't understood by the vast majority of folks or like maybe it's just a different thing altogether. I think now more than ever people are thinking about that and maybe hoping they were still there. But umm, the idea of them slipping away because they're not needed anymore, I don't know about that. I don't, I don't personally agree with that, but that could also be because I grew up, like like my my coming coming up in growing up rather has been in bars and been, umm in places like that. Not you know. not online, not at the University, not at these other places it was</p>	<p>LGBT spaces disappearing</p> <p>Question: Experiences finding love</p>

<p>predominantly bars and so that's sort of, for me it definitely. I mean those places have been disappearing so quickly you know, and some places have popped up for like a year and disappeared, or you know places that have like Styxx that have been in the community forever used to be the underground when I was young are disappearing. Umm yeah I think there's a lot of reasons why they're disappearing but certainly I think they're they will be missed now. You know.</p> <p>Kayla: Umm, could you explain some experiences that you've had trying to find love or partners?</p> <p>Kennedy: Yeah, well I haven't, I did I really have felt pretty lucky in my in my quest for sexual partners or just partners or whatever. It seems to be a flowing spring, umm see I I I haven't really had, i've had wonderful experiences of like ninety nine percent wonderful experiences with just like being out dating all those things. I I I don't know. Can you read the question again, maybe I can.</p> <p>Kayla: I said, umm could you explain or describe some experiences that you've gone through or had while trying to find love or partners or relationships?</p> <p>Kennedy: Oh yeah, I guess what a good thing to talk about is you know like um. Going going, just different parts of your life being different in terms of like, are you monogamous with people are you not monogamous how do you navigate that? How is that seen in your community? How is that seen in the larger community, and just i've had a lot of different experiences. I've been in non monogamous relationships, poly relationships, group sex type umm stuff, and I I really I I have to say i'm lucky again I haven't had a lot of like well I shouldn't say that I mean being labeled as a slut is not a not a umm great I I like the word I identify I identify as a slut. That I mean that's just great, but when that's seen as a negative thing even if you're somebody who, i don't know it's not like i'm lying to anybody you know it's like you're out</p>	<p>Lucky in love</p> <p>Clarification</p> <p>Navigating preferences</p> <p>Managing social image</p>
---	--

there doing your thing. I'm not i'm not, i'mma slut i'm not a liar that kind of thing. But that especially in the lesbian community is seen as you know, kind of a detriment to your character to uh to sort of have lots of lots of sex partners and stuff like that. Which i don't know I never really gave a shit about I just kind of I I realize that maybe maybe maybe that's not my tight community there, you know thats sort of like that pinball thing. Not that I wouldn't hang out with whatever but just like kind of knowing how you're perceived like alright in a in a quest to find new people. Umm but, let's see, I don't know, I've gone through a lot of different i've been mostly with women I identify with women umm and like maybe the occasion with an occasion experience with a cis man. Umm and that has very and that was very unacceptable at the time you know especially for a trans man you know it's like, what are you doing? And it's just like im having sex. It's great, it's fine, it's no big deal its like you know it doesnt doesnt mean anything but my how I identify or whatever. Umm but theres theres alotta there used to be now I feel like there's not so much anymore, but used to be a lot of limits and control in within the community about sex and who you sleep with and how many people you sleep with and are you monogamous or do you all these things and umm they seem to mean different things to people that I it took me a long to to understand. I don't understand why you have these feelings about who I sleep with? Like I don't understand how sleeping with a man makes makes me not queer or not whatever. Umm so sometimes that would be hard to navigate but, it certainly didn't deter me from being who I was and being really loud about it actually, and to talk talking about talking to people about it because another thing about being sleeping with people your type community doesn't necessarily see as ok is that you know that there are other people out there who are experiencing the same thing community doesn't necessarily see as ok is that you know that there are other people out there who are experiencing the same thing and things and in terms and especially in terms of like safety

Community Support/Communication

Safety

<p>and like you know. And the online thing comes around people are like on craigslist and doing whatever and if people are sleeping with people but don't feel like they can talk to their people about it it's not safe and it's not. The person should be able to do what they want to do and you should have their back and you know help them and in whatever way you can so you know should the need arise but it also its safety like if you're not talking to people about i'm sleeping with whatever in terms of safety in terms stds in terms of maybe whatever then the information doesn't flow. and its, I find it dangerous to not, to not support people for whoever they sleep with. But i've been a pretty loud slut for a long time. in fact in the nineties my friend and I were trying to um, we actually had a couple issues printed for ourselves, but we, we got funding to I don't know what happened, something happened and i don't remember what it was, but it didn't end up happening but we made a magazine called Slit Slut and the whole idea about it was to be loud about being promiscuous if that's what you wanted to call it. I dont think ive used that word in fuckin twenty years. And also being loud about education and about stds about health you know pride and in being who you are who you sleep with. Umm I don't know if you want to be. But anyway yeah so but now these days I am in a monogamous relationship and engaged to my partner and you know I still identify as a slut, don't worry.</p>	<p>Magazine: Slit Slut</p> <p>Question: Partners identities</p> <p>Partners managing identities</p>
<p>Kayla: Have you ever had partners that have had a hard time being open about their identities.</p> <p>Kennedy: Yes, I had to think about that for a minute. I have, i've had a number of partners, umm either sexual or relationship partners who umm aren't out at all. You know who are like, as we say living in the straight world and not having any you know not telling people about me or what not and some times. I didn't care depending what the situation was and sometimes it was really detrimental to our relationship. I did have one</p>	<p>Relationship struggle</p>

<p>relationship with a woman who like didn't tell her family about you know we'd been together for like two and a half years and like her family didn't know about me, even though she had come out to them years before umm they just didn't know about me and it was you know starting to affect us, it was it was I underst I feel like I understood why it wasn't about me but it still was a strange thing to sort of invite her into my family and not be able to be invited to those parts of her life. But I think I think that was just a deeper thing but umm, definitely, I have definitely slept with straight "straight" people who are like im not gay. Ok cool, like I don't care how you identify that's not my business. and you know whatever you know we're not getting married, this isn't whatever it's i've definitely had a lot of actually straight sexual partners who consider themselves straight. So am I mumbling sometimes I.</p> <p>Nate: No I think you're good.</p> <p>Kennedy: Oh alright.</p> <p>Nate: What was your relationship with businesses' like Nomia or like Treasure Chest?</p> <p>Kennedy: Ohh yeah those places are interesting. I think I still have a relationship with Nomia. We had a good relationship Nomia. Nomia changed everything when they came to town or opened because it was a women owned for women sex shop. So that changes everything because you could go to the Treasure Chest you could go to Expo you could go anywhere else and it's just really cheap shitty toys really traditional and traditional porn and just you know the same old shit. And I was like definitely didn't feel like a safe space for queer people. Didn't feel like a safe space for uhh women like alotta people that I know it was just not, and then before the internet that was a problem and now that you've got the internet everythings you have your choice. Nomia came along and sort of changed all of that. and umm had had actualy like quality things in their</p>	<p>Question: Pleasure shops</p> <p>Safety</p> <p>Quality products</p> <p>Community</p> <p>Dyke March</p> <p>Maine Trans Net</p> <p>Education/Sex Health</p>
--	---

shop that were not just plastic and sort of dangerous like the things some of the things that they had were like that was actually dangerous that will break and you know things like that. So anyway so they they care enough about people and about sexual health and about people's options to carry things that are of quality. Umm and they were, they are super involved or were super involved in a lot like in pride, in the dyke march ,in like in anything and they were always available to be part of a raffle you know give things to raffles and what not in the Maine Trans Net they were really generous to that they really branched and really talked about education and sexual health and being open about talking about sex. And it doesn't matter what kind of sex you want to have this place is ok for you to come and ask questions. Like if you go to the Expo, you don't wanna ask those, that guy a question, you don't I don't. I was like, no this is like no fricken way. That's not a place to like, for me to talk about anything. That's not the place. So it's changed the sex shop into just a porn and sex shop into like a place where you can go to get information a place that is safe for women and queer people and there are different things there than your traditional shop. But umm Gina the owner is just like super open to talking to anybody doesn't matter your orientation, what kind of sex you're looking to have, whatever she's down to talk to and she tables at events and talks to people, very open man its just so great to have that big part of the sex vibe in this town and it changes a lot of things I think.

Nate: Yeah. Umm you put commerce as a as a topic of interest and you've already mentioned like being really big in the bar scene umm, what what else aside from your interview with Sisters I mean uhh what else were your experiences with say you had written down Blackstone or Somewhere which apparently became Somewhere Else and so on and so forth but what were your affiliations with these bars?

Question: Bars

Bars = Community

Community/Strength

Kennedy: The bars were like a second home, they were like, instead of going home you went there to hang out and chat and talk with people and have a drink and maybe do some karaoke or sit at the piano bar. Umm and actually hang out and meet people, even if it wasn't like a dating thing. Just hangin out being around. And I don't feel like they're anything like that here even in a gay bar. It's very different umm but yeah they were like a second home like. Like I was I was there all the time. That's just where your community is. That's where I feel like the centers of our communities were. At least my community. And there's a lot less in the bars there's just a lot less strength. It's more loose, people. People have a lot less to say about anything. You know it's just more of a place to be. And to like, I don't know go into like a regular bar or a straight bar or whatever. Umm It's just uh it's uncomfortable you know you don't wanna go there with your friends and like everybody's staring at you, and it's just uncomfortable fuck that you wanna be with your people and be comfortable and not be stared at. So that was, that was where we'd hang out. That's where we'd be before the holidays after the holidays sometimes during the holidays depending upon on your families situations. Umm and i feel like that's a lot of where we got our information from what was going on in the community like all that, even after the internet. Cause I didn't really latch onto that very well. Yeah it was just really like a second home. There all the time.

Nate: We tried to do a little research on the places you had given us but uh there was nothing on uh Over the Rainbow or Somewhere. Umm can you tell us a little about those places?

Kennedy: Oh that was the same place so Somewhere, I think it was Somewhere Over the Rainbow, Somewhere Else, and Somewhere. God I can't even remember the, but it was three different incarnations of the same bar and now it's Flask and umm so its still gay owned and what not and still still sort of a place. I mean I certainly feel

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

<p>comfortable going there. But it's not what it used to be you know. But when I do go there i see like, people I used to see you know and it's cool cause you're like hiii. Whats going on. And uhh so that dynamic has definitely changed even though Submerge was a big deal cause Submerge was a dance party that happened at Flask once a month and it was a queer dance party, so even after it became not a gay bar in quotes umm umm Submerge was like awesome and was a queer dance party and so it sort of brought the queer back to Flask. Umm so that was that was a lot like the old the old days. When like most people there were like queer and we could just relax, party.</p>	<p>Question: Safety</p>
<p>Nate: Now throughout this entire like talk, safety has been like a constant theme that you know you constantly keep referring to in different context between sexual safety or just safety for your own health umm how do you feel that climate has you know gone throughout your life as in like the ups and downs.</p>	<p>Safety/Blending in</p>
<p>Kennedy: Umm wow that's a good questions so there so there's like medically, socially, sexually that is a hard one. I would say umm in the beginning medically wasn't a problem because being a dyke wasn't at that point seen whatever, not that I went to see doctors umm. But i think transitioning and being trans and physically transitionings umm. Uhh it's weird it depends on what I wear that day you know what I mean it really I uhh I think because it's the timeframe right so it's like we have the nineties when I like turned eighteen in like nineteen ninety six and that felt scary in a different way, because being gay wasn't actually super awesome, like people were not like yeah whatever it was actually a big deal and it was actually a big deal to be a loud slutty dyke that actually was a huge safety risk. People would pick fights with me all the time you know if I went to a non gay bar if I went like down to the old port to get a drink or whatever or not even drink or just walking down the street people had something to say to you all the time. And i never felt, I was</p>	<p>Timeframe</p> <p>Attacked</p> <p>Safety/Election</p>

always watching my back I still am always watching my back but umm uhh yeah that's a tough one. Cause there's just so much, soo many variables, like timeframe so you have like social timeframe with like perceived acceptance of gay, trans, queer, slut all these different things umm. to now when i'm I identify very differently I look very differently that I used to. I have different ideas of safety than I used or maybe tougher skin I don't know. But Umm. I definitely don't feel safe. That's not something I would say. I definitely don't. Uhh i've been taking stock of that recently in a different way. Since since the election and since just like the shit bomb. But you know. Being like well I never really felt safe and I don't feel safe anyway. I don't feel safe walking down the street i'm always thinking of my safety. Umm because it's not up to me how people see me and how people react to me. Umm so yeah that's always that always a concern it's always a concern in a medical situation I always have to be aware of what's happening I always have to be proactive I always have to be my own educator I always have to educate medical providers. Usually umm. so yeah, safety like physical safety, emotional safety, umm medical safety like all those things it's changed certainly but you know I wouldn't say that I am safe, and i definitely don't feel safe most every day.

Nate: Has it, does it feel better to you, over time do you feel safer I mean if there is a continuum.

Kennedy: I think that that my perception of safety definitely definitely changed after I was perceived as not being a woman so then theres not being a woman safety or not safety because if people can't figure out who you are or what you that is also a very big safety risk. So i think for a long time I physically made myself look more masculine in huge air quotes so that i could pass because I didn't feel safe. I obviously do not feel that way now. I feel that is extremely detrimental to who I am and my own psyche to not be expressive of who I am. But there is there is again you have no

Medical Safety Education

Question: Elaboration

Impression Management

Fear/Anxiety about image

<p>choice and you have no choice to how people see you. so one day somebody could see me and i could pass to somebody, pass meaning looking male umm but without anybody thinking about it or people could get curious and that's a really dangerous place to live. I've started not to give a fuck because that's just the anxiety the anxiety and the fear and just how much you have to, police yourself every single day when you get up when you get dressed when you do whatever it's just so it's horrible, it's horrible thing. and I wouldn't judge anybody for doing that. Umm. i've certainly let myself off the hook for doing that but umm it is a safety issue you know sometimes you do have to choose if i'm not feeling particularly strong some one day then I will dress in a particular way to feel safe. Like jeans and a button down, that's my uniform that I call I call my uniform. That's my safe you know i'm not feeling great today i'm not feeling like i can do this today i'm just gunna try to blend in you know, which is a privilege you know it's a huge privilege. I'm getting less and less able to do that emotionally cause it's just ingenuine and umm but it is and it is absolutely a privilege to simply be able to change your clothing in order to do that however that also doesn't work in my in my case either because i get ma'amed even when thinking that I'm may be flying under the radar all the time. So again you just never know when you are who's seeing you as as what you are. Umm certainly the community has stepped up. In terms of I think the larger concept of community or society sort of, that's the other thing. sort of because that's very fragile I don't see that as a stable a stable support. But in the queer community certainly people have changed drastically in uhh supporting trans people in safety situation well not just safety situations but supporting trans people in general. Just in being who you are in your identity and being vocal about it and showing up when they need to show up and things like that because when I was coming out like eleven years ago or so umm it wasn't cool, it was not cool. I see people saying it's cool now. like you know i'm gonna become</p>	<p>Camouflaging</p> <p>Community support</p> <p>Trans support as a new concept</p> <p>Ostracized for lack of conformity</p>
--	---

cool that's awesome but like that was just not it was not cool especially in the dyke lesbian community, not cool at all. Because it was seen as like betraying this identity of dyke which is really important and something i still identify as which pisses people off still but umm. That was not cool so like suddenly I wasn't invited to certain parties I wasn't invited to certain things things shifted and that was that's when you become like this little pod you know like this little pod that comes off this community and starts floating around like what the fuck what do I do now. You know you're kinda treated as like an enemy. For a lot of different reasons but umm so that has changed and that is a huge thing because that is that is your community support and the people thats a huge huge deal if you don't have support you're in trouble you know. Then i think that's shifted a lot people i mean the T has been added to the LGBTQA you know like all the things. But that being said there's a lot more to do in that area. But in terms of like when I came out to now that's a huge difference, a huge difference in support and understanding and the want and need for people to personally just take it upon themselves to understand or open their community to people or figure out how to open their communities to people who are trans or just not be an asshole that too is great. You know but umm I yeah I think i've always been a target like people have always felt the privilege to umm say and do things that just you know you wouldn't do just say and do unless you thought that person was of lesser value. Uhh. Yeah I still feel I still feel like that I still feel I think about it every day but umm. I think that knowing that things are changing and things have changed and seeing that progression in the past eleven years for myself personally has definitely affected my knowing my level of safety and the the has changed. So knowing that knowing it can change knowing it does change knowing it it is changing does help to not have to think about it as much. But on an intellectual level on an emotional level knowing that i'm not the only trans person you know like people have all kinds of different

T being added to LGBTQA

Question: Community Support

<p>identities and different ways they walk around I certainly think about safety every day for all kinds of people for all kinds of trans people and non binary. Yeah it's.</p> <p>Kayla: So based on that would you say you've felt more support through the community personally?</p> <p>Kennedy: Umm, well that's a that's a tricky question too because I feel like yes in general but I also feel like I don't necessarily, like I have a lot of really good friends and they're really good support like really amazing people in my life that im sooo blessed to have umm but I also feel like I don't know where my community went. Like we're all spread we don't there isn't the places that we used to hang out there isnt the bar there isnt it seems more intellectualized and it seems more digitalized and I can't grasp that, I just can't do it. I don't know how to and I kind of don't want to. I kind of I miss physical interaction I miss seeing people around I miss running into people I don't know where that went and I don't know where hell everybody is. And it's possible that people have found other parts of their own identity that their that their their focusing on it's not necessarily their gay identity or their trans identity which is great getting involved in different parts of their life. But I I don't really know why that's happening umm. Other than people being terrified to be face to face with people somehow. Umm I don't know yeah I guess I partially don't know where my community is. I don't know I don't know like I don't see people around who are my age who I know from before you know. I never see people around I don't know.</p> <p>Nate: So are you still active in the community in helping with being a support system or what events like what you mentioned before the maine trans net and stuff like that do you still partake in events or?</p>	<p>Community disappeared</p> <p>Prefer face to face over digital</p> <p>Societal fear of interaction</p> <p>Question: Active in being a support</p> <p>Pride Reconnecting with Maine Trans Net</p>
--	--

Kennedy: Uhh public with pride, yes I do, but i've taken a break from maine trans net for my own my own well being for a while and then I plan on reconnecting with them now but umm I sort of I sort of feel like my involvement with support is really one on one with people. It's less umm organizing and you know things like that fundraising and it's more you know like i'll get an email about a young person who is coming out as trans and somebody knows me and they connect me to the to the person as somebody to talk to and somebody to say you know, that there are other people like you out there and things like that. So I have a lot of email correspondence I wouldn't say a lot, I have a good amount of email correspondence or phone conversation or i'll meet somebody for coffee however they are comfortable doing that. I feel like that's more where i'm a support than an organization. I kind of feel hemmed in by organizations. Because you can't fuckin do what you wanna do, sometimes you have to do this organizationally thing where i'm not good at following the rules a lot of the time and I think a lot of the rules are bullshit and umm so I I yeah it's hard for me to I don't know be the face of an organization or something like that to represent an entity that isn't my me. It's just not not good at that.

Kayla: Umm you've mentioned the election a few times so, is there anything around that topic you want to touch base on?

Nate: With the election only a week ago from today umm what how do you feel umm about your safety in this country about what him going into office could possibly mean about that.

Kennedy: My safe my personal safety or the community as a whole the lgbt community. It actually its so its soo big I go through different phases every day of of having different feelings and different but the same view it's incredibly terrifying like, like I I don't feel I feel like the larger idea that's so that people either supporting

Question: Election

Question: Election (Reiteration)

Safety personal/community

Fear

<p>Trump and his minions or you know telling everybody well we don't know what he's going to do let's just give him time you know and all this kind of stuff is just like, making everything that he has ever said and done ok. And to me that's the scariest part is to actually see people's true colors. It's like wicked terrifying because that's more that's i'm sure there'll be more theres theres just the idea that I live in a place that you kind of already know that as a Queer and a Trans person umm from rural Maine but but when it's so obvious and so just brightly colored it's just like boom and people are just like yeah that's what we want. It's just horrifying it it I I fear for the safety of my person because hate crimes have been going up exponentially for people of color for Muslims for Trans folks for queer folks and it's it's absolutely terrifying and it's a really hard thing to quantify. To be able to to talk about it and in terms of numbers or like whatever but that's just how that's what's happening so I feel extra on alert now. Personally and physically. umm. I don't I don't I mean obviously not having human rights is not safe period the end and nobody should be able to take that away from from people. Including Muslims who apparently now have to register themselves as Muslim in this country. Umm I I don't even know it's literally so terrifying and so like we were talking about earlier like all of the progress and all of the organizing that everybody's ever done all of the putting yourself being vulnerable to the larger community for the sake of peace for the sake of safety all the things we've all done it just seems like of course that's not gonna go away in like to us like that is not. That's not something you can take the peg out of like you cant you cant take that down. It feels it does feel like that though sometimes, like right now i'm pissed like and i'm am not feeling like that. But there are just times where you just cry like what else do you do? It's horrifying to know that you're not really seen as human cause if you do not have human rights you are not seen as human and that is the most disgusting thing to know that that a lot of people actually think that about you and that's</p>	<p>Hate crime increase</p> <p>Lack of human rights today/future</p> <p>Progress being lost</p> <p>Angry about prospective injustice</p>
---	---

the way they actually see you, but to see that like flower in government like to see that actually you know I mean that's been happening forever. you know that you know not doing anything is doing something but umm. To know that that's on the agenda that's actually on the agenda of our president. Of not our president of the president. Umm and to know that there's all this support for that and to know that someday that people are going to support and they're gonna push that try and push those things through. It doesn't make me feel safe at all. In fact my partner's mom, partner's mom is like is your passport updated cause i'd like to get that updated for you for Christmas if it's not. It's like you're great i love you, that is, that is a wonderful thing, but those are like real things you know, like. and the and the especially in healthcare too. That's been the hardest for me as a Trans person the hardest thing has been like adequate medical care and that is that's it's boggling like i'm not sure I can even finish answering that question it's just terrifying, it's absolutely terrifying. and I just like I fear for so many people, I fear for myself I fear I fear that other people are not fearful enough that some people are who don't have this experience don't have to feel like they don't have to do anything because it's not them and it's nobody that they know. Or nobody that they think they know umm. That just staying silent yea know and then it also wakes you up to understand that you have you have I have definitely been silent about things that you know i could have I could have spoken up about I could have done more organizing I could have done all those things but anyway in terms of in terms of safety umm yeah. I I don't feel safe at all.

Nate: It's kind of changing gears but umm it wasn't on anything you had mentioned you wanted to talk about but uhh, you had spoken about during the aids epidemic when you had started umm teaching the school you had run ins with the church, how umm often did that happen throughout your life that you had to uhh I

Healthcare for Trans

Question: Religion

Universalist Church

<p>wouldn't even say just the Christian religion in general have you ever found interest in it have you ever had to fight against them are they constantly just barraging you in your life?</p> <p>Kennedy: No i've actually had really really really good support like one of the biggest community supporters that I personally had felt and or I feel like our community has had is the U U Church the Universalist. Amazing, amazing people, like some of the most amazing people i've ever met. And I definitely did have that like whole like err churches like err hiss . But uhh for a little bit when I was younger but then just through meeting people and actually talking to people and getting over my fear of going into a church and actually showing up to different things. Like I myself am not a Christian and I don't I don't go to church umm but you know they they have Queer events in the church on congress street in their big church on congress street. By having those experiences sort of got me out of that idea that all Christians must hate me and I have to be fearful of all these things and it took it took just meeting people and having those experiences and having that amazing support they have been there forever literally supporting the Gay and Queer community and the Trans community umm. Publicly which is like a lot of people will show or give support or do certain things but they don't want anybody to know about it and that's not real that's not real support that's not real if you can't if you can't do it all the way to me it's not real. Umm so I have definitely not felt barraged by, I mean i've felt more like nationally and more like watching the news or just seeing certain things. Mostly elsewhere. I mean i'm trying to think of i'm trying to remember certain things like locally in terms of churches and stuff but i've had really good experiences with the church and christian folks who come out and say I don't care who you are this is great and you have our support. And can get beyond that and actually just talk to the person and get to know each other. Like those those were like mind blowing things to me when I started</p>	<p>Universalist Church support through events</p> <p>Christian Family</p>
---	---

being open to attending things at the U U Church that were for the entire community or for the Queer the Gay community. Umm But it's very confusing because you know I have my families Christian my upbringing was Methodist umm and there's some really strong believers in my family and people I grew up with and uhh I yeah I guess I just walk lightly I am still like uhh you like what kind of Christian are you you know because I can't assume you are a hateful one umm because that's obviously not the case but it makes me sad for people who are Christian who don't believe in in that kind of hate because when you say you're Christian what does that mean to people. You know when I hear that I have to like, woo don't don't go there you know you can't. You know I still have to do that sometimes. But it yeah it makes me sad that uhh the whole I mean it's not like a new thing this is like Christian has not been historically I don't know what you'd call it. I don't even wanna say supportive, because i'm thinking of like killings. It definitely has not been bad and i've been really thankful for people who have who have been open to me still even being that young person afraid and recognizing that fear and being like yup totally understand why you're afraid but just leaving it be and not being aggressive about but letting me come to them. And letting us have that conversation when it can happen not you know forcing anything just be like were here. It's cool you know and like yeah. I don't know what else to say.

Kayla: So I guess we're just about at the end of our time anyways we've gone through basically all the things that we wanted to ask, so are there any last final notes that you want to talk about or add in?

Kennedy: I literally can't yeah I'm pretty mushy right now.

Kayla: Well thank you again for agreeing to do this and contributing to the preservation for the LGBT community.

Closing Questions

Thanks

<p>Kennedy: Thanks for doing the interviews you guys. Thats awesome, you guys are awesome at this.</p>	<p>Close/Thanks</p>
--	---------------------

